

Building Connections for Youth

Annual Health Summit – The Hidden Pandemic

La Crosse – April 22, 2022



Building Connections for Youth

- About OCMH
- How are Wisconsin Kids Doing?
- Pandemic Effect
- Connections
- What We Can Do



OCMH 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.

Our Charge

- Study, recommend ways, and coordinate initiatives to improve the integration across state agencies of mental health services
- Monitor data related to children's mental health and well-being

Our Values

- Collaborative across systems
- Data driven
- Family and youth guided
- Promote inclusivity and equity among all stakeholders

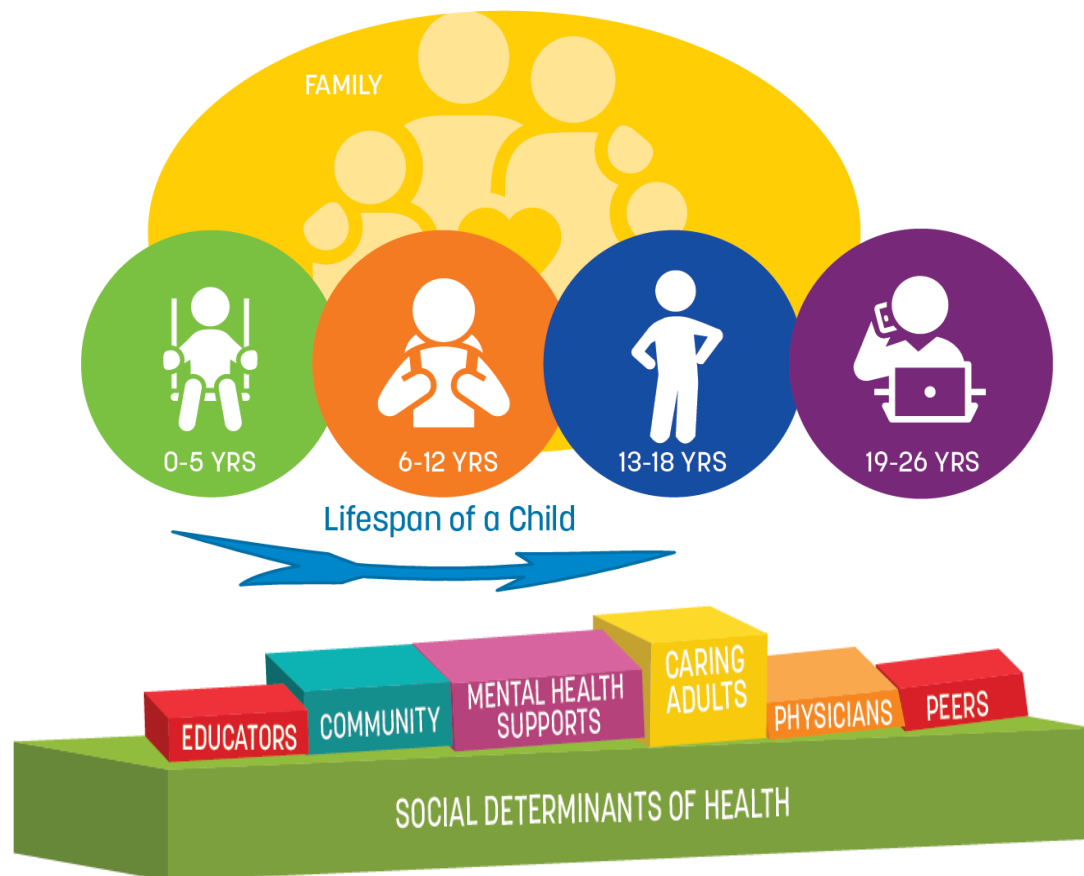
Collective Impact

Collective Impact is the commitment of a group of people from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific, complex social problem, using a structured form of collaboration.

5 Characteristics of Collective Impact



Building Emotional Well-Being Through Strong Foundations





How Are Wisconsin Kids Doing?

