



# BY ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL



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## TOPIC

Mental Health Civic Action Project

## TOPIC DESCRIPTION

Mental health is important and matters in my community because I have noticed there are lots of people dealing with trauma and all sorts of situations. A report shows that 1 in 3 youth struggle with mental health issues in ACPS. If this is not addressed the rise of depressed youth will rise. I decided on focusing on this issue because I have recognized the negative impacts poor mental health has on individuals and on their performance in school and in society.

## BASELINE DATA & GOAL

Currently we know 6 out of 7 Alexandria City report mental health is the biggest health issue in 2024. Also, the goal is not decrease these rates and support mentally struggling people.

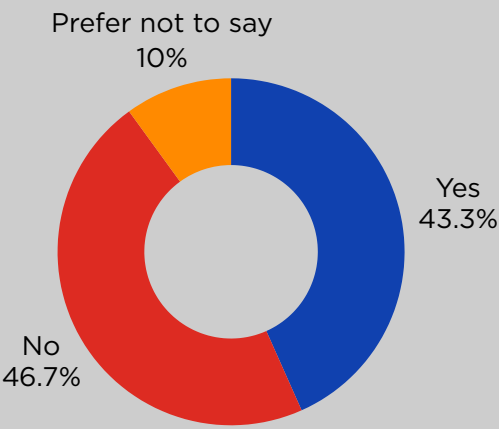
According to the Titan Changemaker Data 33% of Alexandria youth are reported to feel depressed proving this problem exists.

My goal is to increase accessibility to mental health support by breaking financial and stigmas barriers.

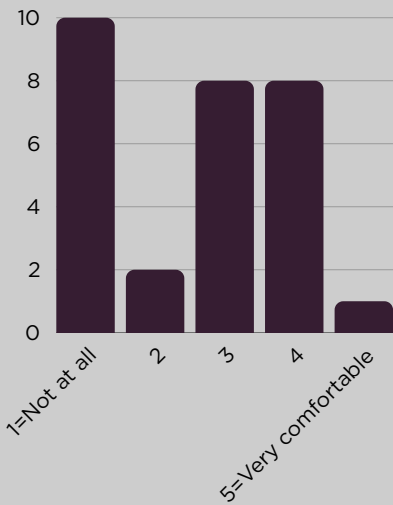
## CYCP GOAL & STRATEGIC AREA

The Children & Youth Community Plan's (CYCP) goal connects to my issue because, similarly, their goal is to work with the youth to educate them and provide any support they may need to succeed as individuals in their academics and in society.

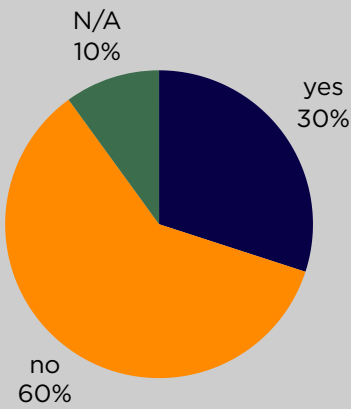
## WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW?



- ACHS students were asked if “In the past 12 months, have you or someone in your household experienced symptoms of depression?” 43.3% of students report feeling or knowing someone feeling depressed, and and larger percent of them report not feeling depressed.
- This matters because almost half of the students report feeling or knowing someone with depression, which is alarming.



- Students were asked to determine how comfortable they would feel talking to a neighbor/friend/classmate about depression. 33% of the respondents voted they would not feel comfortable, whereas 3.3% feels very comfortable.
- This matters because in a society where students don't feel comfortable talking about such issues, is unhealthy. Rather building a safe community and environment should be a top priority.



- This data shows the amount of people whose family health insurance or income limits their ability to seek mental health care. 60% of students voted that their family insurance or income does not limit their ability to get mental health care, and 30% vote that it does affect them.
- This matters because although there's a good amount of students whose family finances does not get in the way, we must try to increase this number to allow for all students to receive mental health care.

- The school district took action by having a wellness center available to students as well as advisory lessons on mental health.
- The mental health lessons are not helpful because most students do not pay attention to them, and also the wellness center is helpful, but students have issues with its privacy policies.

### WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN TRIED?

In the Alexandria city public schools, there is a student support team, which includes counselors, psychologists, social workers and nurses. They help with social emotion development, mental health and academics of students. Families can also go to them for accessing school and community resources.

### WHO CAN HELP?

My stakeholders are the Capital Youth Empowerment Program and the Teen Wellness Center Service. The Capital Youth Empowerment Program is an organization aimed to teach and equip people to build stronger lives and better communities, also they target the struggles of the youth to help. The Teen Wellness Center Service provides physical and mental health care resources, like a therapist.



### WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Quantity: The school has an online mental health service as well as in person services like a therapist and social workers.

Quality: ACPS are still tracking outcomes, but the public data are mixed. Some state that therapists at the teen wellness center has decreased stigma around mental health.

### IS IT ACTUALLY HELPING?

The actions taken as not made a difference because the Titan changemaker data reports that 1 in 3 students are reported to feel hopeless and sad, and this number still remains unchanged. People are not better off without these changes, however there needs to be a better approach on these actions and strategies.

### WHAT SHOULD CHANGE? (YOUR SOLUTION)

I propose is to raise more awareness through more campaigns throughout the school year in order to improve the stigma around mental health by engaging students in mental health activities after school and even during the day in the library. This may help build trust among peers, as it was a concern in my survey. Also, to make the mental health supports more accessible to students during the day and out of school, this could be online support and also peer support groups as suggested by a few of the respondents in my survey. This may decrease the number of students that battle depression alone and without support.

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

Student engagement in school and in their community will improve which includes their academics. Also their mental health will improve. This benefits students and family as they grow healthier and are much more involved.

### CITATIONS

Eickert, C. (2025). *Titan Changemaker Listening Session Handout* [Handout].

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Mental Health Care Services in Alexandria | Springfield, VA. (2026, April 15). Bloom Health Centers. <https://www.bloomhealthcenters.com/alexandria-mental-health-care-services/>

Mental Health Crisis Programs. (2025, May 28). City of Alexandria, VA. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/adult-behavioral-health/mental-health-crisis-programs>

### LEARN MORE

Columbia Mental health and Bloom health center are mental health resources available in Alexandria Va willing to provide health care for residents in the community.