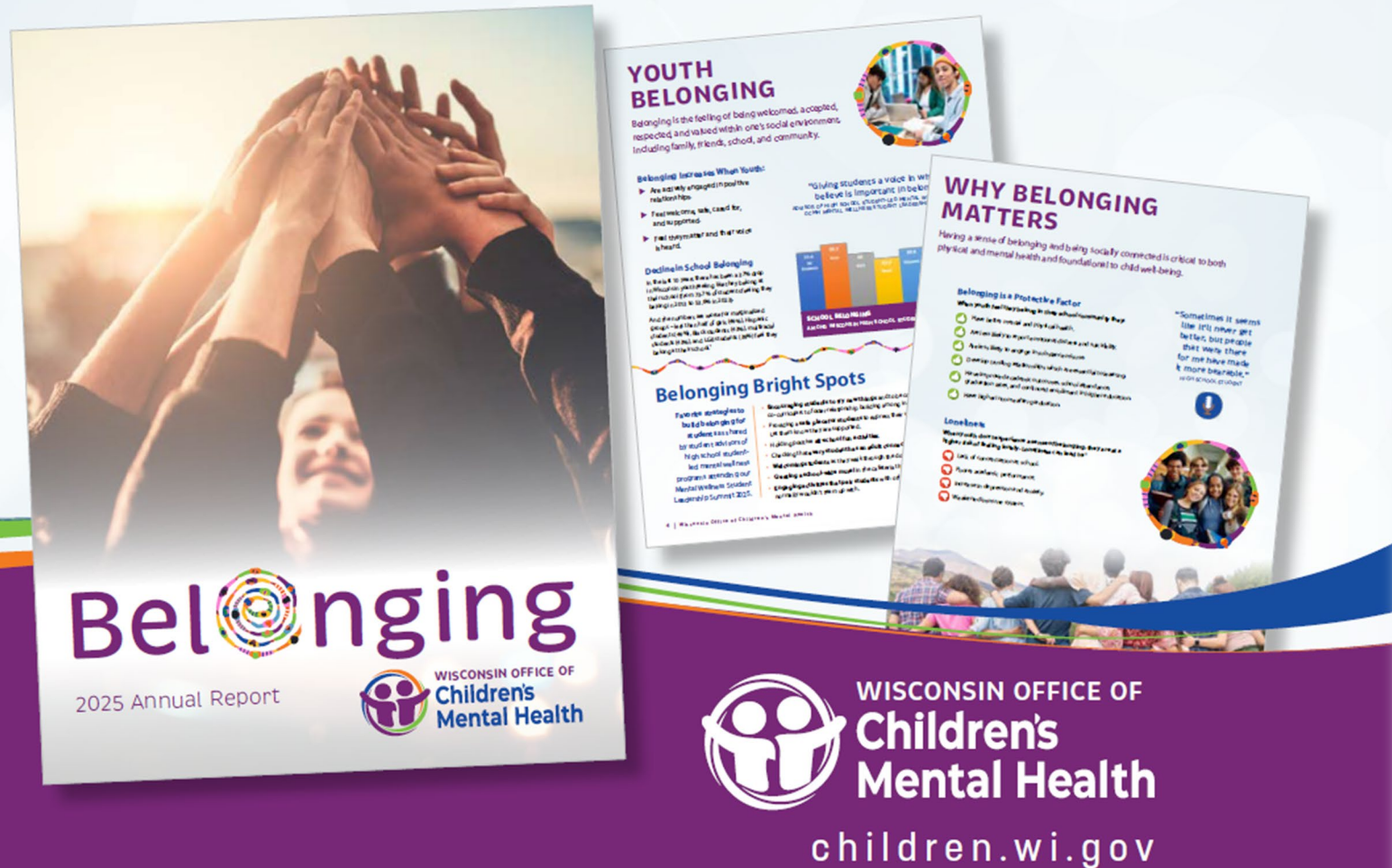


Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health 2025 Annual Report Briefing



