

Mental Health Student Survey: Why VUSD Should Invest in more Mental Health Resources



Now more than ever, students are openly discussing mental illness without fear of the stigma that surrounds the topic. CAUSE youth are concerned that depression, anxiety, neglect and emotional/physical abuse is far too prevalent among their peers and our schools need more support for mental health. Young people don't often know where to turn or where to seek help when struggling with mental illness. Recent school shootings highlight the desperate need to invest in mental health services. In order to identify students' mental health needs, CAUSE youth conducted a survey of students attending Ventura High School, which was distributed among peers, presented in classrooms and posted on social media. Over 130 surveys were collected, where students were asked about their experience with mental illness and accessing services that are currently offered at their school. All participants were then asked to vote for what they felt were the most important mental health services they think should be provided on campus.

Students' Experience with Mental Health

61.5% of students surveyed said they experience difficulty with mental illness

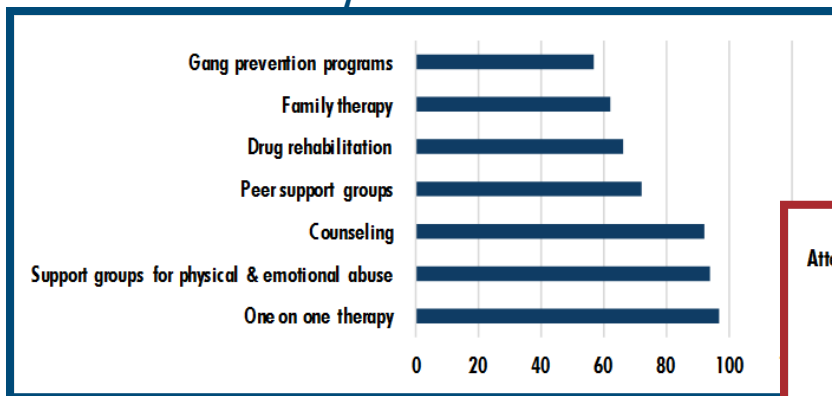
70.5% of students said their mental health needs are not being met at school

70.8% don't feel comfortable using existing services at school

92.4% don't know how to access existing mental health services at school

92.4% think we need more mental health resources available at school

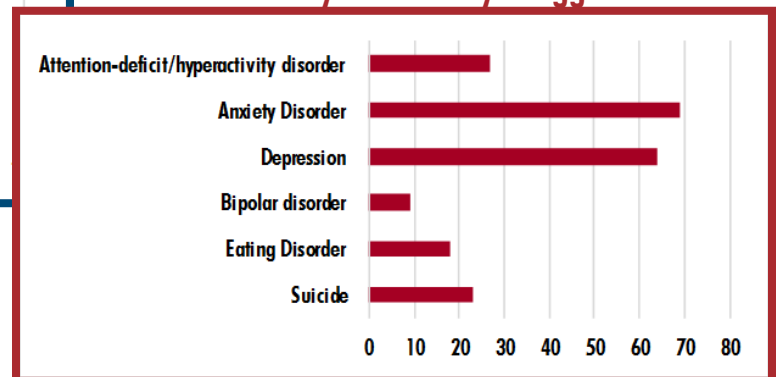
Students surveyed wanted VUSD to offer:



Students want individualized therapy, support groups for physical & emotional abuse, and mental health counseling:

- 97 students said they would want VUSD to provide one-on-one therapy with a mental health professional who can help students develop an individualized treatment plan for their mental health.
- 94 students identified a need for support groups on campus for physical and emotional abuse. Support groups help create a space for healing, where students can share their stories, experiences, and lives in a way that makes them feel less alone and isolated.
- 92 students pointed to the need for access to mental health counselors on campus who may be more informal than therapists, but provide a first line of support for students seeking to improve their emotional well-being.

Students surveyed said they struggled with:



Policy Recommendations

Our survey reveals a glaring need for support systems for students struggling with depression, anxiety and suicide. VUSD should invest in these resources by allocating funding to provide on-site mental health counselors who conduct outreach to raise awareness of existing services and are regularly available on campus, monthly support groups on campus for students who are survivors of abuse or other adverse experiences, and availability of district therapists to refer students who need a personalized plan with a mental health professional.