



## **Education and Mental Illness A Fact Sheet**

- ❖ As many as 20 percent of children/adolescents in the U.S. may have a mental health problem; as many as 5 to 12 percent may have a serious mental health problem (Center for Mental Health Services [CMHS], 1998a; U.S. Surgeon General, 1999; CMHS, 1996; President's New Freedom Commission, 2003).
- ❖ An estimated two-thirds to three-fourths of children with emotional problems do not receive the health/behavioral health services they need, either from school or community agencies (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999; U.S. Surgeon General, 2000).
- ❖ If not treated early, mental disorders can severely disrupt the capacity of youth to function socially, academically, and emotionally (Center for Mental Health Services, 1998).
- ❖ As many as 35 percent of students entering school are considered to be at high risk for social and academic failure (National Council on Disability, 2002).
- ❖ A history of social adjustment issues also accompanies many emotionally disturbed youth to high school—almost three-fourths of them have been suspended or expelled at least once, a rate more than twice that of youth with disabilities as a whole (Wagner and Cameto, 2004).
- ❖ Children and youth with serious emotional behavioral disorders get lower grades, fail more courses and exams, miss more days of school, are retained at the same grade level more frequently, graduate at lower rates, get arrested more often (37% within one 1 year and 58% within 5 years), spend more time in the juvenile justice system, and are more frequently placed in restrictive educational environments (Wagner and Cameto, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2005; Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice; SAMHSA)
- ❖ Emotionally disturbed children have the lowest school completion rate (52%) and lowest academic achievement of any disability category (U.S. Department of Education, 2005; NAMI, 2005).
- ❖ Emotionally disturbed youth have had a dramatic increase over time in ever having been in disciplinary trouble at school, fired from a job, or arrested. Almost 9 in 10 youth with emotional disturbances had had one or more of these experiences by the time they had been out of secondary school up to 2 years, the highest rate of any disability category (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).
- ❖ By young adulthood about 30% experience homelessness, the rate of school dropout, unemployment, serious drug or alcohol problems and pregnancy hovers around 50% and by age 25, up to 65% have been arrested (Davis, 2004).
- ❖ Only one in five youth with emotional disturbance pursue some kind of postsecondary education after high school, among the lowest rates of any disability category (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).
- ❖ One third of students with EBD are unsuccessful in obtaining gainful employment within two to five years after leaving school, and 19% of those employed report loss of their job at least once (Wagner et al., 1995).
- ❖ In contrast, 73% of school dropouts are arrested within the first few years of leaving school and only 1/3 of dropouts receive employment (Sinclair et al., 2005).
- ❖ Youth with EBD are more at risk for poor outcomes than children in any other disability category or their non-disabled cohorts (Bullock & Gable, 2006; Cullinan & Sabornie, 2004; Lane et al., 2005; Reid et al., 2004; Sawka et al., 2002; Wagner et al., 1995).