

Improving Mental Health for New Yorkers Living with Disability

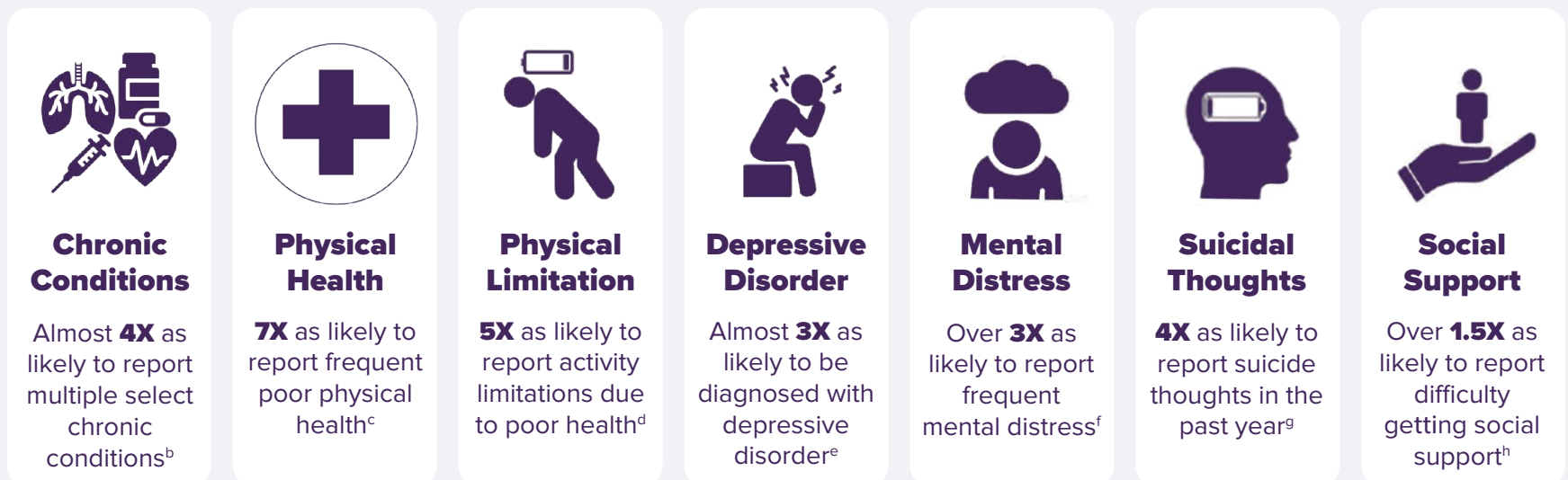


Overall health is a combination of physical, mental, and social health. All three are linked. A change in one area can impact the other areas. **Physical health** refers to how well the body functions. This includes whether or not there is an illness, a chronic disease, or an injury which prevents the body from functioning as expected. **Mental health** focuses on thoughts, feelings, and emotions. It can include stress, anxiety, depression, and other emotional concerns. **Social health** refers to the ability to create meaningful relationships with others. It can include communication, access to social support, and the ability to adapt to changes in one's environment.^a

^a <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/features/mental-health-for-all.html>

People living with disabilities experience significant disparities in chronic conditions, mental distress, physical activity, and social support.

Health status of New Yorkers who live with disability compared to New Yorkers who do not live with disability:



^b Chronic conditions include: diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, arthritis, cancer, stroke, current asthma

^c Adults who report poor physical health more than 14 days in the past 30 days

^d Adults who report activity limitations due to poor health more than 14 days in the past 30 days

^f Adults who report mental distress more than 14 days in the past 30 days

^h Adults who report rarely or never getting the social and emotional support needed

^e Adults who report being diagnosed with a depressive disorder, including depression, major depression, dysthymia, or minor depression

^g Adults who report seriously thinking about killing themselves in the past 12 months

^h Adults who report rarely or never getting needed social and emotional support



Over **ONE QUARTER (26.4%)** of adults who live with disability experience frequent mental distress

Feeling disconnected or demoralized can increase the likelihood that people living with disabilities will experience changes to their health. They can become depressed, have anxiety, experience worsening physical and mental conditions, and engage in unhealthy behaviors.



Isolation



Physical and Structural



Stigma



Call to Action

Provide training to health care providers about physical accessibility, increase time for health care visits for people needing additional support, provide effective communication.

Expand access to physical activity by using inclusive and universal design to make trails, playgrounds, parks, recreation, and attractions accessible by all people.

Reduce stigma by reframing language, attitudes, and behaviors.

Increase accessibility by creating inclusive spaces, creating transportation solutions, developing communication technology and other services to assist in successful social situations.

Source: 2021 Behavioral Risk Surveillance System



Department of Health