



# NEWSLETTER

*June 2022 Edition*

## **Contents:**

- Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning
  - Lived Experience Insights
  - Legislative & Policy Update
  - Children's Mental Health in the News
  - OCMH Updates
  - Of Interest

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

Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning – Newest OCMH Fact Sheet

Lead is a toxic metal that poisons the brain and body. There is no safe blood lead level (BLL) so even very small amounts are dangerous. Lead exposure mainly comes from paint, soil, and water. Lead exposure damages a child's developing brain, kidneys, and nervous system. It can cause learning disabilities, behavior problems, seizures and in extreme cases, death.

Many children who are lead poisoned never show any symptoms, resulting in it going undetected. Undiagnosed lead poisoning can cause a child's intellectual or behavioral issues to be misunderstood, misdiagnosed, or ignored.

Lead exposure is a problem in all of Wisconsin's 72 counties. Children are most at-risk of lead exposure if they live in neighborhoods with older homes, lower housing values, and a higher proportion of rental properties. While rates of lead poisoning have declined over time in Wisconsin, there are dramatic differences for children of color, especially Black children who are poisoned more than three times the rate of White children.

Lead poisoning is 100% preventable.

Read the complete [Fact Sheet](#) and check out what you can do to prevent lead poisoning.

## Lived Experience Insights

## **How Lead Has Impacted My Family**

*By: Shalene Fayne, Lived Experience Partner – Office of Children’s Mental Health*

I've had lead in my body since the late 90's which caused overall chronic problems and various medical issues. When I was a teenager, I was complaining about my legs hurting and I started having seizures. Everyone said it was all in my head. I went to Children's Hospital when I was 15 and they saw the density of lead in my bones. As I started growing it started leeching out of my bones. As an adult, lead has caused me to have high blood pressure, renal failure, and kidney failure.



## LIVED EXPERIENCE PARTNERS

## BUILD CONNECTIONS AND CAPACITY TO CREATE SYSTEMS CHANGE



All of my children were born with lead in their system. Even after that medical history, I still had to request lead testing for my youngest child, Madison. Madison is more hyper than other children. I don't know if it is due to lead or other medical issues such as autism and thinning of corpus colosum. I really can't pinpoint what is going on with her because of the multiple diagnoses. Her lead level has come down by working with the Milwaukee Health Department and adding extra iron to her diet.

What families, communities, and decision-makers should know:

- Lead can lead to cognitive delays.
- Lead can destroy your kidneys.
- Lead is in old homes.
- Even toys have lead in them.
- Kids can be exposed outside of the home too – lead is in the soil and in the water.
- Homes and places where children spend time should be tested for lead.
- When the parent or sibling has lead, we need to monitor lead right away at birth.
- Kids are not tested for lead past age 6, but we need to follow children beyond the age of 6. We need to make sure that more people are being evaluated, particularly within the inner city of Milwaukee. Homes and places where children spend time should be tested for lead.
- The lead test for children needs to be on blood taken from a vein – testing with blood from a finger prick is not always accurate. When kids grow, their lead level may go down, but it could go into the bones, and that is hard to monitor without more in-depth testing.
- Ask the doctor to test your child, especially if you see some unusual behaviors.

## Legislative & Policy Updates

**Biennial Budget Proposals by the Wisconsin Council on Mental Health.** On May 31<sup>st</sup>, the Council forwarded eleven 2023-25 budget proposals to Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake. Among the proposals were:

- Support a return 17-year-olds to Juvenile Justice System (DHS, DOC, DCF, DOJ/Attorney General)
- Fund a DHS Director of Suicide Prevention and staff (DHS)
- Fund grants to support community-based suicide prevention coalitions (DHS, DCF)
- Fund an increase in the Medicaid group therapy rate or allow additional units of service (DHS)
- Fund and support Dialectical Back Behavioral Therapy provided to fidelity (DHS)
- Fund Regional Crisis Stabilization Facilities (DHS)
- Fund expansion of Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) program including expansion of mental health courts (DHS, DOC, DOJ/Attorney General)
- Fund DOC employee training and technical assistance for trauma informed care, diversity equity and inclusion and person-centered planning (DHS, DOC)
- Continue funding for Peer-Run Respite and Peer Recovery Centers (DHS)

State departments are currently developing budget proposals for the Governor's consideration. Departments submit their budget proposals to the Governor in September.

**Biden-Harris Administration Highlights Strategy to Address the National Mental Health Crisis.** Noting that people of all ages are experiencing mental health issues, that more than half of parents are concerned about their children's mental health, and that 40% of teenagers are experiencing persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, the Biden-Harris Administration proposed a comprehensive mental

health strategy and \$100 billion over 10 years for implementation. Among the items specifically related to children are:

- Guidance on how to use American Rescue Plan of America funds to increase access to mental health treatment at schools, colleges, and universities;
- Sharing of resources between the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Education (DOE) to increase school-based health services;
- A pediatric mental health care access program to promote integration of behavioral health needs into the pediatric primary setting;
- Training for human services professionals and volunteers in mental health literacy and social and emotional skills;
- Enhancement of school-based support in Native communities;
- Incentives for recovery support model innovation; and
- Support for grandparents raising grandchildren.