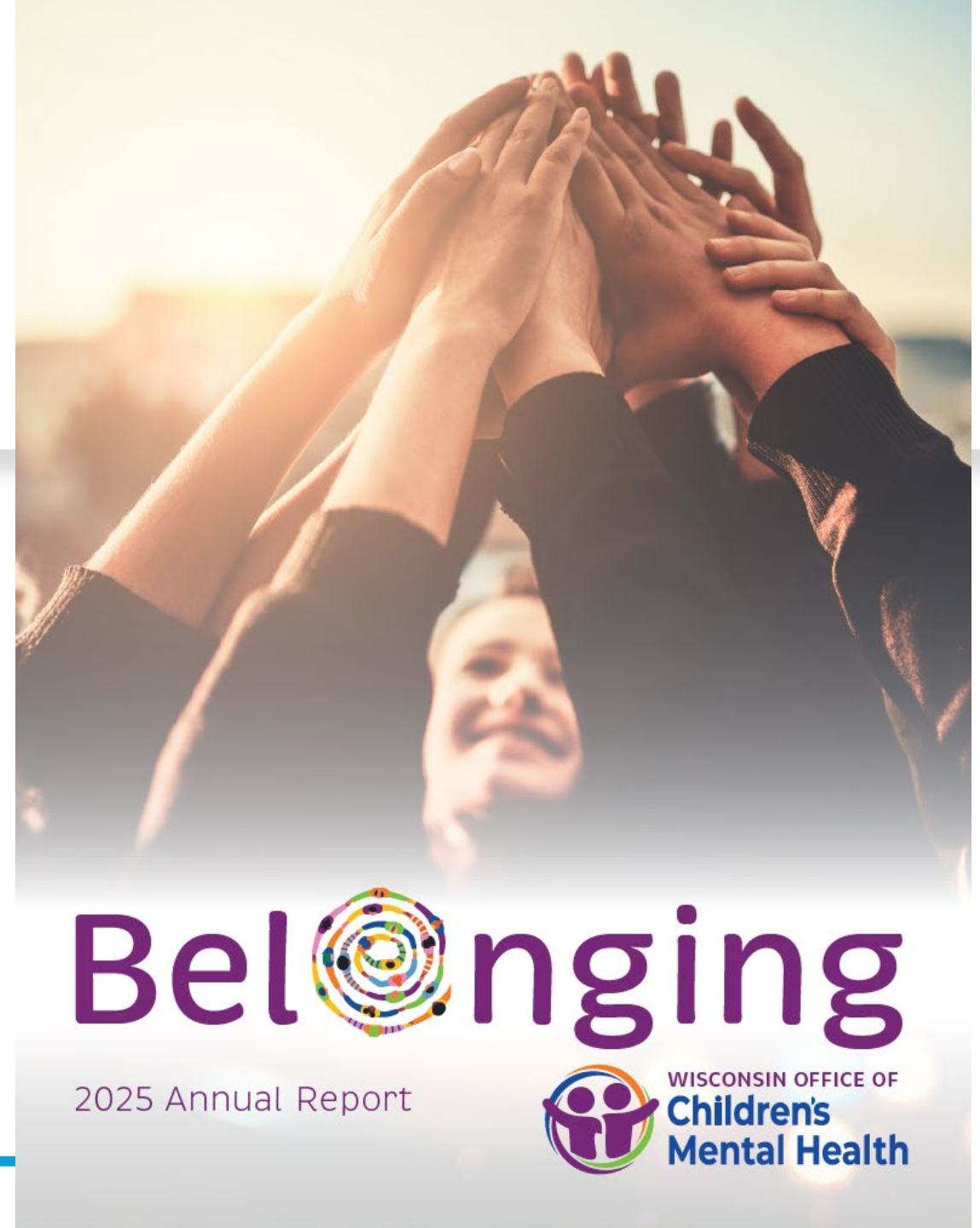
Scan the QR code to
access the report ↓



Presented on January 9, 2026

Today's Briefing

- Welcome
- Overview
- Data Highlights
- Youth Speakers
- Questions



Overview

Linda Hall, Director

Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health

Wisconsin OCMH

- Coordinate mental health initiatives and improve integration across state agencies
- Establish and track children's mental health data points to direct these efforts

Our Vision:

Wisconsin's children are safe, nurtured, and supported to achieve their optimal mental health and well-being.

Systems are family-friendly, easy to navigate, equitable, and inclusive of all people.

