



Children's Mental Health Network

August 1, 2025

Topic: The Family's Role in Children's Mental Health



Meeting Focus: The Family's Role in Children's Mental Health

Agenda

1. Welcome and OCMH Updates
2. Data and Research
3. Parent Panel
4. Children's Mental Health Professional Panel
5. Discussion
6. Member Announcements



2025-27 State Budget

Selected Children's Mental Health Provisions

On July 3rd, Gov. Evers signed the bipartisan budget agreement that delivers his promise to deliver for kids in Wisconsin.

- \$40 million in the first year to continue providing **comprehensive school-based mental health services grants**, \$10 million in year 2
- Nearly \$1.4 billion in spendable revenue for K-12 schools, with the **largest increase to the special education reimbursement rate** in state history
- Largest **increase to the UW System** in nearly two decades
- A **tax cut for working and middle-class families**
- \$110 million **Child Care Bridge Program** for direct payments to bridge some center losses, serve more families, reduce some copays for low-income families
- Permanent positions in the **Office of School Safety** to continue Speak Up Speak Out (SUSO)

"Every budget I have ever built began first by doing what is best for our kids, and this one will be no different."

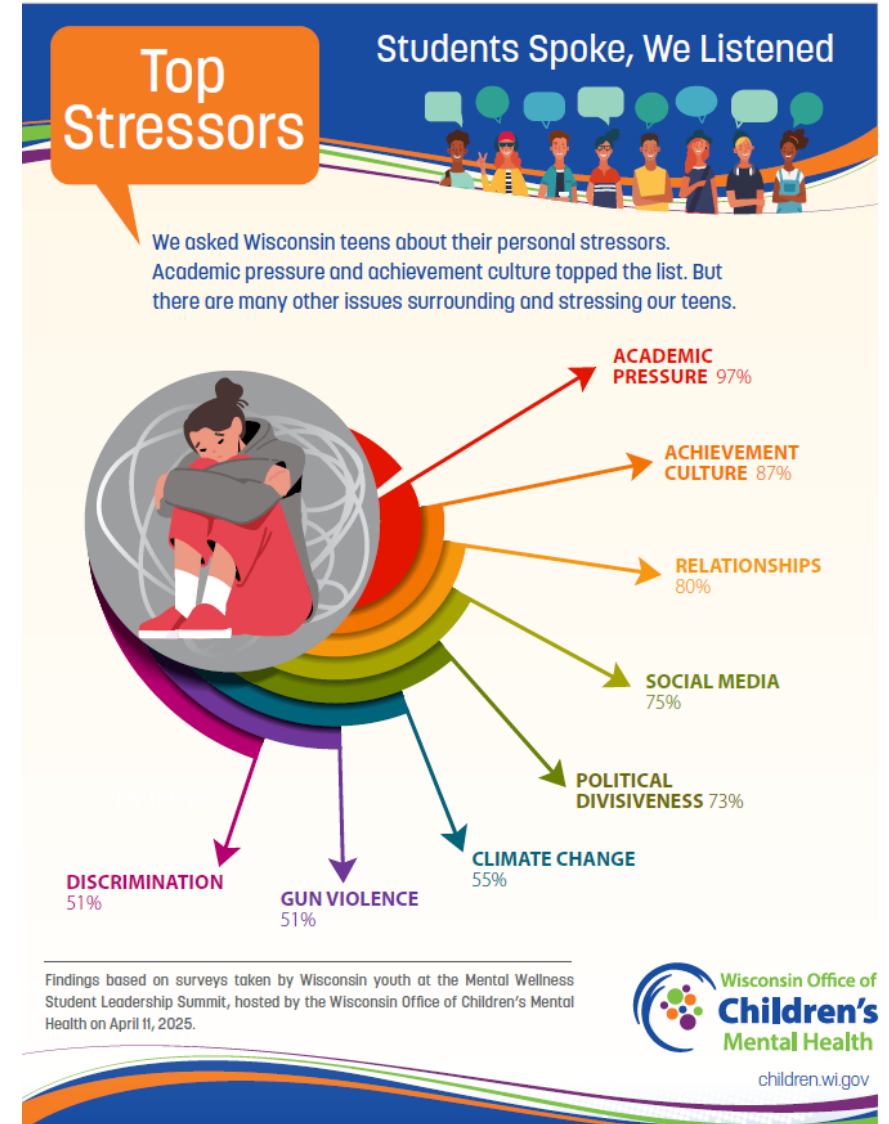
Governor Tony Evers



New Resource

Top Stressors

- Academic pressure – 97%
- Achievement culture – 87%
- Social media – 75%
- Political divisiveness – 73%
- Climate change – 55%
- Gun violence – 51%
- Discrimination – 51%



