

Oconto County Resources

→ **CRISIS** → (920) 834-7000 (*ask for crisis*)

Oconto Community Service Division

8:00am-4:00pm - Monday through Friday

Jill Mutz, Crisis Supervisor

- Rotated coverage (4 Crisis Workers)
- Will deploy a crisis worker OR
- Meet individual at Oconto Human Services Office (*501 Park Ave, Oconto*)

AFTER HOURS coverage through HSHS (different phone number available on outgoing after hours message). Contact person is **Dave Schreider** from 4:00pm-8:00am.

→ **THERAPY SERVICES in Community**

Oconto County Human Services – (920) 834-7000

- 2 dually licensed therapists → Specialty = children and adolescents
- Waiting list = less than 1 month

Bellin Health - Oconto - (920) 433-6073

- Outpatient Therapy – Mark Dittloff, LPC & Lori Eklund-Walsch, LCSW
- Psychiatric Services – Tanya Malek, APNP

Oak Ridge Counseling & Consulting - (920) 944-9373

- Outpatient Therapy – Hedi Wennesheimer (*Dual Diagnosis; All ages*)
Zach Zellner (*Dual Diagnosis; Ages 9+*)
Kelly Corry (*Mindful Counseling & Wellness, All ages*)
- Offer in-person AND virtual services

Kimberley Welk and Associates Family Therapy Center - (920) 461-5820

- Offer virtual school-based services (must be referred through the school)

OTHER THERAPY SERVICES available in surrounding area listed on MyConnectionNEW.org

→ **DISABILITY Referrals**

- Refer to **Oconto County** @ (920) 834-7000 for Functional Screen to determine eligibility for either **CLTS** or **CCS**

→ **AODA Services**

- **Unity** has Recovery Center available for older adolescents (Pecor Street)
- **Libertas Treatment Center**
(920) 498-8600
1701 Dousman St, Green Bay, WI 54303
 - o Adolescent Services, Outpatient Services & Virtual Service options

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN SURROUNDING AREAS

Condensed List of Providers Nearest Oconto

Distance: = Distance from Oconto

BELLIN HEALTH - OCONTO FALLS: OUTPATIENT COUNSELING

Distance: 13.28 miles

Address: 107 E HIGHLAND DR
OCONTO FALLS, WI 54154

Phone: (920) 846-3092

BELLIN HEALTH - MARINETTE: OUTPATIENT COUNSELING

Distance: 14.70 miles

Address: 2820 ROOSEVELT RD
MARINETTE, WI 54143

Phone: (715) 735-5225

BELLIN HEALTH - PULASKI: OUTPATIENT COUNSELING *Telehealth Available*

Distance: 25.26 miles

Address: 723 S Wisconsin Street
PULASKI, WI 54162

Phone: (920) 822-1100

BELLIN HEALTH - STURGEON BAY: OUTPATIENT COUNSELING

Distance: 26.26 miles

Address: 311 N 3RD AVE
STURGEON BAY, WI 54235

Phone: (920) 743-0255

BELLIN HEALTH - HOWARD: OUTPATIENT COUNSELING *Telehealth Available*

Distance: 28.45 miles

Address: 2714 Riverview Drive
GREEN BAY, WI 54313

Phone: (920) 433-6073

BELLIN PSYCHIATRIC CENTER: INPATIENT HOSPITAL SERVICES -

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS PROGRAM *Telehealth Available*

Distance: 32.27 miles

Address: 301 E ST JOSEPH ST
GREEN BAY, WI 54301

Phone: (920) 433-3630

BELLIN HEALTH MENTAL HEALTH/COUNSELING SERVICES

Distance: 32.77 miles

Address: 1630 Commanche Avenue
GREEN BAY, WI 54313

Phone: (920) 430-4700

DYNAMIC FAMILY SOLUTIONS: STURGEON BAY *(also has an office in Green Bay)*

Distance: 26.42 miles

Address: 101 N 4TH AVE
STURGEON BAY, WI 54235

Phone: (920) 323-7431

CCM COUNSELING AND WELLNESS

Distance: 28.64 miles

Address: 2150 Memorial Drive
HOWARD, WI 54303

Phone: (920) 498-3383

POWER FOR CHANGE

Distance: 30.04 miles

Address: 123 North Oakland Avenue
GREEN BAY, WI 54303

Phone: (920) 770-4088

Outpatient counseling services to families, couples, and individuals of all ages. Power for Change provides **intensive in-home therapy** for children, adolescents, and adults ages 3 to 21 years old.

ONEIDA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AGENCY

Distance: 31.03 miles

Address: 2640 W POINT RD
GREEN BAY, WI 54304

Phone: 920-490-3790

Outpatient services in a holistic and culturally sensitive manner. Counseling is provided for individuals, couples, and/or families.