OCMH Staff



Linda Hall

Director

Karen Katz

Operations Lead

Amy Marsman

Senior Research Analyst

Andrea Turtenwald

Family Relations Coordinator

Connect With Us



WISCONSIN OFFICE OF
**Children's
Mental Health**

Email

OCMH@wi.gov

Resources

<http://children.wi.gov>

Newsletters

<https://children.wi.gov/Pages/OCMHNewsletters.aspx>

Annual Reports

<https://children.wi.gov/Pages/ResearchData/AnnualReport.aspx>



Wisconsin Office of **Children's Mental Health** **FACT SHEET**

LEARN:

- WHY THIS MATTERS
- WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS
- WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WISCONSIN
- WHAT HELPS
- WHAT WE CAN DO

ADVERSE Childhood Experiences

- HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGES
- ABUSE
- NEGLECT

POSITIVE Childhood Experiences

- CULTURAL TRADITIONS
- SUPPORTING ADULT RELATIONSHIPS
- SAFE HOME ENVIRONMENT
- FAITH

SUPPORTING CHILD WELL-BEING

Wisconsin Office of **Children's Mental Health** **DATA BITES**

INSIGHTS ON CHILD WELL-BEING

FEELINGS THERMOMETER

How do you feel?	What can you do about it?
ANGRY, FURIOUS, EXPLOSIVE ► Yelling, Stomping, Meltdown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vigorous physical exercise • Breathe deep breaths • Take a warm shower or bath
FRUSTRATED, ANNOYED, IRRITABLE ► Arguing, Refusing, Shutting down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meditate/pray • Listen to favorite music • Take a fast-paced walk
ANXIOUS, WORRIED, UNSETTLED ► Pacing, Avoiding, Crying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to a family member/friend • Pay attention to each of your 5 senses • Focus on what you can control
SAD, NEGATIVE, LONELY ► Crying, Withdrawn, Slowed/Disengaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a positive goal for the day • Call a friend or relative • Journal about your feelings
HAPPY, CALM, CONTENT ► Smiling, Laughing, Engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help someone else • Notice and enjoy your positive mood • Engage in an enjoyable activity

Wisconsin Office of **Children's Mental Health** children.wi.gov

WHAT TO DO WHILE YOU WAIT FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



AT THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

- Ask for a mental health screening for your child.
- If you don't think your doctor is understanding you, say "I'm not sure you are hearing me."
- Consider a parent-only appointment with the doctor.
- Can you contact the doctor in different ways – call later, electronic message?
- Send pictures or videos that demonstrate your child's issues.

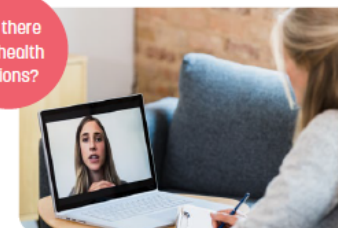
"I'm not sure you're hearing me."



FOR THERAPY

- Is there a therapy group for your child? Search other therapists' websites or social media.
- Ask the therapist you have been referred to for resources – podcasts, books, etc.
- Parent's employer may have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- Is telehealth for mental health services an option?

Are there telehealth options?



AT YOUR SCHOOL

- Are there school-based mental health services or resources at your school?
- Actively communicate with school staff – your child's teacher, counselor, office staff, etc. Let them know what to expect with your child.

Are there good behaviors to encourage?



AT HOME, IN YOUR FAMILY

- Look at the basics – is your child getting enough sleep, eating well, going to school?
- Search for online support groups.
- Seek out people who will understand your situation.
- Could a parent coach help?
- Sometimes you need to monitor your child 24/7.
- Practice self-care and regulate your own emotions as necessary.
- Remember to find moments to enjoy your child and being a parent.



Report Overview

<https://children.wi.gov/Pages/ResearchData/AnnualReport.aspx>

**Belonging is the key to wellness,
unlocking solutions to mitigate
the youth mental health crisis.**



Belonging Data

Amy Marsman, Senior Research Analyst
Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health

