



MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties

From: Coalition to Empower our Future

Re: NY Parents Call for a Comprehensive Approach to Solving the Youth Mental Health Crisis

Date: May 2025

In advance of Mental Health Awareness Month, the Coalition to Empower our Future conducted conversations with parents across New York to discuss the state of youth mental health and wellbeing. Additionally, in partnership with Mercury Analytics, the coalition conducted an online survey among 600 parents in New York from April 7 to 14, 2025.

This research finds that parents in New York are worried about the state of youth mental health and wellbeing, agree there are many factors driving the issue, and are seeking a multifaceted approach that includes support and resources to help them support their kids.

Key Research Findings:

Youth mental health is seen as a deteriorating and pervasive challenge that is unlikely to improve in the foreseeable future. Survey data shows that New York parents are worried about youth mental health and wellbeing – the vast majority say the situation is bad and not improving. In the coalition’s conversations with parents across New York, many express a similar sentiment, saying things that indicate “*things are getting worse.*”

Q: HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE STATE OF YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE U.S. TODAY?



Q: THINKING BACK TO 6 MONTHS AGO, DO YOU THINK YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE U.S. HAS...



Q: THINKING AHEAD 6 MONTHS FROM NOW, DO YOU THINK YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE U.S. WILL BE...



QUOTES FROM PARENTS

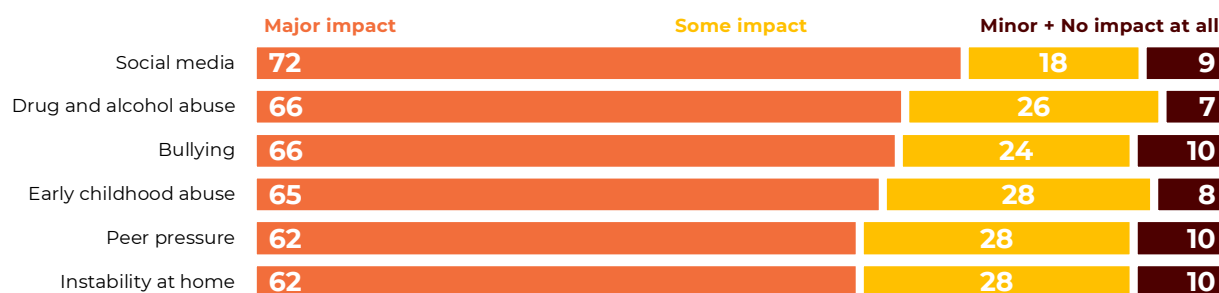
"Anybody who thinks we're in a good place with youth mental health in America right now is severely kidding themselves." – NY Parent

"[Youth mental health] is not too positive right now, because there's a lot of expectations." – NY Parent

"Things are getting worse. Mental health is leading to issues like anxiety, lower self-esteem in kids, and cyberbullying. All these things are affecting them in a negative way." – NY Parent

New York parents think a broad range of factors is causing the decline in youth mental health. The vast majority of parents in New York recognize that youth mental health is a complex and multifaceted issue. In both survey research and in the coalition's conversations across the state, parents cite a broad array of drivers, for example, social media, drugs and alcohol, bullying, early childhood abuse, peer pressure, instability at home, etc.

Q: PLEASE INDICATE HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT YOU WOULD SAY EACH FACTOR HAS ON YOUTH IN THE U.S. RIGHT NOW.¹



QUOTES FROM PARENTS

"It's a comprehensive problem." – NY Parent

"There's a number of factors that are playing in. Teenagers have become very aware of the world around them and they went through a pandemic where they were fully remote for 18 months, so they missed that launching period in their lives." – NY Parent

"There are multiple issues. [Kids are] dealing with social media, the pandemic, and the affairs in our country and the world right now." – NY Parent

When it comes to tackling youth mental health, New York parents are looking for a comprehensive approach. Parents say youth mental health and wellbeing is a complicated problem, requiring a multifaceted solution. Survey data shows that more than eight-in-ten parents in New York support a comprehensive approach over a narrow approach targeting phones and similar devices. And in the coalition's conversations across the state, parents have expressed that a broad range of solutions and approaches is essential.

Q: WHEN IT COMES TO IMPROVING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST APPROACH?



QUOTES FROM PARENTS

"[We need] a comprehensive solution." – NY Parent

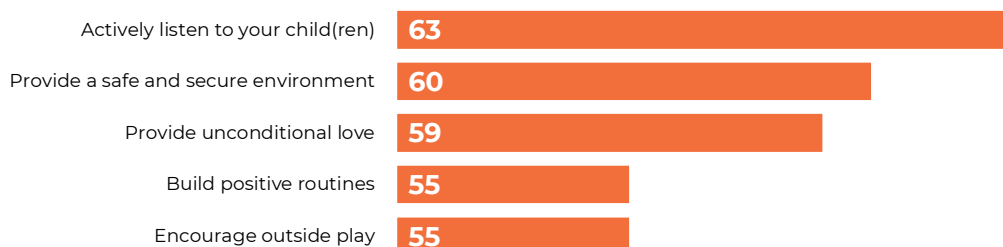
"I generally think we need a comprehensive solution to address this problem. Everyone's situation is different. Somebody mentioned the school, but I think it also starts in the home and the community. It's a multiple-tiered approach." – NY Parent

