Key Takeaways

Following are key research findings that informed student recommendations:

1. High school students in northwest lower Michigan are experiencing significant mental wellness challenges today including anxiety and depression.

2. Many students, especially those experiencing anxiety and depression, do not have anyone they would feel comfortable talking to if they were feeling sad, anxious or hopeless.

3. Because mental health issues and ways of addressing them are not “normalized,” many students do not know how to address their mental health and are reluctant to seek help when they need it.

4. Students would feel more comfortable talking to friends and family, rather than teachers and coaches, if they were feeling sad, anxious or hopeless.

5. Time spent outside in nature helps the vast majority of students to de-stress.

6. Students in large numbers would use chill out rooms/spaces, opportunities to learn techniques to center and de-stress, more opportunities to talk to counselors or therapists, a school buddy system and other approaches if they were stressed out, anxious or down.
Summary of Recommendations

Eleven recommendations were developed by YWI students in response to research findings. See the end of this report for full recommendations. Recommendations focused on three main categories:

• **Mental Health Education**
  - School districts should begin mental health education in elementary and middle schools; schools should invite therapists or counselors to teach students specific emotional regulation and organization techniques.

• **Facilitating Interactions**
  - Schools should have counselors or therapists come into classrooms; counselors and teachers should make time to connect 1-on-1 with students and have the training to help them with mental health issues; schools should consider school “buddy systems” to connect students.

• **Use Safe Spaces and Nature to Alleviate Stress**
  - Schools should provide quiet “chill spaces” where students can decompress: teachers should incorporate the outdoors and possibly field trips as much as they can into course curricula.
YWI Project Overview
YW I By the Numbers

- **Student Researchers:**
  - 14 high school students
  - 5 counties of Northern Michigan

- **Survey Respondents:**
  - 530 students
  - 20 different 5-county regional high schools

- **Recommendations:**
  - 11 recommendations for schools, policymakers and community leaders

*Thank you! To all of the students who led this work and participated in the survey. To the community partners (LIFT, The Rock, Grow Benzie, and the Youth Advisory Council) who helped us find such amazing student leaders and otherwise supported the project. To the teachers and school administrators who helped promote the survey. To the Michigan Health Endowment Fund who provided the grant to make all of this work possible. We appreciate you all!*
YWI Research Process

• **Stage 1:**
  – Learn survey research fundamentals
  – Brainstorm research topics

• **Stage 2:**
  – Brainstorm, revise, refine survey questions
  – Disseminate survey to community

• **Stage 3:**
  – Review and interpret survey findings
  – Brainstorm, revise, refine recommendations
**Project Timeline**

### FEBRUARY/MARCH, 2023

**FOUNDATIONS AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

**Gain research skills and collectively design survey**
- Recruit high school student participants to lead this work while receiving a regular stipend for their substantial commitment of time
- Review research techniques, pros/cons
- Develop research questions (what we want to learn)
- Develop survey questions
- Develop, pre-test and finalize an online survey

**Outputs:**
- Final programmed survey

### APRIL/MAY, 2023

**DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS & REPORTING**

**Field a survey, interpret results and develop recommendations**
- Gather insight from high school students across Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau Counties
- Interpret findings and develop recommendations
- Develop a presentation with findings and recommendations

**Outputs:**
- (April/May) Present to Community Foundation Board of Directors
- (June-Aug) Disseminate to Michigan Health Endowment Foundation program staff and broad list of media, community leaders, policymakers and other stakeholders

### PHASE 2

**SHARE INSIGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS**

**Tell the story of youth mental health to raise awareness and action**
- Work with a journalist from Interlochen Public Radio to develop audio stories featuring key findings and recommendations
- Share stories with the community to build awareness and spur action

**Outputs**
- Audio stories
530 respondents from 20 regional high schools participated in the study.

### Participating Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frankfort</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>Elk Rapids</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalkaska</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>Benzie Central</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suttons Bay</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Mancelona</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC Central</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>TC High</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellsworth</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Buckley</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC West</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Central Lake</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northport</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Forest Area</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Lake</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Interlochen AA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leland</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kingsley</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC St. Francis</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>TC Greenspire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Totals By County

- **Antrim**: 7%
- **Benzie**: 30%
- **Grand Traverse**: 19%
- **Leelanau**: 19%
- **Kalkaska**: 26%

2023 Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, Youth Wellness Initiative Survey: 530 Respondents
Respondent Demographics

The survey results include voices and opinions from a wide variety of students.