Making and Keeping Friends

Ages 6 - 12

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

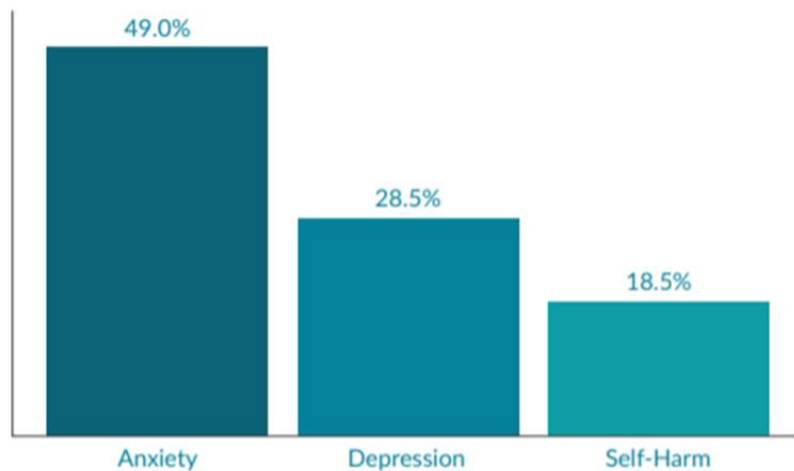
INDICATOR	US CURRENT	WI BASELINE	WI CURRENT
Difficulty with social skills	22%	23%	26%

More kids ages 6-17 are having difficulty making and keeping friends

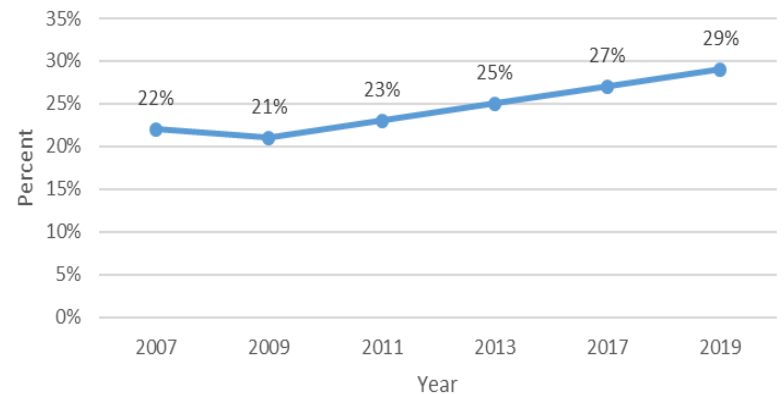
Anxiety, Depression & Self-Harm

Ages 13 - 18

Self-Reported Rates of Anxiety, Depression, and Self-Harm



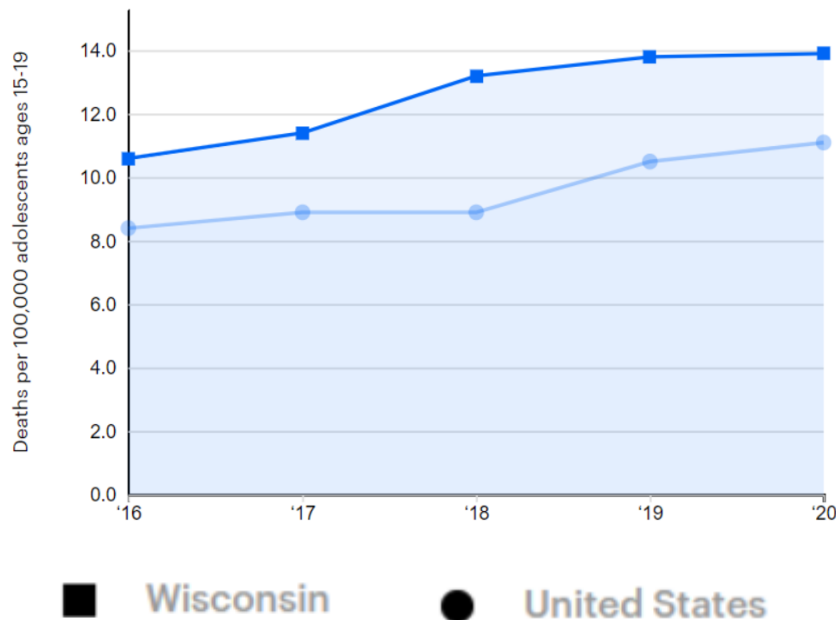
Students Feeling Sad or Hopeless
Almost Every Day



