



NEWSLETTER

April 2022 Edition

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Welcome to the Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) April Newsletter!

Healthy Screen Time in a Digital World – OCMH April Fact Sheet

Spending time on screens, whether smartphones, tablets, computers, gaming consoles, or TV, are a common and increasing part of daily life for the majority of kids. The more time kids spend on screens, the less time they have for healthy sleep habits, physical activity, and time outdoors, all of which improve well-being.

Prior to the onset of the pandemic, on average, kids aged 8-12 spent 5 hours a day on a screen while teens spent up to 9 hours a day. A large National Institutes of Health (NIH) study on adolescent brains found the average during COVID increased to 7.7 hours of screen time per day, excluding schoolwork, for 12-13 year-olds.



Spending too much time on a screen physically alters the brain due to a premature thinning of the cortex, resulting in lower cognitive skills. Researchers have warned that too much time on a smartphone can impair the development of social skills, critical thinking, and impulse control.

What parents/caregivers can do:

- Start your child with a basic cell phone, not a smartphone.
- Establish limits – create a family technology use contract.
- Monitor use – set restrictions on apps, use parental controls, and monitor all devices.
- Model healthy screen time for your kids.
- Cultivate healthy habits – for example, participate in outdoor activities, ensure kids get the recommended amount of sleep, and prioritize in-person connections.

Read the complete [Fact Sheet](#) and review the references.

(continued)

Lived Experience Insights

Youth Share Advice on Social Media Use

At the September 2021 OCMH Youth Listening Session on the Impact of Social Media we asked youth from across Wisconsin what advice they would give a younger sibling about how to manage social media. They said:

- Limit yourself.
- Try not to rely on it or think it's your whole life.
- Focus on making things positive and helpful to you, filter out the negative and toxic things.
- Be safe and responsible with what you share on social media.

LIVED EXPERIENCE PARTNERS

BUILD CONNECTIONS AND CAPACITY
TO CREATE SYSTEMS CHANGE



OCMH Updates

OCMH Launches Second Segment of Free Video Training

“Implicit Bias” is the topic of Segment 2 in the “Exploring Race and Culture from a Trauma-Informed Lens” video training series, and it has been released. In this 30-minute video an expert panel discusses: what implicit bias is, how am I being biased, and what can I do about my bias. Panelists are:

- **Harold Gates** (panel moderator) – Consultant, Share Collaborative
- **Dr. Lindsay Bernhagen** – Associate Lecturer/ Director – Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning / Diversity Officer for Academic Affairs / Athletics Diversity and Inclusion Designee, University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point
- **Jamaal Smith** – Community Injury and Prevention Manager, Milwaukee Office of Violence Prevention



Segment 1 of the series is on White Privilege and includes two videos. Segment 3 is on Working with People with Different Racial and Cultural Backgrounds and will be released later in April. The videos are ideal for 1-hour staff trainings – employee teams can watch the video together and then discuss the questions.

The video training series continues to be very popular with over 1,000 views and over 2,000 hits on the OCMH webpage hosting the training. Access the videos and toolkits [here](#).

Plan now – May is Mental Health Awareness

Mental Health Awareness Month is next month. OCMH has partnered with ArtWorks and CAPE to provide activities to spread awareness and acceptance. Watch for more information in May. In the meantime, below is information on the group creating this year's materials.



[ArtWorks for Milwaukee](#) combines arts engagement with workforce development in intensive paid internships for teens throughout the year. Since 2001, over 1,400 high school students have participated

in ArtWorks' programs. These programs encourage development and practice in professionalism, collaboration, leadership, accountability, and other essential job skills.

While operating under the umbrella of Artworks for Milwaukee, CAPE Mental Health Movement is a paid internship program of nine high school students. Through #CAPEMovement, the interns utilize graphic design to help spread mental health awareness, education, and acceptance. The group aims to improve access to resources, dismantle stigmas, and rebuild healthier perceptions concerning mental health.

Of their group's vision, the teen interns say: "We value our community and seek sustainable ways to improve mental health. We believe it starts with us setting a strong foundation for the present and future generations that come from ALL backgrounds, especially the young and the underserved. We imagine a world where the stigmatization of mental health conditions is a thing of the past, and effective mental health care is as common and readily available as physical check-ups."

Voices of Wisconsin Students Photovoice Project

Youth ages 14-26 interested in mental health and who like to take photos are invited to check out the Photovoice Project. Participating youth can earn \$25 for taking and submitting photos as part of this research project. To learn more contact Sara Kohlbeck at skohlbeck@mcdw.edu.

Legislative & Policy Update

Get Kids Ahead Initiative. During his 2022 State of the State address on February 15, Gov. Tony Evers announced his "Get Kids Ahead" initiative which provides \$15 million to support school-based mental health services in K-12 schools across the state. Gov. Evers also announced a \$5 million investment for the University of Wisconsin (UW) System to help students access mental health supports remotely and on campus. Every public school district can opt in to receive these funds and receive \$10,000 plus an additional amount based on their total number of students. Schools are able to use these funds to provide direct mental healthcare, hire and support mental health navigators, provide mental health first aid and trauma-based care training, or provide family assistance programs—whatever kids need. A breakdown of funding available for each school district is available [here](#). In announcing the initiative, Governor Evers said, "We know this pandemic has affected our kids in more ways than one, including their mental health. And a kid who's in crisis isn't going to be able to pay attention at school, finish their homework, or engage with their friends or teachers."