See [Top Stressors](#) flyer

New Resources

Mental Wellness Students Spoke, We Listened

Youth share their thoughts on what is needed for a strong foundation in mental wellness...

Balance

- "Finding a balance between friends, home, school, work, etc."
- "Finding a balance between feeling in control and knowing how to handle your specific struggles. It's OK to not be okay!"

Support

- "Having people who are there for me and will support me - people who will have my back when I am struggling."
- "Having people to celebrate the good times with."
- "Being together as a group and helping out when you can."
- "Supporting others and understanding. Spreading kindness."


Talk

- "Be able to talk freely about my mental health, without judgement. Knowing that others feel the same."
- "Making sure people know that mental health isn't something to be ashamed of."
- "Starting early! Having a better understanding of mental health earlier!"

Safety

- "Having a safe place, free of embarrassment and stigma."
- "A sense of community and creating a positive and safe environment."
- "Accepting everyone, recognizing every wellness."

Wisconsin high school youth shared these thoughts at the Mental Wellness Student Leadership Summit 2025 hosted by the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health on April 11, 2025 in Madison.

 children.wi.gov

Finding a balance, have support, to feel safe, and to talk.

[See flyer.](#)

Increasing Youth Belonging Students Spoke, We Listened

What/who makes you feel connected to your school?

"My friends and teachers who I have good bonds with"

"Understanding teachers"

"Sports"

"Music and theatre"

"My positive friends and peers make me feel like I belong."

"My teachers make me feel connected to school!"

"Being in leadership roles"

"School-wide activities that bring people together"

"School counselor"

"My friends!"

"Clubs"

continued >>

Wisconsin high school youth shared these thoughts at the Mental Wellness Student Leadership Summit 2025 hosted by the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health on April 11, 2025 in Madison.

 children.wi.gov

Friends, sports, clubs, music, activities that bring youth together, and teachers/staff.

[See flyer.](#)

Starting Early Students Spoke, We Listened



Youth agree that addressing mental wellness should start earlier and share how to do so...

Starting in middle school:


- "I wish I was taught more about how to express feelings."
- "Start talking about mental health sooner and validate it!"
- "Mental health is important and something we all have."
- "We need someone to talk to."
- "Be able to talk to a trusted adult."
- "We need information! I really just didn't know anything about mental health."

Ideas on what school should do:

- "Tell students how to meet with their school counselor."
- "Have dedicated mental health days with activities for kids."
- "Students need a deeper connection to teachers."
- "Have a mental health student club."
- "No cell phones or social media."
- "More connection with high schools. Provide positive high school role models for middle schoolers to look up to."
- "Provide more mental health support in the middle school level."
- "Teach youth how to properly cope with stress and other mental struggles, what to do if you're feeling hopeless."
- "Stop bullying."

  [School Mental Health Resources](#)

Wisconsin high school youth shared these thoughts at the Mental Wellness Student Leadership Summit 2025 hosted by the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health on April 11, 2025 in Madison.

 children.wi.gov

Address mental wellness earlier, in middle school.


[See flyer.](#)

New Resource

What Youth Want Physicians to Know when Threating Them

See [flyer](#)

What Youth Want Physicians to Know when Treating Them



High school students were asked how they want physicians to talk to them when receiving treatment. The HEADSS framework, a recognized psychosocial interview framework, was used. HEADSS stands for Home, Education, Activities/Alcohol, Drugs/Diet, Sexual Behavior/Self-Esteem, and Suicidality/Safety. The framework provides physicians with a better understanding of a young person's situation and what their specific needs may be. Below is what the students said.

HOME

! A person can have multiple homes and that "house" does not equal "home." Not everyone has support or someone to turn to.

