



NEWSLETTER

January 2023

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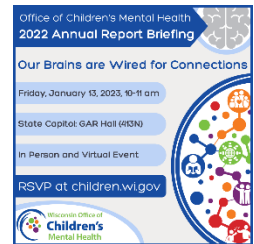
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Welcome to the Office of Children’s Mental Health (OCMH) January Newsletter!

OCMH Updates

OCMH 2022 Annual Report Briefing: Wired for Social Connection – How Wisconsin Youth are Feeling and Connecting

Learn the status of children’s mental health, concerning trends, and what we can do to improve children’s well-being and social connection as we present our 2022 Annual Report.



Friday, January 13, 2023 • 10-11 am

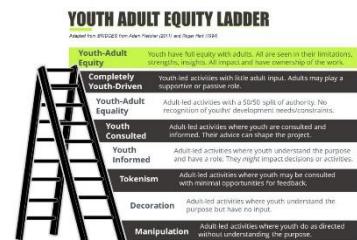
Two ways to join:

- In person at the Wisconsin State Capitol (2 E. Main Street, Madison), GAR Hall (413 N) or
- Virtual

[Register for this event.](#)

Encouraging Youth Engagement – Youth Adult Equity Ladder and Assessment

Milwaukee Succeeds’ [Youth Adult Equity Ladder](#) caught the attention of attendees at OCMH’s November 4, 2022 year-end Collective Impact Council meeting focusing on Youth Leadership in Systems Change and Relationships. The Youth Adult Equity Ladder is a tool Milwaukee Succeeds uses to examine why and how youth voice is incorporated, ranging from manipulation, tokenism, and equality to full youth-adult equity.



Milwaukee Succeeds has also launched the [Youth/Adult Equity Self-Assessment Tool](#) to help organizations determine where they are on the ladder. The assessment should be completed as a team. Once completed, a copy of the results will be emailed to the organization completing the assessment. We encourage our partners to take this survey.

(more)

Lived Experience Insights

OCMH Lived Experience Partner Crystal Long shares her insights on reflecting on the past year and parenting young adults.

As the New Year rings in I like to reflect on previous years, considering the things that have happened and what still needs to happen in my family. It helps me provide focus for the year ahead.

This year my reflection seems different as my children are all in the young adult stage. While in many ways they still need me, there are now things where I am not needed. And, to be honest, this is a little difficult for me because I have to learn to navigate life in a different way.



As I reflect on the past years with my young adult children, I realize even though we went through the same things as a family we all took away different thoughts and memories from the experiences. As I listen to them speak about what they remember and how they felt about situations, I am surprised at how different, and yet familiar, their words are. As a parent it brought up so many mixed emotions because I thought I had been there for them and we worked through things together, but they didn't always feel that way, and I had to come to terms with that.

I have come to realize that no matter how much we try to protect our children and make the choices we think are best, we cannot determine how they will feel or think about the situation. As I look back and reflect on the past year I can't help but think how some things make more sense now. Hearing things in the moment and then hearing them from my children after the fact just seem so different. Maybe it is growth or maybe it just how our brains process the information in a heightened state verses a calmer state.

Here is what I've learned over the years, and I hope it is helpful to others:

- My perspective is not the same as someone else's.
- Appreciate differences as that is what helps us learn and grow.
- Don't be hard on yourself when making a choice you think is right, even if it turns out to not be.

We all have choices to make. Be kind to yourself as well as others because we all see things at a different angle.

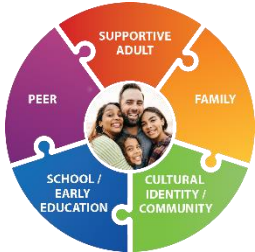
- *By: Crystal Long, Office of Children's Mental Health Lived Experience Parent Partner*

Beloit School Offers Student Connection Survey

Encouraging Positive Student-teacher Relationships

Beloit School Offers Student Connection Survey – Encouraging Positive Student-teacher Relationships

Social connections are important, and some of the most critical connections happen at school. Students who feel connected to at least one person in their school are more likely to succeed and can better navigate the ups and downs of high school.



