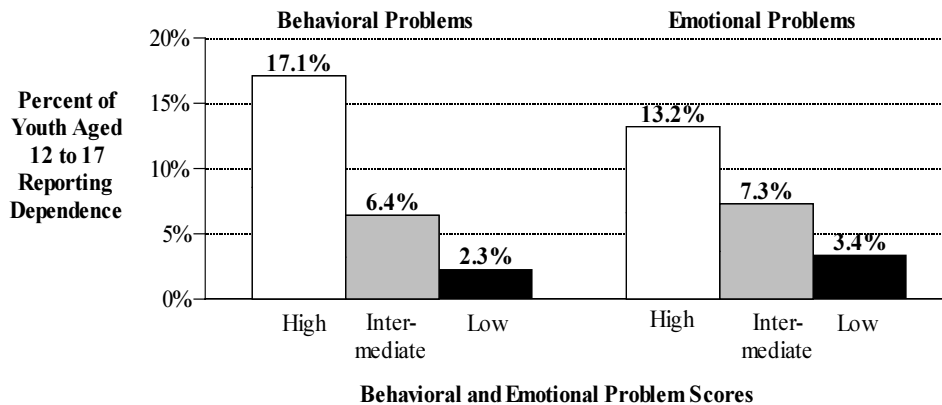


Youth With Behavioral and Emotional Problems More Likely to Report Alcohol or Illicit Drug Dependence

Adolescents with serious behavioral problems were more than seven times more likely than those with less serious problems to report that they were dependent on alcohol or illicit drugs (17.1% vs. 2.3%), according to an analysis of data from the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse. In addition, youth with serious emotional problems were nearly four times more likely to report dependence (13.2% vs. 3.4%). According to the authors, while “these findings strongly suggest that emotional and behavioral problems represent significant risk factors for adolescent substance use,” future research is needed to identify the exact nature of the relationship between substance use and emotional and behavioral problems (pp. 32-33).

Percentage of Youth Aged 12 to 17 Reporting Dependence on Alcohol or Illicit Drugs, by Behavioral and Emotional Problem Scores*, 1994-1996



*Severity levels (high, intermediate, and low) for behavioral and emotional problem scale were determined using values set in the Youth Self-Report (YSR), an instrument extensively used in adolescent studies to assess psychological difficulties.

SOURCES: Adapted by CESAR from data from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies, “The Relationship Between Mental Health and Substance Abuse Among Adolescents,” Analytic Series: A-9, 1999. Copies of the report are available from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) at 800-729-6686.