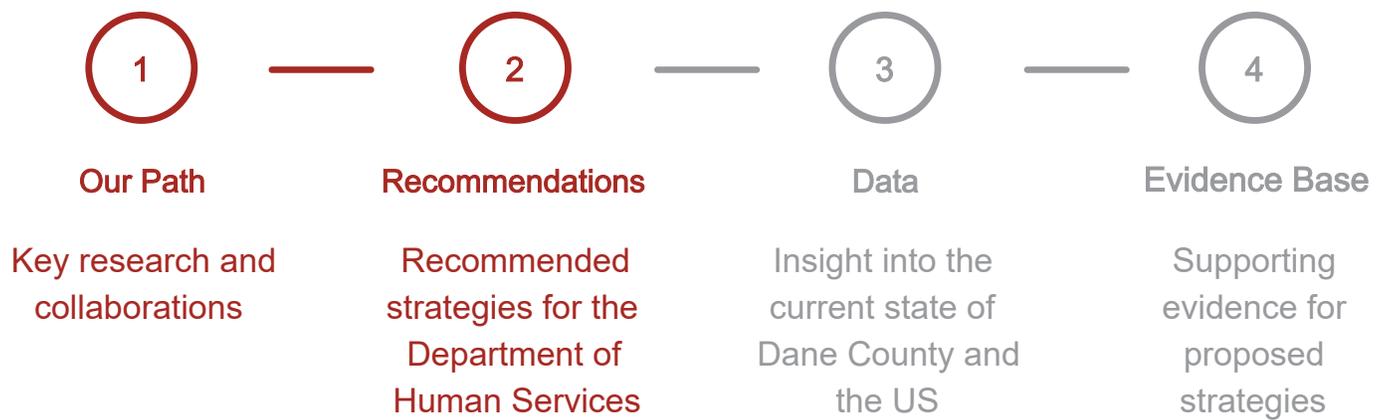


Addressing The Teen Mental Health Crisis in Dane County

Building Protective Factors to Enhance Social Connectedness and Prevent Adverse Mental Health Outcomes

Prepared for the Dane County Board of Supervisors Executive Committee by Elias Tsarovsky

Agenda



Scope

The goal of this report is to present key research and data regarding teen mental health in Dane County and posit recommendations to address and support teen mental health in Dane County.

Our Path

Data Review

Review Dane County Youth Assessment and national data.

Mar - Apr
2023

Meetings with Community Members and Staff

Meet with Community Stakeholders and Department of Human Services staff to discuss strategies and needs.

May 2023

Feb - Mar
2023

Literature Review

Identify evidence-based strategies for addressing protective factors related to promoting positive teen mental health.

Apr - May
2023

Presentation to Dane County Board of Supervisors Executive Committee

Present Recommendations and share report.

Current Services

The Dane County Department of Human Services (DHS) funds **\$5,556,668.00** of youth mental health-related services throughout Dane County.

Recommendations

Recommendation #1

Increase the current funding for the 15 youth centers funded through the Department of Human Services at an additional \$5,000 dollars per youth center per year. Also, recommend that the Department of Human Services monitor the development of future youth centers in Dane County and fund accordingly in coming years.

Recommendation #2

Recommend the Department of Human Services collaborate with community partners such as Public Health Madison and Dane County, NAMI Dane County, and school districts to implement a Seize The Awkward Media Campaign to elevate current county resources dedicated to teen mental health, encourage peer support, and destigmatize mental health care.

Recommendation #3

Recommend the Department of Human Services explore the feasibility of participating in community conversations with stakeholders such as school districts, NAMI Dane County, the Healthy Kids Collaborative, Safer Communities, and other community -based organizations and providers regarding the implementation of Sources of Strength throughout Dane County.

Key Concepts

Teen Mental Health

The ability of all teens in Dane County to thrive and be the most authentic version of themselves in a community that values them and makes them feel like they belong and are supported through the hard moments of life [1,2].

Protective Factors

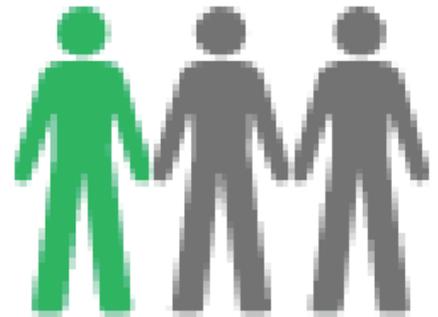
Protective factors are factors that make it less likely that individuals experience adverse mental health outcomes. Protective factors may be biological, psychological, or social factors in the individual, family, and the environment [2].

Overall, strengthening protective factors for youth through increased social connectedness and anti-stigma work is associated with better mental health outcomes for youth; with youth experiencing the highest level of adversity benefitting the most from protective factors at school and in the community [7,8].