Brown County Community Counseling Resources

300 S. Adams St, Green Bay, WI 54301
Phone (920) 448-4300
www.ADRCoFBrownCounty.org

Name/Address	Telehealth Available	Sliding Fee Scale	Medicaid (MA)	Medicaid (MA) HMO	Medicare	Waiting List	Notes
A Better Future Counseling Services 920-217-2746 812 Fisk St, Ste 201, GB abfcounseling365.com	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Provides counseling & assessment services for substance use related problems & other addictive problems. Services include counseling, AODA assessments, interventions, anger management evaluations, & life coaching.
Abundant Life Counseling & Renewal Center 920-482-2932 3049 Ramada Way, Ste 200, GB abundantlifecounselingcenter.com	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Biblically based ministry. Counseling services for individuals, families, & couples for a variety of life's challenges.
Aurora Behavioral Health - Outpatient Behavioral Health 920-288-5630 1160 Kepler Dr, GB care.aurorahealthcare.org	Yes	No	Yes	All HMO's & private ins.	Yes	No	Outpatient psychiatric & therapy services for Aurora patients (individual, couples & family therapy). Appointment only upon referral from Aurora provider.
Baeten Counseling & Consultation Team 920-632-4471 2920 S Webster Ave, GB baetencounseling.com	Yes	Yes	Yes, Badger Care+, Title 19, Tricare & Medicare	Most HMO's	Yes	No	Provides substance abuse/addiction services &/or mental health therapy. Provides court-ordered AODA assessments, individual, couples, & family therapy for a wide range of challenges.
Bellin Psychiatric Center - Outpatient Counseling 920-433-6073 301 E St Joseph St, GB bellin.org	Yes	No	Yes, accepts Medicaid with UHC HMO, & Medicare	United Health Care	Yes	Referral is needed a Bellin Primary Care Provider	Provides mental health assessments; crisis management; individual, couples, group & family therapy; substance abuse services. PsyD, MD, & therapists available for a variety of issues, AODA, eating disorder, & ADD/ADHD.
Catholic Charities Counseling Services 920-272-8234 1825 Riverside Dr, GB catholiccharitiesgb.org/counseling	Yes	Yes	Yes & Medicare	Varies call to inquire about HMO's	Yes	Scheduling 3-4 weeks out	Counseling & support groups for a variety of today's issues. No one is turned away due to inability to pay.
Christian Counseling Ministries Counseling & Wellness 920-498-3383 2150 Memorial Dr. Ste 213, GB ccmcounseling.com	Yes	Yes	No	Interns offer free services income based	No	No	Christian based counseling services. No or low-income people can call the office to determine eligibility for the Intern & Free Counseling Outreach Program.

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Endorsements are not assumed or implied.



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Name/Address	Telehealth Available	Sliding Fee Scale	Medicaid (MA)	Medicaid (MA) HMO	Medicare	Waiting List	Notes
Counseling By Schlader 920-288-9104 (call or text) 1808 Treeland Dr, GB counselingbyschlader.com	Yes	Yes	Yes			Varies	Individual, Marital, or Group Family Sessions. Works with a wide range of issues including Substance Abuse
Crisis Center of Family Services 920-436-8888 3150 Gershwin Dr, GB familyservicesnew.org	No	No charge	-	-	-	Walk-In. No appointment needed.	Providing short-term, crisis counseling for a variety of issues, referrals to community agencies, & suicide assessments. No MD or Nurse.
Crossing the Bridges 920-712-4526 840 Challenger Dr, Ste 130, GB crossingthebridges.com	Yes	Yes	Yes	Most HMO's	No	No	Combination of Christian Counseling & Mental Health Therapy. Trauma, anxiety, grief/loss, abuse, anger, & a variety of other life challenges. Offers a parenting class. Experience working with offenders in & out of jail & their families.
Dynamic Family Solutions 920-323-7431 3021 Holmgren Way, GB dynamicfamilysolutions.com		No	Yes, Managed & Network Health, Title 19, Tricare	Managed & Network Health	Yes	Same week appts	Trauma, Substance Abuse, LGBT Therapy, In-Home Family Therapy.
Family Services of NEW Counseling Clinic 920-436-6800 300 Crooks St, GB familyservicesnew.org	Yes	Yes	Yes	Managed & Network Health	Yes	No	Counseling for a variety of today's issues. Intern may be available for uninsured at \$5/session. Geriatric specialty
Foundations Health & Wholeness 920-437-8256 1061 W Mason St, GB wearefoundations.org	Yes	Yes	Limited # per month, call on the 1st or 15th of the month for an apt	All	Yes	3-4 weeks wait	Waiting period may vary-Psychologist available, Child & adult services for a variety of issues
Innovative Counseling 920-497-6161 1499 Sixth St, GB innovativecounseling.com	Yes	No	Yes, Katie Beckett Waivers	All HMO's & private ins.	Yes	Varies, can be 2-3 months	Intensive In-Home or outpatient therapy for individuals, couples, families, & child/adolescents with emotional/behavioral issues or Autism. Can bill insurance for Autism services.
Kimberley Welk & Associates 920-461-5820 926 Willard Dr, Ste 136, GB kwaftc.com	Yes	Yes	Yes Title 19	All	No	No	Specialties include: anxiety, depression, conflict resolution, eating disorders, trauma, grief, parenting, stress, cognitive & developmental disabilities, women issues, career, EMDR, couple counseling, skill building, & family counseling.

