



NEWSLETTER

February 2023

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

Supporting Child Well-being through Peer Support – Newest OCMH Fact Sheet

Peer support is a form of community care where those with lived experience help others navigate issues through supportive relationships. Aside from being someone to talk to, peer support providers can help identify resources and navigate care. Positive outcomes are more likely when people talk with someone who has lived through the same experience. Youth who have peers they can relate to and have positive teen friendships have better mental health outcomes into adulthood.



There are a range of peer support roles from informal support to formal roles that require specific training roles such as recovery coaches, community health navigators, and certified peer specialists. Because peer support providers have lived experience, they understand the stigma often associated with mental health issues. They also tend to be culturally competent and trauma-informed. Given the shortage of mental health professionals, especially racially and culturally diverse practitioners, peer support fills a critical gap in the workforce.

Among the different types of peer support are:

- School-based Peer-led Wellness Programs – Student leaders actively support their peers in wellness, mental health, and suicide prevention activities. See the OCMH [map](#) showing where these groups are active.
- Certified Peer Specialists – Wisconsin offers two certification programs:
 - Certified Parent Peer Specialists – People trained to provide peer support to other parents raising a child with behavioral health challenges.
 - Certified Peer Specialists – People trained to support adults with mental health and substance use issues.
- Peer Recovery Centers – Those living in recovery from mental health and substance use challenges can serve as a safe resource for peers.

What we can do

Parents/Caregivers

- Seek out peer confidential support specific to your identity (e.g. [parents](#), [LGBTQ](#), [Hmong](#), or [people with disabilities](#)).
- Consider becoming a [Certified Parent Peer Specialist](#) if you have experience to share.

Policymakers:

- Support Medicaid reimbursement rates for peer support services.

- Expand peer specialist programs that offer paid employment for the peer workforce.

Schools

- Create opportunities for youth to provide peer support in whole school wellness and school-based mental health programs.
- Cultivate a [Trauma Sensitive School](#).

Access the Fact Sheet and research citations [here](#).

Lived Experience Insights

DeAnna Cobun, Parent Partner with Professional Services Group and member of the Department of Children and Families Parent Leaders in Child Welfare stakeholder group, shares her insight into how peer services help parents.



As a Parent Partner I have worked with a wide range of parents who struggle with mental health issues as well as drug and alcohol addictions. The parents who have a Parent Partner have said that having someone who understands what they are going through significantly changed their willingness to work with a system that is distrusted by most of the community.

Having a peer support in this system is important because these are the darkest times in a parent's life, and they want someone who understands their feelings. As a peer support in this system, I can help the parents understand the process when all they hear is the noise of an empty home. As a peer support I can advocate for my parent when their voices are shaky.

There is something about lived experience that you can't teach. When talking about making changes to systems, having a group of people who have experienced that system can be a benefit to the decision makers. They get to hear about the real-life stories of what works and what doesn't work. The peer support work that is happening here in Rock County has shown to empower our parents to engage with a system they are navigating.

- *DeAnna Cobun works as a Parent Partner for Professional Services Group in Rock County. They are contracted through Rock County Child Protective Services (CPS) to work with parents going through the CPS system. A requirement of being a Parent Partner is to have had children that were removed from their care and then successfully navigated the system.*

Parenting in America Today

Mental health concerns top the list of parental worries.

The biggest concern for parents in America about their children younger than 18 is mental health. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center found that around 40% of parents are extremely or very worried that their children might struggle with anxiety or depression. And, according to Dr. Pamela Cantor, Founder and Senior Science Adviser of Turnaround for Children, these numbers could turn out to be an underestimate of the suffering.



The Pew study shows mothers are more likely than fathers to worry about the many things concerning them about their children. It also points to differences by income and by race and ethnicity. Read more about the Pew study [here](#).

In an interview with NPR, Dr. Cantor discusses things we can do to help young people in dealing with stress, anxiety, and depression. She said, “We know that there are things that we can do, whether they have to do with nutrition, sleep, meditation. We know that sports and athletics and physical activity can be helpful. And most of all, relationships, supportive relationships have a biology that’s actually protective of the brain.” She continues to discuss social media, signs that parents should look out for, and how they can support their children. Read/listen to the interview [here](#).