Wisconsin Legislature. A number of bills of interest to those concerned about children's mental health and well-being failed to pass before the Legislature ended its session mid-March. Among them were bills that would:

- create a Safer Wisconsin package of statutory changes and funding to address community policing, violence prevention, and treatment and diversion programs;
- encourage lodging establishments to provide training to employees on recognizing and preventing human trafficking along with a related bill that would create a human trafficking council;
- prohibit vaping on school property;
- require testing for PFAS in schools and child care centers;
- establish a grant program to pay for additional staffing to assist in the care of children with disabilities when other funding is unavailable or insufficient; and
- create a parental bill of rights.

To be considered when the Legislature returns in January, these bills would have to be reintroduced.

Mental Health Care in the United States: The Case for Federal Action. In March, U.S. Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, released a [report](#) documenting the array of shortfalls in the mental health care system that prevent American families from accessing the care they need. The report which was jointly authored by majority and minority staff on the committee, is the next step in the bipartisan effort to understand the mental health care crisis in the nation. The Committee intends to craft a bipartisan legislative package over the summer.

President Biden’s Announces Strategy to Address our National Mental Health Crisis. Declaring mental health essential to overall health and acknowledging that our nation faces a mental health crisis that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, on March 1st, the [President announced a plan](#) that proposes:

- reforms to health coverage and major investments in the mental health workforce;
- historic investments in youth mental health and suicide prevention programs and in training, educational loan repayment, and scholarships that help address the shortage of behavioral health providers, especially in underserved communities;
- invests in increasing the number of mental health providers serving Medicaid beneficiaries, as well as in behavioral health workforce development and service expansion, including in primary care clinics and at non-traditional sites;
- requiring all health plans to cover mental health and substance use disorder benefits;
- requiring health plans to ensure that they have an adequate network of behavioral health providers;
- lowering patient costs for mental health services costs;
- requiring parity in coverage between mental health and substance use disorder and other medical benefits;
- sustained and increased funding for community-based centers and clinic; and
- a State option to receive enhanced Medicaid reimbursement on a permanent basis.

The Budget also supports the implementation of the 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the Veterans Crisis Line’s 988 expansion initiative.

Children’s Mental Health in Professional Literature

OCMH Senior Research Analyst Amy Marsman spotlights open access and recent research about issues affecting children’s mental health.



Inflation, war push stress to alarming levels at two-year COVID-19 anniversary. *American Psychological Association, Stress in America Survey.* March 10, 2022.

[Read the article.](#)

Too Many Locked Doors. The scope of youth confinement is vastly understated. A one-day count cannot accurately reflect the wide and deep footprint of youth incarceration. *The Sentencing Project,* March 15, 2022. [Read the article.](#)

With students in turmoil, US teachers train in mental health. *AP News,* April 4, 2022. [Read the article.](#)

Pandemic took a toll on teen MH, US study says. *AP News,* March 31, 2022. [Read the article.](#)

More articles are available on the [OCMH Website.](#)

Children's Mental Health in the News

Kids as Young as 8 Are Using Social Media More Than Ever, Study Finds. The New York Times. Read the [article](#).

Council aims to reduce excessive drinking in Wisconsin. WI Proud. Read the [article](#).

Addressing Suspension and Expulsion in Early Childhood Education Settings: An Infant and Early childhood Mental health-Informed Approach. Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health. Read the [report](#).

Report: The scope of youth confinement is vastly understated. Juvenile Justice Information Exchange. The US incarcerates an alarming number of children and adolescents every year. Disproportionately, they are youth of color. Read the [article](#).

US: The Blueprint: Strategizing and Partnering to End Youth Suicide (Commentary). Psychiatric Times. Supporting pediatric health clinicians and other health professionals in identifying strategies and key partnerships to support youth at risk for suicide. Read the [article](#).

Of Interest

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month! The theme this year is "Thriving Children and Families: Prevention With Purpose."

- National resources: [Protective factors/ACEs](#), [outreach toolkit](#), and [sample social media posts](#).
- Wisconsin resources: Visit the [Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board's website](#) for the Five for Families social media posts. Links are [Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board Public Awareness](#) and [Prevention Board Toolkit](#).

April is National Minority Health Month – Give Your Community a Boost! is the theme. The month is a time to raise awareness about health disparities. To learn [more](#).

The CDC released their [ABES 2021 report](#). These are the most recent national figures and are startling. Youth of color reported they seriously considered attempting suicide last year in the following cultural breakdown:

- 25.6% - Multiracial
- 23.3% - American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 19.7% - Hispanic
- 16.2% - Black
- 15.9% - Asian

Speaking Up About Mental Health! This is My Story Essay Contest – High School students ages 16-18 across the US can enter this nationwide essay contest. Essays should address ways to eliminate and/or reduce mental health stigma that young people may need to overcome when seeking mental health treatment. Multiple winners will receive cash prizes. Submissions are due April 30, 2022. For more [information](#).

Gender-affirming Care Resource – the National Child Traumatic Stress Network has released a resource identifying what gender affirming care means, describes different approaches for supporting

transgender, gender diverse, and intersex (TGI) youth and their families, and lists additional tools to enhance organization’s work. Learn [more](#).

Education and Mental Health During COVID-19 – How Children and Caregivers Doing A Year Later? National Federation of Families. See the [infographic](#).

The Wisconsin Department of Justice opened a Title II **school-based restorative justice program grant opportunity**. This will support public, private, charter, and tribal schools in introducing restorative justice principles and practices to their school discipline policies and procedures or expanding their use within the school. Grants up to \$50,000 will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis. Applications will be accepted until April 29th or all funding is awarded. For [information](#).

Talking to Children about War. The National child Traumatic Stress Network. This fact sheet offers recommendations for talking to children about war. For this and other [fact sheets](#).



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