


PROJECT 10 TOPICAL BRIEFS are published on a bi-monthly basis. Each issue focuses on a specific topic or theme, highlighting current and upcoming information and events related to secondary transition. This month the Topical Brief is focused on Mental Health and Transition.

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Story 1: Mental Health and Awareness

Awareness of mental health issues facing our youth is an important first step in understanding the problem and participating in a solution. The National Institute of Mental

Health (NIMH) reports that "**One in five children ages 13 - 18 have, or will have, a mental illness.**" The proportions of this statistic are almost too large to absorb.

Think about it on these levels:

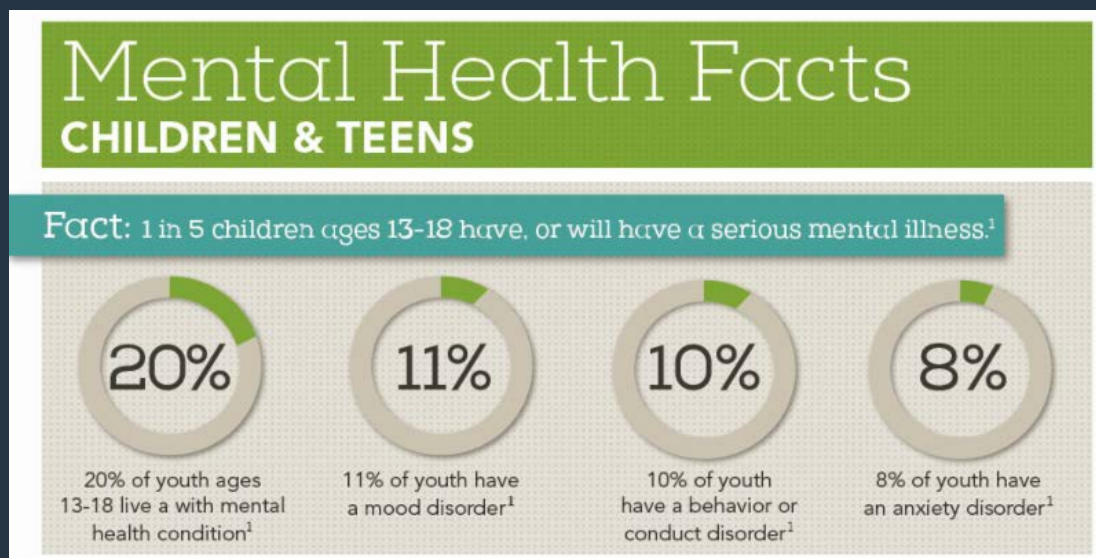
- State-Level - The Florida State Educational Agency (SEA) Profile (2017) tells us that we had 2,816,824 students in PK to 12th grade. One fifth of that student population (563,364) could have some type of mental illness.
- School-Level - If there are 600 students attending your school, 120 of them could have some type of mental illness.
- Classroom-Level - If you teach 100 students during the week, 20 of the students you know by name and by face may have some type of mental illness.



The mental health of our students is a vital issue that rightfully raises our concern. Mental health problems impact our students in a variety of ways.

- Suicide is one of the top three leading causes of death for youth between the ages of 10 - 24 and in 90% of those instances, an underlying mental illness existed (National Alliance on Mental Illness [NAMI], n.d.).
- In juvenile justice systems, approximately 70% of the youth have a mental illness (NAMI, n.d.).
- The high school dropout rate for students with an emotional/behavioral disability (EB/D) in Florida was 38% in 2015-16 (Florida SEA, 2017).
- Students with mental health needs experience a delay of 8 to 10 years between the time symptoms appear and the time help is received (NAMI, n.d.).

Mental health issues are, indeed, far-reaching. In the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) graphic below, explore other informative mental health statistics.



Assess your own awareness about mental illness by taking this quiz provided by NAMI Florida. Spoiler alert: the answer to item 10 may be an unwanted surprise.

[Mental Health Awareness Quiz](#)

Story 2: Supporting Students in Secondary Transition with Mental Health Needs

Using data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2, Wagner and Cameto (2004) compared findings across 12 disability groups, including students with emotional disturbance. Among those findings reported, it is noted that youth with an emotional disturbance are more likely than youth with an IEP to experience the following:

- Higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage within the family
- Enrollment in lower-performing schools
- Higher incidents of being suspended, expelled, arrested and bullied
- Less help with homework from family members

Students with mental health needs are also at higher risk of substance abuse and involvement in criminal activity (Haber, Karpur, Deschenes, & Clark, 2008). In Florida, students with emotional/behavioral disabilities (E/BD) had a 38% dropout rate in comparison to 17% for students with disabilities (SEA Profile, 2017). It is clear to see how the disadvantages that students with mental health needs experience create challenging barriers to overcome.



