

Resolution calling for an increase in mental health services for youth

WHEREAS, Young people in San Francisco have faced new and complex challenges during the pandemic including online school, lack of socializing, health-related anxieties, and personal challenges which affect their mental wellbeing; and,

WHEREAS, According to the US Surgeon General's 2021 Advisory Report, nationwide emergency room visits concerning suspected suicide attempts rose by 51% in adolescent girls and 4% in adolescent boys in 2021 relative to 2019, suggesting that the pandemic is responsible for this increase; and,

WHEREAS, Mental health related emergency room visits among adolescents ranging from 12 to 17 years of age, increased by 31% when comparing 2020 to the previous year (CDC); and,

WHEREAS, According to ScienceDirect, mental health disorders develop during 12-24 years of age (PubMed); and,

WHEREAS, In a survey conducted between 2017-2019, KidsData found that 30.2% of Black SFUSD students in grades 7, 9, and 11 experienced depression-related feelings, along with 29.7% of Hispanic/Latino students, and 22.4% of Asian students. These percentages have only increased as a result of the pandemic; and,

WHEREAS, Results of an analysis of young people found that 47.8% perceived stigma as the main barrier to accessing mental health services (The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health); and,

WHEREAS, According to the results from a 2009-2019 survey conducted by the CDC, youth struggling with depression are more likely to exhibit suicidal behavior, drop out of school, use alcohol or drugs, and engage in unsafe sexual activity, in addition to having difficulties with school and relationships; and,

WHEREAS, The National Academies report cites surveys finding that the dropout rate for students with diagnosed mental-health problems ranges from 43% to as high as 86%; and,

WHEREAS, Mental illness can negatively impact family life, personal happiness, acceptance of civic responsibility and completion of one's education; and,

WHEREAS, According to NPR, "nearly a quarter of fatal police encounters followed calls about disruptive behavior directly tied to a person's mental illness," demonstrating the important need for alternative policing solutions in response to mental health calls; and,

WHEREAS, The Youth Commission has historically supported legislation urging mental health care be extended to young people in San Francisco (RESOLUTION NO. 0102-010; MEMORANDUM SUPPORTING BOS FILE NO. 210042); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That DCYF increases funding to CBOs that employ school-based mental health counselors so that there are at least 2 full-time therapists employed on all public high school campuses at any given time; and be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, The Youth Commission urges SFUSD to utilize mental health professionals to provide workshops for students about mental health; and be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, That SFUSD should create a mental health awareness campaign with the goal of decreasing stigma around mental health, and increasing the outreaching capacity for all Wellness Centers in high schools; and be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, That mental health counselors employed by Wellness Centers in SFUSD high schools host additional counseling groups as a way to increase therapeutic capacity and access to services; and be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, That all service providers, Wellness Centers, governing agencies, and relevant authorities that address youth mental health foreground the intersectionality of mental health and race in their work; and be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Department of Public Health uses their resources and connections to conduct outreach for youth struggling with mental health challenges; and be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, That Mayor London Breed supports the following San Francisco Police Department clauses in regards to mental health; and be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, That Mayor London Breed and the Board of Supervisors deprioritize funding for police responses to mental health calls, and instead prioritize funding for policing alternatives to caring for people in mental health crises; and be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Police Department avoids a response to a young person in a mental health crisis, and that better suited mental health personnel are the first to be dispatched instead; and be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Police Department receives additional training in de-escalation tactics when responding to a mental health crisis.

Sources:

US Surgeon General's 2021 Advisory Report:

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf>

CDC Study (Suicide Attempts and COVID):

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7024e1.htm?s_cid=mm7024e1_w

PubMed Study (Development of Mental Health Disorders):

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17434406/>

Kids Data Survey of SFUSD Students:

<https://www.kidsdata.org/region/266/san-francisco/results#ind=&say=&cat=27>

Association for Child and Adolescent Health Study:

<https://acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1475-3588.2012.00673.x>

CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/YRBSDataSummaryTrendsReport2019-508.pdf>

National Academies Report:

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/2021/02/changing-campus-cultures-to-support-mental-health>

NPR Article:

<https://www.npr.org/2020/10/19/924146486/removing-cops-from-behavioral-crisis-calls-we-need-to-change-the-model>

MEMORANDUM SUPPORTING BOS FILE NO. 210042

<https://sfgov.org/youthcommission/sites/default/files/210042%20Youth%20Commission%202021-RBM-09.pdf>