



Mental Health Awareness Month Public Health Report May 2026

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Current Data related to Mental Health

Public Health's Response

Project Spotlights

- Youth Wellbeing Network
- Access to Care Crisis Continuum Workgroup
- CredibleMind

Request to adopt the Mental Health Proclamation

Dakota County Mental Health Data

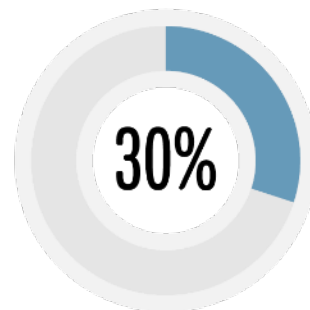


60 Suicides in
Dakota County
residents (2024)

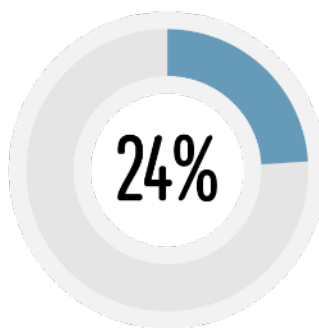
The suicide rate is higher
for males than females.

↑ The rate increased
from 2020 to 2024.

The Dakota County
rate was lower than
the state for 2024. ↓

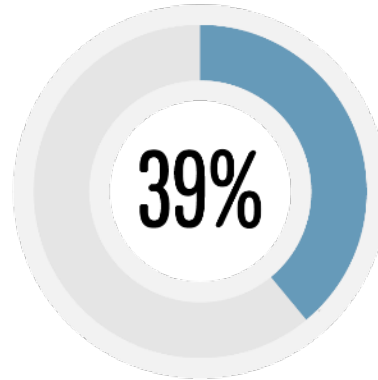


▶ Dakota County adults
(25 and older) reported
having ever been told
they have anxiety (2023)
An increase from 19 percent
in 2014.

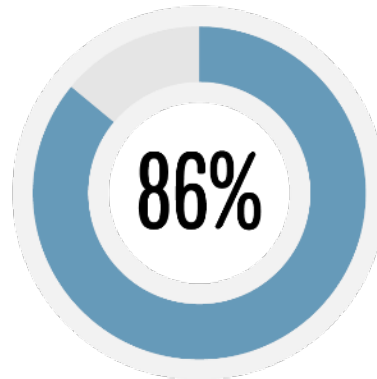


▶ Dakota County adults
(25 and older) reported
having ever been told they
have depression (2023)
An increase from 20 percent
in 2014

Mental Health Data Continued



▶ **Dakota County 5th graders agreed that they worry a lot**
Similar to the state (2025)



▶ **Dakota County students reported that they can talk to their parent or guardian about the problems they are having** (2025)

Public Health's Response



Population Focused Efforts:

- Statewide Health Improvement Partnership grant
- Opioid Settlement Response
- Youth Wellbeing Network
- Cannabis and Substance Use Prevention grant
- Health Promotion Team initiatives

Client-Facing Services:

- Providing resources and support
- Mothers and Babies program
- Screenings/Referrals
- Family Home Visiting, Women, Infants and Children, and Community Health Workers

Community Health Improvement Plan: Mental Health & Substance Use Pathway



GOAL: Strengthen prevention, early intervention, crisis response, and recovery supports for mental health substance misuse.

Strategies:

- Advance prevention efforts through mental health literacy, substance use education, stigma reduction campaigns, and youth protective factor strategies.
- Enhance the Access to Care Crisis Continuum through coordinated cross-sector partnerships that improve patient outcomes and provider well-being.
- Use data and learning efforts to support evidence-informed action across the Mental Health and Substance Use Pathway.
- Build trauma-informed systems and organizations to improve access, build trust, and reduce disparities in mental health and substance use care.

Project Spotlights

Partnership with Wilder Research



Listening Sessions

- Sept. 9, 2025, Diamondhead Ed. Ctr.
 - *Young Adults*
- Sept. 17, 2025, Diamondhead Ed. Ctr.
 - *Parents/Caregivers of Youth*
- Nov. 6, 2025, Inver Hills C.C.
 - *Young Adults*

Wilder “Data Party”

- Feb. 11, 2026, Robert Trail Library





Mental Health



What the Data Show

- Schools are the #1 place youth access mental health care
- Young people seem less able to tolerate stress
- Girls are more likely than boys to feel anxious or depressed
- Many 11th graders are not getting enough sleep
- More youth are willing to ask for help than ever before



Recommendations

- Expand school-based mental health services
- Deliver Mental Health First Aid training for adults
- Educate youth on the importance of sleep
- Implement the Make It OK Ambassador program
- Share info via bathroom stall posters in schools & colleges

Individual Factors & Social Media



Individual Factors



What the Data Show

- Young adults are stressed about money and transitioning to adult life
- Social media is a major challenge
- Protective factors are improving overall
- Emerging concerns: AI use, ICE enforcement, and safety-related stressors



Recommendations

- Address root causes of financial stress for young adults
- Provide education on digital well-being and screen time
- Teach youth to identify trusted sources of information
- Increase access to mental health services
- Launch 'peer champion' programs for youth support
- Help schools use survey data to drive programming

Family, Peer, School, and Community Factors



Family Factors



What the Data Show

- Immigrant and refugee families have unique needs not fully captured in surveys
- Maintaining strong family relationships is a key protective factor
- Many 8th graders lack strong teacher connections
- Youth feel safer in their neighborhoods than at school