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www.ADRCoftbrowncounty.org

Name/Address	Telehealth Available	Sliding Fee Scale	Medicaid (MA)	Medicaid (MA) HMO	Medicare	Waiting List	Notes
Libertas Treatment Center 920-498-8600 1701 Dousman St, GB <i>libertastreatment.org</i>	Yes	Offer Uninsured Discount	Yes	Varies call to inquire about HMO's	No	Yes, call for current wait	Adult & Adolescent AODA outpatient & inpatient treatment. Psychiatrist available.
Living Hope Christian Counseling 920-338-8699 2066 Lawrence Dr, De Pere <i>livinghopellc.org</i>	Yes	No	Yes	All	No	No	Outpatient mental health clinic. Treatment & management for children, adolescents, & adults. Offers life coaching & consulting services.
New Tomorrow Counseling LLC 920-351-3500 3021 Holmgren Way, Ste 200, GB		Yes	Yes	All	No	No	Individual, Family, Group, Child, Couples, & Parent Counseling for variety of today's challenges. Psychologist on staff & provide referrals to Psychiatrists. Geriatric specialty.
NEW Wellness Associates 920-497-6200 2830 Ramada Way, Suite B, GB <i>newwellnessassociates.net</i>	Yes	No	No	All	Yes	Usually same week	State certified outpatient mental health and substance abuse facility offering individual, couple, & family counseling for a variety of concerns. AODA, AODA aftercare, anger mgmt, ADD/ADHD. Geriatric specialty.
Oneida Behavioral Health 920-490-3790 2640 West Point Rd, GB <i>oneida-nsn.gov</i>		No	N/A	N/A	No	2 weeks	Serves enrolled Oneida Nation tribal members & their families. Psychiatrist available.
Phoenix Rising Counseling 920-530-5853 2330 Meadow Park Dr, GB <i>pr-counseling.com</i>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Individual, couple, & family counseling for variety of concerns, PTSD, anxiety, depression, trauma, DBT, grief, borderline personality disorder & addictions. Sliding fee scale & private pay only.
Power For Change 920-770-4088 123 N Oakland Ave, GB <i>powerforchangellc.com</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Call to inquire	Dual-eligible only	Usually same week	Individual, couple, & family counseling for variety of concerns, including ADD/ADHD, AODA, & Autism/Asperger's. Accepts MA & Private Insurance. Bilingual Staff (Spanish) (check on availability)
Prevea Clinic Behavioral Care 920-272-1200 GB & De Pere Locations <i>prevea.com</i>	Yes	No	Yes, only if established Prevea patient	All Prevea Providers	Yes, only if est. Prevea provider	Varies	Integrated medical/mental health care. Team = psychiatric nurses, Therapists, PsyD & a psychiatrist available. Geriatric Specialty. Bilingual Staff (Spanish) (check on availability).

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Name/Address	Telehealth Available	Sliding Fee Scale	Medicaid (MA)	Medicaid (MA) HMO	Medicare	Waiting List	Notes
Rawhide Youth & Family Counseling Services 920-982-6100 916 Willard Dr, Ste 100, GB rawhide.org	Yes	Yes	Yes & Badger Care	Inquire about HMO's	Dual-eligible only	1 week or less	Offers therapy for variety of issues including childhood & adolescent emotional & behavioral issues. Equine therapy also available.
Sherman Counseling 920-733-2065 2271 Holmgren Way, GB shermanconsulting.net		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Specialties include: substance abuse & behavioral addictions, eating disorders, depression, anxiety, LGBTQ, Grief & Loss, & Stress & Pain Managements. Psychologist provides psychological evaluations & testing for a variety of needs.
Spectrum Behavioral Health 920-784-2644 1496 Bellevue St, Ste 101, GB spectrumbh.com	Yes	No	Yes	Most HMO's	Yes	No	Specialties include: anger, emotional management, depression, autism, behavioral disorders, & anxiety disorders. Nurse practitioner on staff but must be referred by therapist at Spectrum. Experience working with geriatric population.
The ATT Center 920-264-0996 1496 Bellevue Street, Ste 502, GB theattcenter.com	Yes	No	No	HMO- Varies call to inquire about HMO's	No	No	Counseling services for depression, bipolar, adjustment disorders, relationship issues, OCD, trauma, behavioral problems, ADHD, anxiety related disorders, sexual wellness, and more. Also offers Ketamine Assisted Therapy (KAT).
VA Veterans Center 920-435-5650 1600 S Ashland Ave, GB		-	-	-	-	-	Serving combat veterans & their immediate families. Offering readjustment counseling as well as support groups for current & past combat vets.
Willow Creek Behavioral Health 920-328-1220 1351 Ontario Rd, GB willowcreekbh.com		n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes	None	Inpatient & Outpatient services. Outpatient programs allow patients to receive care 5 days/week while continuing to live at home. Teens & Adults. Specialties include anxiety, depression, grief, trauma, PTSD, bipolar disorder, psychiatric disorder.
Wings of Eagles Counseling 920-227-7078 217 Madison St, GB wingsofeagles1.com		Yes	Yes	All except Humana & United Health	No	None	Works with Children, Teens, & adults. Specialties include: depression, anxiety, Intensive In-home, Grief, life transitions, family/parenting issues, stress & anger management, conflict resolution, & career.