DON'T:

- ☒ Assume that the youth has a place they call "home." Check your records on the patient's family situation first so you don't bring up things that may be triggering.
- ☒ Ask these questions when family is in the room.
- ☒ Mention something bad that may have happened in the past.

DO ASK QUESTIONS LIKE:


- ☒ Who do you live with?
- ☒ Who is in your life that supports you?
- ☒ What does "home" mean to you?
- ☒ Are you heard at home?
- ☒ Where do you feel safe? Do you feel safe at home?

EDUCATION

! School causes a lot of stress, and 11th grade is particularly stressful. It can be hard to focus on school when there are other things going on outside of school.

DON'T:

- ☒ Ask about colleges or the pressure on grades.
- ☒ Lecture.
- ☒ Be judgmental or condescending.

 If someone doesn't want to talk about this, move on to a different topic. Youth want physicians to be polite, nice, respectful of different cultures, and open minded.

DO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT:

- ☒ What things the student enjoys at school.
- ☒ What their favorite subject/class is.
- ☒ Where they go to school, what grade they are in.
- ☒ Sports or programs they are involved in.
- ☒ Plans post high school.

88% of students said it was very important for medical providers to provide support for their mental health.



New Opportunity for Youth Leaders

- Annual cohort
- 15 high school Juniors/Seniors
- Meet monthly – September through May
- Applications due Sept. 8

See flyer [here](#)
Access application [here](#)

Wisconsin Office of
Children's Mental Health



**Wisconsin Youth
Wellness Champions**

PollEverywhere

Log in at:

<https://pollev.com/ocmh627>

OR

Join PollEverywhere by texting:
“ocmh627” to 22333



**What are your
thoughts on the
family's role in
children's mental
health?**



What are your thoughts on the family's role in children's mental health?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.



Data & Research

Family's Role in Children's Mental Health

Amy Marsman – OCMH Senior Research Analyst



Data to Consider

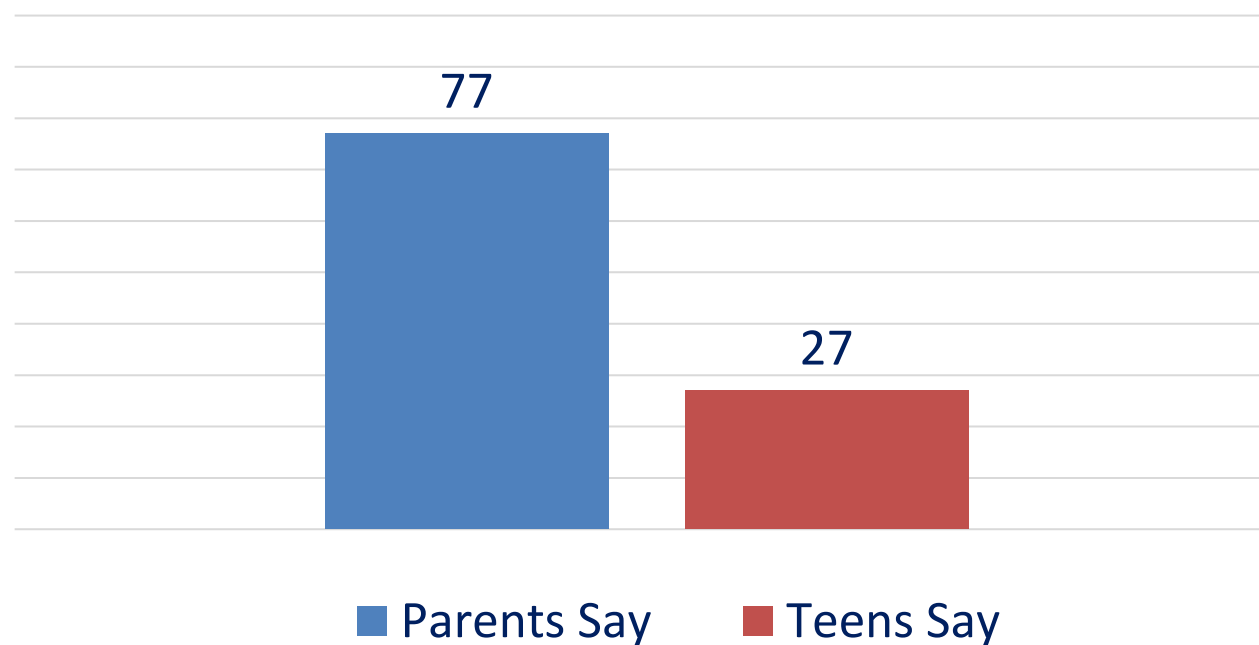
58%

Teens who say they
get the social and
emotional support
they need.






