

What do you want from a post-pandemic world for children with behavioral health needs? Now is the time for Action!

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Concerning Data from the Pandemic

- From January to May 2020 for Medicaid and CHIP-enrolled Youth:
 - 40% decline in health screenings
 - 44% decline in outpatient mental health services
 - 75% decline in dental services
 - 30% decline in children <2 receiving vaccines
- Reports to Abuse and Neglect Hotlines went down across the country by as much as 50%
- % of ER visits for BH reasons increased 31% for 12-17 year olds and 24% for 5-11 year olds from March to October 2020 compared to 2019

Lessons from Healthcare Spending on Primary Care

- Dropped 38% in April 2020 compared to a year ago. June 2020 was 10% lower.
- Primary care practitioner (PCP) volume improved to 70-80% of pre-COVID volume in July and August.
- Telehealth visits *declined* from 69% of total visits in April to only 21% of visits in July.
- Do patients and providers prefer in-person visits? Is this also true for behavioral health? Are reimbursement rates for telehealth less attractive?

Adults are Struggling

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC) survey from June 2020 of 5,412 US Adults:
 - 40.9% reported at least one adverse mental health or behavioral health condition including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress and substance abuse
 - Rates were 3-4 times higher than a year ago
 - 10.7% reported seriously considering suicide in the last 30 days (25.5% for ages 18-24)
- And we know, if adults are struggling so are the children.

Millennials as Parents

- Born between 1980-2000, roughly ages 21-40
- Nearly 1/3 have a behavioral health condition and rates are rising by double digits
- Rates of major depression, alcohol use disorder (AUD), tobacco use disorder (TUD), substance use disorder (SUD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are rising.
- 5-year prevalence rates:
 - Depression 43% – AUD 5% –TUD 10%
 - ADHD 39%

Impact of COVID on Millennials

- 34% increase in alcohol consumption
- 20% increase in smoking
- 17% increase in vaping
- 16% increase in non-medical drug use
- Negative perceptions of their mental health and 80% reporting their mental health has had a negative impact on their physical health
- Deaths of despair (Opiate Use Disorders [OUDs], suicide) were already on the rise pre-COVID, so the pandemic didn't land on a blank page

A Second, Behavioral Health Pandemic?

- Rising rates of mental health disorders and SUDs
- Disproportionate impacts for black, brown, and indigenous families, lower socio-economic status (SES), older adults, and front-line workers including our children's behavioral health workforce
- Deaths from COVID are >575,000 and rising rapidly
- Each COVID death is estimated to leave 9 family members bereaved
- Social distancing, while essential, takes away a key source of support
- Hurricanes, fires, floods, racial trauma, political turmoil

Tiered Responses using a Public Health Approach

- Screening – Prevent normal grief and distress from becoming prolonged and disordered
- Mental Health Risk Assessments – Return prolonged grief and PTSD to normal grief and distress trajectories (via primary care)
- Treat Those at Highest Risk – To prevent morbidity and mortality

Supporting the Workforce

- Same CDC study reported 22% of essential workers seriously considered suicide.
- Early childcare providers, teachers, mobile response and stabilization services (MRSS), in-home therapists, parent partners, and therapeutic mentors never expected to become *front-line workers in a pandemic!*
- How are we supporting the workforce that is being sent into harms way?
- How can you adapt your direct services to ensure client, family and worker safety?
- What percent of your children's behavioral health services are still being received virtually?

How is this Pandemic different from other Disasters we have experienced?

- Unclear timeline, i.e., when will it end?
 - Marathon, not a sprint is important to manage expectations. Chronic vs. acute stress
- Universality of risk, i.e., not just happening to others, managing our own response while also remaining focused on the needs of others
- Racial disparities in infection and death rates
- Context – No consensus on how we should respond to the crisis leading to divisions vs. coming together in this time of crisis

How do we support Resiliency?

- Finite amount of “adaptive energy” to cope with stress and we didn’t go into this on a full tank!
- Children look to their parents to know how concerned to be...so how do we support parents’ resiliency and modeling positive adaptation and coping?
- Not everything that is stressful results in PTSD and can actually be an opportunity to develop competency.
- The greatest predictor of resilience is collaboration and cohesiveness.

How do we Support Resiliency?

- We have trauma-informed and responsive approaches and supports.
- We have some evidence-based practices (EBPs) that are proving to be even more effective via telebehavioral health, e.g., Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), behavioral coaching/Parent Behavioral Training (PBT).
- Physical distancing doesn't require social distancing...how do you create virtual or safe opportunities for connection?
- Other strategies? What has worked for you and your family?

What do we want the New Normal to look like?

- What aspects of telehealth do consumers want to see continue post-pandemic?
- Who does telehealth work well for and who does it leave out or is less effective? Hybrid models?
- Given the nature of COVID, how do we prepare for *years* of waxing and waning flare-ups?
- How do we keep those in need of services engaged in treatment?

Final Thoughts (thanks for Frances Collins at NIH)

- We can stay socially close and reach out to each other in different ways.
- We're going to get through this, but get through it in a way that will change us. Will we be changed by becoming stronger and more resilient, having learned some lessons about ourselves and about each other?
- We cannot simply hide our heads under our pillows and wait for this to pass. When you wake up in the morning, say to yourself: "I'm engaged in something that matters. I'm not just a passive victim of this terrible pandemic. I'm trying to do what I can and work toward getting us through."

Questions?



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