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Phone (920) 448-4300
www.ADRCoftbrowncounty.org

Psychiatric Assessment for Medication Which Accept Medical Assistance

Bellin Behavioral Health

920-433-3630

301 E St Joseph St, Green Bay

MA for outpatient services

Accepts United Health HMO

In-patient and out-patient services available.

Referral from Bellin Primary Care Provider required for outpatient services

Willow Creek Behavioral Health

920-328-1220

1351 Ontario Rd, Green Bay

In-patient and out-patient services available.

Detox services available with dual diagnosis

Crisis and Suicide Assessment

Crisis Center

920-436-8888

3150 Gershwin Dr, Green Bay

24 Hour access

The Crisis Center of Family Services is here to provide free and confidential crisis intervention to callers who are having thoughts of suicide or are in emotional distress.

Wisconsin Lifeline

Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

24 Hour access

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline call center serving all of Wisconsin. Callers who are suicidal or in emotional distress can call for free and receive confidential phone support.

988-Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available nationwide, available 24/7. Call or text 988 if you or someone you know needs support now.

Brown County Community Treatment Center

920-391-4700

3150 Gershwin Dr, Green Bay

Accepts MA

In-patient and out-patient services

Bilingual Staff (Spanish) - AODA/MH therapy - adults only. Call to check on availability.

Catholic Charities

920-272-8234

1825 Riverside Dr, Green Bay

Accepts straight MA but need prior approval for HMOs

****Dr. is only available upon referral made by the agency therapists****

Mental Health Support - Helplines

National Alliance on Mental Illness - NAMI

920-371-0961

1234 Main St, Ste 11, Green Bay

NAMI provides support, education and advocacy to those living with mental illnesses well as their friends and family members.

Center for Suicide Awareness

Text HOPELINE to 741741

24 Hour access (TEXT ONLY)

Bilingual Staff (Spanish & Portuguese)

Emotional support, information, & resources before situations rise to crisis level. Texts received reflect struggles with breakups, relationship issues, job loss, bullying, LGBTQIA+ issues, parental issues, school, friends, or just having a bad day. A live, trained crisis counselor receives the text and responds quickly.

Trans Lifeline

877-565-8860

24 Hour access

Bilingual (Spanish)

Trans Lifeline's Hotline is a peer support phone service run by trans people for our trans and questioning peers. We believe that some of the best support that trans people can receive is from trans community members with shared lived experience. Call us if you need someone trans to talk to, even if you're not in crisis or if you're not sure you're trans. (Oprima 2 para hablar con un operador en español.)



Need to Know Where to Go?

Brown County Mental Health Navigation Guide

Safe



MyConnectionNEW.org



Connect to LOCAL
mental health
services & supports



MyConnectionNEW.org is a resource for mental health & substance abuse information, resources, and service navigation.

At Risk



Call or Text 2-1-1 anytime for free assistance with human, social, mental, and basic needs and for help during disaster situations.

Unsafe



Call 920-436-8888 anytime when immediate support is needed to prevent a situation from becoming dangerous.

Danger



Call 9-1-1 to request immediate assistance from police, fire and rescue personnel for any in-progress situation that could potentially result in danger to someone's life.



What to Expect

Crisis Center:

- A crisis counselor will talk with you so they can understand the situation and help you problem-solve, explore options, and possibly send help to de-escalate the crisis.
- If there are any concerns a person might harm themselves or someone else, the crisis counselor will complete a risk assessment and work with you to determine what is needed to help the person be safe and stable.
- Crisis counselors work to provide trauma-informed, person-centered support in the least restrictive way. Hospitalization does occur at times, as the last and least used option. Most people are helped by finding ways to increase support and reduce risk in their everyday life.
- Crisis counseling is a short-term service to address an immediate mental health need. If ongoing services are needed, or if there are needs for services besides mental health support, the crisis counselor will help people connect with resources.

Follow up services will be provided to determine if the crisis has been resolved or if additional support is needed.

911:

- Please call 911 for assistance if you or someone you know is in danger as a result of a mental health crisis.