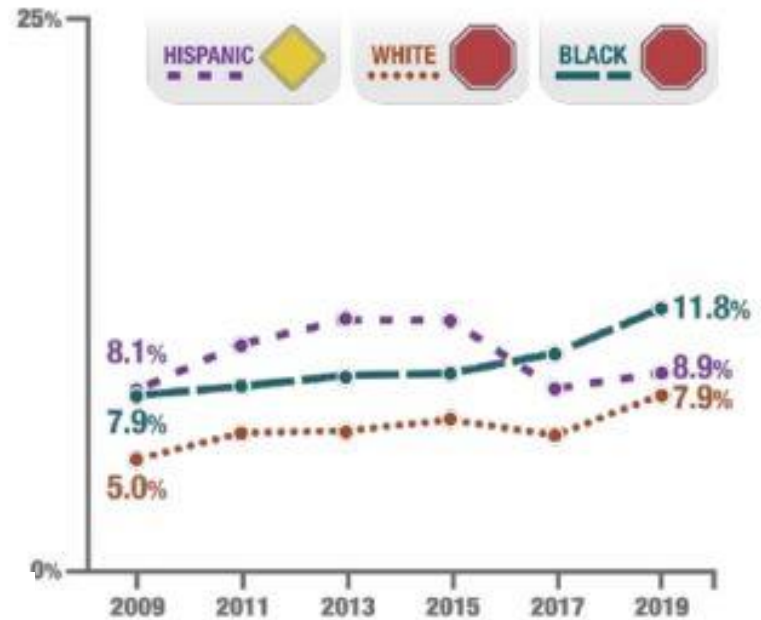
Source: Wisconsin High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019