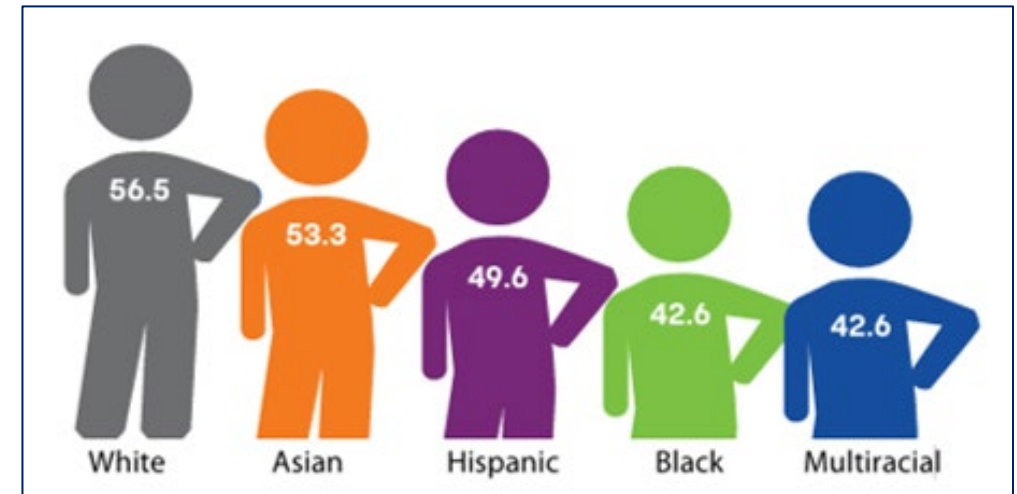
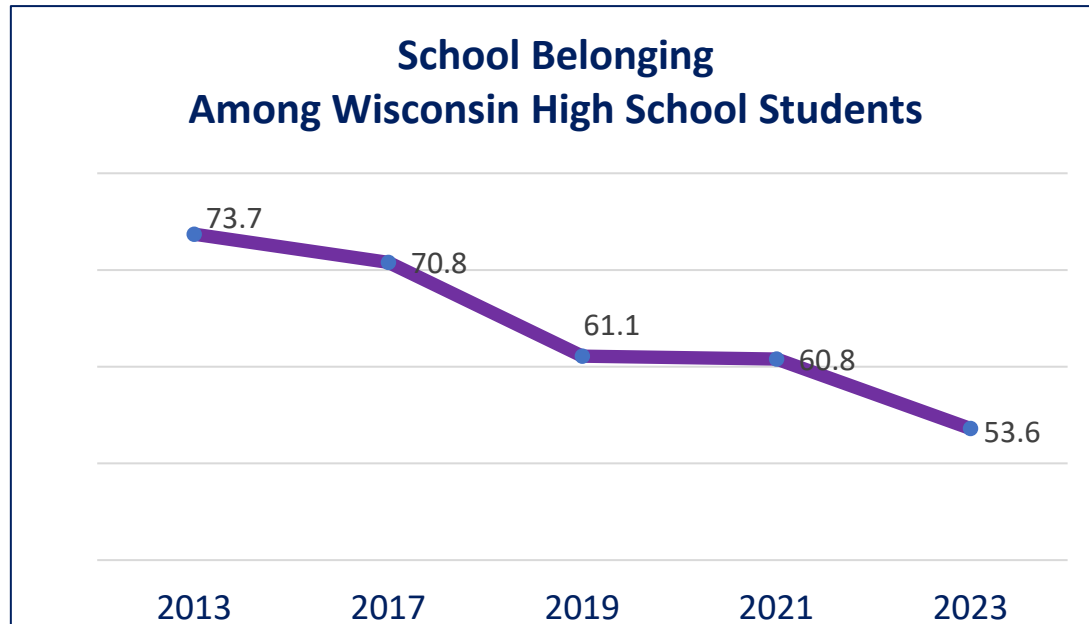
Belonging is a Protective Factor

- ✓ Improves mental and physical health
- ✓ Less emotional distress and suicidality
- ✓ Less likely to misuse substances
- ✓ Helps to build trusting relationships
- ✓ Improves academic outcomes
- ✓ Higher income after graduation



Why Belonging Matters

Belonging Trends



Data Highlights

<https://children.wi.gov/Pages/ResearchData/AnnualReport.aspx>

Belonging Increases When Youth...

- ✓ Are actively engaged in positive relationships.
- ✓ Feel welcome, safe, cared for, and supported.
- ✓ Feel they matter and their voice is heard.



