

## Teen boys treated for assault often want mental health care, too

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(HealthDay)—Many teen boys treated at an ER following a violent

assault also want psychological services to help them cope with the trauma, according to new research.

"Assault victims describe feeling constantly tense and 'on guard,' and having nightmares or unwanted flashbacks of the assault. Unfortunately, many youth also begin to avoid talking about the event or avoiding the places or people that remind them of the assault—school, friends, normal [adolescent](#) activities," said study author Rachel Myers, a research scientist at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

"It shows us that just treating the external wounds is not enough. Young men not only need, but want, help to cope with their fears and difficult emotions in the aftermath of [injury](#)," Myers said in a [hospital](#) news release.

The study included 49 teenage boys between the ages of 12 and 17. All were treated at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's emergency room at some point between 2012 and 2016. Most were black and lived in an urban setting. All had been assaulted, often by their own peers.

Many of the injuries were considered relatively minor, and all of the teens were discharged from the ER following treatment without being admitted to the hospital.

Nevertheless, nearly two-thirds of the boys reported suffering from significant stress. And 9 in 10 said they needed some form of [mental health treatment](#), including therapy or suicide counseling.

More than half (56 percent) said they needed psychosocial assistance, while indicating a willingness to enroll in group sessions involving other injured peers.

About 60 percent also indicated a need for legal advice, and many

expressed concerns about their overall well-being and safety following their ER discharge.

"This work highlights how adolescent males receiving care in the ER with what may be physically minor injuries are suffering significant trauma," Myers said.

"We also know that with real support, young people are resilient, go back to school, and go on to graduate and pursue their goals," she said.

The findings were published recently in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

**More information:** There's more on teens and mental health at the [U.S. National Institute of Mental Health](#).

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