Suicide

Deaths per 100,000 Ages 15-19

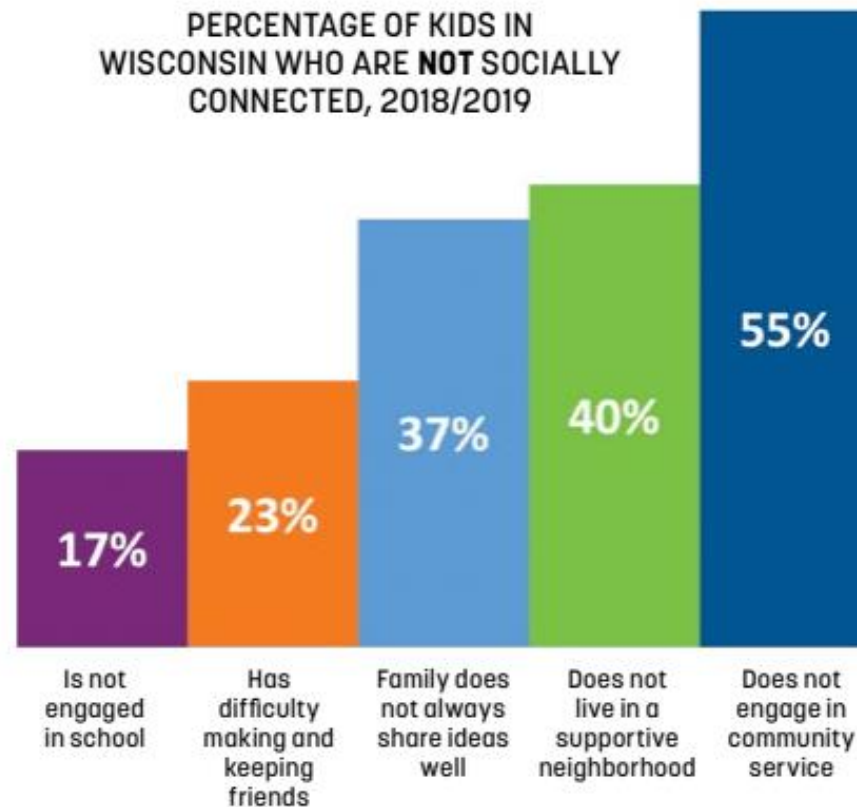


Trends in Reported Suicide Attempts



Source: National Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Kids lacking Social Connections



Connections are Critical



It is especially important for a **teenager's physical and psychological health** to be part of a **social network beyond their family**. As they develop their own identity, peers offer support and relief from depression, anxiety, and stress.



Pandemic Effect

Pandemic Effect

Parental Stress

- Adult mental health needs are down from earlier points in the pandemic but still high
- Almost half of Wisconsin parents reported frequently feeling down, depressed, or hopeless



Pandemic Effect



Insurance companies report a
100% increase
in the percentage of
**self-harm, substance use,
and mental health claims**
for teens in 2020 as compared to 2019.

Source: Fair Health. Whitepaper. *The Impact of COVID-19 on Pediatric Mental Health: A private study of healthcare claims.* March 2021.

Pandemic Effect

- More teen girls (ages 12-17) treated for suicide attempts than before the pandemic
- At least one-third of Wisconsin's emerging adults (ages 18-24) experience anxiety



*provisional 2021 Emergency Department data

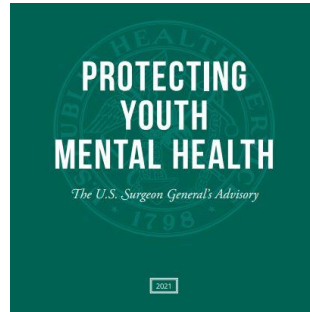
The Voices of Wisconsin Students: Learning, Coping, and Building Resilience During COVID-19

Summary Of Key Findings For High School

- High levels of **stress, anxiety, and depression**
- Significant challenges with virtual learning environments
 - Feeling “forgotten”; increased workloads, yet limited help
- **Lack of connectedness to school, teachers, and friends**
- Students have heightened expectations of their teachers
 - Loss of spontaneous interactions; need reassurance, and support
- **Limited awareness of mental health resources**
- **Stigma, skepticism, and concerns about confidentiality** are barriers to accessing mental health and wellness resources
- Perceived increases in substance use among peers
- **Despite challenges, students have developed new coping skills and ways to be resilient**