**Question:** What grade are you currently in?

- 9th: 18%
- 10th: 40%
- 11th: 26%
- 12th: 16%

**Question:** How do you identify your gender?

- Female: 56%
- Male: 37%
- Non-binary or other: 6%

**Ethnic/Racial Identity (Select All That Apply)**

- Caucasian/White: 87%
- Native American: 10%
- Hispanic/Latino/Latina: 8%
- Black/African: 3%
- Asian: 3%
- Middle Eastern: 1%
- Pacific Islander: 1%
- Other: 5%

**Question:** How do you identify your ethnicity? Please select all that apply.

2023 Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, Youth Wellness Initiative Survey: 530 Respondents
Today, 40% of these high school students are experiencing moderate or severe anxiety and 24% are experiencing moderate or severe major depression.

**Question:** Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you experienced the following?

* The GAD-7 (General Anxiety Disorder-7) a seven-item diagnostic tool validated in both the primary care setting and the general population to assess anxiety. ** The PHQ9 (Patient Health Questionnaire) is a nine-question tool similarly used to assess depression. In this case the students who led the research design added a 10th question, but the scores are normalized to compare to outside benchmarks.
Large numbers of regional high school students are experiencing one or more dimensions of anxiety over half the time.

**GAD7* (Generalized Anxiety Disorder) Scores – All Respondents: “Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Several Days</th>
<th>Over Half the Days</th>
<th>Nearly Every Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becoming easily annoyed or irritable</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worrying too much about different things</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble relaxing</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being able to stop or control worrying</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being so restless it’s hard to sit still</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The GAD-7 (General Anxiety Disorder-7) a seven-item diagnostic tool validated in both the primary care setting and the general population to assess anxiety.
Depression in Detail

Large numbers of these high school students regularly experience one or more dimensions of depression, and more than a quarter have thoughts of self harm.

**PHQ9* (Patient Health Questionnaire) Depression Scores – All Respondents:** “Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Several Days</th>
<th>Over Half the Days</th>
<th>Nearly Every Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling tired or having little energy</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep or sleeping too much</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling bad about yourself - or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor appetite or overeating</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little pleasure or interest in doing things</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling down, depressed or hopeless</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving or speaking so slowly that other people have noticed Or, the opposite - being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling like you wished you weren’t here anymore**</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way***</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The PHQ9 (Patient Health Questionnaire) is a nine-question tool used to assess depression. ** In response to pretest feedback an additional depression question was asked. ***The overall PHQ rating was normalized by assigning 0.5 of the score from each of the questions on the last two lines of the table on this slide.
Stressors and De-Stressors

School, schoolwork/grades and crowds are stressful for most. Nature, friends and family tend to alleviate stress.

**Situations That Generally Make You More or Less Stressed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Much Less Stressed</th>
<th>A Little Less Stressed</th>
<th>No Change</th>
<th>A Little More Stressed</th>
<th>Much More Stressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outside in nature</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With my friends</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home with my family</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On social media</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about the news of the world</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In crowded places</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about schoolwork and grades</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At school</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:** Do these situations generally make you feel more or less stressed? If any of these don’t apply, answer “no change.”

2023 Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, Youth Wellness Initiative Survey: 530 Respondents
Activities (all respondents)

Though most students participate in one or more activities that may be affirming, many experience barriers of not enough time and not enough money.

**Activities – All Respondents (Select All That Apply)**

- Hang out with friends: 79%
- Social media: 70%
- Play sports: 55%
- Family activities: 47%
- Play video games: 46%
- Work: 40%
- Read: 38%
- Study: 32%
- Go to the movies: 28%
- Make art: 28%
- Play musical instruments or sing: 20%
- Church/Religious activities: 16%
- Volunteer: 15%
- Other: 14%

**Barriers to Participation In After School and Weekend Activities – All Respondents (Select All That Apply)**

- Not enough time: 39%
- Not enough money: 22%
- Work commitments: 22%
- Lack of access to transportation: 20%
- Family commitments: 17%
- Other: 8%
- None of these: 37%

**Question:** What do you currently do during your free time? Please select all that apply.
Correlation is not causation, but depression among these students is correlated with participation in some key activities.

**Activities – All Respondents Compared to Those With Moderately Severe and Severe Depression**

(select response categories)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>All Respondents</th>
<th>Moderately Severe Depression</th>
<th>Severe Depression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hang out with friends</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play sports</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family activities</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play video games</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make art</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play musical instruments or sing</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/Religious activities</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:** What do you currently do during your free time? Please select all that apply.