Recommendations

- Build early support for first-generation and refugee families
- Support families alongside students — not students alone
- Professional development for school staff on building caring relationships
- Empower youth how to support and refer friends to resources, have hard conversations and connection points
- Conduct listening sessions with cultural communities

Access to Care: Crisis Continuum Workgroup

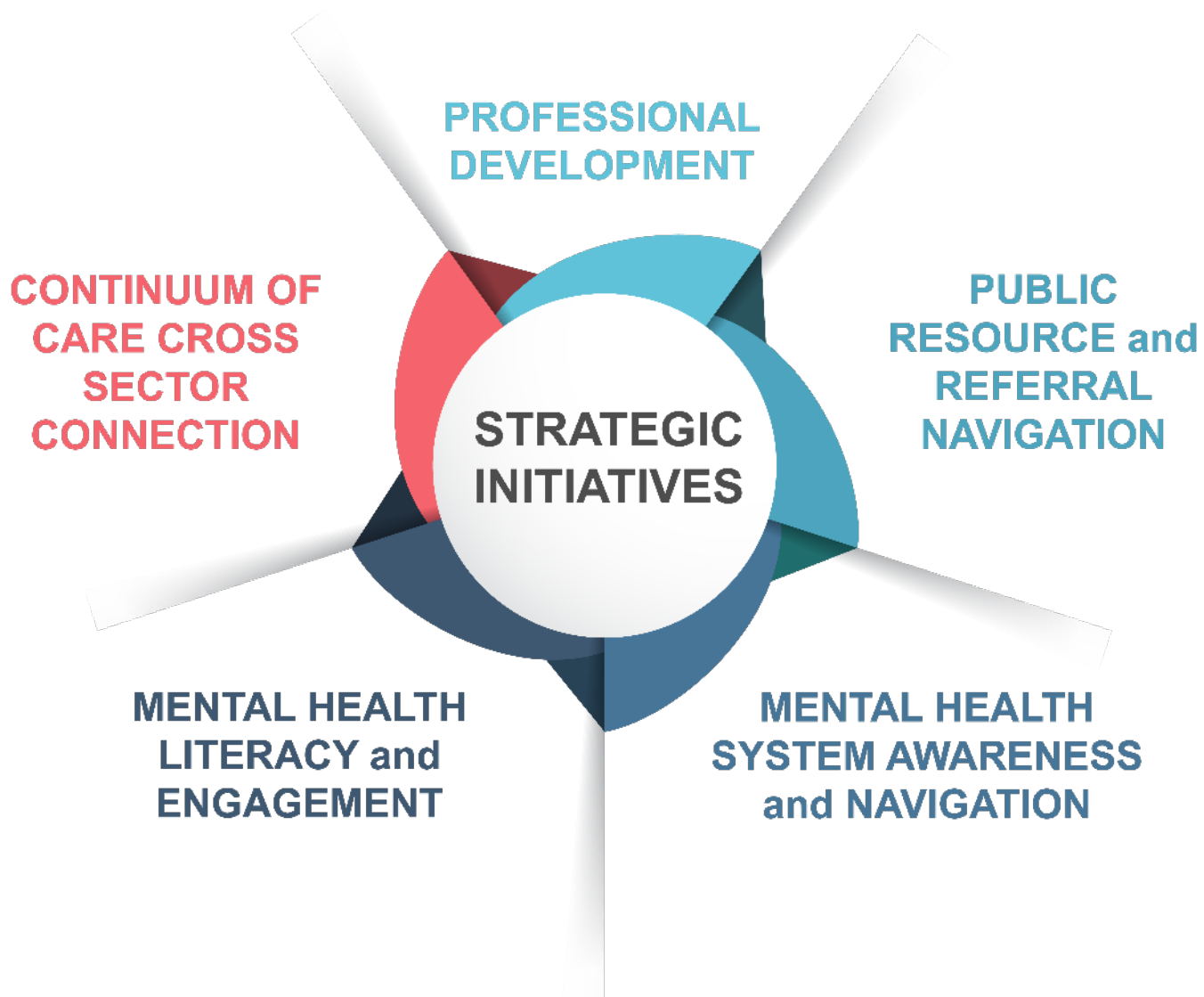


Multi-sector collaborative workgroup working to explore how can we better utilize our spheres of influence to improve staff experience and patient care within the current crisis-continuum and mental health service landscape

One year of exploration and action planning, with implementation to follow

- Five 90-minute meetings
- Prioritized attendees to keep within scope and ensure community experiences are represented

Strategy Recommendations



One-stop shop for personalized mental wellbeing resources

- Scientifically validated assessments on topics like anxiety, depression, meditation, burnout, and substance use
- Expert-reviewed apps, podcasts and books, articles and videos across mental health topics
- Tools that help you focus on building skills to thrive mentally and emotionally



1st Year of CredibleMind



- 1,726 unique users
 - 2,436 sessions
 - Yard Sign campaign
 - Ability to respond quickly: Annunciation shooting in Sept.
 - Exploring grant opportunities to extend the contract
- ✓ *Digital communication campaigns, bookmarks, yard signs, sharing with community partners and with referrals for promotion*

Recommendation



Staff recommends that the Dakota County Board of Commissioners proclaims May as Mental Health Month in Dakota County and continues to support efforts to promote mental health awareness, trauma-informed training, education, and access to services and supports to serve the mental health needs of the residents of Dakota County.

Closing



Thank you!