

Young people who spent time away from home because they felt like they couldn't return and probable serious mental illness

Those with a probable serious mental illness are

3.5 times more likely to have spent time away from home than those without a probable serious mental illness (32.2% versus 8.6%)



Of the young people who spent time away from home

Nearly **1/2** (45.6%) of those with a probable serious mental illness had done so on six or more occasions in their lifetime

1/2



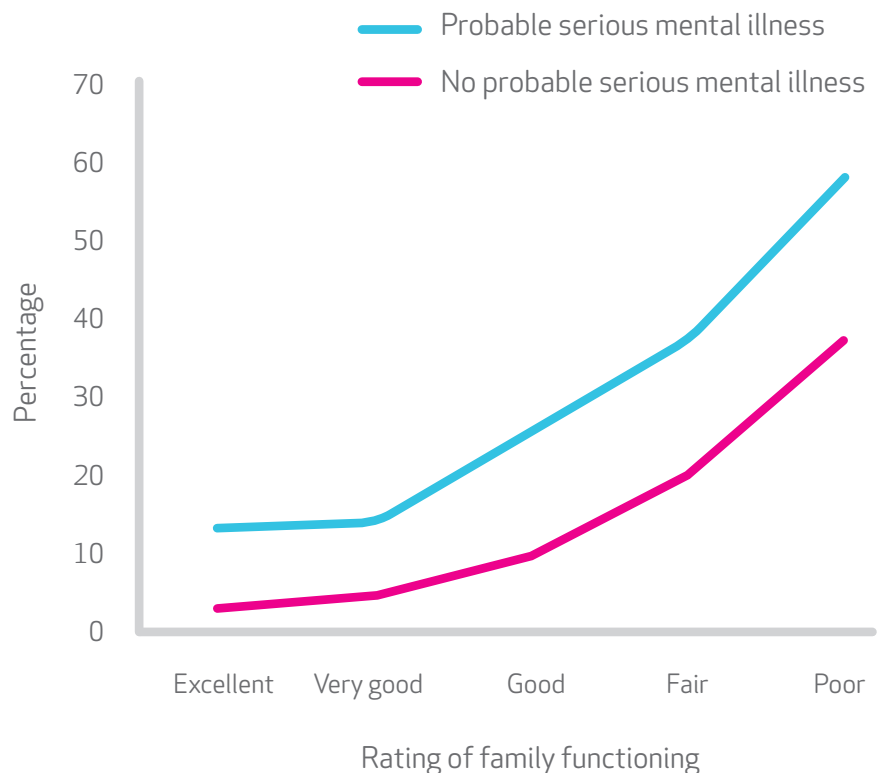
In contrast, one third (33.3%) of those without a probable serious mental illness who had spent time away from home had done so on six or more occasions

Family functioning, mental illness and time spent away from home

Spending time away from home increases as rating of family functioning decreases regardless of whether the young person had a probable serious mental illness or not.

But having a probable serious mental illness places a young person at even more risk of spending time away from home.

An alarming 57.7% of those with a probable serious mental illness who rated their family functioning as poor had spent time away from home as compared to 37.0% without a probable serious mental illness.



Issues of concern and time spent away from home

Young people who reported they were very concerned or extremely concerned about family conflict, depression, coping with stress and suicide were far more likely to have spent time away from home.

Compared to young people who had not spent time away from home, many more young people reported high levels of concern about:



Family conflict

48.9% 'extremely' or 'very' concerned compared to 12.8%



Depression

46.0% 'extremely' or 'very' concerned compared to 15.3%



Coping with stress

58.6% 'extremely' or 'very' concerned compared to 35.2%



Suicide

28.8% 'extremely' or 'very' concerned compared to 8.1%

Compared to young people who did not have a probable serious mental illness, many more young people reported high levels of concern about:



Depression

55.8% 'extremely' or 'very' concerned compared to 10.4%



Coping with stress

73.3% 'extremely' or 'very' concerned compared to 29.4%



Body image

53.2% 'extremely' or 'very' concerned compared to 19.4%



School or study problems

59.5% 'extremely' or 'very' concerned compared to 26.8%

Key policy recommendations

Commonwealth, State and Territory governments should:

- Commit to a policy to halve youth homelessness by 2020
- Fund and expand proven early identification and intervention programs
- Invest in supported accommodation models
- Invest in more social and affordable housing
- Invest in a broad approach to youth mental health
- Adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach to people becoming homeless when they exit state care

A funded and comprehensive service system for young people should provide:

- Early identification of issues and early intervention services
- Outreach services
- A variety of housing options
- Holistic wrap around services
- Opportunities for young people to be involved in service design and implementation
- Services that cater for the diversity of young people's needs

If you are a young person and need someone to talk with, you can contact Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 (24/7) kidshelpline.com.au or headspace: 1800 650 890, headspace.org.au

For more information: researchandpolicy@missionaustralia.com.au

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