*2023 Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, Youth Wellness Initiative Survey: 530 Respondents*
Many of these students are not comfortable being themselves and feel out of place with people they know.

**Question:** Are these statements accurate? Please use a 1 to 5 scale where 1 indicates “not at all” and 5 indicates “extremely.”

*Are These Statements Accurate? – All Respondents*

1. I am comfortable enough to “be myself” at school
   - 10% Extremely Accurate
   - 17% Very Accurate
   - 32% Somewhat Accurate
   - 25% Not Very Accurate
   - 16% Not At All Accurate

2. I often feel out of place in groups of friends or people I know
   - 19% Extremely Accurate
   - 27% Very Accurate
   - 28% Somewhat Accurate
   - 15% Not Very Accurate
   - 11% Not At All Accurate

2023 Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, Youth Wellness Initiative Survey: 530 Respondents
Most students have at least a few supportive people in their lives they would be willing to talk to in general about their feelings.

**Number of Supportive People In Your Life – All Respondents**

- **More than 5**: 38%
- **4-5**: 19%
- **2-3**: 32%
- **1**: 6%
- **None at all**: 4%

**Question:** How many supportive people do you have in your life? That is, people you would be able to talk to about what you are feeling (good and bad).
Many of those with severe anxiety and moderate/severe depression do not feel they have supportive people in their lives.

| Number of Supportive People In Your Life – All Respondents Compared to Those Experiencing Anxiety or Depression |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All Respondents | Experiencing Anxiety | Experiencing Depression |
| | | Moderate Anxiety | Severe Anxiety | Minor Depression to Mild Major Depression | Moderately Severe Major Depression | Severe Major Depression |
| More than 5 | 38% | 26% | 17% | 22% | 14% | 20% |
| 2-3 | 32% | 43% | 44% | 50% | 51% | 38% |
| 4-5 | 19% | 19% | 14% | 17% | 16% | 13% |
| 1 | 6% | 6% | 15% | 8% | 11% | 18% |
| None at all | 4% | 7% | 9% | 3% | 8% | 13% |

**Question:** How many supportive people do you have in your life? That is, people you would be able to talk to about what you are feeling (good and bad).
If feeling sad, anxious or hopeless most students would not feel comfortable talking to teachers or counselors in school and 17% would not be willing talking to any of these types of people.

**Question:** If you were feeling sad, anxious or hopeless, would you be comfortable talking to any of the following people?

- Friends or classmates: 60%
- Family members: 50%
- Other adult(s) in my life: 24%
- Teacher(s) or coach(es) at school: 19%
- Counselors at school: 19%
- Other: 9%
- None of these: 17%

*2023 Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, Youth Wellness Initiative Survey: 530 Respondents*
Many of those with anxiety and depression would not feel comfortable talking to friends, family, teachers, coaches or counselors.

### People You Would Feel Comfortable Talking To – All Respondents Compared to Those Experiencing Anxiety or Depression (Select All That Apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People You Would Feel Comfortable Talking To</th>
<th>All Respondents</th>
<th>Experiencing Anxiety</th>
<th>Experiencing Depression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Respondents</td>
<td>Moderate Anxiety</td>
<td>Severe Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends or classmates</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other adult(s) in my life</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher(s) or coach(es) at school</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselors at school</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question: If you were feeling sad, anxious or hopeless, would you be comfortable talking to any of the following people?
Many students would not reach out for help if feeling sad, anxious or hopeless, and many would not know where to go for support.

**Are These Statements Accurate? – All Respondents**

- If I was feeling sad, anxious or hopeless, I would know where to go for support:
  - Extremely Accurate: 14%
  - Very Accurate: 29%
  - Somewhat Accurate: 31%
  - Not Very Accurate: 16%
  - Not At All Accurate: 11%

- If I was feeling sad, anxious or hopeless, I would definitely reach out for help:
  - Extremely Accurate: 7%
  - Very Accurate: 17%
  - Somewhat Accurate: 27%
  - Not Very Accurate: 29%
  - Not At All Accurate: 20%

- There are enough resources available in school to help students experiencing mental or emotional challenges:
  - Extremely Accurate: 4%
  - Very Accurate: 16%
  - Somewhat Accurate: 34%
  - Not Very Accurate: 27%
  - Not At All Accurate: 19%

- There are enough resources available in the community to help students experiencing mental or emotional challenges:
  - Extremely Accurate: 4%
  - Very Accurate: 18%
  - Somewhat Accurate: 42%
  - Not Very Accurate: 21%
  - Not At All Accurate: 14%

- In general, I think adults are able to understand what students like me are going through:
  - Extremely Accurate: 3%
  - Very Accurate: 8%
  - Somewhat Accurate: 30%
  - Not Very Accurate: 31%
  - Not At All Accurate: 28%

**Question:** Are these statements accurate?
If feeling sad, anxious or down, students would like access to a variety of supports and resources from a "chill out room" to opportunities for counseling and therapy.