Youth Mental Health Crisis



U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory & Report

President Biden Announces Strategy to Address National Mental Health Crisis

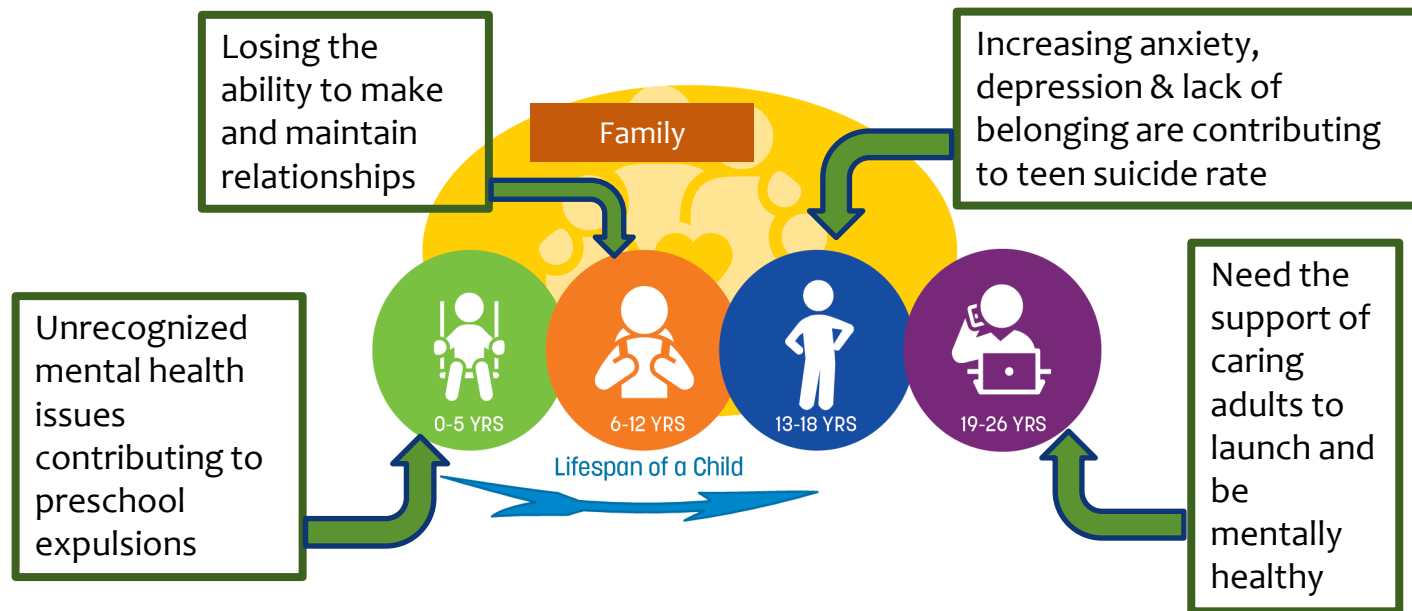


Gov Evers' *Get Kids Ahead Initiative*

- \$15 million of flexible funding for school mental health
- Every public school district can opt in to receive \$10,000 plus an additional amount based on their total number of students.



Kids Across the Lifespan are Struggling



What's the One Thing?

Social Connectedness of Youth

Definition:

Youth are socially connected when they are actively engaged in positive relationships where they feel they belong, are safe, cared for, valued, and supported.



Social Connectedness of Youth

Outer circle:

Represents array of OCMH network working in CMH

Inside circle:

5 categories of Social Connectedness of Youth



Initial areas of focus/new teams:

- Family
- Supportive Adult
- Cultural Identity/Community

Social Connectedness Impact Team Visions

Connection Category	Vision
<p>Family</p> 	<p>Children have warm, positive relationships with their family that make them feel like they belong, are safe, cared for, valued, and supported.</p>
<p>Supportive Adults</p> 	<p>Adults, especially older adults, connect with and establish affirming relationships with youth.</p>
<p>Cultural Identity / Community</p> 	<p>Young people are regularly involved in spaces that help them feel connected to one another and their culture or identity.</p>

Trusted relationships
benefit both the youth
and the adult

Tools for Mental Health Understanding



Name: _____

Pronouns: _____

▶▶▶ I need support in the next 5 minutes. ◀◀◀
Here's what I need from you to help me:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____ (over)



**DEPRESSION LOOKS
DIFFERENT FOR
EVERYONE**



**WHAT YOU SEE
OUTSIDE...**



**ISN'T ALWAYS
WHAT IS
HAPPENING
INSIDE**



**TEXT
HOPELINE
TO 741741**

— FROM ANYWHERE,
ANYTIME, ABOUT ANY
TYPE OF CHALLENGE OR
STRUGGLE. HELP AND
HOPE IS JUST A TEXT
AWAY.™



GRADES 3-5

Mental Health Literacy
Instructional Units

MANAGING MY MENTAL HEALTH



FEELINGS THERMOMETER

How do you feel?

What can you do about it?



