



Foster Youth and Mental Health Fact Sheet

- ? The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 75 - 80% of children who need mental health services don't receive them.¹
- ? Approximately 588,000 children reside in some form of foster care. There are about 80,000 children in foster care in California alone.²
- ? A child in California is abused or neglected every 4 minutes.³ 100 times a day a child in California enters the foster care system.⁴
- ? More than 80% of children in foster care have developmental, emotional, or behavioral problems.⁵
- ? Approximately 67% of parents with children in the child welfare system require substance abuse treatment, but child welfare agencies are able to provide treatment for only 31%.⁶
- ? Studies have linked foster care to conduct disorder. One study found that 44% of young adults who had been in foster care reported being involved in delinquent activities that led to court charges.⁷
- ? According to the County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services, of the 1,000 youth emancipated from the foster care system in Los Angeles County each year, 45% either go directly on to the streets or end up on the streets within six weeks of emancipation.⁸
- ? Three in ten of the nation's chronically homeless adults are former foster care children.⁹
- ? Foster children occupy 40% of the child mental health inpatient beds on any given day.¹⁰
- ? Among a population of foster children diagnosed with severe mental disorders, 88% were diagnosed with having the same or a more severe disorder three years later.¹¹
- ? Those leaving foster care are at especially high medical risk and likely to have acute, chronic, and complex health needs resulting from past neglect or abuse.¹²
- ? In the United States, 1 in 10 Children and Adolescents suffer from mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment.¹³

¹ Child Welfare League of America, Fact Sheet 2005, Available online at: www.cwla.org

² ibid

³ Children's Law Center, 2005. Accessed in the internet at www.clcla.org

⁴ ibid

⁵ ibid

⁶ ibid

⁷ ibid

⁸ Shelter Partnership, *A Report on Transitional Housing for Emancipated Foster Youth in Los Angeles County*, April 1997. Available on the website at <http://www.shelterpartnership.org/publications/efvexec.pdf>.

⁹ Roman, N.P., & Wolfe, N. (1995). *Web of failure: The relationship between foster care and homelessness*, National Alliance to End Homelessness. [Online], Available: www.endhomelessness.org

¹⁰ Shelter Partnership, *Report on Emancipated Foster Youth*, 2000. As cited by the Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger and Homelessness at: www.lacehh.org/homelessyouth.html

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Brindis, C.D., et al., 2003, "The Unique Health Care Needs of Adolescents," *The Future of Children*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Spring.

¹³ Child Welfare League of America, Fact Sheet 2005. Available online at: www.cwla.org