

## Many say mental health care is vital, but often tough to get

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Survey of U.S. adults finds concerns about accessibility, expense.

(HealthDay)—Although most Americans think mental health care is important, they often believe it's expensive and hard to get, a new survey shows.

In questioning more than 2,000 adults, nearly 90 percent said they place equal value on mental and physical health. But one-third said [mental health](#) care is inaccessible. And 40 percent said cost is a barrier to treatment for many people, the survey found.

Forty-seven percent of respondents thought they have had a mental health condition, but only 38 percent of them had received treatment. Of those who were treated, most thought it was helpful, including 82 percent who got psychotherapy and 78 percent who received medications.

The survey also found that 86 percent of participants knew that [mental health disorders](#) such as [depression](#) are risk factors for suicide. Only 47 percent knew that anxiety disorders also increase suicide risk, according to the survey.

The survey findings were released Sept. 1 by the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. September is Suicide Prevention Month.

Other findings: 55 percent of respondents said they had been affected by suicide in some way; 94 percent believe suicide is preventable; 93 percent said they would take action if someone close to them were considering suicide; and 67 percent said they would tell someone if they were having suicidal thoughts, with women being more likely than men to do so.

"There's a significant body of research that demonstrates that individuals suffering from anxiety disorders and depression face an increased risk for suicidal thoughts and attempts," Dr. Mark Pollack, president of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), said in an ADAA news release.

Pollack, who is also a professor and chairman of the psychiatry department at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, added that effectively diagnosing and treating [anxiety disorders](#) and depression, especially when a person has both, are key to reducing suicide crises.

Survey respondents aged 54 and younger were more likely to have received treatment for a mental health condition than those who were older. Those between 18 and 34 were more likely than older people to consider it a sign of strength to see a mental health professional. Women were more likely than men to have received treatment, and to say they

had suffered anxiety and depression. Men were more likely to admit to substance abuse, the survey found.

Dr. Christine Moutier, chief medical officer of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, said the findings were encouraging.

"Progress is being made in how Americans view mental health and the important role it plays in our everyday lives," she said in the news release. "People see the connection between mental health and overall well-being, our ability to function at work and at home, and how we view the world around us. Respondents want to help a loved one by connecting them to the right mental health treatment and support."

**More information:** The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more about [mental health](#).

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