



THE ROLE OF FANTASY LITERATURE IN THE MENTAL HEALTH OF GENERATION Z

— A 2023 REPORT —

“Fairy tales do not tell children the dragons exist.
Children already know that dragons exist. Fairy
tales tell children *the dragons can be killed.*”

G.K. CHESTERTON

U.S. FACTORS FOR YOUNG ADULT MENTAL HEALTH BY STATE

1. Having Least ONE MAJOR DEPRESSIVE EPISODE (MDE) IN THE PAST YEAR
2. SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (SUD)
3. SEVERE MAJOR DEPRESSIVE EPISODE (MDE)
4. Having MDE But DID NOT RECEIVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
5. Having Severe MDE AND RECEIVED SOME CONSISTENT TREATMENT
6. Having Private Insurance THAT DIDN'T COVER MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL
7. Having an INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) FOR EMOTIONAL

U.S. RANKING FOR YOUNG ADULT MENTAL HEALTH BY STATE

1 District of Columbia 2 Delaware 3 Wisconsin 4 Pennsylvania
5 Massachusetts 6 New Jersey 7 New Hampshire 8 Connecticut 9 Nevada
10 Oklahoma 11 Colorado 12 Rhode Island 13 Illinois 14 Maryland 15 Vermont
16 South Carolina 17 Wyoming 18 North Dakota 19 Mississippi 20 New York
21 Minnesota 22 Georgia 23 Indiana 24 North Carolina 25 South Dakota
26 Iowa 27 Ohio 28 California 29 Arizona 30 Utah 31 Kentucky 32 Maine
33 Florida 34 New Mexico 35 Michigan 36 Missouri 37 Alabama 38 Alaska
39 Montana 40 Washington 41 Tennessee 42 Louisiana 43 Hawaii 44 Arkansas
45 West Virginia 46 Texas 47 Idaho 48 Virginia 49 Nebraska 50 Kansas
51 Oregon

**“Imagination is the only weapon
in the war against reality.**

THE CHESHIRE CAT

Alice in Wonderland | by Lewis Carroll

**“Better not to give in to it.
It takes ten times as long to put yourself
back together as it does to fall apart.”**

FINNICK ODAIR

Mockingjay | by Suzanne Collins

THE PREVALENCE OF YOUTH WITH AT LEAST ONE MAJOR DEPRESSIVE EPISODE (MDE) IN THE PAST YEAR

Almost 17% of youth (age 12-17) reported suffering from at least one major depressive episode (MDE) in the past year. Youth experienced numerous hardships during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CDC’s Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey (ABES) found that **67% of U.S. high school students** reported that schoolwork was more difficult, **55%** experienced some emotional abuse in the home, **11%** experienced physical abuse, and **24%** reported they did not have enough food to eat during the COVID-19 pandemic. **EACH FACTOR CAN HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON MENTAL HEALTH.**

**“Of course it is happening inside
your head, Harry, but why on earth
should that mean *that it is not real?*”**

ALBUS DUMBLEDORE

The Deathly Hallows | by J.K. Rowling

**“Better not to give in to it.
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FINNICK ODAIR

Mockingjay | by Suzanne Collins

YOUTH WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IN THE LAST YEAR

11.5% of youth (over 2.7 million youth) are experiencing severe major depression. There are significant racial and geographic disparities for youth with severe major depressive episodes. Rates of a severe major depressive episode were highest among **youth who identified as more than one race, at 16.5% (about 123,000 youth)**. The percentage of youth with severe major depressive episode in South Dakota (ranked 51) is nearly four times the percentage of youth with severe MDE in South Carolina (ranked 1).

“Even nothing *cannot* last forever.”

AMERICAN GODS

by Neil Gaiman

**“It’s like in the great stories, Mr. Frodo.
The ones that really mattered. Full of
darkness and danger they were. And
sometimes you didn’t want to know the
end... because how could the end be
happy? How could the world go back to
the way it was when so much bad had
happened? But in the end, it’s only a
passing thing... this shadow.
Even darkness must pass.”**

SAM WISE GAMGEE

Lord of the Rings | by J.R.R. Tolkein