ANGRY, FURIOUS, EXPLOSIVE
▶ Yelling, Stomping, Meltdown

- Vigorous physical exercise
- Breathe deep breaths
- Take a warm shower or bath



FRUSTRATED, ANNOYED, IRRITABLE
▶ Arguing, Refusing, Shutting down

- Meditate/pray
- Listen to favorite music
- Take a fast-paced walk



ANXIOUS, WORRIED, UNSETTLED
▶ Pacing, Avoiding, Clingy

- 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

- Set a positive goal for the day
- Call a friend or relative
- Journal about your feelings



HAPPY, CALM, CONTENT
▶ Smiling, Laughing, Engaged

- Help someone else
- Notice and enjoy your positive mood
- Engage in an enjoyable activity



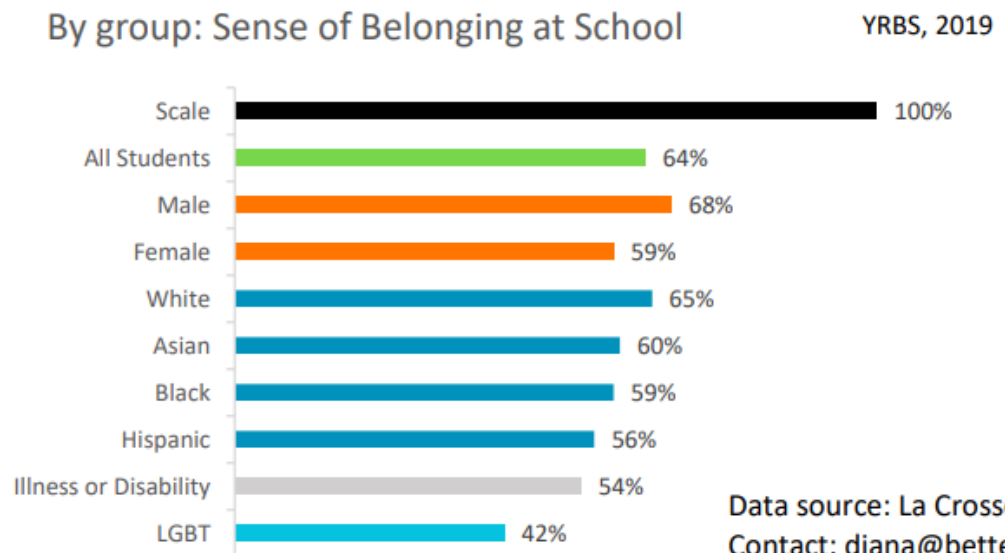
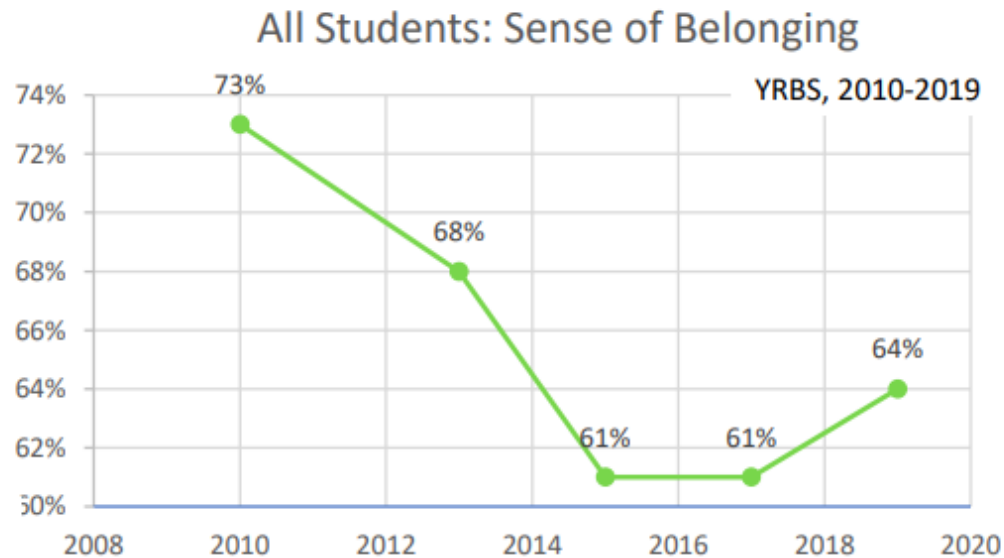
Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health