For more information visit:

MyConnectionNEW.org

<https://www.browncountyunitedway.org/2-1-1/>

<https://www.familyservicesnew.org/crisis-center/>



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Brown County
Health & Human Services



Connections
for mental wellness



Brown County
Health & Human Services
Community Services

INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICES

Aging & Disability Resource Center 920-448-4300

Services, activities, events and workshops available for older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers.

Dial- 211

United Way's non-emergency telephone number that connects callers with community services.

My Connection NEW

Website lists mental health and substance use/abuse information, resources and service navigation.

www.MyConnectionNEW.com

Search **BEREAVEMENT**-Grief Support Groups

Online Depression Screen

Free, quick, and Confidential.

www.depression-screening.org

Warning Signs for Suicide (a partial list)

- Withdrawal from friends or social activities
- Sexual identity issues
- Loss of interest in things that ordinarily brought joy or happiness
- Personality changes, anxiety or panic attack
- Risky or self-destructive behavior
- Unwillingness to connect with those who could help
- Apathy
- Lack of interest in the future
- Change in personal appearance
- Giving away prized possessions
- Talk of having no reason to live

**PLEASE SEEK HELP
THERE IS HOPE**

24-HOUR CRISIS SERVICES

Crisis Center
920-436-8888

Crisis Text Line
Text HOME to 741741

Suicide Hotlines
1-800-SUICIDE
1-800-273-8255

Suicide Text Line
Text HOPELINE to 741741

Veterans Suicide Hotline
1-800-273-TALK, Option 1

The Trevor Project
(Saving Young LGBTQ Lives)
1-866-488-7386
Text START to 678678

Trans Lifeline's Hotline
1-877-565-8860

PSYCHIATRIC/MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Aurora Behavioral Health Center
920-288-5630

Bellin Health Psychiatric Center
920-433-3630

**Brown County Human Services
Community Treatment Center**
920-391-6940

NAMI Brown County
920-430-7460

Oneida Behavioral Health
920-490-3790

Prevea Behavioral Care
920-272-1200

Willow Creek Behavioral Health
920-328-1220

RESOURCES IN RESPONSE TO A CRY FOR HELP



The materials were prepared by the Brown County Coalition for Suicide Prevention and contain a variety of resources about mental health & suicide prevention. The Brown County Coalition is dedicated to promoting awareness, providing education, overcoming stigma, supporting survivors, and preventing suicides in Brown County.

Brown County
Coalition for
**suicide
prevention**

Updated 1/8/21

Why Me?

You have received this brochure because people are concerned about you and your welfare. You may have expressed feelings of hopelessness, thoughts of hurting yourself, or even attempted to harm yourself or end your life by suicide. Whatever the reason, you are encouraged to review the information.

The will to live is strong... but when someone truly believes that there is no hope or they are in tremendous physical or emotional pain, that will can be overcome. It happens too often. Suicide affects people of all walks of life, cultures, professions, and ages.

According to many suicide prevention agencies, every 12 minutes in our nation, someone dies by suicide. Most people who are suicidal do not want to end their lives; they want to end the pain. Stress, mood disorders, depression, or life-altering events, limit the ability to think clearly and make decisions. They lose hope and begin to feel that the pain will be with them for the rest of their lives.

Some people are more vulnerable and greatly affected by stressors, interpersonal conflicts, relationship issues, or life-altering events. They may feel weakened by the weight of these and many other issues and begin to believe that the circumstances are never going to improve. They believe strongly that there is no way to solve the problem or escape the pain. This in turn may lead to thoughts of suicide.

If you have had these thoughts, you are not alone. You may have felt hopeless, but there are many resources available to provide hope. At the very least, talking with someone about the thoughts you have may be a relief.

Life is precious but never easy. Suicide is not the answer to the times when it seems unbearable. Please keep these resources for yourself or others who may need extra help in finding hope.

Suicide Prevention by Balancing Risk Factors with Protective Factors

Risk Factors for Suicide

(not a complete list)

- Chronic stress
- Recent loss or multiple losses
- Trauma or abuse
- Poor self-image
- Isolation
- Family history of suicide
- Interpersonal conflicts
- Change in marital status
- Experienced rejection or failure
- Being bullied or being the bullier
- Feeling a stigma about seeking help
- Access to a means or method
- Depression (diagnosed or undiagnosed)
- Chronic pain or physical illness
- Incarceration or threat of incarceration
- Recent discharge from mental health facility
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Humiliation or threat to status
- Previous suicide attempt
- Exposure to suicidal behavior
- Influence of others who died by suicide
- Chemical dependency

Protective Factors for Suicide

(not a complete list)

- Restricted access to means or method
- Accessible mental health resources
- Effective clinical care, mental health, or treatment centers in community
- Strong spiritual or religious faith
- Having a purpose and sense of meaning in life
- Skills to problem solve
- Education in controlling impulses and handling disputes in nonviolent ways
- Stress management skills
- Coping skills
- Surrounded by community of people who provide ongoing support and hope
- Strong connections to family
- Strong connections to friends and/or a community that minimize sense of isolation.
- Living in a community where seeking help is not viewed as negative.
- Receiving strong messages that reduce the stigma of mental health disorders and suicide.