Question: If you were stressed out, anxious or down, which of these would you personally use? (Select All That Apply)

- Chill out (quiet) room: 61%
- Opportunities to learn techniques to center and decrease stress: 28%
- More opportunities to talk to counselors or therapists: 28%
- School buddy system – another student in school providing support: 20%
- Classes in school on social, emotional and mental well-being: 18%
- Online buddy system – online peer-to-peer support: 14%
- Online list of mental health services in your community: 13%
- Speakers in school assemblies speaking about mental health issues: 11%
- Other: 6%
- None of these: 19%

2023 Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, Youth Wellness Initiative Survey: 530 Respondents
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Resources and Supports – All Respondents Compared to Those Experiencing Anxiety or Depression (Select All That Apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Respondents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chill out (quiet) room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to learn techniques to center and decrease stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More opportunities to talk to counselors or therapists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School buddy system – another student within your school providing support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes in school on social, emotional and mental well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online buddy system – online peer-to-peer support from someone at a different U.S. school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online list of mental health services in your community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speakers in school assemblies speaking about mental health issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:** If you were stressed out, anxious or down, which of these, if any, would you personally use?

2023 Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, Youth Wellness Initiative Survey: 530 Respondents
Barriers to Talking to Therapists

The most widespread barrier that would prevent these students from seeking outside counseling or therapy is a belief that “it would feel weird”

**Question:** Which of these, if any, would keep you from talking to counselors or therapists outside of school if you were stressed out, anxious or down? Please select all that apply

- It would feel weird: 52%
- Not enough money: 15%
- Not sure where to find these people: 13%
- Lack of access to transportation: 12%
- Other: 11%
- None of these: 30%

2023 Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, Youth Wellness Initiative Survey: 530 Respondents
The barriers that would keep students from talking to counselors or therapists outside of school are higher for those experiencing anxiety and/or depression.

**Barriers to Talking to Counselors or Therapists Outside of School – All Respondents Compared to Those Experiencing Anxiety or Depression (Select All That Apply)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: Which of these, if any, would keep you from talking to counselors or therapists outside of school if you were stressed out, anxious or down? Please select all that apply</th>
<th>All Respondents</th>
<th>Experiencing Anxiety</th>
<th>Experiencing Depression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Moderate Anxiety</strong></td>
<td><strong>Severe Anxiety</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would feel weird</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough money</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure where to find these people</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of access to transportation</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
YWI Student Recommendations
Student Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed by YWI students in response to research findings:

1. School districts should begin implementing mental health education when students are in elementary school to build acceptance for mental health discussions at a young age.

2. Schools should have counselors, therapists or psychiatrists come into classrooms and spend time with students so that they know who to go to if they have problems later on and feel more comfortable asking for help.

3. Schools should make sure counselors are meeting with every student individually, outside of yearly class scheduling, to ensure students are presented the opportunity to get help for any social/emotional issues.

4. Schools should provide seminars or classes for teachers to learn how to help students with mental health challenges and issues.

5. Teachers should schedule one-on-one conversations with students to better understand how school affects their mental health and what can be done to combat any negative issues or to increase positive behaviors.
The following recommendations were developed by YWI students in response to research findings (continued):

6. Therapists/counselors/psychiatrists should teach students specific emotional regulation and organization techniques they can use when navigating different situations regarding their mental health. This could be done in smaller groups of students at a time so that they feel more comfortable.

7. Teachers should take advantage of the positive impacts that nature can have on mental health and try to incorporate the outdoors and possibly field trips as much as they can into course curricula.

8. Schools and student groups should establish outdoor excursion clubs where people can get together to go on hikes or do other outdoor activities.

9. Schools should increase the number of tables, benches, and other seating spaces outside to encourage students to use courtyard spaces in free time.

10. Schools should create or expand safe areas such as “chill spaces” where students can go if they need to relax and decompress.

11. Schools should experiment with a school buddy system so that students have at least one other student within their school providing support.