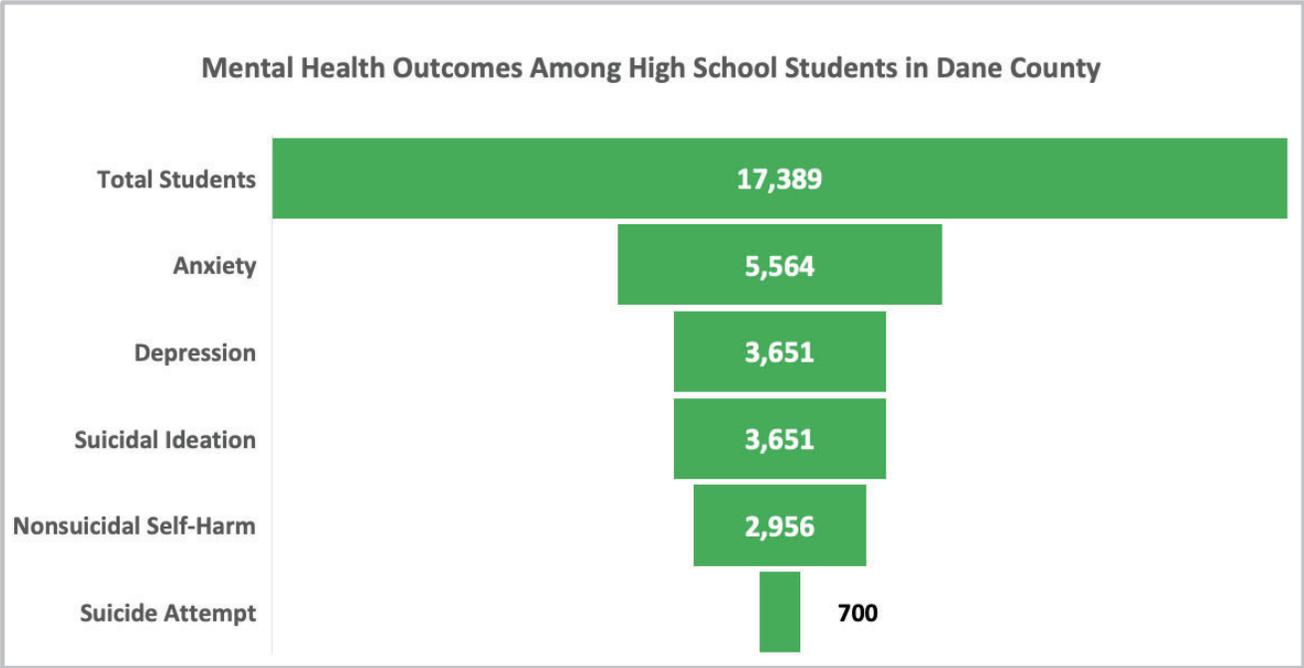
Data

National Data

More than **1 in 3** high school students experienced poor mental health during the pandemic and **nearly half of students** felt persistently sad or hopeless [9].



Dane County Youth Assessment



Dane County Youth Assessment

Students experience a higher burden of poor mental health outcomes when they hold multiple historically oppressed identities, as the discrimination they may experience is multifaceted [11].

Youth experiencing the worst mental health outcomes:

- *LGBTQ+ Youth*
 - ☒ *Multiracial & BIPOC Youth*
 - ☒ *Lowest-Income Youth*
 - ☒ *Female-identifying Youth*
-

Recommendations

Recommendations

1. **Increase the current funding for the 15 youth centers** funded through the Department of Human Services at an additional **\$5,000** dollars per youth center per year. Also, recommend that the Department of Human Services **monitor the development of future youth centers** in Dane County and fund accordingly in coming years.
 2. Recommend the Department of Human Services **collaborate with community partners** such as Public Health Madison and Dane County, NAMI Dane County, and school districts **to implement a Seize The Awkward Media Campaign to elevate current county resources** dedicated to teen mental health, encourage peer support, and destigmatize mental health care.
 3. Recommend the Department of Human Services **explore the feasibility of participating in community conversations with stakeholders** such as school districts, NAMI Dane County, the Healthy Kids Collaborative, Safer Communities, and other community-based organizations and providers **regarding the implementation of Sources of Strength throughout Dane County**.
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Mental health was a top three value in the recent youth survey and community survey for the City of Fitchburg Teen Center by EQT by Design.

Recommendation #1: Youth Resource Centers

- ☒ Dane County funds nine youth resource centers in Madison and six youth resource centers in the greater Dane County area — **15 total youth resource centers**.
 - ☒ The County allocates about **\$158,000** to all youth resource centers in the county.

 - ☒ Research indicates buildings dedicated spaces for youth to be themselves and come together to build community **increases their social connectedness** [12]
 - ☒ Social connectedness is important for the adolescent brain and can promote positive mental health outcomes for youth [13].
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Recommendation #2: Communications Campaign

- ☒ Seize The Awkward is a national media campaign by the Ad Council in partnership with The JED Foundation and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention that **aims to teach and encourage young people (ages 16 - 24) about how to talk with their friends about mental health and how to take care of their own mental health** [15].
 - ☒ The campaign provides partners with a toolkit for how to launch their own campaign [16]. The toolkit is **free to download** and **provides best practices** for implementation.
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Recommendation #3: Peerto-Peer Support

- ☒ Peer-to-peer support programming in high schools across Wisconsin and in comparable counties **has proven effective** at supporting teen mental health.
 - ☒ Sources of Strength is an evidence-based suicide prevention program that uses peer leaders **to enhance protective factors associated with reducing suicide** across a school population showing effectiveness in **both preventative upstream and intervention outcomes in high school students** [17,18].
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Additionally, we would like to thank the community organizations who helped us better understand the mental health needs of youth in the community.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to the people at the Dane County Youth Commission collecting data from youth and creating the Dane County Youth Assessment.

Thank you to the youth who filled out the Dane County Youth Assessment survey.

We see you and hear you.

Questions?

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