WHY THIS MATTERS

When a child repeatedly experiences threatening or harmful situations, their body remains on high alert, flooded with adrenaline or the stress hormone, cortisol. This is toxic stress, which can damage developing brains and bodies and can cause numerous physical and behavioral problems. Toxic stress can be present at home, at school, or in the community.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Toxic stress, such as poverty or emotional abuse, is linked to a host of chronic health conditions. It can change our biology, in which generations pass chronic conditions down the genetic line. Emotionally, children who live with toxic stress can demonstrate oppositional behaviors and struggle with self-regulation, which leads to trouble maintaining healthy relationships. People with toxic stress may have difficulty focusing. This makes mental concentration and completion of tasks problematic in school and work. Memory problems caused by toxic stress further impact the brain's ability to learn new content.



Recent research found the pandemic prematurely aged teenage brains years in a matter of months. The effects of this prematurity were similar to that of toxic stress: impacting teens' emotional regulation, decision-making, and impulse control.

These brain changes are linked with anxiety, depression, and learning problems.¹ In addition, teens report that stress, anxiety, and depression are their biggest barriers to learning.²

Divorce, discrimination, housing insecurity, or death of a family member are sources of toxic stress and can be traumatic to children. Some of these experiences and environments are considered Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs have been studied for years by researchers as they can increase levels of toxic stress.

4+ ACEs

32X more likely to have a learning/behavioral issue

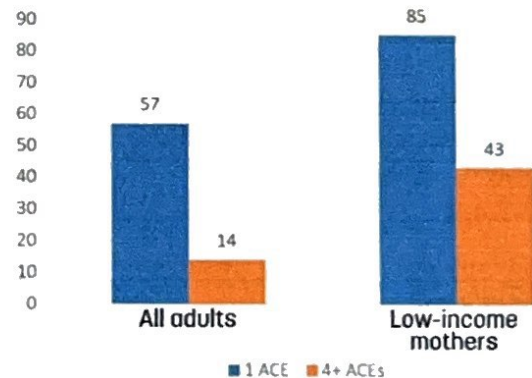


Most people have at least one ACE. Those with four or more ACEs are at substantial risk of chronic physical and mental health problems. Children with four or more ACEs are also 32 times more likely to have a learning/behavioral issue when compared to children with no ACEs.³

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WISCONSIN?

In Wisconsin, 60% of adults had at least one ACE, and 16% had four or more. Among low-income mothers, 85% had at least one ACE, and 43% experienced four or more ACEs.⁴

Percent of Wisconsin Adults with ACEs



- continued -

REDUCING AND ADDRESSING TOXIC STRESS⁵

Brain plasticity – the ability of the brain to continually adapt in response to the environment – means that kids can recover from stress. Kids' brains and bodies are able to cope with stress through mindfulness practices, exercise, good nutrition, adequate sleep, and healthy social interactions. If toxic stress stops and is replaced by practices that build resilience in a caring environment, the brain can slowly undo many of the stress-induced changes. Resilience is the ability to cope and recover from difficulties and is a proven strategy that increases mental well-being. Resilience is a skill that kids can learn.

Protective factors also help to lessen the consequences of toxic stress. A trusted relationship with a caring adult is the key protective factor. Caring adults can help kids recover from adversity by establishing a positive connection and developing healthy coping strategies to deal with stress.

Adults can create environments that make resilience building possible, and that help prevent toxic stress from occurring in childhood. Refundable tax credits like the Child Tax Credit help to reduce child neglect, youth violence, and child poverty.⁶

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic experiences that cause toxic stress. Adversities can be experienced within the family, or outside the home in the community.

- Emotional or physical neglect
- Emotional, physical, or sexual abuse
- Experiencing discrimination, racism, homophobia
- Incarcerated loved one
- Household members with mental illness or substance abuse
- Parental separation, divorce, or death
- Witnessing violence in the home or community

WHAT WE CAN DO

➤ PARENTS/CAREGIVERS:

- Seek help if you or your children feel unsafe in your home.
- Ensure children have at least one trusted adult in their lives.
- Strengthen skills and relationships that help families cope with stress.
- Instill healthy household habits: connect over meals, get sufficient sleep, exercise, and spend time in nature.
- Develop healthy coping skills and teach your child how to build their own resilience. [Resilient Wisconsin](#) offers numerous resources.

➤ POLICYMAKERS:

- Invest in high-quality early care and education for children living in high-poverty communities.
- Expand refundable tax credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, to ease financial burden on working parents.