So, how can we support students with emotional/behavioral disabilities and other mental health needs?

While the need for continued research in this area remains, the following suggestions are emerging from the literature and the field of practice:

- Provide transition services that are available to all students and students with disabilities.
- Ensure school personnel and service providers are committed to a strengths-based approach and understand the challenges students with mental health needs face.
- Provide educational environments that are supportive, flexible and stable.
- Affirm and encourage students to advocate for themselves, direct their own lives and exercise leadership; think person-centered planning!
- Implement student engagement strategies to strengthen student involvement.
- Use mentors to positively impact academic performance as well as build relationships that strengthen connections to school.
- Offer career exploration and work-based learning opportunities to foster career aspirations.
- Encourage family involvement. Provide information and training to families that prepare them to understand the impact of their youth's mental health needs as they relate to achieving transition goals.
- Foster a system of collaboration across all life domains, such as secondary education, postsecondary education, training, employment, transportation and independent living (Jivanjee et al., 2016; Murray & Allen, 2010; Podmostko, 2007; Quick Guide: Mental Health-Secondary Transition, 2016).

For further information about serving transitioning students with mental health needs, check out the Pathways Research and Training Center (RTC) article, [Transition Mental Health Service Provider Core Competencies \(n.d.\)](#).

Resources

* The title of each resource is hyperlinked.

[Enhancing Career Development Engagement and Self-Determination for Young Adults with Mental Health Diagnoses](#)

This report provides basic information about self-determination as well as career development and engagement for young adults with mental health diagnoses.



[Mental Health and Secondary Transition Annotated Bibliography from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition \(NTACT\)](#)

This NTACT document provides a brief discussion on why mental health support in secondary transition is important and shares an overview of research that is being done in this sphere.

[National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)

NAMI is a national mental health organization dedicated to helping Americans affected by mental illness to build better lives through education, advocacy and leadership.

[National Alliance on Mental Illness, Florida \(NAMI Florida\)](#)

NAMI Florida seeks to improve the quality of life for individuals and their families affected by mental illness through education, support and advocacy. See NAMI Florida's website for more information on their signature programs and training.

[Pathways Research and Training Center \(RTC\)](#)

Pathways RTC houses six research projects that aim to improve the lives of youth and young adults with serious mental health conditions. Training, technical assistance dissemination activities and a national conference, *Focal Point*, are the avenues through which new information is shared. Check out the website for training modules, webinars and publications.

[SEDNET, The Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities](#)

Florida's SEDNET Administration Project and the 19 SEDNET Regional Projects serve as a collaborative resource for school districts, agencies, and families working to promote positive educational and community-based outcomes for children with E/BD. SEDNET promotes the provision of a quality system of care for students with or at-risk of emotional and/or behavioral challenges. Find contact information for the Director of SEDNET, Nicki Zenn, and the 19 Regional Projects [here](#).

[Transition to Adulthood for Youth with Challenging Behaviors: Transition Planning Tips for Parents from the PACER Center: Champions for Children with Disabilities](#)

This publication provides checklists for parents in the areas of employment, postsecondary education and independent living that help to identify transition goals, accommodations and related services that prepare their youth to successfully transition to adulthood.

[Transition Mental Health Service Provider Core Competencies](#)

This article, featured on the Pathways RTC website, shares 15 core competencies that are

described in the four-pronged perspective of attitude, knowledge, skill and example.

[Transition for Youth with ED/BD Training Module from Transition Coalition](#)

This module aims to assist high school transition programs to better serve students with E/BD by teaching how to structure services in a way that effectively addresses their unique needs.

Upcoming Events

2018 Florida Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) Summer Leadership Institute

Date: June 11 - 13, 2018

Location: Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa, Bonita Springs, FL

"Game On" is the theme of the 2018 summer institute.

Featured speakers include Julie Weatherly and Dr. Randy Sprick.

Click [here](#) to register.