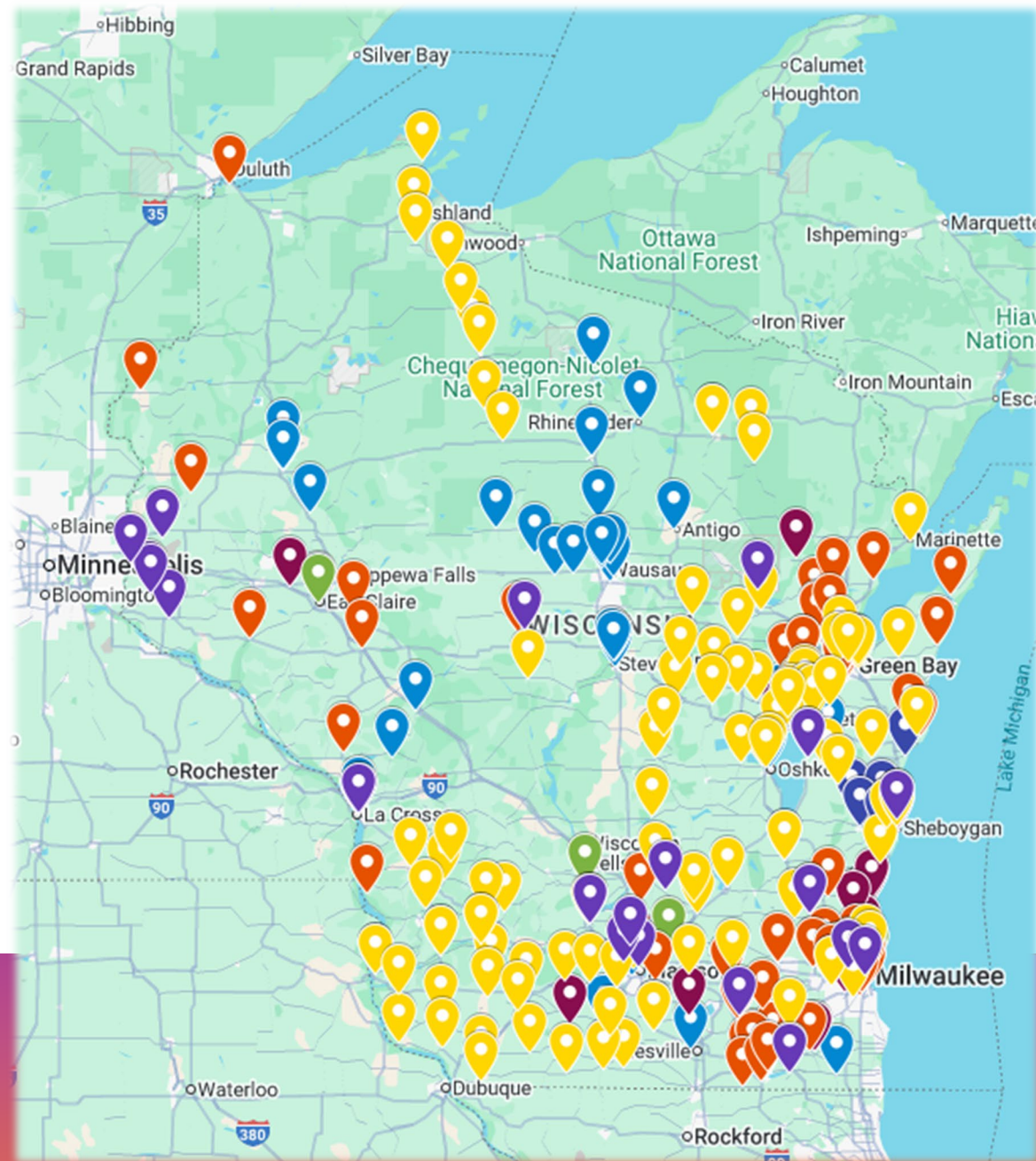
Why Belonging Matters



Belonging Strategy: **Peer-Led Mental Health Groups**



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Building Belonging



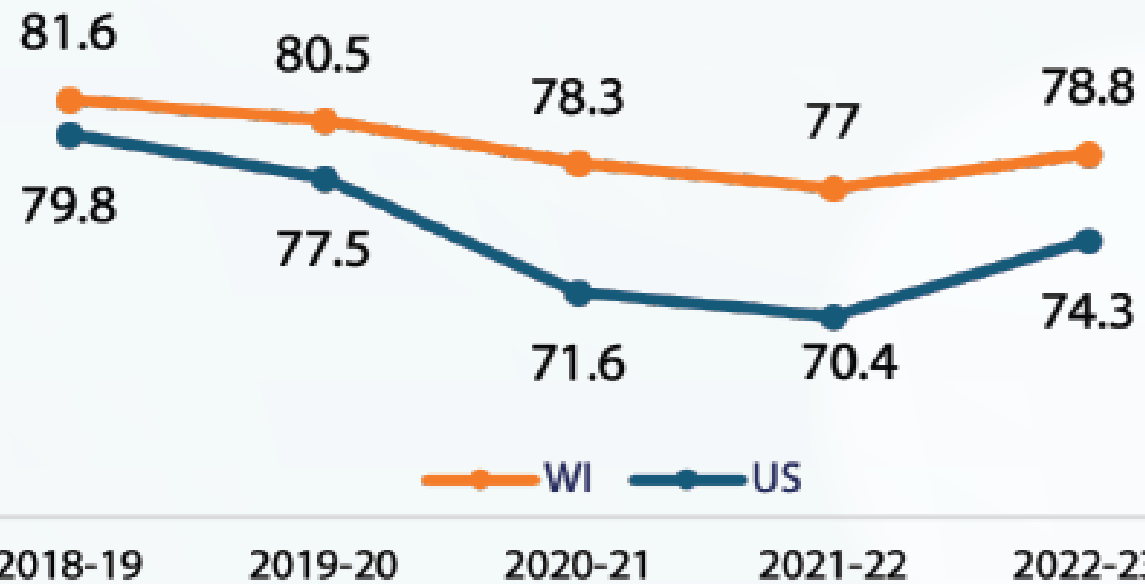
Youth Speaker

Dean Swanlund, McFarland High School
OCMH Wellness Champion



Belonging Strategy: **Extracurricular Activities**

BELONGING TRENDS EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (AGES 6-17)



Building Belonging