➤ SCHOOLS

- Cultivate a trauma-informed school with trauma-sensitive strategies, whole school wellness practices, and social emotional skill-building in all grades.
- Provide extra support to children known to have been exposed to traumatic events or to be experiencing ACEs.
- Include resources such as crisis lines for parents and students to access if feeling unsafe in their home.

➤ PROVIDERS

- Provide trauma-informed care.
- Consider screening patients for ACEs.
- Complete the [CDC ACEs Provider Training Modules](#), offered by professional role.
- Leverage the resources of the [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#).

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⁵ Learn more in this Guide to Toxic Stress by the Center on the Developing Child: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/guide/a-guide-to-toxic-stress/>

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WHY THIS MATTERS

It's estimated that 50% of all mental illnesses begin by age 14, and 75% by age 24. Due to a shortage of mental health professionals, financial obstacles, and social stigma, few kids receive the mental health care they need. Universal mental health screening—wellness screens—can be conducted in schools or doctors' offices to catch kids who may be struggling, identify their strengths, and provide resources before they reach a tipping point.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Research shows that identifying and treating mental health conditions early in life helps to prevent mental illness in adulthood.¹ Researchers point to the need to screen for anxiety, depression, and suicide risk. One study found that screening teens for depression alone didn't identify all kids who were at risk of suicide.² The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has issued a recommendation that physicians screen kids age 8 and up for anxiety, and screen adolescents age 12 and up for depression as well as suicide risk, even in the absence of documented symptoms.³

Experts also encourage school-based universal screening, where all students — not just those who display symptoms — are asked about their strengths and struggles. While it's not clear how many schools currently screen universally, the majority (55%) of public schools in the U.S. are providing diagnostic assessments to evaluate specific students for mental health concerns.⁴ Schools that cannot offer treatment to their students can make a referral to a mental health provider, which often gets students into services more quickly than if they don't have a referral.

The majority of American parents agree that improving mental health screening and treatment would be very or extremely effective in preventing school violence.⁵



Screening Recommendations:
8+ YEARS --> ANXIETY
12+ YEARS --> DEPRESSION & SUICIDE RISK

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WISCONSIN?

Many Wisconsin schools already conduct wellness screens though the process varies between districts. A variety of screeners are being used. The frequency and duration of screening varies, as do the ages of students (grade levels) covered. Wellness screens are often provided in middle and high school grades. Some schools screen every other year, in Grades 7, 9, and 11, for example, while others screen every grade every year. A growing number of schools are screening earlier than middle school with some working toward implementing wellness screens in all grades (K-12).

HOW SCREENING WORKS

In middle and high school grades, students typically complete the screening questionnaire on their own. In earlier grades a teacher might complete the screener. Regardless of whether it is a student self-report or a teacher screen, the information collected is only viewed by the professionals involved in the screening process. These might be the school psychologist, school counselor, school nurse, school social worker, or a mental health partner from the community contracted to conduct the screening process.

To deepen equity, schools identify strengths and stressors among individual students as well as groups of students (e.g. females, Hispanic, LGBTQ).⁶ Schools can follow up to offer groups of students tailored support, provide whole-school instruction, or facilitate treatment for specific students in need.

Screeners can accurately identify internalizing symptoms such as anxiety and depression among shy or reserved students who might go 'under the radar.' This creates an

- continued -

WHAT WE CAN DO

➤ FAMILIES:

- Opt in. Allow your child to participate in wellness screens.
- Understand that kids tend to turn to people at school rather than their parents when feeling overwhelmed.
- Partner with your child's pediatrician and school to strengthen your child's coping skills, emotional literacy, resiliency, and ability to manage stress.

➤ SCHOOLS:

- Make wellness screens as routine as vision and hearing checks.
- If screening hasn't begun yet, start small. Screen in one grade and build from there. Include questions that ask about student strengths and skills.⁷
- Embed screening in a comprehensive school mental health system that focuses on whole school wellness.⁸
- Follow the Surgeon General's recommendations on what schools can do to address the youth mental health crisis.⁹
- Serve as a gateway to resources and provide referrals to mental health providers.
- Create a positive school culture with strong student-teacher relationships.

➤ POLICYMAKERS:

- Promote the integration of primary care and mental health at local and state levels.

- Fund universal wellness screening in schools.
- Expand school-based mental health resources through support for telehealth, student services professionals in schools, and school wellness programming.
- Require insurance companies cover an annual mental health wellness check, as is done for annual physical wellness checks.

