

Healthy Children Need Healthy Adults

Normalizing Conversations on Mental Health

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Commissioner, CT DCF

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***Thank You Commissioner Bye,
Dr. Thomas-Farquharson and
OEC For Recognizing
Mental Health Month!***



Children's Behavioral Health at DCF

DCF by statute is responsible for children's behavioral health

Over \$300,000 on mental health services

Psychiatric Hospital for Children and Youth

Two PRTF's (one for girls and one for boys)

Recently restructured to provide better integration between health and mental health (brain-based health) with a focus on social determinants of health

Focus on the mental health of the caregivers and the helping professionals is essential

CT Children's Behavioral Health System-It Takes A Village

Transforming Children's
Behavioral Health Policy &
Planning Committee

DCF Internal Operations

Behavioral Health Plan
Implementation Advisory Board

State Government Interagency
Collaboration; Children's Cabinet

What does the data tell us?

Source: Dr. Wizdom Powell



1 billion people worldwide suffer from some form of mental health disorder



60% of adults with a mental illness do not receive care

More National Data

Females are 2x as likely to have mental illness than males

From 2011-2021 suicide deaths increased among POC, young people and people living in rural areas by 30%

75% of young people involved with JJ met the criteria for a mental health disorder

Black people living below the poverty level are twice as likely to report serious psychological distress, as compared to those over the poverty level.

CT Statistics

Rising rates of children
feeling sad or helpless



From 25% in 2005 to
36% in 2023 (Annual
Youth Risk Behavior
Survey)



18.8% of adults in
Connecticut report
experiencing mental
illness



Rising rates among
BIPOC youths/LGBTQ
communities



According to SAMHSA-
13% of youth aged 12-
17 in CT experience a
major depressive
episode



CT's MH service array
ranks higher than the
national average

Celebrities Who Died By Suicide

EVERYONE
Impacted: Young &
Old, Rich & Poor

- *Grayson Murray - Golfer*
- *Robin Williams - Actor*
- *Marilyn Monroe - Actor*
- *Ernest Hemmingway - Author*
- *Vincent Van Gogh - Artist*
- *Stephen “tWitch” Boss – Dancer / DJ*
- *John McAfee – Cyber Security Expert*
- *Chelsie Kryst - Miss USA*
- *Don Cornelius – Soul Train*

Significant Contributors

Shadow Pandemic: We didn't touch for 3-4 years



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graph TD; A[Shadow Pandemic: We didn't touch for 3-4 years] --> B[Mass Shootings]; B --> C[Politics/Media]; C --> D[International Relations]; D --> E[Social Media's Impact on Isolation];
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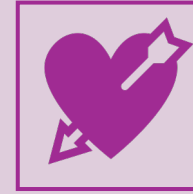
Mass Shootings

Politics/Media

International Relations

Social Media's Impact on Isolation

Changing Dynamics/ Co- Occurring Disorders



Increase in Murder –
Suicides



Increase in IDD/ASD
and Mental Health



Increase in Substance
Misuse-Opioids and
Mental Health

What Happened To The Workforce?

Where did they go?



Solution Focused Strategies

We have to normalize the discussion-
at work and home-What's your story?

*Medina Jett, *Peace Be Still*

Take care of yourself-I go to church
and therapy

Need whole-person and whole-
family care- Thank You OEC!

Need to start early and further up-
stream

Healthy Children Need Healthy Adults

***Let's be a village and work together to
break the stigma!***



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