Parents greatly overestimate meeting their teens' social and emotional needs.

Parent Meeting Teen's Social and Emotional Needs





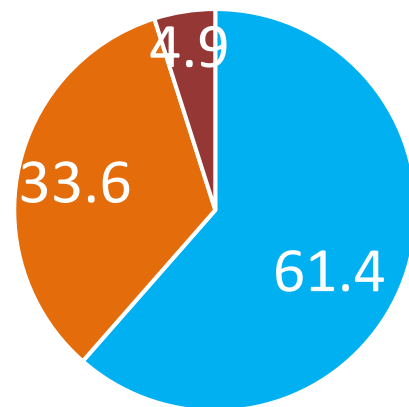
Thriving Children Feel They Belong

-  In their families
-  In their schools
-  In their communities



Sense of Belonging - Family

Share Ideas and Talk About What Matters

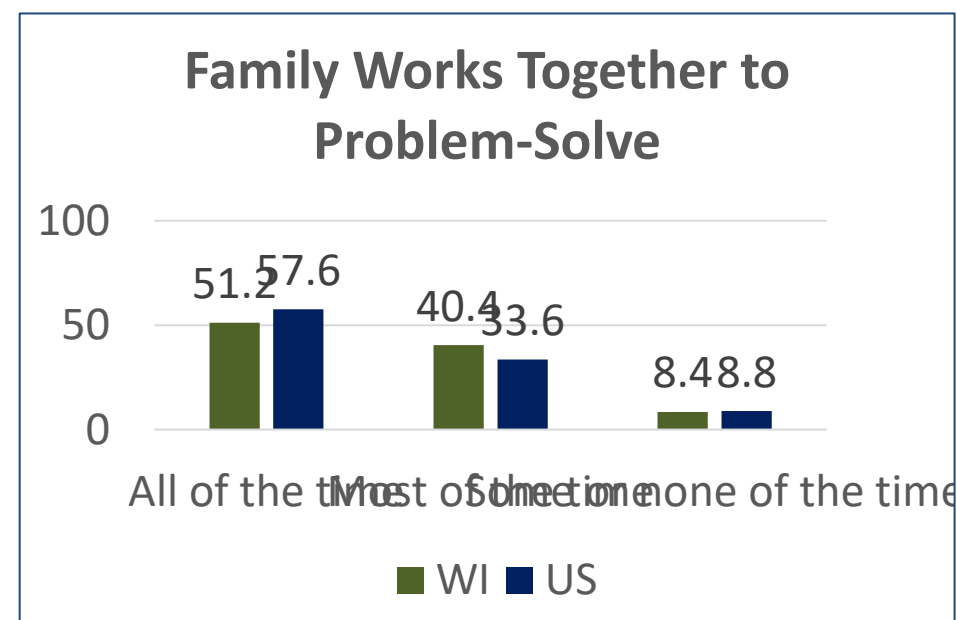
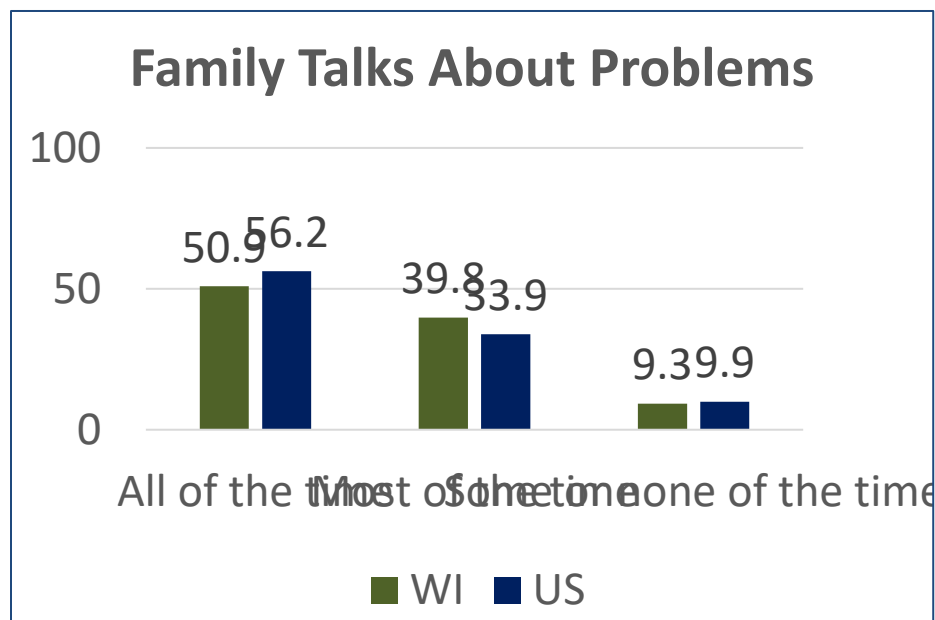