Also referenced are:

- DOE's [Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral and Mental Health](#) initiative.
- The Centers Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) investment of \$15 million in the [Healthy Schools program](#).
- DHHS's \$2 million investment to establish a new [Center of Excellence on Social Media and Mental Wellness](#) which will develop and disseminate information, guidance, and training on the impact of children and youth social media use, especially the potential risks social media platform pose to mental health.
- The Surgeon General's December, 2021, [Advisory on Protecting Youth Mental Health](#) that emphasizes six recommendations:
  - Recognize that mental health is an essential part of overall health.
  - Empower youth and their families to recognize, manage, and learn from difficult emotions.
  - Ensure that every child has access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally competent mental health care.
  - Support the mental health of children and youth in educational, community, and childcare settings. And expand and support the early childhood and education workforce.
  - Address the economic and social barriers that contribute to poor mental health for young people, families, and caregivers.
  - Increase timely data collection and research to identify and respond to youth mental health needs more rapidly. This includes more research on the relationship between technology and youth mental health, and technology companies should be more transparent with data and algorithmic processes to enable this research.

Access the entire Biden-Harris Administration fact sheet [here](#).

**School Social Workers Improving Student Success Act ([H.R. 7037](#))**. Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Milwaukee) and Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-California) introduced legislation, in March, to provide grants to: 1) hire and retain school social workers to increase youth access to mental health services and 2) develop a National Technical Assistance Center for School Social Work to study the effectiveness of school social work and develop strategies for its improvement. [More](#).

*(more on next page)*

## Children's Mental Health in the News

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



**Lead poisoning tests plunged during the pandemic. Kids still aren't getting screened.** NBC News, May 11, 2022. [Read Article](#).

**Related:** Known to be toxic for a century, lead still poisons thousands of Midwestern kids.

**White House turns focus to youth mental health.** Roll Call, May 18, 2022. [Read Article](#).

**Related:** Biden-Harris Administration Highlights Strategy to Address the National Mental Health Crisis.

**A Cry for Help from Teen Boys in Austin is Answered.** The 74, May 22, 2022.

[Read Article](#).

**Related:** Adolescent Connectedness.

**Related:** Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Study, January-June 2021.

**Over Half of Young People With Depression Don't Get Help for at Least a Year.**

Healthline, May 11, 2022. [Read Article](#).

**Related:** Examination of Young US Adults' Reasons for Not Seeking Mental Health Care for Depression, 2011-2019.

**A decade after MPS was flagged for over-suspending Black students, disparity persists.** Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, May 19, 2022. [Read Article](#).

**Related:** How Implicit Bias Impacts Our Children in Education.

## OCMH Updates

### Help Us Determine our Annual Meeting Topic

We want your opinion. What would you like to hear about at our OCMH Annual Meeting in December?



Once again, this December, we will invite our network, partners, and the public to attend a meeting on current issues in children's mental health. The meeting will be virtual and we are shaping the agenda now. Please take this short 3-question [survey](#) and let us know what children's mental health topic/s you would like to learn more about.

## Of Interest

### June is Pride Month

Pride Month is celebrated each year in the month of June to recognize the strength and resilience of the LGBTQ+ community. This month also acknowledges the impact that LGBTQIA2s+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, two-spirit, and countless affirmative ways others choose to identify) people have had on society locally, nationally, and internationally. Read more: [U.S. Census Bureau](#); [U.S. Proclamation](#); Governor Evers [Executive Order #166](#).

### **Tools to Help Cope after Recent Mass Shootings**

The National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM) compiled a [list](#) of websites and free resources to help support youth, families, schools, and communities impacted by violence.

### **Summer Vacation Tips**

The Child Mind Institute offers [suggestions for summer routines](#)

### **Practice Communication Skills**

[Ways to Improve Your Grade-Schooler's Communication Skills](#)

### **Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)**

Medicaid and CHIP cover essential mental and behavioral health services for kids and teens. Learn more from these [tools](#) that encourage parents and caregivers to enroll.