One of the most important things educators can do for students' mental health is to form supportive and meaningful relationships with their students. The Beloit Learning Academy (the alternative high school in Beloit) understands this and has implemented a survey that asks students to identify staff members they feel most connected to. This includes any staff member – school social worker, counselor, GED coordinator, homeless coordinator, secretary, administrators, or a teacher. The simple, yet effective, data collection process is conducted in the initial term of the school year and helps gain a better insight into student connections.

Many of the students who are enrolled in Beloit Learning Academy (BLA) are behind in high school credits for their age due to issues outside of their control, including a lack of basic needs and adverse socioeconomic conditions. They are often referred from the traditional high school, and BLA provides a caring environment for them to meet their college and career goals in a nontraditional setting.

The survey is especially helpful for those who are not comfortable publicly identifying their connections. When teachers know who their students have formed strong connections with, they can maximize their effectiveness serving students' social, emotional, and academic needs. Cultivating positive student-teacher relationships has impacted their students' academics, behaviors, and attendance.

Having the ability to identify which students have connections is a useful tool in order to help them continue to stay motivated and face any struggles that may arise, in or out of school. It is an even more important way to identify those students who are lacking any adult connection in the building. The staff and faculty at BLA, once aware of those students, reach out to make connections with them to ensure they do not fall through the cracks. The connections list becomes a valuable reference to use in times of crisis to provide students support from their preferred adult.

Students generally indicate that they have 2-3 connections. Since using the connection survey, staff have noticed improved connections with students who have identified them. In some cases, staff were unaware of students who expressed connections with them on the survey. This allowed staff to be more intentional when interacting with the students and for the escorting of those students to their trusted staff member in times of adversity, both academic and behavioral. This also helps when choosing staff chaperones for field trips, events, and even in assigning students to Advisors during their Life Skills courses. This is due to the fact that the Advisors are the students' college and career liaisons, as they express interest in higher education and career fields. The best part of the communication survey is that it gives a voice to students who have not developed the interpersonal communication skills to identify a staff member verbally. The Google Forms survey opportunity allows students to communicate this vital information to staff, which helps when 1-1 coaching, mentoring, academic support, or behavioral support is needed.

The BLA has shared their Student Connection Survey with the Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) should other schools wish to implement and utilize the survey. Contact [OCMH](#) for more information.

Legislative & Policy Update

Federal Mental Health Appropriations. The Federal [Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations](#) bill passed in December provides increased funding for access to mental health services. Several items specifically address children's mental health:

- \$130 million for Children's Mental Health Services, a \$5 million increase
- \$140 million, a \$20 million increase, for Project AWARE

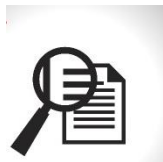
- \$111 million for Department of Education programs designed to increase the availability of mental health services in schools
- \$94 million for the National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, an increase of \$12 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level
- \$15 million for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, an increase of \$5 million above the fiscal year 2022 enacted level

Additional items address the availability of mental health services generally and will affect access for the adults in children’s lives.

Essential Health Benefits. The federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is [soliciting public comment](#) on issues related to the Essential Health Benefits (EHB) under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (the Affordable Care Act or ACA). Among the benefits topics DHHS is interested in hearing about are: the description of the EHB, the scope of benefits covered in typical employer plans, the review of EHB, coverage of prescription drugs, and substitution of EHB.

Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Patient Records. The federal Department of Health and Human Services has released [a notice of proposed rulemaking](#) to make it easier for providers to share patients’ substance use disorder treatment records. Currently, rules on sharing substance use disorder treatment records are more restrictive than for other patient records. Patients usually have to consent each time substance use records are shared. Providers argue that they sometimes do not have access to all the information they need to treat patients and that the rules pose a compliance burden. Under the proposal, providers would only need to get a patient’s consent one time to share substance use records.

Children’s Mental Health in the News



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

Students Say Depression, Anxiety Are Holding Them Back. But They Can’t Find Help at School.