■ Very well ■ Somewhat well ■ Not very well



Sense of Belonging - Family

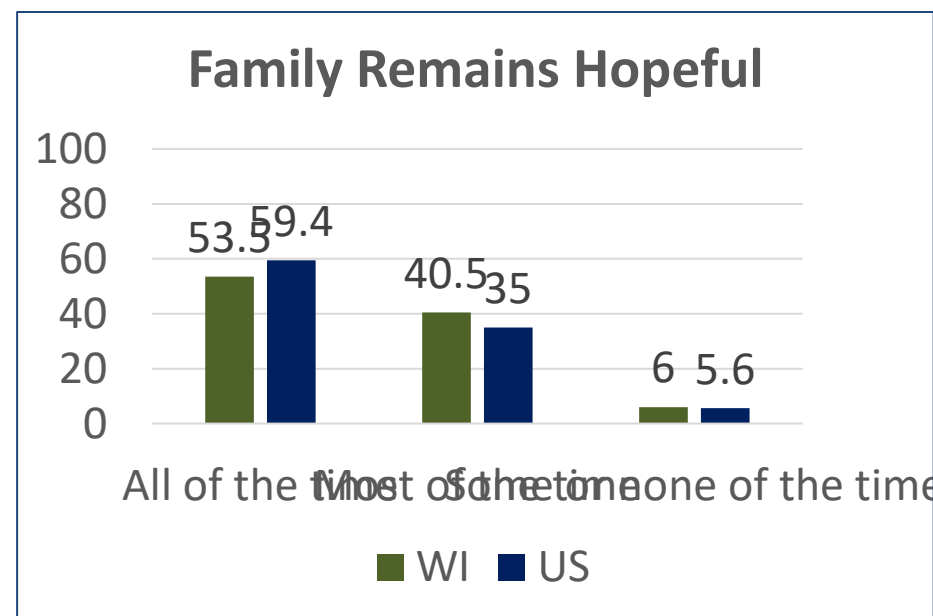
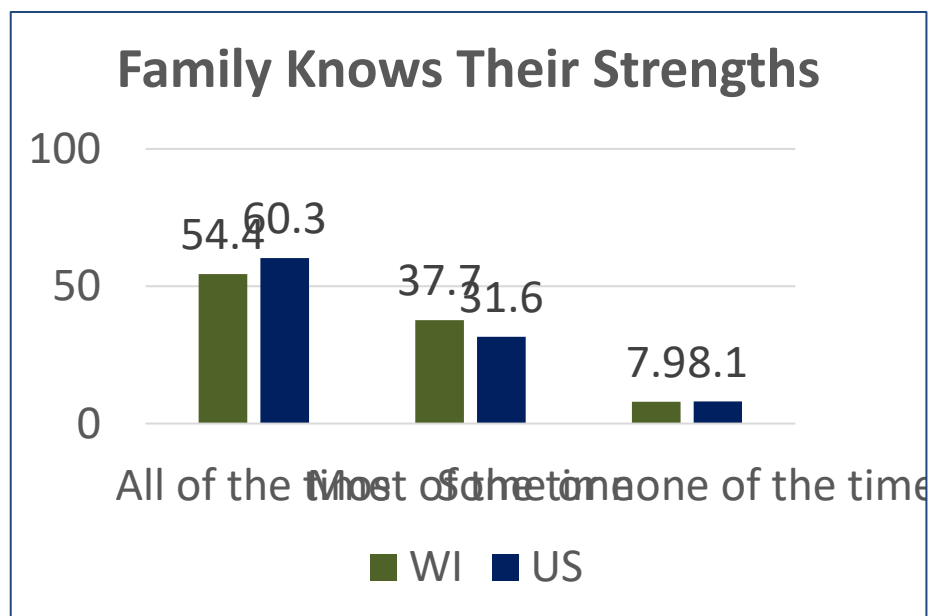
Family Resilience: communication, problem solving, strengths and hope