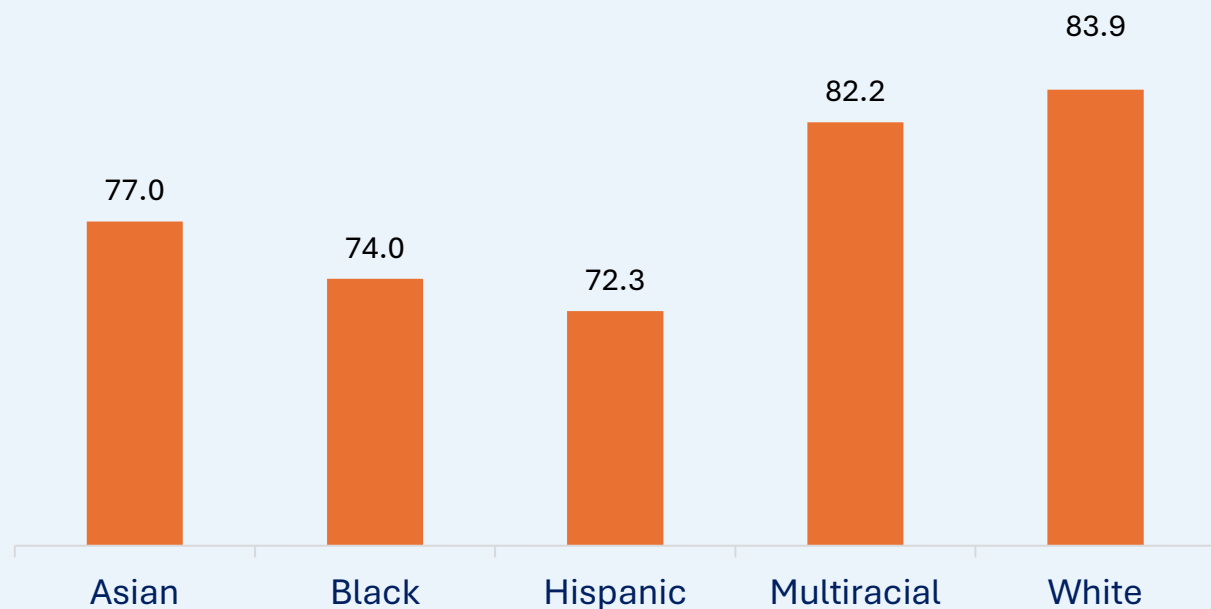
Youth Speaker

Alivia Miller, Chippewa Falls High School
OCMH Wellness Champion



Belonging Strategy: **Supportive Adults**

Supportive Adults Besides Parent
Among Wisconsin High School Students



Building Belonging





Youth Speaker

Gavin Merriam, Wausau East High School
OCMH Wellness Champion



Building Belonging








Well-Being Dashboard

Amy Marsman, Senior Research Analyst
Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health

