Youth affected by parental incarceration experience more mental health problems than their peers.

It is estimated that four million youth in the United States suffer from a serious mental health issue. Until recently, little was known about the mental health of Minnesota youth who have experienced the incarceration of their parent. Findings from the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACES) link the exposure to household dysfunction, such as familial incarceration, to higher risks of medical and social problems as an adult.

Using data from the Minnesota Student Survey (2013), the impact of parental incarceration on the mental health of Minnesota youth was analyzed. This infographic shares key information learned about students' self-reported emotional and behavioral problems.

**Mental Health Indicators**

### Long-term mental health problems
Youth who have experienced parental incarceration — currently or in the past — are more likely to report long-term mental health problems compared with youth who have no history of parental incarceration.

**MALE**
- 2x more (16%)
- 3.2x more (25%)

**FEMALE**
- 2.2x more (27%)
- 2.5x more (30%)

Compared with youth who have never had an incarcerated parent

### Mental health treatment in the past 12 months
Youth who have experienced parental incarceration — currently or in the past — are more likely to have received treatment than youth who have no history of parental incarceration.

**MALE**
- 2x more (10%)
- 3.3x more (17%)

**FEMALE**
- 2x more (16%)
- 2.7x more (22%)

Compared with youth who have never had an incarcerated parent

### Why Examine Differences by Gender?
Some common mental disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and somatic complaints are more common in females than males.

**Internalizing problems in the past 12 months**
Youth who have experienced parental incarceration — currently or in the past — are more likely to have experienced at least three of these reoccurring issues: feelings of depression; trouble sleeping; feeling anxious or upset; or wanting to end their life.

**MALE**
- 2x more (30%)
- 2.8x more (41%)

**FEMALE**
- 1.9x more (57%)
- 2.1x more (61%)

Compared with youth who have never had an incarcerated parent
Youth who have experienced parental incarceration report more frequent suicidal ideation and suicide attempt than those who have not experienced it.

### Mental Health Indicators

#### Purposeful self-injury

Youth who currently have an incarcerated parent are more likely to hurt or injure themselves than those of the same gender who have not experienced parental incarceration.

**MALE**

- Youth who currently have an incarcerated parent: 15%
- Youth who have not had an incarcerated parent: 7%

**FEMALE**

- Youth who currently have an incarcerated parent: 31%
- Youth who have not had an incarcerated parent: 17%

Compared with youth who have never had an incarcerated parent

**2.2x** Youth who have a currently incarcerated parent **4.5x** Youth who have never had an incarcerated parent

### Youth who have seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year

**MALE**

- Youth who currently have an incarcerated parent: 13%
- Youth who have not had an incarcerated parent: 6%

**FEMALE**

- Youth who currently have an incarcerated parent: 33%
- Youth who have not had an incarcerated parent: 28%

Compared with youth who have never had an incarcerated parent

**2.3x** Youth who have a currently incarcerated parent **3.6x** Youth who have never had an incarcerated parent

### Youth who have attempted suicide in the past year

**MALE**

- Youth who currently have an incarcerated parent: 4%
- Youth who have not had an incarcerated parent: 1%

**FEMALE**

- Youth who currently have an incarcerated parent: 15%
- Youth who have not had an incarcerated parent: 3%

Compared with youth who have never had an incarcerated parent

**2.8x** Youth who have a currently incarcerated parent **10.2x** Youth who have never had an incarcerated parent

**3.3x** Youth who have a currently incarcerated parent **4.6x** Youth who have never had an incarcerated parent

This infographic is brought to you by Minnesota's Strengthening Families Affected by Incarceration Collaborative's Evaluation sub-committee which includes representatives from Wilder Research, University of Minnesota, Council on Crime and Justice, MN Department of Corrections, MN Department of Human Services, MN Department of Education, and MN Department of Public Safety. Staff time for the production of this infographic was provided by Wilder Research.

Part 4 of a series of graphics on the impacts of parental incarceration on Minnesota youth.

### Sources


American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 14(4), 245-258.

Retrieved from http://www.ajpmronline.org/article/S0749-3797%2898%2900017-5/fulltext

These findings were revealed in the 2013 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS), a reflection of the overall well-being of our youth. The MSS is administered every three years to Minnesota students and covers a broad array of topics, including academics, school and community, substance use, mental health, and more. This MSS does not include data from the Duluth, Minneapolis, or Rochester school districts. These data are reflective of the aggregate responses of 9th grade students, with the exception of Alternative Schools and Juvenile Correctional Facilities data which are not separated by grade.