### **988 is Coming Soon**

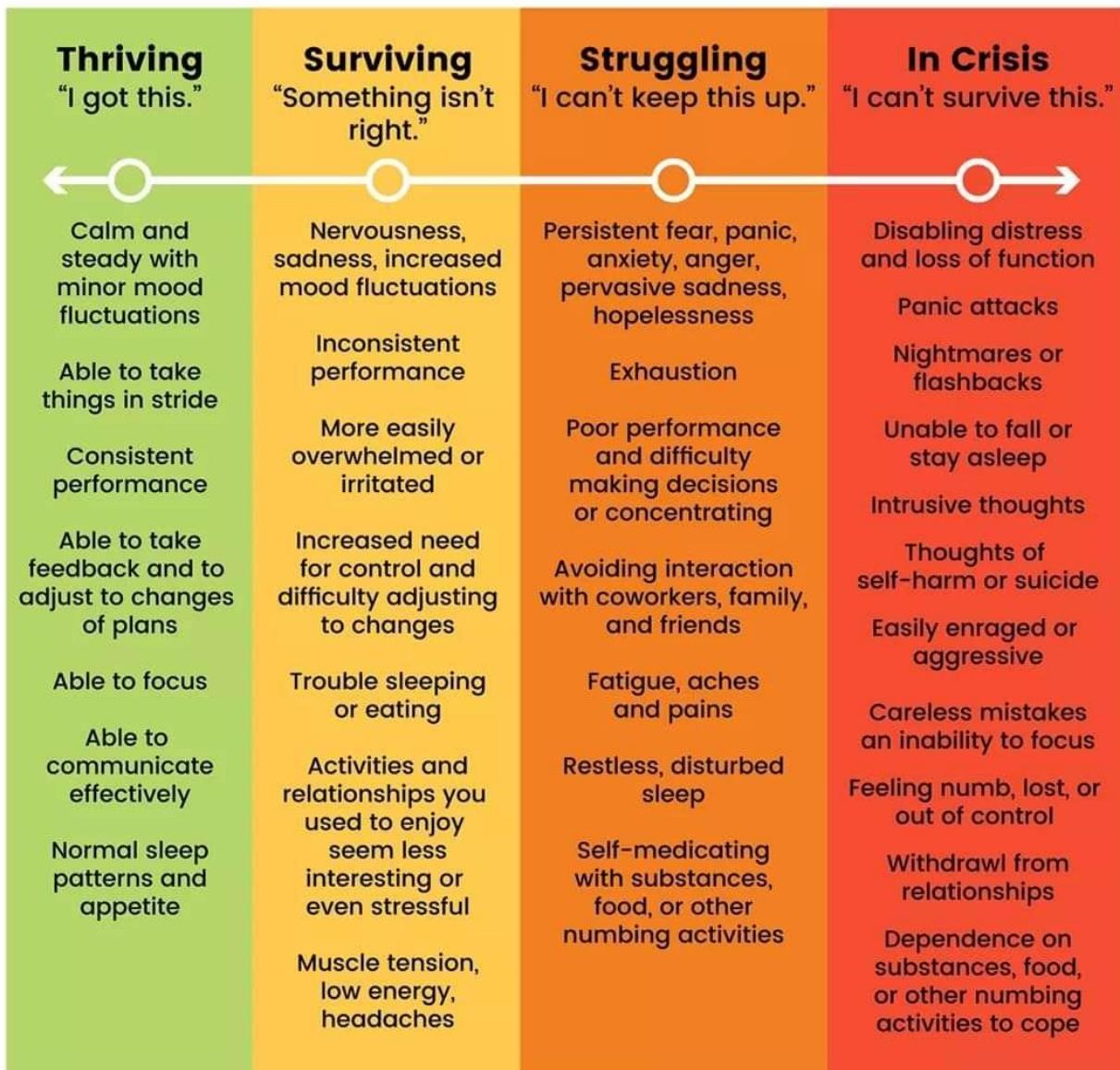
As of July 16, 2022, anyone in mental health distress can call 988, send a text to 988, or use the online chat function on [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](#) to connect with a counselor through what will be known as the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Wisconsinites who use 988 will connect with an in-state service, the Wisconsin Lifeline. For [information](#). The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255 remains in service and should be used prior to the July 16 launch of 988.

### **Ken Burns Documentary on Youth Mental Health**

Ken Burns' newest documentary focuses on youth mental health. "Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Illness" focuses on the mental health crisis among youth in America and premieres on PBS stations nationwide June 27 and 28, 2022. The film gives voice to the experiences of young people who struggle with mental health challenges and focuses on the importance of awareness and empathy.

The Office of Children's Mental Health  
[Children.wi.gov](#)  
[OCMH@wisconsin.gov](mailto:OCMH@wisconsin.gov)  
Follow us on Twitter @WIKidsMH  
Like us on [FaceBook](#)

*(more on next page)*



Adapted from: Watson, P., Gist, R., Taylor, V., Evlander, E., Leto, F., Martin, R., Vaught, D., Nash, W.P., Westphal, R., & Litz, B. (2013). Stress First Aid for Firefighters and Emergency Services Personnel. National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.