20th Anniversary Family Cafe

Date: June 15 - 17, 2018

Location: Hyatt Regency Hotel, Orlando, FL

This year marks 20 years annual opportunities for families to come together for information, training and networking. As usual, the event will have a wide range of individual breakout sessions, a packed Exhibitor's Hall with dozens of vendors, inspiring keynote speakers, the Governor's Summit on Disabilities and other special events.

Click [here](#) to register.

2018 National Association of People supporting EmploymentFirst (APSE) Conference: Imagination Drives Transformation

Date: June 26 - 28, 2018

Location: Disney's Coronado Springs Resort, Lake Buena Vista, FL

This conference focuses on the advancement of Employment First, a movement that embraces the idea that all individuals, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life. The conference features networking opportunities; on-site Certified Employment Support Specialist (CESP) exam opportunities, high-quality breakout sessions and discussion about state-of-the-art strategies to ensure equitable employment for all citizens with disabilities.

Click [here](#) to register.

Florida Association of Management Information Systems (FAMIS) Annual Conference

Date: June 26 - 28, 2018

Location: Daytona Beach Hilton Resort, Daytona Beach, FL

This year's conference will focus on the importance of collaboration between exceptional student education (ESE) and management information systems staff to ensure that quality

data are submitted to the Florida Department of Education (FDOE). Best practices to ensure accurate data keeping will be shared.
Click [here](#) to register.

2018 Annual Hartwick Symposium Series

Date: July 12, 2018

Location: Live Oak Event Center at University of Central Florida, Orlando

There are two events on this day. The first is a one-day event for Florida secondary educators and the second is a half-day event for parents and guardians. Please see the times and descriptions below.

Secondary Educators

Time: 8:00am - 3:00pm

This one-day interactive symposium is designed for secondary educators to learn about and explore Florida's postsecondary options and resources for students with intellectual disability.

Click [here](#) to register.

Family Focus

Time: 4:00pm - 8:00pm

This half-day statewide symposium is designed for parents and guardians to learn about and explore postsecondary options and resources leading to employment and career opportunities for students with intellectual disability.

Click [here](#) to register.

Upcoming Webinars

Vocational Rehabilitation Work-Based Learning Experience Program and Vendor Registration

Tuesday, May 29, 2018

10:00am - 11:00am

Click [here](#) to register.

Thursday, May 31, 2018

2:00pm - 3:00pm

Click [here](#) to register.

This webinar provides an opportunity for school districts to learn about the new work-based learning experiences (WBLEs) and the vendor registration process. This webinar is being offered at two times to accommodate busy schedules. The material covered will be the same at both sessions.

Apps for Independent Living - Managing Money, Budgets and Shopping

Tuesday, June 5, 2018



1:00pm - 2:00pm

This PACER Center live seminar (available through livestreaming) will be a fast-paced overview of mobile apps that can help youth with disabilities live on their own. The focus will be on the essential independent living skills of creating a budget, managing money, and shopping for groceries. A variety of apps will be discussed for both smart phone and tablet devices (including Apple's iOS and Android). Click [here](#) to register. Choose Livestream option during registration.

Additional Announcements

Vocational Rehabilitation(VR) Summer Youth Programs (SYP)

The VR Summer Youth Program is a terrific opportunity for Florida youth to participate in a variety of pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). SYP providers will offer a combination of Pre-ETS that range from self-advocacy training to work-based learning experiences and more. For more info about SYPs and a list of SYP providers click [here](#) or, for questions, you may contact Carmen Dupoint at Carmen.Dupoint@vr.fldoe.org.

Florida College and Career Transition Club

Resources are available to local public and private schools to establish a Florida College and Career Transition Club (CCT Club). The Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA) at the University of Central Florida (the Center) invites schools serving students in grades 9 - 12 to apply for these resources to establish CCT Clubs that will increase awareness of Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program opportunities and help students with intellectual disabilities prepare for and access those opportunities across Florida. The funds provided will cover a CCT Club sponsor stipend and club activities. For more information and application instructions, click [here](#).

Health Care Transition in the School Setting: A Training Program for Educators

This web-based, self-paced course provides special education teachers, school nurses, transition specialists, administrators and support staff with the knowledge, skills and tools to facilitate improved health literacy, self-management, communication and self-advocacy among students with disabilities and chronic health conditions. Information on course modules, student curricula, materials and resources is available [here](#).

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Project 10: Transition Education Network

Assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes.

Project 10: Transition Education Network University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Questions or comments?

Email us at project10@stpete.usf.edu.

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