



Mental Illness and the CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

People with mental illness deserve help, not handcuffs. Yet people with mental illness are overrepresented in our nation's jails and prisons. We need to reduce criminal justice system involvement and increase investments in mental health care.

About **2 million times** each year, people with serious mental illness are booked into jails.



About **2 in 5** people who are incarcerated have a **history of mental illness** (37% in state and federal prisons and 44% held in local jails).

66% of women in prison reported having a history of mental illness, **almost twice the percentage of men** in prison.



Nearly **1 in 4** people shot and killed by police officers between 2015–2020 had a mental health condition.

Suicide is the **leading cause of death** for people held in local jails.



An estimated **4,000 people** with serious mental illness are held in solitary confinement inside U.S. prisons.

COMMUNITIES



70% of youth in the juvenile justice system have a diagnosable mental health condition.

Youth in detention are **10x more likely** to suffer from psychosis than youth in the community.

About **50,000 veterans** are held in local jails — 55% report experiencing mental illness.



Among incarcerated people with a mental health condition, **non-white individuals** are more likely to be held in solitary confinement, be injured and **stay longer in jail**.

ACCESS TO CARE

About **3 in 5 people** (63%) with a history of mental illness do not receive mental health treatment while incarcerated in state and federal prisons.



45% Less than half of people with a history of mental illness **receive mental health treatment** while held in local jails.



People who **have health care coverage** upon release from incarceration are more likely to **engage in services that reduce recidivism**.



Data from the U.S. Department of Justice and other select sources. Find citations for this resource at nami.org/mhstats