Middle and high school students say overwhelmingly that depression, stress, and anxiety are the biggest barriers to their learning, according to a new report released by YouthTruth, a nonprofit that surveys K-12 students and families for school districts. Read [story](#), [results](#), [insights](#), and [related article](#).

Poll finds youth mental health crisis is not getting better. The majority of school administrators say the problem is the same or worse than a year ago, especially in rural areas. Read the [press release](#), [results](#), [presentation](#).

Psychologists struggle to meet demand amid mental health crisis. The American Psychological Association’s practitioner impact survey found the largest increase in patients was among adolescents 13-17 with nearly half of psychologists reporting patient increases for this group. Read [survey results](#), and [related article](#) on ways to get help during therapist shortage.

Collaborative care models, where primary care providers, case managers, and psychiatrist work as a team, effectively resolve many common barriers to quality treatment. ADHD is highly treatable, yet systemic barriers — from cost and lack of pediatric services to fragmented care systems — often hinder identification of ADHD in children and/or prevent them from receiving optimal care. As an integrated care model, collaborative care treats persistent conditions that require systematic follow-up, like ADHD.

Read [story](#). Related, the Medical College of Wisconsin reports on an integrated care approach to improve mental health screenings in primary care settings. Read [story](#).

Simulations show the long-term benefits of two-generation programs, especially for Black children.

Programs that serve both parents and preschoolers with two-generation strategies help to enhance parents' social and economic capital, as well as the development of infants and toddlers. Read the [research](#), related [journal article](#).

Of Interest

Gov. Evers Statewide Budget Listening Sessions Tour. Gov. Evers will hold listening sessions as part of his statewide 'Doing the Right Thing' listening session tour. In person locations are in Wausau, Superior, and Eau Claire. A virtual session is also scheduled. [Learn more](#).

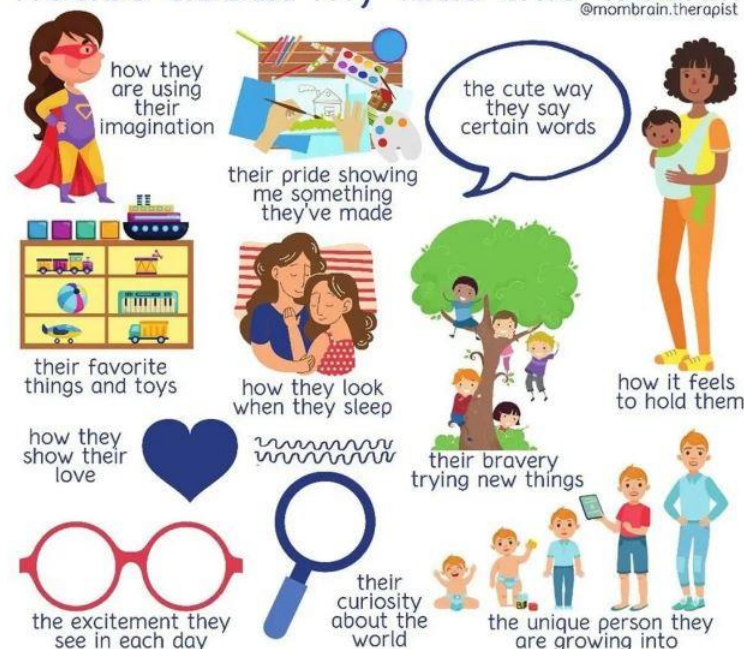
School Mental Health Podcast.

["School Mental Health Works!"](#) is a podcast featuring discussion on school mental health in Wisconsin. It is produced by the Coalition for Expanding School-Based Mental Health in Wisconsin in collaboration with the Wisconsin Association of Family & Children's Agencies and the Department of Public Instruction.

Checking in with Teens about their Mental Health. The Department of Public Instruction stresses the importance of checking in with teens regarding their mental health and offers tips on how to do that. [Check it out](#).

Things I want to pause and notice about my kids this week...

@mombrain.therapist



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