

NIMH STRATEGIC PLAN The NIMH Strategic Plan for Research: An Overview

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is the lead federal agency for research on mental illnesses. Mental health research has seen exciting advances in recent years, from predicting risk for mental disorders such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, to novel treatment discoveries making a difference in the lives of those living with major depression. Looking forward to the next five years and beyond, the NIMH Strategic Plan for Research aims to build on these advances.

To read the Strategic Plan in full, please visit www.nimh.nih.gov/strategicplan.

VISION

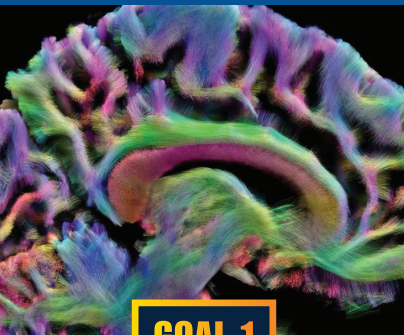
NIMH envisions a world in which mental illnesses are prevented and cured.

MISSION

To transform the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses through basic and clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery, and cure.

Goals of the NIMH Strategic Plan for Research

The four Goals of the NIMH Strategic Plan for Research form a broad roadmap for the Institute's research priorities, spanning fundamental science to public health impact.



GOAL 1

Define the Brain Mechanisms Underlying Complex Behavior

Work to understand the brain mechanisms and circuits that contribute to mental function and dysfunction, and the genomic and non-genomic factors associated with mental illnesses.



GOAL 2

Examine Mental Illness Trajectories Across the Lifespan

Characterize brain, cognitive, and behavioral development to help understand risk factors, biomarkers, and indicators of mental illnesses and treatment response across the lifespan and in diverse populations.



GOAL 3

Strive for Prevention and Cures

Develop, refine, and test interventions based on discoveries in genomics, neuroscience, and behavioral science, and optimize the effectiveness of interventions for delivery in practice settings.



GOAL 4

Strengthen the Public Health Impact of NIMH-Supported Research

Speed up the development, adoption, and implementation of effective, evidence-based mental health services to improve the reach and outcomes of these services in diverse communities and populations.



Joshua A. Gordon, M.D., Ph.D.
Director of NIMH

“NIMH’s broad portfolio aims to ensure that our research will have public health impacts across a range of timeframes—from the near-term to the far-off future. At NIMH, we’re proud of how far we’ve come, humbled by the distance yet to be traveled, and empowered by the hope that drives us forward.”

Cross-Cutting Research Themes

Several research themes cut across and are integral to the Goals of the NIMH Strategic Plan for Research. These themes include:

- Prevention
- Global Mental Health
- Environmental Influences
- Comorbidities
- Translational Research
- Computational Approaches
- Harnessing the Power of Big Data
- Building the Research Workforce

Challenges and Opportunities

The NIMH Strategic Plan for Research outlines challenges facing mental health research, such as the burden of mental illnesses. The plan also presents research opportunities—for example, early intervention in psychosis, mental health equity, and digital health technology—to address these challenges.

Serving as an Effective and Efficient Steward of Public Resources

The NIMH Strategic Plan for Research outlines the Institute’s stewardship efforts, including setting priorities, managing programs and resources, and monitoring progress to advance the understanding and treatment of mental illnesses.

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