

# A Health of the Heartland Fact Sheet: Mental Health



## What is Mental Health?

Mental health is a state of emotional, psychological and social well-being that enables individuals to cope with life’s challenges.<sup>1</sup> Good mental health allows people to handle stress, work productively and actively participate in their community.<sup>1</sup> Poor mental health can include conditions like depression, anxiety, substance misuse disorder and many more. Poor mental health can impact physical health and can even cause death. People who experience poverty, violence, disability and inequality may be more likely to have poor mental health.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, youth, people-of-color, sexual minorities, people experiencing homelessness and justice involved individuals are particularly at risk of experiencing mental health crises.<sup>3</sup> Mental health can be improved by addressing the environmental and societal factors that cause distress to community members, strengthening mental health supports and improving equity.<sup>3</sup> In 2023, Jackson County and Joplin County residents both had an average of six mentally unhealthy days out of the last 30 days.<sup>4</sup>

### Common Types of Mental Health Disorders

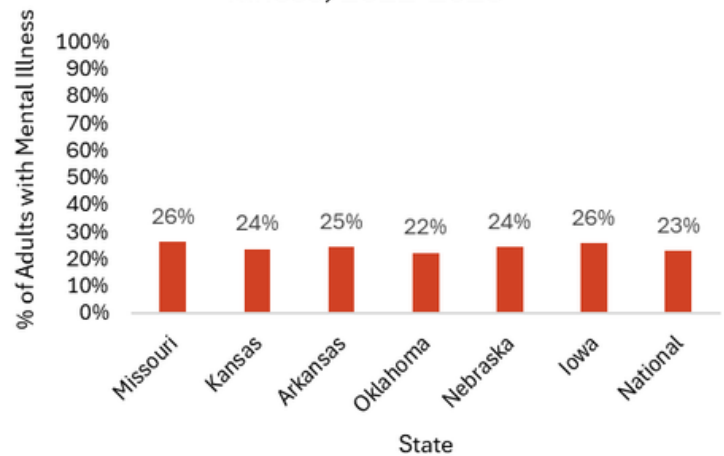
<p><b>Anxiety Disorders</b> like obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) or panic disorders</p>
<p><b>Mood Disorders</b> like bipolar disorder, seasonal affective disorder or depression</p>
<p><b>Substance Use Disorders</b> including misuse of alcohol, tobacco, opioids or other substances</p>
<p><b>Eating Disorders</b> like anorexia, bulimia or orthorexia</p>
<p><b>Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)</b></p>

Source: Cleveland Clinic

Missouri Mental Health Statistics (2022-2023)	Ages 18-25	Ages 26+
Had Any Mental Illness	36.2%	24.5%
Major Depressive Episode	18.5%	8.3%
Attempted Suicide	2.3%	0.5%
Received Mental Health Services	31.9%	26.9%

Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Percent of People 18+ with Any Mental Illness, 2022-2023



Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health

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## Recognizing Mental Health Concerns

A mental health concern becomes a mental illness when symptoms begin to impact one's ability to function and bring about frequent stress.<sup>7</sup> Untreated mental illness can have serious consequences: the 2022-2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that 12.9% of Missouri children ages 12 to 17 had serious thoughts of suicide in the past year, 5.7% made a suicide plan and 3.7% attempted suicide.<sup>5</sup> In Southwest MO, 4.6% of adults had thoughts of suicide, and in Jackson County, MO, 4.1% of adults had thoughts of suicide in the past year.

**Suicide Rate in  
Jackson County**

**20.9 per 100,000**

**Suicide Rate in  
Jasper County**

**18.6 per 100,000**

- CDC WONDER,  
2018-2023

Dial  
**988**

If you are struggling with  
mental health.

## Public Health Interventions

In 2022, the mental health crisis line 988 was launched nationally to be an easy way for those who are in crisis to seek help and connection to local resources.<sup>9</sup> Today, 96% of Missouri 988 calls are answered locally, meaning that callers can be connected efficiently to local resources.<sup>9</sup>

## KCU's Impact

KCU's Center for Population Health and Equity is facilitating equitable access to mental health care in two big ways. One, KCU students are working with Kansas City Public Schools students to assess and manage mental health issues to achieve student success. Two, CPHE supports assessment and management of mental health issues that impact educational success for KCU students. Finally, CPHE staff provide clinical psychology services to patients of Care Beyond the Boulevard, a clinic that cares for people without insurance and people experiencing homelessness.

## References

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5. SAMHSA. 2022-2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. April 16, 2025.
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2023 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2024 August 19, 2025.
7. Mayo Clinic. Mental Illness. 2025 Accessed June 25, 2025
8. KFF. 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Two Years After Launch. 2024.

## ABOUT KANSAS CITY UNIVERSITY

Kansas City University was founded in 1916 as one of the nation's five original osteopathic medical schools. Today, KCU is a fully accredited, private, not-for-profit health sciences university strategically located on two campus locations – Kansas City and Joplin, Missouri – to address the growing health needs of both urban and rural populations. KCU's Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, Biosciences and Dental Medicine offer graduate degree programs in osteopathic medicine, clinical psychology, biomedical sciences, dental medicine as well as multiple dual-degree opportunities.

## THE CENTER FOR POPULATION HEALTH AND EQUITY MISSION

The CPHE builds momentum around understanding and addressing the social factors that impact health within and outside of the traditional health care setting, in partnership with local organizations, to better prepare students to practice osteopathic medicine, clinical psychology and dentistry while improving the well-being of the communities we serve.