

Examining Caregiver Well-being

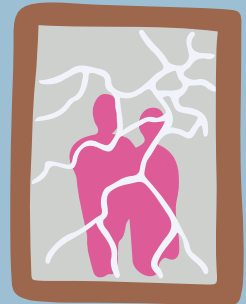
Mental Health, Substance Use, Trauma
Exposure, and Experiences of Discrimination
Among Caregivers of Youth With Juvenile
Legal System Involvement



Purpose

A 2025¹ study surveyed caregivers of youth involved in the juvenile legal to identify:

- rates of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and cannabis and alcohol use;
- frequency of exposure to traumatic events and discrimination; and
- the association between experiences of traumatic events and discrimination and behavioral health concerns.



About the Study

Researchers recruited 100 caregivers whose child screened positive for mental health and/or substance use concerns as part of a juvenile diversion program in the northeastern U.S.

The caregivers included biological parents, legal guardians, and other primary caregivers. They participated in self-report measures on their:

mental health	alcohol and cannabis use	experiences of traumatic events	experiences of discrimination
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Importance

Caregiver well-being is a critical intervention target for youth with juvenile legal system involvement to improve parenting practices and, ultimately, youth outcomes.

Results

The results indicate that caregivers experienced a variety of behavioral health concerns, with an alarming number experiencing traumatic events and discrimination.



Key Takeaways

Around one-third of caregivers of youth participating in juvenile diversion (i.e., youth arrested for the first time or for a subsequent less serious offense) reported having clinically significant mental health and substance use concerns, with 58% of the caregivers further reporting experiencing past-year discrimination and an additional 85% reporting lifetime trauma exposure.

In this sample of caregivers, mental health concerns—including PTSD symptoms—were more closely linked to experiences of discrimination than to experiences of trauma.



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