

# Priority: Anxiety and Stress

**Goal:** Increase the proportion of people living in New York who show resilience to challenges and stress.

## What is Anxiety and Stress and Why is it Important?


Mental health refers to the successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and to cope with adversity.<sup>145</sup> Stressful circumstances can make people feel worried, anxious, and unable to cope.<sup>146</sup> Chronic stress leads to overactivation of the “fight or flight” response and can have negative effects on organ systems in the body. Stress can also contribute to mental and behavioral health challenges, including depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and substance misuse.<sup>147</sup> Anxiety is anticipation of a future threat and can be associated with muscle tension and vigilance in preparation for future behavior and cautious or avoidant behaviors.<sup>148</sup>






Persistent anxiety and stress can increase the chances of poor mental health and lead to premature death.<sup>146</sup> NYS has seen an increasing trend of frequent mental distress since 2016, reaching a rate of 15.9% in 2022. In 2021, frequent mental distress affected a notably higher percentage of adults with a household income of less than \$25,000 (21.0%) and an even higher percentage of adults with a disability (30.5%).<sup>149</sup> By promoting opportunities for increased focus on anxiety and stress, NYS can address overall mental health and well-being in populations most at need.

### SMART(IE) Objective:

- 5.0 Decrease the percentage of adults who experience frequent mental distress from 13.4% to 12.0%.**
- 5.1 Decrease the percentage of adults in households with an annual income of less than \$25,000 who experience frequent mental distress from 21.0% to 18.9%.**

Desired Outcome	Indicator	Data Source	Population	Baseline	Target
Reduce the prevalence of anxiety and stress	Percentage of adults experiencing frequent mental distress during the past month, age-adjusted, aged 18 years and older	BRFSS	Adults	13.4% (2021)	12.0% (2030)
			<b>Subpopulation of Focus</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>
			Adults with household income less than \$25,000	21.0% (2021)	18.9% (2030)

Interventions	Population of Focus	Age Range	Intermediate Measures
<b>Featured Intervention:</b> Promote and increase awareness of evidence-based mindfulness resources to reduce the negative impact of stress and trauma. <sup>150-152</sup> 	Everyone	All ages	Manner of outreach and data re: reach of intervention (e.g., number of outreach events, number of flyers distributed, number of website visits)

Interventions	Population of Focus	Age Range	Intermediate Measures
 <p><b>Featured Intervention:</b> Implement and promote Mental Health First Aid course training.<sup>153,154</sup></p> <p>LHD H O</p>	Everyone	All ages	Number of trainings delivered; number of people trained
 <p>Promote awareness and use of screening through social care networks (SCNs).<sup>155</sup></p> <p>LHD O</p>	Everyone	All ages	Participation rate among SCNs, number of families and individuals screened, number of successful referrals made as a result of screening
 <p>Promote and implement models that screen people for stress, anxiety, and their social needs. Two models that may be used are Community Mental Health Promotion and Support (COMHPS) and ENGAGE.<sup>156,157</sup></p> <p>LHD O</p>	Everyone	All ages	Participation rate among organizations of focus, number of people screened, number of successful referrals made to needed services as a result of screening
 <p>Promote resilience-building strategies for people living with chronic illness by enhancing protective factors, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independence</li> <li>• Social support</li> <li>• Positive explanatory styles</li> <li>• Self-care</li> <li>• Self-esteem</li> <li>• Reduced anxiety<sup>158</sup></li> </ul> <p>LHD H O</p>	People living with chronic illness	All ages	Manner of outreach and data re: reach of intervention (e.g., number of outreach events and attendees, number of flyers distributed, number of website visits, number of people trained)
 <p>Promote and expand school-based social-emotional learning (SEL) to teach youth skills needed to handle stress, resolve conflicts, and manage emotions and behaviors. Programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Action</li> <li>• Second Step</li> <li>• The Good Behavior Game</li> <li>• Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)<sup>159-163</sup></li> </ul> <p>O</p>	School-age youth	School-age youth	Participation rate among schools, number of students receiving SEL education

## Lead Partner Agencies and Organizations

[NYS Department of Health](#)

[NYS Office of Mental Health](#)

[NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports \(OASAS\)](#)

[NYS Education Department](#)

New York State Trauma Informed Network and Resource Center

Mental Health Association of New York State (MHANYS)

## Implementation Resources

[NYS Office for Mental Health \(OMH\)](#)

[NYS OMH - Mental Health First Aid](#)

[Community Mental Health Promotion and Support \(COMPHS\)](#)

[Columbia University Department of Psychiatry - ENGAGE](#)

[NYS Trauma Informed Network \(TIN\) and Resource Center](#)

[NYS TIN and Resource Center - Breath-Body-Mind](#)

[Mental Health Association of New York State \(MHANYS\)](#)

[NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports \(OASAS\)](#)

[NYS Education Department \(NYSED\)](#)

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