

Child Mental Health Needs During COVID-19: Findings from the Family Strengths Research Study

Child Mental Health Needs During COVID-19:

COVID-19 has disrupted school, work, and family life, leading many children and youth to feel uncertain and anxious. Additionally, the pandemic has reduced children's outlets for relieving stress, such as playing with friends and seeing teachers, coaches, or extended family members. Physical distancing has also reduced access to mental health resources important for addressing mental health issues.



How are Children in Western PA Coping with Their

Mental Health Needs?

Parents consistently report that child mental well-being is one of the most difficult issues for them to address. Based on the [Family Strengths Survey](#), only 25% of parents and caregivers felt they could support their children's social, mental and emotional well-being as much as they wanted.

Parents and caregivers experienced challenges helping their kids and teens have positive mental health while being physically isolated: *"We need more help with the mental health of our teen, she's not adjusting well. She feels very separate from her classmates. She's very lonely and it's worrisome."*

Another parent described the challenge of finding mental health services: *"I'm really struggling with my child's mental health issues. Before everything started we were trying to find her a therapist now we aren't sure what to do for her."*

These Programs Can Help Children and Youth Address Their Mental Health Needs:

Contacting your child's doctor is a great option. Your child's doctor can help care for many behavioral and mental health concerns and can connect your child with a therapist or psychiatrist if needed. Pediatricians, therapists, and psychiatrists can care for children through video visits without leaving your home.

[Dialectical Behavioral Therapy \(DBT\) Skills in Schools](#) provides a social emotional learning curriculum. They offer free online classes on *Student Life Skills to Survive and Thriving During COVID-19*.

[Supporting our Valued Adolescents \(sova.pitt.edu\)](#) is a website for teens and [wisesova.pitt.edu](#) is for parents. SOVA is a place a young person who feels anxious or depressed can go to find information and support from others who have been there too.



Services for Teens At-Risk (STAR) Center provides clinical and outreach suicide prevention services: <https://www.starcenter.pitt.edu/>

Resolve is a free 24-hour, 365-day crisis service for Allegheny County, 1-888-796-8226: <https://www.upmc.com/services/behavioral-health/resolve-crisis-services>

About this Study: The Family Strengths Study is a weekly survey of parents or expecting parents in Western PA. The study is a collaboration between UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP), University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), United Way, and the Allegheny County Health Department and Department of Human Services. This survey is part of the Pittsburgh Study and made possible through support from the CHP Foundation, Pitt Department of Pediatrics, The Grable Foundation, and The Shear Family Foundation. For more information, visit <https://www.pediatrics.pitt.edu/family-strengths-survey>



Who do I contact for more information? For more information please contact:

Family Strengths Survey team at PGHstudy@pitt.edu.

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General Resources for Mental Health:

- Allegheny Family Network (AFN): <http://www.alleghenyfamilynetwork.org/> Chat line: 1-888-273-2361
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Keystone PA: <https://www.namikeystonepa.org/>
- Mental Health America SW PA: <https://mhaswpa.org/>
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP): <https://afsp.org/chapter/western-pennsylvania>
- Inside Our Minds offers a monthly group remotely during this current time: <http://insideourminds.org/>

Crisis Prevention:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for other counties, 1-800-273-8255
- Crisis text line to talk to someone anonymously. Text START to 741-741

Your Child's Mental Health Needs:

- Children's Community Pediatrics (CCP)'s behavioral health program: <https://www.childrenspeds.com/specialties-and-services/behavioral-health>
- Navigating Teen Life page at <https://www.childrenspeds.com/health-resources/just-for-teens>
- [Family Support Centers](#) for families with a child five years of age or younger:
- Youth who have been involved with human services or juvenile detention have access to peer support program through DHS Youth Support Partners: [https://alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/News-Events/Accomplishments/Youth-and-Family-Support/Youth-Support-Partners-\(YSP\).aspx](https://alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/News-Events/Accomplishments/Youth-and-Family-Support/Youth-Support-Partners-(YSP).aspx)

Telehealth Services (offering tele-therapy and tele-psychiatry):

- Many pediatricians, therapists, counselors, and psychiatrists offer telemedicine visits and telephone visits. Please call your child's doctor for any questions about mental health/illness, behavior, development, or any other concerns.
- UPMC CCP/Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP) providers: 724-933-3910
- [Western PA Institute and Clinic \(WPIC\)](#): 412-624-1000 or 1-877-624-4100; Center for Children and Families: 412-235-5444
- [Mercy Behavioral Health: 1-877-637-2924](#)
- [Allegheny General Hospital: 1-877-284-2000 or 412-DOCTORS/412-362-8677](#)
- [Persad Center: Specialize in LGBTQ needs: 412-441-9786 x 223](#)
- [Persoma Counseling Associates: 412-823-5155](#)
- [Milestone Centers: 412-243-3400](#)
- [Vista Behavioral Health: 412-641-7016](#)
- [Cognitive Dynamic Therapy Associates: 412-687-8700](#)
- [Allegheny Mental Health Associates: 412-967-5660 x 1](#)
- [Watson Institute: Autism Spectrum Disorder/Intellectual Disability: 412-365-3800](#)
- [Children's Institute of Pittsburgh](#): Co-existing Medical Issues: 412-420-2400
- [Every Child, Inc.:](#) 412-665-0600

Apps to help children and teens with focus, calm, mindfulness, and stress:

- [Click here](#) for Sesame Street Breathe, Think, Do.
- [Click here](#) for MIndfulness for Children.
- [Click here](#) for free resources from Headspace.
- [Click here](#) for Calm and [here](#) for additional free resources from Calm.
- [Click here](#) for anxiety support from Sanvello.
- [Click here](#) for free resources from Smiling Mind.



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