children.wi.gov

What We Can Do



Building Connections for Youth



Data source: La Crosse Cou
Contact: diana@bettertoge

Building Connections for Youth



Building connections for mental wellness

1 IN 5 YOUTH
IN OUR COMMUNITY
WILL FACE A MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGE*

What is Better Together?

Better Together is a collaborative community project intended to improve mental health, reduce the number of youth at risk for depression (ages 12-18), promote an overall culture of mental wellness and normalize mental health conversations.

Better Together is an extraordinary opportunity to improve mental health in La Crosse County, funded through 2024 by the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment at the Medical College of Wisconsin. La Crosse County—one of 10 communities statewide selected to receive this grant—was chosen due to its proven history of creating positive change through innovation and collaboration.



MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES...

AFFECT OUR YOUTH
50%
BEGIN BY AGE 14

50% of mental health challenges begin by age 14 and impact learning, relationships and lifestyle choices*

ARE COMMON
28%
AT RISK

28% of La Crosse County youth reported being at risk for depression⁴

CAN BE PREVENTED

Through strong relationships, healthy lifestyles and caring communities

It's ok to talk about mental health. There is hope.

SO, LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

- COMMUNITIES**
Increase awareness of and improve attitudes about mental health throughout communities
- YOUTH**
Increase resilience, coping skills and social connectedness among youth
- PARENTS/EDUCATORS**
Give parents, educators and others additional ways to support youth
- SYSTEMS**
Encourage and support cooperation and communication across mental health support systems and networks

VISION

Better Together envisions a future in which mental wellness continually improves throughout La Crosse County and conversations about mental health are increasingly common and regarded as normal.

In partnership with key community organizations, Better Together seeks to help youth better understand mental wellness, feel a stronger sense of belonging and a greater sense of purpose, develop positive relationships with trusted adults and learn skills to enhance coping and resiliency.

This unique grant will also enable Better Together and its partners to help adults in La Crosse County best support youth in mental wellness and to create stronger communication pathways that encourage mental wellness throughout entire communities.

This project is funded by the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

LEARN MORE

Help Better Together promote an overall culture of mental wellness and normalize mental health conversations throughout La Crosse County.
bettertogetherlacrosse.org / 608-371-9789
info@bettertogetherlacrosse.org

BETTER TOGETHER PARTNERS

Organizations and individuals from important facets of our community are working with Better Together to help promote mental wellness.
See the complete list at bettertogetherlacrosse.org.

Healthcare | Health and Human Services | Education | Law Enforcement
Youth-Serving Organizations | Community Agencies | Funders | Mental Health Advocates

Building Connections for Youth



Building Connections for Youth

Protective Factors

- 1 Ability to talk with family about feelings
- 2 Family is supportive in difficult times
- 3 Participation in family and community traditions
- 4 Feeling of belonging in high school
- 5 Feeling of being supported by friends
- 6 Having at least two non-parent adults who care
- 7 Feeling safe and protected by an adult at home

A Wisconsin study identified that these factors protect children from emotional distress, reduce the effects of trauma, and allow growth toward resiliency.

Building Connections for Youth

Reducing Social Isolation

Evidence-based ways to reduce loneliness in adolescence and young adulthood

1. Limit social media use
2. Spend time volunteering
3. Cultivate authentic connections
4. Adopt a pet
5. Exercise
6. Get enough sleep
7. Visit a therapist



Source: Newport Healthcare

Questions



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www.children.wi.gov