About the Data

Indictors (42 total)

- ☐ Quality of Life
- ☐ Social & Economic Factors
- ☐ Clinical Care
- ☐ Health Behaviors

-  Wisconsin is going in the wrong direction.
-  Wisconsin seems to be headed in the wrong direction.
-  This indicator did not meaningfully change.
-  Wisconsin seems to be headed in the right direction.
-  Wisconsin is going in the right direction.

About the Data

Provides national context

Generally, 5 years prior to current

Most recent available data

QUALITY OF LIFE			
INDICATOR	US CURRENT	WI BASELINE	WI CURRENT
Two or more ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences)	18%	17%	17%
Children who have emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions (ages 3-17)	26%	25%	27%
Youth experiencing a major depressive episode (ages 12-17)	19%	16%	18%
LGBTQ youth seriously considering suicide	39%	42%	39%
High school students with anxiety	NA	49%	52%
High school students feeling sad or hopeless	40%	29%	35%
Teens seriously considering suicide	20%	16%	19%
Suicide attempts	10%	7%	9%
Young adults experiencing any mental illness (ages 18-25)	35%	29%	41%

The number of kids with major depressive episodes continues to increase, both in Wisconsin and the nation.

Data from 2024 show a decline in LGBTQ suicidality in Wisconsin. More recent national trend data, however, show nearly half of LGBTQ youth considered suicide.

There has been a substantial increase in the rate of young adults who have a mental illness.

Areas of Improvement

Compared to 5 years prior:

- ✓ Adults with a **college degree** has increased
- ✓ **Foster care placements** have decreased
- ✓ **Teen birth rate** has decreased

Areas of Improvement

Compared to 5 years prior:

- ✓ **Psychiatrists** have increased
- ✓ **School Nurses** have increased
- ✓ **School Social Workers** have increased
- ✓ **School Counselors** have increased
- ✓ **School Psychologists** have increased

Positive News



74% of HS kids **don't drink**

77% of HS kids are **not sexually active**

84% of HS kids **don't use marijuana**

96% of HS kids **don't use other illegal drugs**

99% of HS kids **don't smoke cigarettes**

Areas of Concern

Compared to 5 years prior:

- ✓ Children with an **emotional, behavioral, or developmental condition** increased.
- ✓ Youth experiencing a **major depressive episode** increased.
- ✓ **Young adults experiencing a mental illness** increased.

Areas of Concern

Compared to 5 years prior:

- ✓ Those who had **difficulty receiving treatment for child** with mental conditions **increased**.
- ✓ Doctors who **did not ask about parental concerns** with learning, development, or behavioral problems (ages 0-5) **increased**.
- ✓ **Early developmental screen** given to **less than half** of parents to complete.

Areas of Concern

Compared to 5 years prior:

- ✓ Enrollment in **4K** declined.
- ✓ Parents who often **attend child's activities** declined.
- ✓ **Screen use** (beyond schoolwork) increased.
- ✓ **Sufficient sleep** declined.

Mixed News

- ✓ **Seclusion & Restraint** data show a decline from 5 years ago (baseline), but an increase from 1 year ago.
- ✓ **Vaping** data show a third of HS students have tried vaping. While those who vape frequently (7.1%) is lower than 5 years ago, it has increased since 2021.
- ✓ **LGBTQ** youth who seriously considered suicide declined in 2024, but recent national data show nearly half considered suicide in 2025.



Well-Being Dashboard

<https://children.wi.gov/Pages/ResearchData/AnnualReport.aspx>

Youth Voice

Wisconsin Office of
Children's Mental Health



**Youth Mental
Wellness Champions**



Youth Speaker

Kenai Volkman, Columbus Catholic High School
OCMH Wellness Champion



Belonging

2025 Annual Report



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Legislative Perspective

Representative Pat Snyder

Wisconsin Legislative Children's Caucus

Questions





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<https://children.wi.gov/Pages/ResearchData/AnnualReport.aspx>



Belonging

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