Sense of Belonging - Family

*Family Resilience: communication, problem solving, **strengths and hope***





Protective Factors

- **Parental Resilience** – ability to manage stress, cope with challenges and bounce back after setbacks
- **Social Connections** – positive and supportive relationships with family, friends, neighbors, and community members
- **Access** – to services and resources that meet child's basic needs of health care, food, shelter, and education
- **Problem-Solving and Coping Skills** – ability of kids to communicate clearly, manage emotions, build health relationships.



Protective Factors



Create safer environments



Provide physical and emotional support



Foster healthy, connected relationships



PCEs: Positive Childhood Experiences

ADVERSITY CAN BE OUTWEIGHED BY PROACTIVELY PROMOTING POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES TO PREVENT ADULT MENTAL AND RELATIONAL PROBLEMS.²

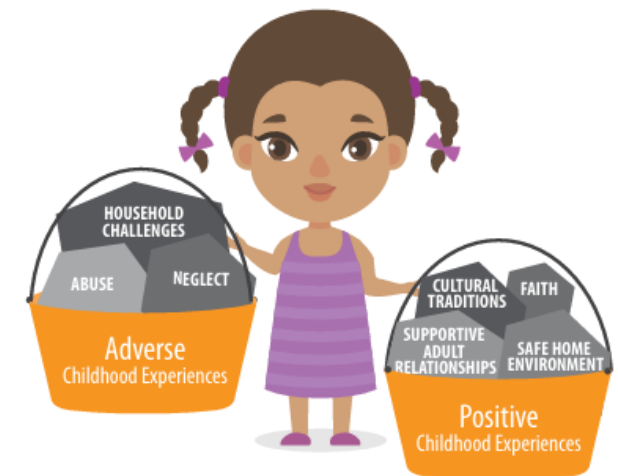




PCEs: Positive Childhood Experiences

1. Ability to talk with family about feelings.
2. Feeling that family is supportive in difficult times.
3. Comforting cultural/community traditions.
4. Feeling a sense of belonging at school.
5. Supportive friends.
6. Having at least 2 non-parent adults who genuinely care.
7. Feeling safe and protected by an adult in the home.

ADVERSITY CAN BE OUTWEIGHED BY PROACTIVELY PROMOTING POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES TO PREVENT ADULT MENTAL AND RELATIONAL PROBLEMS.²