"It's not a one size fits all type of situation. There's a lot of issues, whether it be addiction to devices, bullying on social media, or problems such as ADHD and things like that." – NY Parent

"It starts at the home and what the family life is like. Also, it's who's home and how much attention the child gets and all that stuff. It's complicated." – NY Parent

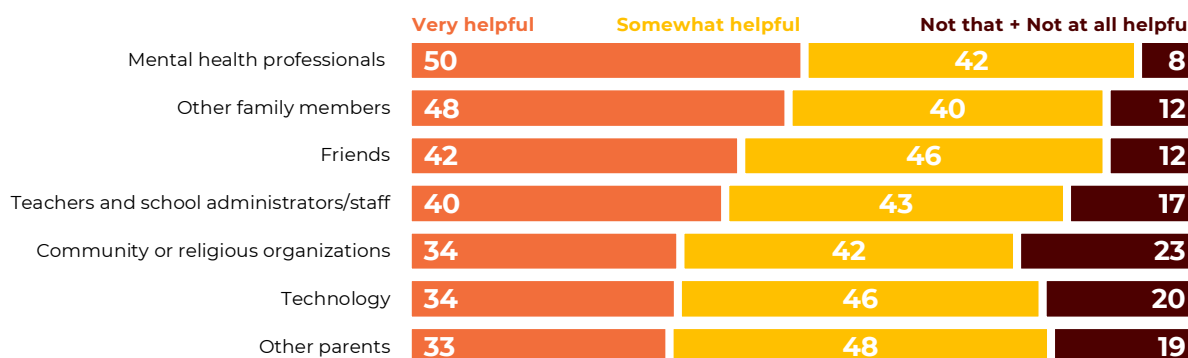
New York parents feel extremely responsible for youth mental health, and they are trying to provide their kids with the support systems they need. Parents want to support their child or children's mental health. In the coalition's conversations across New York, parents say they want to be *"an advocate"* and *"a teacher"* for their kids. They say they also want to *"have really open communication"* with their kids. These conversations are backed up by survey data that says many parents in New York are actively trying to implement strategies to support their kids – for example, by providing stable and communicative environments.

Q: HOW DO YOU PERSONALLY SUPPORT YOUR CHILD OR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING?¹



New York parents rely on support from a broad range of resources and people. In both survey data and the coalition's conversations with parents across New York, parents say they rely on their community to help them support their child or children's mental health. For example, parents are relying on mental health experts, family members, friends, and teachers.

Q: HOW HELPFUL IS THE SUPPORT FROM EACH RESOURCE?¹



QUOTES FROM PARENTS

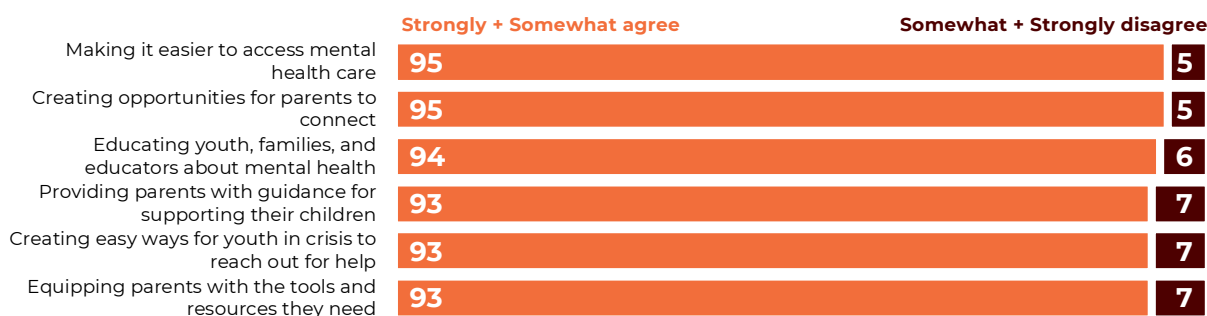
"I lean on [my kids'] guidance counselors, their grandparents, aunts, and my husband." – NY Parent

"My son looks up to my brother and really idolizes him. So, they'll spend time together and he'll help decode how my son is feeling outside of myself and my husband." – NY Parent

"I tend to lean on my sister for a female's perspective on things. I have two daughters, so, I may not always understand what they're going through." – NY Parent

When it comes to protecting youth mental health and wellbeing, New York parents are looking for support from their community. In the coalition's conversations across New York, parents report they have trouble finding the right tools and resources to support the mental health and wellbeing of their kids. They say it's hard to know where to look, find credible expertise, access professional support, and know if they are doing the right thing. Survey data backs up the sentiment that parents need more support – for example, the data demonstrates that parents want youth mental health support to be more affordable and accessible.

Q: HERE IS A LIST OF STRATEGIES. PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE IF EACH WOULD HELP IMPROVE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING.ⁱⁱ



QUOTES FROM PARENTS

"The amount of resources that are out there are so expansive and ever-growing, but it's the quality of that resource, not the quantity of it. So, it's trying to find the marriage of all of these resources together." – NY Parent

"There's so many resources that you have to pick and choose the right one that fits with you. It takes a while and it's overwhelming." – NY Parent

"I'm frustrated that New York City doesn't provide counseling services for kids in preschool. [My son] will have to wait another year to qualify and he would definitely benefit from therapy." – NY Parent

ⁱ Chart displays items that only rise to the top among nationwide parents.

ⁱⁱ Chart displays data from a selection of key strategies.