



MENTOR LEADERS PRODUCE MENTOR LEADERS

www.mlpml.org

Mission Statement

Mentor Leaders Produce Mentor Leaders (MLPML) is a Philadelphia-based nonprofit dedicated to empowering youth ages 10–24—particularly those impacted by trauma, systemic inequities, and mental health challenges—through long-term mentorship, emotional literacy, STEM education, academic support, and youth-led systems of change.

We transform mentees into mentorship leaders by helping them build confidence, purpose, and skills to uplift their communities and lead change.



Expanded Services: Now Supporting Young Ladies

In 2025, MLPML officially expanded to serve girls and young women, adding:

- Gender-responsive leadership development
- Emotional literacy and trauma healing tools
- Postsecondary and workforce readiness
- Safe spaces for identity exploration and expression
- Peer mentorship training for future youth leaders



Key Partnerships

MLPML collaborates with a robust network of partners:

- **Temple University (ReCAST Program):** Trauma-informed care and mental health education
- **Mighty Writers:** Writing for emotional processing and self-expression
- **Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN):** Workforce development and paid internships
- **School District of Philadelphia:** Program partnerships and OST integration
- **Community College of Philadelphia:** Postsecondary preparation
- **Senator Anthony Williams' Office & Councilmember Jamie Gauthier:** Legislative and civic support
- **District Attorney Larry Krasner's Office:** Public recognition and advocacy
- **Christy Rec Center:** Community access and event hosting

Youth Mental Health Data

– Philadelphia (Ages 14–24)



44.6%

Recent findings show a clear youth mental health crisis:

Sadness & Hopelessness:

- 44.6% of high school students reported persistent sadness in 2021 (↑ from 38% in 2019)



Suicidal Ideation:

- 1 in 5 students considered suicide (2019)
- Suicide attempts exceeded national averages (2021)
- Female, Hispanic, and LGB students are most at risk



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):

- High exposure to abuse, neglect, and violence in low-income communities



Anxiety & Depression:

- 1 in 5 teens experience symptoms
- Driven by academic, family, and community stress



Access Barriers:

- LGBTQIA+ youth referrals outpace capacity
- Undocumented youth face insurance and access issues
- Structural barriers: housing instability, transportation, and stigma



Substance Use:

- Growing concern as a coping mechanism among stressed and underserved youth

MLPML's Strategic Response

Sadness & Hopelessness

- SEL journals, emotional check-ins, Missing Dad reading series, safe group circles

Suicidal Ideation & Risk

- Trauma-informed mentors, peer support, referrals, crisis response protocols

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Healing-centered engagement and trauma-informed curriculum

Anxiety & Depression

- Peer therapy groups, reflection journals, breathing exercises, and SEL workshops

Access Barriers

- School-based delivery, trusted community partners, free programming

At-Risk Populations

- Inclusive, culturally grounded programs for LGB, female, and Hispanic youth

Substance Use Risks

- Identity-building, mentoring, vision planning, and purpose-driven activities

Core Program Components

1. Peer-to-Peer Mentorship
2. Emotional Intelligence & SEL
3. Conflict Resolution & Communication
4. College & Career Planning
5. STEM + Mental Health Integration (STEM MINDS LAB)
6. Legacy Leader University: Youth-led mentorship training pipeline

Economic Empowerment

- 15–30 youth employed annually via partnerships and summer programs
- Job placement and retention up to 82% (2023)
- Skills training: mock interviews, money management, resume building, entrepreneurship

Recognition & Community Impact

- 2025 University of Pennsylvania Community Hero Award (Vincent Garrett)
- Youth-led mental health presentations to:
 - DA Larry Krasner
 - Councilmember Jamie Gauthier
 - Temple ReCAST
 - PYN
- Positive outcomes:
 - Reduced violence
 - Increased postsecondary planning
 - Youth transformed into peer mentors and leaders

Current Goals

- Expand into more School District of Philadelphia schools
- Launch Legacy Leader University with city-wide chapters
- Strengthen trauma-informed, inclusive programming for girls and LGBTQ+ youth
- Scale partnerships and funding for sustainability



MLPML Youth Mental Health Challenges & Response Sheet

Youth Mental Health Data – Philadelphia (Ages 14–24)

Sadness & Hopelessness: In 2021, 44.6% of Philadelphia high school students reported feeling sad or hopeless for two+ weeks. In 2019, it was 38%. **Suicidal Ideation:** 1 in 5 students considered suicide. Suicide attempts were higher than national average in 2021. **Adverse Childhood Experiences:** High exposure to violence, trauma, and poverty among Philadelphia youth. **Anxiety & Depression:** About 1 in 5 adolescents experience anxiety or depression. Root causes include family instability and academic stress. **Access Barriers:** LGBTQ+, undocumented, and minority youth face limited access due to insurance, stigma, housing, and provider shortages. **At-Risk Populations:** Female, Hispanic, and LGB students show higher prevalence of suicidal ideation and emotional distress. **Substance Use:** Remains a growing coping mechanism among underserved youth.

How MLPML Responds

Challenge	MLPML Response
Sadness & Hopelessness	SEL tools, journaling, emotional check-ins, and safe space circles.
Suicidal Ideation	Trained facilitators, peer support, mandatory reporting, and referral network.
Adverse Experiences	Trauma-informed program design with healing-centered engagement.
Anxiety & Depression	Weekly circles, journaling, coping strategies, STEM engagement.
Access Barriers	Community-based programming, school partnerships, local referrals.
At-Risk Youth	Culturally and gender-responsive programming; inclusive environments.
Substance Use	Mentorship, purpose-building, identity exploration, leadership training.