Parents, Stress, and Youth Mental Health

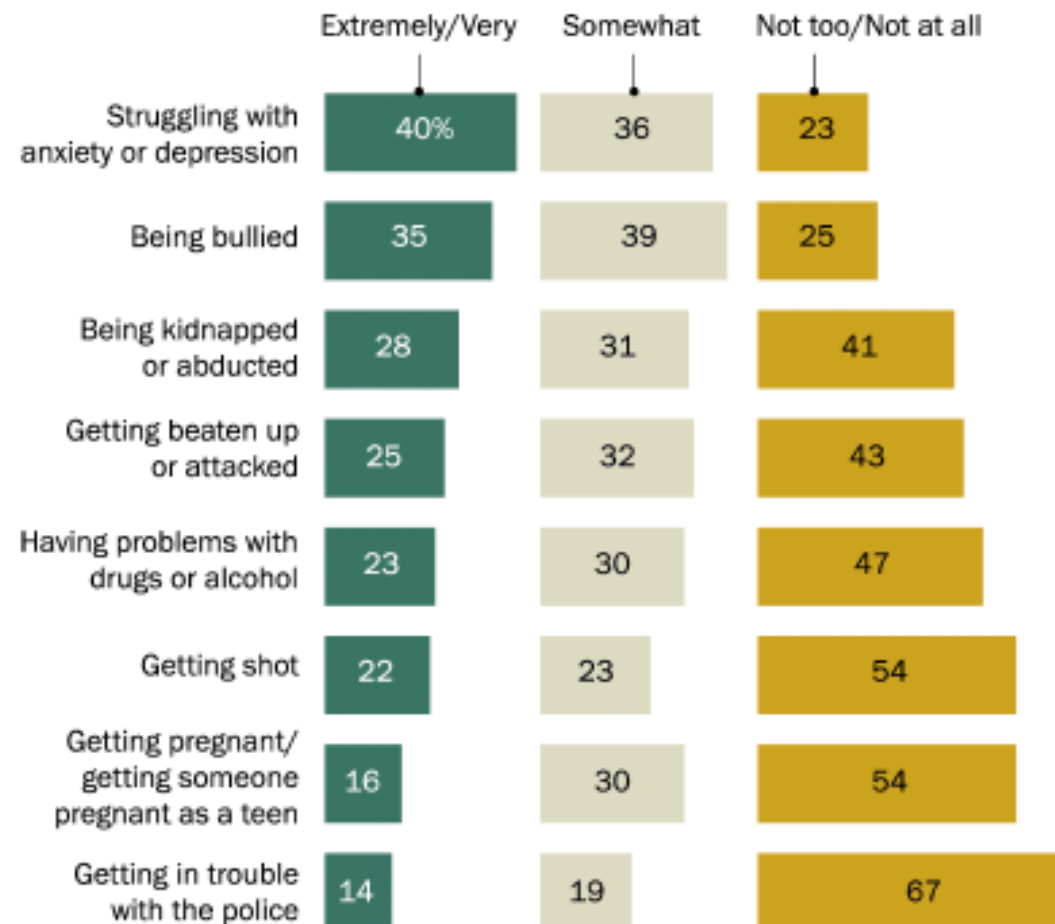


Parental Worries

- 76% worry about anxiety or depression
- 74% worry about bullying
- 59% worry about kidnapping
- 53% worry about drugs or alcohol
- 45% worry about getting shot

Mental health tops the list of parental concerns

% of parents saying they are ____ worried about each of the following happening to any of their children at some point





Comfortable but Reluctant to Start

Most teens are comfortable talking about mental health but often don't start the conversation.

- 65% of teens say they're open to talking about mental health, but only **48% talk with parents about their mental health.**
- 34% seek mental health information from parents, and among those who have sought information about mental health, **95% trust their parents for it.**



Parent Panel

Elyse Harvey
Angela Clements
Janelle Moneyppenny

Break

5 minutes

Provider Panel

Nelsie Stern
Phyllis Greenberger
Robert Kaminski

Small Group Discussion

Select Your Discussion Room

1. **Mental Health Systems** – Nelsie Stern, Elyse Harvey
2. **Family Advocacy** – Phyllis Greenberger, Janelle Money Penny
3. **Parent Peer Specialist** – Robert Kaminski, Angela Clements



Discussion questions:

1. Based on what you've heard from both panels and your experience, what are your thoughts on the family's role in children's mental health?
2. What are the gaps?

Let's Talk



Resources

Strengthening Families

1. [Triple P – Fearless Triple P](#)
2. [5 for Families](#)
3. [Family Resource Centers](#)

Child Welfare

[The Wisconsin Family Connections Center](#)



Link to [resource handout](#).

Mental Wellbeing

1. [NAMI Wisconsin](#)
2. [Mental Health America - WI](#)
3. [OCMH Support for Families](#)

Children with Special Health Care Needs

1. [Wisconsin Wayfinder](#)
2. [Children's Long-Term Support](#)
3. [Disability Rights WI](#)

Resources – Advice

Other parents

Pediatrician

Therapists

Legal system

Local County
Health and Human
Services –
Behavioral Health

Individual
learning: books,
podcasts,
webinars, classes

Announcements / Next Meeting

Member Announcements

- Share announcements/events/activities from your organizations



Next Meeting

- November 7, 2025





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