OCMH Updates

OCMH 2022 Annual Report Released

OCMH released its 2022 Annual Report in a briefing event on January 13, 2023. Over 540 people registered for the event, which was held in person at the State Capitol and virtually.

- Read the [report](#)
- Listen to the [briefing event](#)



OCMH Collective Learning

OCMH Lived Experience Partner Dr. Tracy Loken Weber will share insights of over five years of research and disseminate her dissertation finding – **From Adverse Childhood Experiences to General Education Development: A Qualitative Phenomenological Case Study of Women and Their Journey Through Adult Literacy and Educational Transformation.**



Friday, February 24, 2023
10-11 am
Virtual
Register [here](#).

Dr. Loken Weber has over 25 years of community leadership and service, actively serving on numerous local, state, and international boards and currently serving as the State Co-Chair for the Children’s Mental Health Collective Impact Council as a Parent Partner for the Wisconsin Office of Children’s Mental Health and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) Foster Care Advisory Group. Tracy is currently serving the UW-Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Program as a Foster, Adoptive, and Relative Statewide Trainer, a trained Parent Peer Support Specialist, a Mental Health Advocate, Amazon Best Selling Author, and Certified Life Coach.

Legislative & Policy Update

Year of Mental Health. Gov. Tony Evers during his 2023 State of the State address [declared 2023 the Year of Mental Health](#), calling mental and behavioral health a “burgeoning crisis” affecting the state and Wisconsin’s kids, families, and workforce. He also announced that his 2023-25 executive budget will

include approximately \$500 million to expand access to mental and behavioral health services across Wisconsin. Making his “Get Kids Ahead” initiative a permanent, ongoing program to ensure kids have access to school-based mental health services (\$270 million) is one item in the package. Below are several more items of particular interest to children’s mental health advocates.

Office of Children’s Mental Health

- Provide 1.0 FTE position, \$63,800 GPR in FY24 and \$78,500 GPR in FY25 to support carrying out the duties of the office.

Department of Health Services

- Crisis Urgent Care & Observation Center Grant Program - \$10.1 million
- Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility Grant Program - \$1.8 million
- Youth Crisis Stabilization Facilities Funding - \$1.0 million
- Qualified Treatment Trainee Grants Program Expansion - \$1.6 million
- Medicaid Certified Peer Specialists Expansion - \$3.7 million
- Medicaid Residential Substance Use Disorder Treatment Room & Board Coverage - \$16.6 million.
- Medicaid Autism Treatment Services Rate Increase - \$12.2 million
- Additional Medicaid Behavioral Health Services Rate Increases - \$17.0 million
- Suicide Prevention Program - \$0.5 million
- Qualified Treatment Trainee Coverage Requirement - No state expense

Department of Public Instruction

- Comprehensive School Mental Health Aid - \$118 million
- School Mental Health Staff Reimbursement - \$18.0 million

Department of Children & Families

- Wisconsin After 3 Program - \$1.8 million
- Support for Child Care Setting Behavioral Issues - \$3.3 million

Prioritizing advocacy for increased investments in children’s mental health is critical in this year when there is considerable attention to the youth mental health crisis. If you would like to learn more about effective budget advocacy or if you want to brush up on your advocacy skills, consider attending the School Mental Health Advocacy 101 Workshop on Wednesday, February 22, 2023, 6-7pm CST via Zoom sponsored by the Coalition for Expanding School-based Mental Health in Wisconsin. [Registration Link](#)

Bolstering Child Care Statewide for Working Families. During his 2023 State of the State address, Governor Evers also announced that he will be proposing additional support to make child care more affordable and accessible for working families and to bolster child care providers statewide. He will propose more than \$340 million to provide a permanent investment in the Child Care Counts: COVID-19 Stabilization Payment Program that was created during the pandemic to support Wisconsin’s early care and education community. Also, he will propose \$22 million to support the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families’ (DCF) innovative “Partner Up!” Program, which supports employer-child care provider partnerships and child care provider staff recruitment and retention. In addition, he will be including his previously proposed plan to create a caregiver tax credit and expand the Child and Dependent Care Credit in his budget proposal, providing nearly \$30 million in tax relief to more than 100,000 Wisconsinites. [More.](#)

Youth Mental Health and Help the Health Care Workforce Meet Families’ Mental Health Needs.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded nearly \$245 million in Bipartisan Safer Communities Act funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Health Resources and Services Administration to support youth mental health, school-based programs, and help the health care workforce address mental health needs. [More.](#)

Children's Mental Health in the News



OCMH Senior Research Analyst Amy Marsman spotlights recent articles, resources and research findings impacting youth mental health.

