



Youth Employment: A Foundation for Mental Health and Well-Being

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Employment is an important foundation for mental health and well-being. This Mental Health Awareness Month, the U.S. Department of Labor is focused on how employment and pathways to good jobs can support the mental health of young people.

Our new “[Youth Employment: A Foundation for Mental Health and Well-Being](#)” emphasis gets to the heart of the matter. In the past, society has viewed mental health and employment as separate issues, but they’re very much connected. A good job offers not only wages and benefits that create financial stability and ensure future security, but also instills a sense of purpose and belonging that motivates us to achieve and grow. For some people, this may mean workplace accommodations and health care benefits that offer access to treatment for mental health conditions or substance use disorders. For young people, in particular, workforce development and career training programs can also be important access points to information, resources, and mentors that can support well-being.

Quality work experiences, including internships, apprenticeships, cooperative education, and mentoring, can produce immediate and long-term benefits for young people, such as financial independence and improved health, both physical and mental.

It is paramount to ensure young people benefit from workforce development programs and supportive services that prepare them for the good jobs being created by President Biden’s historic Investing in America agenda. As with all workers, it is also critical to make sure young people know their workplace rights, what resources exist to support their mental health and well-being, and how to access these resources. The workforce system is often a front-line point of contact for young people and can be a valuable ally in identifying and responding to their needs. It is an important part of a community approach essential to creating a “no-wrong-door” culture characterized by seamless access to education, training, wellness services, housing, transportation and other supports needed to successfully transition from youth to adulthood and thrive in the world of work.

Now is the time to commit to bridging the gap between youth employment programs and wellness services. Preparing young people for good jobs requires us to make sure those jobs also support their well-being.

There are many ways our communities can step up to support [#YouthMentalHealth](#).

Young people can take steps to protect, improve, and advocate for their mental health and that of their family, friends, and neighbors.

The workforce system can support a “no wrong door” approach to supportive services, take steps to identify and respond to the mental health and well-being needs of young people, and build workforce in related professions.



Policy makers can encourage programs and supportive practices in the workplace that help mitigate employment disparities and encourage more young people, including those from underserved communities, to work and contribute to their well-being.

Employers can create a mental health friendly workplace culture that fosters well-being, including for young people, through their recruitment, hiring, onboarding, retention, and benefits practices.

[Learn more about each of these areas on our new page.](#) This month and beyond, let's commit to fostering career success and overall health by getting more young people into good jobs that promote well-being, because good jobs change lives. During Mental Health Awareness Month, tell us what you are doing to support #YouthMentalHealth.

Submit a response by June 15, 2024. And join us on May 14 at 2:00 p.m. ET, to hear department leadership talk about resources and recommendations. [Register for the virtual event here.](#)

Julie Su is the acting secretary of labor.

Tags: [mental health](#), [Youth employment](#), [young workers](#)

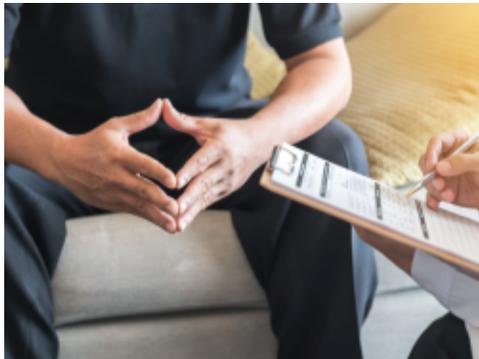
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