

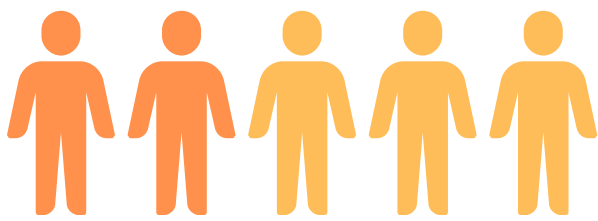
Durham County Health Priorities 2024

#4 Mental Health

Mental Health was ranked fourth among the top five health priorities in 2018 and again in 2024 by Durham County residents.

Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention¹



2 in five survey respondents reported that their mental health declined since March 2020.^{2,3}

Thirty-four percent of County-wide participants reported financial stress followed by work (30%) and personal relationships (21%) are top causes of stress.² Thirty percent of Comunidad Latina participants reported financial stress followed by work (18%) as causes of stress, and then, interestingly, 17% of participants reported not having any stress. This is compared to 11% of County-wide participants. **The most common method of dealing with stress for both survey participants was exercising.**^{2,3}

“My biggest concern is that mental health is not taken seriously in my community.”⁴

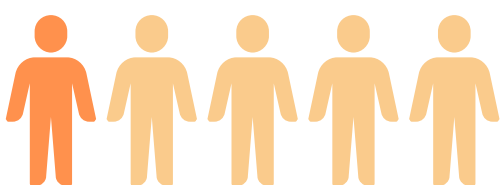
“Mental healthcare is stigmatized. It’s hard to talk about anxiety or depression.”⁴

“There needs to be more safety nets in place to advocate for kids.”⁴

Less than half of those living with mental illness are seeking treatment.⁵ This is in part due to lack of access and racism in the medical fields but also because there is a societal stigma on mental health. Often people living with mental illness are portrayed in film, books, and magazines as being out of control, unstable, and hostile.

If you or a loved one has a mental illness (trouble with emotions, stress, anxiety, depression, among others) it’s important to take steps to get help. There are many online forms of therapy now, more efforts to reduce stigma, and a broader understanding of the complexities of mental illness.

Durham County has one of the best patient to mental health provider ratios in the state,⁶ For every 140 Durham residents, there is one mental health provider. This is compared to for every 320 North Carolina resident, there is only one provider.



One in five middle schoolers and high schoolers considered suicide.⁷

In Durham County, bisexual high school students were more likely to report having more bad days out of the past 30 than their LGBTQ+ peers.⁷

33% of County-wide participants and 73% of Comunidad Latina participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their community would think less of a person if they had a mental illness.^{2,3}

When survey participants were asked where they would refer a friend with a mental health problem to, the most common resource was a doctor or therapist for both surveys. However, 20% of Comunidad Latina participants did not know where to refer their friend.^{2,3}



Community Insights^{2,3}

- More free resources for mental health
- Better access to mental health services.
- Prioritize kids' mental health.
- More resources for mental health and substance use.
- Coordinate with law enforcement to help with mental health.
- Help schools with mental health.
- Provide more mental health services for residents over 60.

Since 2018:

- The Community Response Team was created as part of the Holistic Empathetic Assistance Response Team (HEART). This program provides an alternative to police, fire fighters, or emergency response teams to respond to mental health 911 calls. Team members are trained more appropriately to assist people experiencing a non-violent mental health crisis or other behavioral need and arrive without police.⁸
- Mental health and the justice system was examined by a group of Duke students who built a dashboard available [here](#). The data collected for this project came from the Durham County Detention Facility, Duke Health, and Lincoln Community Center.⁹
- The Opioid Action Plan Implementation Initiative was founded. The purpose of grants awarded under this program is to implement strategies to prevent opioid overdoses, increase access to opioid use disorder treatment, and build local capacity to respond to the opioid epidemic in NC by funding specific activities highlighted in the NC Opioid Action Plan.¹⁰

Resources

The Partnership for a Healthy Durham created the Mental Health committee. This committee decided to focus on mental health rather than substance use disorder and mental health. This committee seeks to increase public awareness of mental illness and access to mental health services. Mental Health committee meetings are open to the public and are held virtually. Visit the [Partnership calendar](#) for more information.

- El Futuro - (919) 688-7101
- Lincoln Community Health Center - located at 414 E Main St Durham, NC 27701
- HEART program can assist during a non violent mental health crisis if you dial 911.
- Dial 988 if you are having a mental health crisis.
- For counseling resources, call the Mental Health Hotline at 866-903-3787
- Duke Behavioral Health North Durham - (919) 684-0100
- Alliance Behavioral Health - [919-972-7700](tel:919-972-7700)



Resources:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mental Health. Available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm>
2. Partnership for a Healthy Durham. 2022 Community Health Assessment County-wide survey data report. Available here: <https://healthydurham.org/health-data>
3. Partnership for a Healthy Durham. 2023 Community Health Assessment Comunidad Latina survey data report.. Available here: <https://healthydurham.org/health-data>
4. Partnership for a Healthy Durham. 2023 Mental Health Listening Session.
5. Mayo Clinic. Mental Health: Overcoming the stigma of mental illness. Available here: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/in-depth/mental-health/art-20046477>
6. County Health Rankings. 2024 Durham County. Available here: www.countyhealthrankings.org
7. Partnership for a Healthy Durham. 2023. 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data report. Available here: <https://healthydurham.org/health-data>
8. City of Durham. Community safety. Available here: <https://www.durhamnc.gov/4576/Community-Safety>
9. Duke University. Mental Health and the Justice System in Durham County (2020-2021). Available here: <https://bassconnections.duke.edu/project-teams/mental-health-and-justice-system-durham-county-2020-2021>
10. NC DHHS. North Carolina's Opioid and Substance Use Action Plan. Available here: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/department-initiatives/overdose-epidemic/north-carolinas-opioid-and-substance-use-action-plan>