



MINISTRY OF HEALTH MALAYSIA



# TECHNICAL REPORT

## PERCEIVED BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS IN ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AMONG MALAYSIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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NMRR ID-24-01341-RRF (IIR)

MOH/S/IPTK/61.25(TR) - e

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**Suggested citation:**

Logeswary, K., et al. (2025). *Perceived barriers and facilitators in accessing mental health services among Malaysian secondary school students* (NMRR ID-24-01341-RRF [IIR]). Institute for Health Behavioural Research (IHBR), National Institutes of Health, Ministry of Health Malaysia.

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**Published and distributed by:**

Institute for Health Behavioural Research,  
Block B3, National Institutes of Health (NIH),  
No.1, Jalan Setia Murni U13/52 40170 Shah Alam,  
Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

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## **Acknowledgement**

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The authors sincerely thank the Director-General of Health, Malaysia, for granting permission to publish this report. We are deeply grateful to the Director of the Institute for Health Behavioural Research for their exceptional support and technical guidance, which were vital to the success of this study.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the National Centre of Excellence for Mental Health (NCEMH), Ministry of Health Malaysia, for their generous funding and unwavering support.

Our sincere thanks also go to the Daily School Management Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia, for their invaluable assistance in providing the participants' database and facilitating efficient data collection. Their contributions were instrumental in ensuring the smooth implementation of this study.

We are especially grateful to the teachers, state education department officers, and district education department officers for their dedication in coordinating and supporting the data collection process. Their cooperation was crucial to the success of this research.

Finally, we extend our deepest gratitude to all the participants for their valuable contributions and participation, without whom this study would not have been possible.

## Abbreviations

<b>BPSH</b>	Daily School Management Division (Bahagian Pengurusan Sekolah Harian)
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>eRas</b>	Educational Research Application System
<b>GBK</b>	Guidance and Counselling Teachers (Guru Bimbingan Kaunselling)
<b>KK</b>	Health Clinic (Klinik Kesihatan)
<b>MMHA</b>	Malaysian Mental Health Association
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry Of Education
<b>MOH</b>	Ministry Of Health
<b>MREC</b>	Medical Research Ethics Committee
<b>NCEMH</b>	National Centre of Excellence for Mental Health
<b>NHMS</b>	National Health and Morbidity Survey
<b>NMRR</b>	National Medical Research Register
<b>PDRM</b>	Royal Malaysia Police (Polis Diraja Malaysia)
<b>PIBG</b>	Parent-Teacher Association (Persatuan Ibu Bapa dan Guru)
<b>PIBKS</b>	Parents, Community, and Private Sector Involvement (Pelibatan Ibu Bapa, Komuniti dan Sektor Swasta)
<b>PKD</b>	District Health Office (Pejabat Kesihatan Daerah)
<b>PPS</b>	School Liaison Officer (Pegawai Perhubungan Sekolah)
<b>PRISM</b>	Modul Program Intervensi Minda Sihat
<b>PRS</b>	Peer Counsellor (Pembimbing Rakan Sebaya)
<b>SAM</b>	Islamic Secondary School (Sekolah Agama Menengah)
<b>SBP</b>	Fully Residential School (Sekolah Berasrama Penuh)
<b>SMEs</b>	Subject Matter Experts
<b>TOT</b>	Training of Trainers
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# Executive Summary

The National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2022 reported that 26.9% of adolescents aged 13 to 17 in Malaysia experienced depression, highlighting a concerning decline in their mental well-being. Despite the high prevalence of mental health issues, many adolescents do not seek professional help, underscoring a critical gap in service utilization. This cross-sectional study, conducted from September to October 2024, aimed to identify barriers and facilitators influencing adolescents' access to mental health services. Using an online self-administered questionnaire, the study gathered responses from 6,735 secondary school students aged 13 to 19 years, representing both urban and rural areas through a multi-stage stratified cluster sampling design.

The findings revealed that most respondents demonstrated strong mental health literacy, with 71.2% achieving excellent knowledge scores. A positive correlation emerged between knowledge and attitudes, as students with greater understanding exhibited more favorable attitudes toward mental health. Attitudes were generally positive, with 68.2% of respondents scoring "good" and 28.5% scoring "excellent," although 3.3% showed poor attitudes, indicating a need for targeted awareness initiatives. Despite these encouraging trends, barriers to accessing mental health services were prevalent, with 54.4% reporting moderate barriers and 23.5% experiencing maximal barriers, such as stigma, limited awareness, and service unavailability. Conversely, 61.9% of respondents identified strong facilitating factors, including peer support programs, teacher guidance, and telehealth services. Regarding mental health practices, 53.3% of students shared their feelings, while 21.1% sought professional help, and 25.6% did not take any action.

The findings emphasize the need for a multifaceted approach to address gaps in adolescent mental health services. Recommendations include integrating comprehensive mental health education into school curricula to enhance literacy and reduce stigma, launching targeted awareness campaigns to foster positive attitudes, expanding service accessibility through telehealth and peer support programs, and strengthening collaboration between schools, healthcare providers, and policymakers. This study offers valuable insights to guide evidence-based interventions that address the unique mental health needs of Malaysian adolescents and promote a more resilient youth population.







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