SDOH Affect Babies for Life

Social determinants of health (SDOH), access to secure housing, family employment and economic stability, education, healthcare, and childcare within the first years of a child's life impact that child for life. The first three years of a child's life mark a foundational period of social and cognitive development that sets the stage for lifelong learning, health, and well-being. Authors find that public policy decisions in the U.S. frequently group early childhood into a single, isolated stage, which often fails to prioritize the unique needs of babies and toddlers. Also noted is that parents' mental health is predictive of their children's mental health ([stress contagion](#)), even during infancy and toddlerhood, and interventions that address the socioemotional health of parents with young children also have the benefit of improving overall family health and well-being. Read [article](#) and [journal article](#).

State of America's Babies: 2022 Yearbook Released

ZERO TO THREE, an organization that works to ensure all infants and toddlers benefit from the family and community connections critical to their well-being and development, released the 2022 Yearbook. The data and indicator analysis in the Yearbook are powered by Child Trends, a leading nonprofit research organization focused exclusively on improving the lives and prospects of children, youth, and their families. Read the [report](#).

Mental Health America releases data dashboard and guide on youth leadership

Mental Health America (MHA) recently released a [dashboard](#) of MHA Online Screening Program data that geographically maps rates of suicidal ideation, severe depression, PTSD, trauma, and psychosis for every state and county in the U.S. This dashboard is updated with three years of state and county-level data, from January 2020-December 2022. It contains an age filter, which allows users to view separate state-level mental health screening results for youth.

MHA also released a [guide](#) to supporting and advancing youth leadership. *Building Power to Build a Mentally Health World* provides recommendations on:

- Supporting young people to cultivate power within themselves,
- Building power with mentors through supportive relationships, and
- Organizing power to advance mental health through intentional intergenerational work.

Why 988 Should include youth-led supports

As state and community leaders redesign and implement their 988 crisis systems, youth leader Hayley says adults must consider youth-led supports. "Young people know better than anyone else what's going to work for them." She shares that person-led care is proven effective and gives young people a sense of empowerment and allows them to develop skills that help them in adulthood. Hayley highlights that adults often underestimate and infantilize young people, especially those struggling with mental health or substance use challenges or marginalized by the systems meant to protect them. "They default to thinking kids can't handle tough topics and conversations—but they forget they already are." Read the [story](#).

Parents Often Bring Children to Psychiatric E.R.s to Subdue Them, Study Finds

Many parents bring children to emergency rooms to manage aggressive behaviors. But the visits offer little long-term benefit, doctors said. Related research on the trends in pediatric mental health emergency department (ED) visits and revisits reveals an increase in both. Between 2015 and 2020 ED

visits increased by 8% annually with 13% of patients revisiting the ED within six months. Study authors suggest tailoring intervention around health care access to improve mental health care delivery. Read the [story](#) and [journal article](#).

Effectiveness of Child Psychiatry Consultation Programs: Findings presented from a child psychiatry consultation program suggest that consultation with child psychiatrists enabled pediatricians to manage a majority of cases, including those children with moderate severity and some degree of complexity.

If pediatricians can manage mild to moderate psychiatric disorders in the primary care setting with consultative support, the services of child and adolescent psychiatrists can be reserved for the most severe and complex cases, thereby, easing the provider shortage and improving children's access to mental health care. Read the [journal article](#); [recommendations](#) on integrating mental health care into pediatric primary care settings; and [annual program summary](#) for the [Wisconsin Child Psychiatry Consultation Program](#).

Of Interest

Random Acts of Kindness Week is February 13-17

Help make kindness the norm at school, home, and work. For ideas visit the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation's [website](#). There are scientifically proven benefits of being kind! Kindness increases the "love hormone" (oxytocin), energy, lifespan, pleasure, and serotonin while decreasing pain, stress, anxiety, depression, and blood pressure. Learn [more](#).

