



12 August 2014 – Up to 70% of youth in the juvenile justice system have at least 1 mental health condition, while 55% have 2 or more.

And with 20% of the world's young people experiencing different mental health conditions every year, the UN seeks to raise awareness about mental health on this year's [International Youth Day](#) on 12 August.

Youth with mental health conditions often experience stigma and discrimination, which in turn can lead to exclusion. Some adolescents are particularly at risk of developing mental health conditions, including homeless and orphaned youth, and those in juvenile homes.

The barriers these adolescents face can be overwhelming, particularly in countries where there is a lack of investment in mental health services. Too often, owing to neglect and irrational fear, persons with mental health conditions are marginalized not only from having a role in the design and implementation of policies and programs, but even from basic care. This leaves them more vulnerable to poverty, violence and social exclusion, and has a negative impact on society as a whole.

In his message for International Youth Day, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reminds us that with understanding and assistance, these young people can flourish, making valuable contributions to our collective future. He states:

“Let us begin to talk about our mental-health in the same way we talk about our overall health. As we mark International Youth Day 2014, let us enable youth with mental health conditions to realize their full potential, and let us show that mental health matters to us all.”

Efforts are needed to overcome stigma to ensure that young people with mental health conditions can lead full and healthy lives free from isolation and unnecessary shame, and that they have access to the support they need. On this year’s observance day, the UN aims to lift the veil that keeps these young people locked in silence.

You can take part in the conversation on youth and mental health by using the hashtag #mentalhealthmatters, and joining in on the discussion on these sites:

- <http://www.twitter.com/UN4Youth>
- <http://www.pinterest.com/UN4Youth>
- <http://www.facebook.com/UN4Youth>
- <http://www.instagram.com/UN4Youth>



