

Rank	Young Adults, Ages 18–44	Middle-Aged Adults, Ages 45–64
1	Transitional challenges: Younger adults may experience difficulties adjusting to new life stages, such as leaving home, entering the workforce, and starting a family. These transitions can be stressful and may lead to depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems.	Stress-related disorders: Middle-aged adults often experience significant stress from work, family, and other responsibilities, which can lead to stress-related disorders, such as anxiety and depression.
2	Substance misuse: Younger adults may be more likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as experimenting with drugs and alcohol. Substance misuse can lead to addiction, as well as other mental health problems.	Substance misuse: Middle-aged adults may turn to alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with stress, leading to substance misuse and addiction.
3	Academic and career pressures: Younger adults may face pressure to succeed in their academic and career pursuits. These pressures can lead to stress, anxiety, and depression.	Health problems: As people age, they become more vulnerable to physical health problems. Chronic illnesses and physical disabilities can increase the risk of depression and other mental health problems.
4	Social media and technology: Younger adults are more likely to use social media and technology, which can lead to issues such as social isolation, cyberbullying, and addiction.	Relationship issues: Divorce, loss of a spouse or significant other, and other significant relationship changes can be especially difficult for middle-aged adults, leading to depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues.
5	Mental health stigma: Younger adults may face stigma and discrimination related to mental health. This can prevent them from seeking help when they need it and can exacerbate mental health problems.	Caregiving responsibilities: Many middle-aged adults are caring for aging parents or other family members, which can be emotionally and physically demanding, leading to caregiver burnout, depression, and anxiety.
6	Trauma and adverse childhood experiences: Younger adults may have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences, such as abuse or neglect, which can lead to mental health problems later in life.	Empty nest syndrome: When children leave home, parents may experience feelings of sadness, loneliness, and a sense of loss, leading to depression and other mental health problems.
7		Financial stress: Middle-aged adults may experience financial stress due to mortgage payments, college expenses, and other financial obligations, leading to anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems.

Table 25.1 Mental Health Challenges Affecting Adult Populations