➤ PROVIDERS:¹⁰

- Pediatric providers can make mental health screenings as routine as vision and hearing checks.
- Follow AAP screening recommendations, utilize AAP mental health toolkit for pediatricians, and complete training in mental health screening.
- Focus on primary prevention in patients ages 0-5 by emphasizing positive parenting, parental well-being and addressing the social determinants of health.
- Embrace opportunities to train in suicide prevention to increase comfort level in counseling patients and families on suicide prevention.
- Educate families on the importance of screening for lead poisoning which can cause mental health conditions such as ADHD.
- Integrate primary health care as much as possible and specifically to include youth mental health screening.¹¹



WHY THIS MATTERS

Like other vulnerable groups, including LGBTQ youth, mounting evidence shows young women and girls are facing record high levels of depression, anxiety, violence, and suicidality. A focused effort on improving girls' well-being will help children's mental health throughout the state, and help protect their mental health into adulthood.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

Nationally, data show that teen girls are facing significant mental health challenges. While mental health has declined for all teens, girls are faring worse than boys on nearly every measure. Teen girls have reported record high levels of violence, depression, self-harm, and suicide risk, often twice that of boys.¹

Both male and female adolescents report school as their top stressor. But girls have unique stressors on top of academics.

Early sexualization is a common occurrence in many girls' lives, particularly the adultification of Black girls, which can raise stress levels, and reduce opportunities for wellness activities. The majority of girls using major social media sites say they've been contacted by a stranger who made them feel uncomfortable. They also report seeing content about suicide and eating disorders regularly.²

A fixation on young female bodies can lead to poor body image and low self-esteem that can drive eating disorders. Studies find that poor body image starts at a young age: the majority of girls ages 6-8 said their ideal body is thinner than their current body.⁴ Nearly all (95%) of people with eating disorders are between the ages of 12 and 25.

Cyberbullying can also lead to poor self-esteem, problems with body image, anxiety, and depression. Data show that girls experience cyberbullying twice as often as boys.

However, research also shows that quality teen friendships and school belonging can protect kids from mental health concerns throughout their adolescence, extending into adulthood.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WISCONSIN?³

Nearly half of Wisconsin's female high school students report feeling sad and hopeless nearly every day, twice the rate of boys.

An alarming percent of Wisconsin girls have considered suicide (25%), made a plan (20%), and attempted suicide (11%) – all twice the rate compared to boys. Native American girls and Black girls in Wisconsin are much more likely to self-harm than girls of other backgrounds.⁵ A fifth (22%) of teen girls in the state report being bullied online.

Female high school students, with an average age of 15, report distressing levels of sexual violence. In Wisconsin, 20% of high school girls have experienced sexual assault or coercion. Students who experienced sexual assault or coercion are far more likely to consider and attempt suicide.

WISCONSIN GIRLS IN DISTRESS

66% Anxiety

50% Sad and hopeless nearly every day

32% Self-harm

22% Bullied online

20% Experienced sexual assault or coercion

25% Considered suicide

20% Made a plan for suicide

11% Attempted suicide



WHAT WE CAN DO

YOUTH:

- Build positive relationships. Healthy friendships protect your mental health and help build resilience to overcome life's challenges.
- Curate your social media feeds to be uplifting. Cultivate a positive experience. Do a digital detox when you feel overwhelmed.
- Reduce screen time at night so you can fall and stay asleep. Charge your phone outside of your bedroom while you sleep.
- Commit to healthy habits that improve mental health: get sufficient sleep, exercise, spend time outside, and eat meals with your family.
- Ask for help if you are being bullied, facing violence of any kind, or struggling with your mental health.
- Advocate for [peer-led wellness groups](#) in your school.

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS:

- Consistently [check-in](#) with your child about how they're feeling and managing stress.
- Discuss healthy coping skills to manage academic and social stress, and teach your daughter how to build her own resilience.
- Engage in wellness activities that build confidence and healthy habits. Avoid discussing diets, body shape, or size.
- Encourage her to reduce screen time, especially at night, and model healthy tech habits. See [parent guide](#) on girls and social media.
- Find out what social media she enjoys and engage with her on that content as a way of connecting and monitoring social media use.
- Know the [signs](#) of kids in mental distress.

SCHOOLS:

- Implement universal mental health screening of all students.
- Create inclusive spaces that help foster connectedness among students, helping them to build positive relationships with peers.
- Teach mental health literacy and digital literacy, with a focus on bullying and cyberbullying.
- Educate staff on trends and how to support youth mental health, particularly among girls and girls of color.
- Make clear the school policies and repercussions for bullying, cyberbullying, and relationship violence.

POLICYMAKERS:

- Expand stable, non-competitive funding of school mental health services for all districts.
- Increase funding for peer support services.
- Require schools to teach mental health literacy and suicide prevention education. Require school staff to take suicide prevention and mental health training.

EXTRA STRESS



Adversity and stress can accelerate the aging process, and early studies reveal that the stress of the pandemic may have thrust many girls into early puberty. Studies show that those who begin puberty early are more likely to have mental health problems, especially depression, than those who don't develop early.

As they grow, many girls' emotions and social behaviors develop faster than the parts of the brain that help control behavior. They may have more pronounced difficulty processing complex feelings and managing stress. Helping adolescents learn to develop coping skills that allow them to manage stress, understand emotions, and foster positive relationships will benefit their mental health – both in the short term and the long term.⁶

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