February is Black History Month

Black History Month provides a month-long celebration to honor and celebrate the achievements, contributions, and history of Black Americans. For more information:

- [Events](#) paying tribute to generations of African Americans who struggled with adversity.
- [History of Black History Month](#)

February is National Parent Leadership Month

Empowering parents is the goal of National Parent Leadership Month. Empowered parents raise empowered children. Learn [more](#). For [resources](#).

Public Hearing on Telehealth Policies

The Department of Health Services Division of Care and Treatment Services will hold a public hearing regarding updating administrative rules which govern behavioral health treatment programs reimbursable by medical assistance to be into compliance with 2019 Wisconsin Act 56 and allow affected providers to be in compliance with Division of Medicaid Services administrative rules and telehealth policies for billing and other purposes. The virtual hearing will be Friday, February 17, 2023, 1-2 pm.

- Join the Zoom meeting online
<https://dhs.wi.zoomgov.com/j/1604192500?pwd=NzJYUlc1STNoVVFWRGo3aUpSazJydz09>
- Join the Zoom meeting by phone
669-254-5252 (Meeting ID: 160 419 2500 | Passcode: 976069)

[Feedback may be provided at the public hearing or submitted to the Division of Care and Treatment Services until February 17, 2023](#)

Project Resiliency – Peer Run, Non Crisis Line Addresses Needs in Hmong and Underserved Communities

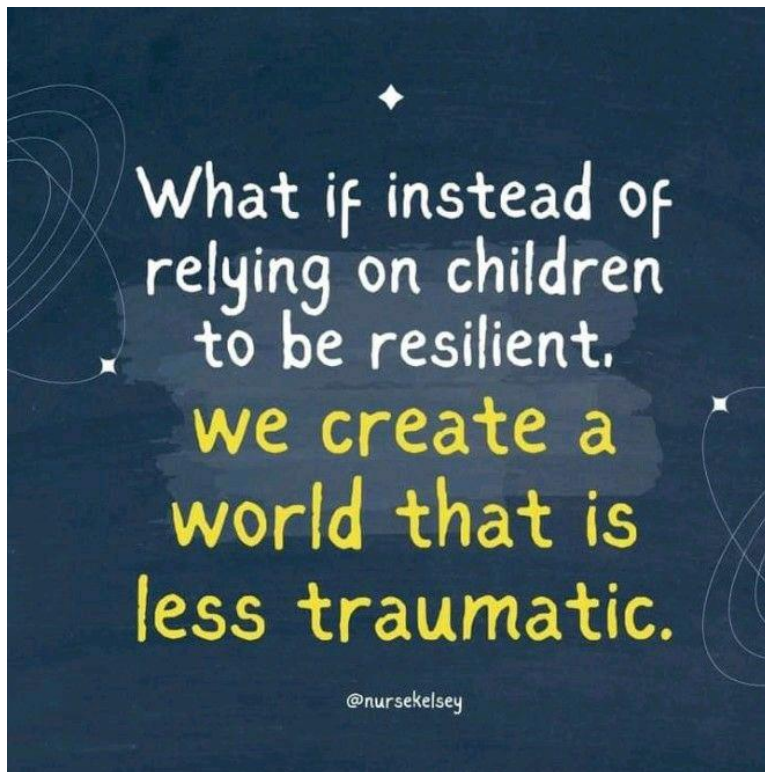
The Wisconsin United Coalition of Mutual Assistance Association (WUCMAA) is leading a statewide mental health initiative, Project Resiliency, which seeks to address the needs in the Hmong and underserved communities. One component of this work has been to create a peer-run non-crisis telephone service that will allow peer-to-peer support over the phone. The warmline is a free, confidential service that is peer-led and aims to spread awareness about mental health in underserved communities. The warmline number is **1-800-293-7080**, and it is open **Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm CST**. Hmong and English are available.

Resources to Help Dealing with the Traumatic Earthquake

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network provides materials to assist adults in [helping children after an earthquake](#). Learn [more](#).

Specific resources in Arabic:

- Psychological First Aid [Tips for Parents](#) for Helping Children in Disasters
- After the Earthquake: [Helping Young Children Heal](#)



The Office of Children’s Mental Health

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