



NEWSLETTER


March 18, 2020

Special Edition – COVID-19 and Mental Health

In a very short time our lives have been altered by COVID-19 – our routines have been turned upside down and our priorities have shifted. Every day we hear more news that can shake our sense of well-being. In the Office of Children’s Mental Health (OCMH) we want to do what we can to offer resources and encouragement for well-being in these challenging times. Towards that end we offer a few considerations and resources below, all with the hope of encouraging good mental health and well-being for parents and children.

Although ever mindful of the mental health issues facing especially children as they and their parents navigate this stressful time, we will carry on as best we can, because our 2020 focus on Building Emotional Well-being through Strong Foundations continues to be as important as ever. We plan to follow our regular schedule for meetings, but will conduct each of them virtually whether by conference call or Zoom. In the weeks ahead we will certainly all become more comfortable with remote meetings and hopefully find new ways to make them feel more personal.

Why The Coronavirus Is Triggering Mental Health Issues:

Despair	Mindset switch from "living" to "survival"	Triggers feelings of hopelessness
Increased health anxiety		Decreased job security
Fear for loved ones lives		Promotes social withdrawal
Decreased financial security		Loneliness
		Quarantine makes it more difficult to distract oneself from existing mental health issues

Coronavirus isn't just threatening our physical health, but our mental health too. Look after it. Please share to raise awareness. @RealDepressionProject



Until we convene again in person, take good care of yourself *and* those around you!

Linda A. Hall

Linda A. Hall, Director
Office of Children’s Mental Health



Resources

For Parents – Talking to your Children

[CDC – Talking with Children about Coronavirus Disease 2019: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html)

For Parents - continued

PBS Wisconsin – [10 Tips for Talking about COVID-19 with Your Kids](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/10-tips-for-talking-about-covid-19-with-your-kids):
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Talking to Children about Coronavirus Disease 2019

- Remain calm and reassuring
- Make yourself available to listen and talk
- Avoid blaming language that could lead to stigma
- Monitor television, radio, phone, and online activity
- Provide accurate and age appropriate information
- Teach everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs

Source: Centers for Disease Control

Additional Trusted Resources

- **DHS Wisconsin COVID-19 web page:** <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>
- **Centers for Disease Control:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- **Social Distancing (SAMSHA):** <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>
- **World Health Organization:** <https://www.who.int/en>

Contacts for Assistance with Mental Health and Other Essential Needs

- **2-1-1 Wisconsin** in most parts of the state can help with identifying local services like utility assistance, housing, food, elder care, crisis intervention, alcohol and other drug recovery and more. Online: 211wisconsin.communityos.org/. Phone: 211 or 877-947-2211, 24/7/365. Text: Text your zip code to 898211. Chat: 211wisconsin.communityos.org/. M-F 9am - 5pm.
- **County Human Services Agencies Statewide:** <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/areadmin/hsd-programs.htm>

Telehealth News from Medical Assistance – March 18, 2020

Telehealth Delivery of Services. Given that COVID-19 is a communicable disease, telehealth services, if offered by providers, may be preferred to limit travel and exposure of members requiring health care. Current Wisconsin Medicaid telehealth policy ([ForwardHealth #510](#)) permits reimbursement for select synchronous telehealth services.

DHS is also developing policy to expand services that could be provided via telehealth. For currently covered telehealth services, DHS will expand originating site to allow services to be provided regardless of the member location. DHS will not make changes to originating site fee policy at this time. In addition, DHS will allow coverage of e-visits, certain phone visits, and certain Medicare-allowable telehealth services. Policy details and guidance will be provided in a forthcoming ForwardHealth provider update. We will continue to explore other opportunities for expanding this important service delivery method.

***This guidance does apply to mental health services.** For more, see full [Wisconsin Medicaid Response to COVID-19 Outbreak](#) memo. A link also appears near the bottom of the Forward Health portal page (<https://www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/WIPortal/>).*