

CRISIS TEXT LINE |



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Crisis Text Line and Common Good Labs Release New Study That Offers Solutions to the Youth Mental Health Epidemic; Community Programs Like Arts and Sports Can Help Kids Cope With Mental Health Issues

More than 32 million children live in areas where there are not enough mental health providers to address their needs; kids say extracurricular programs are essential for bridging the gap

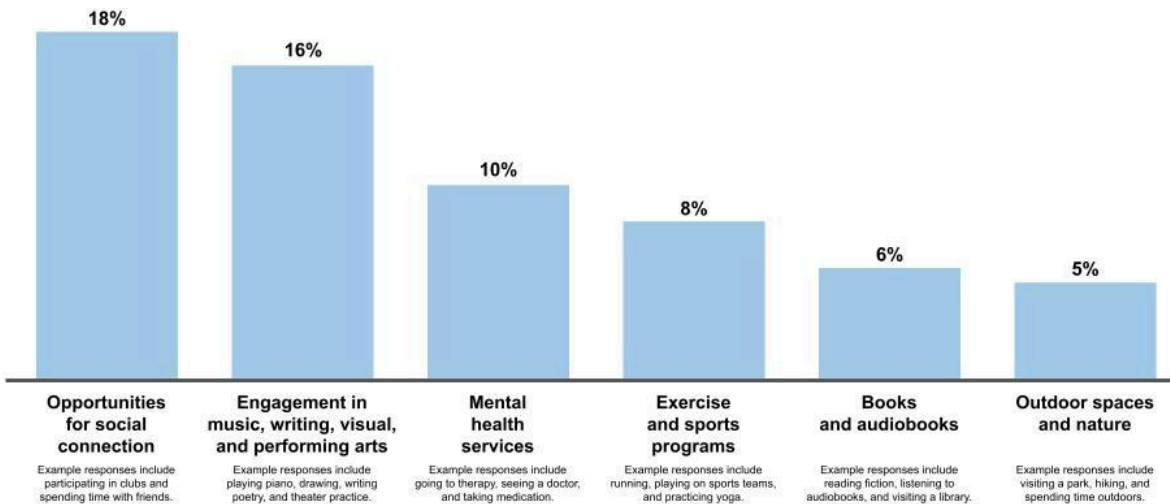
February 6, 2024 - (NEW YORK) - Teen depression and suicide have increased significantly over the past decade, while local programs – like sports and the arts – that help teens cope and promote social connection are continuously being cut. A new [study](#) from [Crisis Text Line](#) and [Common Good Labs](#) examines the lack of access to resources by city and finds six solutions to support kids' mental health titled, "*What Do Young People in Crisis Need from Their Communities.*"

Crisis Text Line partnered with Common Good Labs to analyze anonymized conversations that young people under 18 had with Crisis Text Line's volunteer crisis counselors via text message. The study identified the six most common resources teens say they need from their communities, including:

- **Opportunities for social connection**
- **Engagement in music, writing, visual, and performing arts**
- **Mental health services**
- **Exercise and sports programs**
- **Books and audiobooks**
- **Outdoor spaces and nature**

What resources do young people use to cope with mental health crises?

Percentage of crisis-intervention conversations in which each resource was mentioned as a source of support or relief



Source: Crisis Text Line and Common Good Labs analyses of 87,622 anonymized, crisis-intervention conversations with texters 17 years and younger from 2019 to 2022.

“We hear from young people in distress every day about the issues they are facing and more importantly, the resources they are seeking to support their mental health,” says Dena Trujillo, CEO of Crisis Text Line. “Local communities and government officials must work together to address these concerns and ensure mental health resources are accessible to all in order to combat the growing mental health epidemic.”

Despite the alarming trends in mental health, communities have been cutting the funding for protective resources. For more than a decade, local governments have cut funding for parks by more than \$2.5 billion and spending on local libraries is 5% lower, on a per capita basis. Even in major metropolitan cities, important programs and facilities are rapidly declining. In Philadelphia, for example, art and music education have been cut and deemed less essential, New York has proposed the largest cuts to libraries in local history, and Los Angeles cut after-school programs in more than 500 schools. These cuts across the country have reduced the number of children participating in extracurricular clubs by 1.5 million and the number of those playing high school sports by 1.8 million.

“Data is not just information; it’s a key to unlocking solutions for our communities,” said Rohit Acharya, partner at Common Good Labs. “Through our partnership with Crisis Text Line, we analyzed anonymous data from thousands of conversations with teens about the resources they need to support their mental health. The results provide a roadmap for local leaders to invest in proven solutions and combat the mental health crisis facing communities across America.”

According to this new study, the lack of access to resources for coping with a mental health crisis for youth is widespread and varies by geography. For example, the majority of 8th graders are not enrolled in visual arts education, and half of high schoolers across the country are not participating in sports. Even the most widely available measure identified – access to public libraries – fails to reach four in ten children. Among rural areas, an average of 90% of children are in mental health deserts, compared to 60% of children in counties near metropolitan areas.

For this study, Crisis Text Line and Common Good Labs analyzed over 87,000 conversations between young individuals under 18 and Crisis Text Line's volunteer crisis counselors. The dataset spans 2019 to 2022, offering a robust and contemporary perspective on the mental health concerns faced by this demographic. All personal information from texters was anonymized during the examination of the text message exchanges. This study offers a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by adolescents in their interactions with Crisis Text Line. The full study can be found online [here](#). For more information regarding the methodology, please contact research@crisistextline.org.

About Crisis Text Line

[Crisis Text Line](#) is a nonprofit organization that provides free, 24/7, confidential high-quality text-based mental health support and crisis intervention in English and Spanish. Since its launch in 2013, people in crisis initiated more than nine million crisis conversations with Crisis Text Line, and the organization trained over 65,000 volunteers to support people in their moments of need. We are committed to creating an empathetic world where nobody feels alone. Individuals seeking confidential support can connect with us via text, web chat and WhatsApp. To be connected to a live, trained nonjudgmental volunteer Crisis Counselor, text HELLO to 741741 or 443-SUPPORT in WhatsApp or text HOLA to 741741 or 442-AYUDAME in WhatsApp for Spanish or connect with us via [web chat](#). Visit Crisis Text Line on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Additional information, including how to become a volunteer or how to support Crisis Text Line through donations or partnerships, is available at www.crisistextline.org.

About Common Good Labs

Common Good Labs is a research organization that designs actionable solutions to improve communities. We use data science tools to empower leaders at foundations, non-profit organizations, and in government. Our work focuses on reducing poverty without displacement, enhancing public safety and health outcomes, improving education, supporting small businesses, and other related topics. For more information, visit www.commongoodlabs.com.

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