



may 2022: issue 3

Greetings adolescent health colleagues,

In my never-ending effort to “multitask,” I planned to write this introduction while waiting on my car to be serviced. Shortly after arriving in the waiting area, another customer (an older gentleman) started making small talk. I obliged, while also trying to hint “ok, I need to stop talking now.” An hour and a half later, the stranger had shared his life story, including some unhappy parts, complete with photos and other mementos he carried in his wallet.

If I’m being honest, I was annoyed. Now I was even more behind. When I got back to my office, I texted my frustration to Rena and Katie. Rena, in her infinite wisdom, pointed out the irony (that I was too irritated to notice) that my efforts to write an introduction about mental health awareness month were thwarted by a lonely person looking for basic human connection. She shared that older neighbors that she had never met came everyday to her recent three-day garage sale and talked to her for 20-30 minutes each day. One of them even sent Rena a thank you card for spending so much time with her.

My new friend in the car dealership and Rena’s neighbors are not adolescents. But we all, regardless of age, need connection. We “older” humans have spent a lifetime navigating connections and relationships, and now find ourselves desperate to connect. Young people two years into a pandemic, on the other hand, are navigating the developmental tasks of adolescence without a familiar net. Succeeding at these developmental tasks hinges intricately on finding positive connections with peers and caring adults, and exploring their own identity in the context of friends, family and community.

Reports of adolescents and young adults dealing with depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, self-harm are alarmingly high – a trend that started before the pandemic and has been exacerbated by it. Data from the [2021 Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey](#) confirmed alarming statistics that nearly 40% of students in grades 9-12 reported mental health issues, including persistent thoughts of sadness and loneliness, 44% had suicidal thoughts and 9% attempted suicide. These trends are complicated by challenges in [screening and care for teens](#) in an overwhelmed system.

Young adults are faring similarly: [nearly half of all young adults experience reported mental health symptoms](#) during the pandemic, with a third of those reporting being unable to receive counseling treatment. [Racism and poverty are some of these real barriers to the treatment of youth mental health concerns](#). The challenges are daunting.

Thanks to my daughter who was deejaying our car ride last week, I was introduced to the song “Numb Little Bug”. The lyrics really hit me...

*Do you ever get a little bit tired of life
Like you're not really happy but you don't wanna die
Like you're hanging by a thread but you gotta survive
'Cause you gotta survive
Like your body's in the room but you're not really there
Like you have empathy inside but you don't really care
Like you're fresh outta love but it's been in the air
Am I past repair*

*A little bit tired of tryin' to care when I don't
A little bit tired of quick repairs to cope
A little bit tired of sinking
There's water in my boat
I'm barely breathin'
Tryna stay afloat
So I got these quick repairs to cope*

Our young people’s boats are filling up with water faster than they can bail themselves out. We need all hands on deck.

This month, we’re thinking about the intersection of three national observances – National Adolescent Health Month, Mental Health Awareness Month, and Sex Ed for All Month. The common thread is positive connections and meaningful engagement of young people. Thank you for all you do to help young build

On behalf of the State Adolescent Health Resource Center Team,

[Lynn Bretl](#), MPP

Director, State Adolescent Health Resource Center at the University of Minnesota

Wanna be an NNSAHC website guest blogger? Contact [Katie Pierson](#) to learn more!

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The Office of Population Affairs (OPA) has designated May 2022 as the first annual [National Adolescent Health Month \(NAHM\)](#), emphasizing the importance of building on young people's strengths and potential, encouraging meaningful youth engagement in adolescent health activities, and highlighting key topics in adolescent health. The 2022 NAHM themes are:

1. Empower youth with sexual and reproductive health information and services
2. Support mental health and well-being
3. Encourage physical health and healthy decision making
4. Sustain equitable, accessible, youth-friendly services

OPA recognizes that making investments in adolescent health and well-being will generate a "[triple benefit](#)" for society: healthier youth today, healthier adults in the future, and healthier future generations when today's adolescents become parents, guardians, and caretakers. During NAHM and all year long, we're [strengthening relationships with young people](#) and connecting them to services and opportunities that support and promote their health and well-being. Visit the [NAHM resource page](#) for tools and messaging to promote NAHM themes throughout the year.



Mental Health Awareness Month 2022

For over 70 years, we've observed [Mental Health Awareness Month](#) in May to shine light on an issue that affects us all. MHAM has never been more important than now for youth and young adults who have faced over two years' worth of [disruptions](#) to their developmental trajectories. America's youth mental health system was [fundamentally flawed](#) long before the pandemic: we're now trying to squeeze young people into a mental health treatment system designed to treat WWII veterans.

Resources for youth-serving adults

The system needs to change. This year's MHAM theme, [Back to Basics](#), describes a pressing need for an immediate, all hands on deck approach. The latest Surgeon General's Advisory, [Protecting Youth Mental Health](#), calls for this kind of whole-society response, and includes a series of recommendations to improve youth mental health across eleven sectors, including young people and their families, educators and schools, and media and technology companies. For an overview of the White House's ramped up strategies for improving mental health outcomes for young people -- and potential partnership opportunities -- check out AMCHP's [What Title V MCH Program Staff Need to Know: Federal Investments in Youth Mental Health](#) brief.

According to the Suicide Prevention Research Center, one step in building a [strategic approach to suicide prevention](#) is to find evidence-based programs and practices that address the specific risk and protective factors you hope to focus on.

[AMCHP's #ScreenToInterveneForAYAs Blog](#) is a space for state Title V maternal and child health professionals and their partners to learn about efforts to build better preventive care systems for optimal

for supportive schools. [Sign up to receive new blog posts](#), and contact Anna Corona (acorona@amchp.org) to have your writing featured!

We know from experience and research that young people need connections: [students who felt close to persons at school](#) had a significantly lower prevalence of poor mental health during the pandemic. We also know that young people are more invested in their own health care when they are [engaged in conversation and shared decision-making](#).

Many resources are providing tools directly for young people, such as [The Jed Foundation's](#) (JED) mental health resource center which helps young people find ways to manage feelings like anxiety and sadness; learn how to navigate emotional challenges like break-ups and other difficult transitions; get information on mental health conditions like depression; discover tools for self-care; and get help for themselves or a loved one.

Resources by and for youth

And youth themselves are telling us what they need: [Teens Speak](#) blog, created by the Youth Advisory Program at Boston Children Hospital's Young Women and Young Men Health sites, features "real teens responding to real issues" about health and wellness. [Active Minds](#) is a nonprofit organization supporting mental health awareness and education for young adults, founded by a junior at the University of Pennsylvania following the suicide of a sibling. Its various programs let young people that they are not alone in feeling not okay.

[Mental Health Is Health](#) is a national initiative rooted in the reality that we all have mental health and need to take care of it like we do our physical health. It aims to normalize conversation, create a connection to resources and inspire action on mental health. In Spring 2022, MTV Entertainment Group, in coordination with the Biden-Harris Administration and 18 leading mental health nonprofits, convened the first-ever Mental Health Youth Action Forum to drive culture from awareness to action on mental health through storytelling and media. [Meet the Youth Action Forum Participants](#).

sex ed for all month

For [Sex Ed for All Month](#), we join national advocates in voicing a shared commitment to working toward a world where all young people—no matter where they live or how they identify—get equitable access to the sex education they deserve.

This intersection with Mental Health Awareness Month reminds us that adolescence and young adulthood is full of social, physical and emotional developmental milestones, including exploring sexuality and identity, and building relationships with peers: supporting healthy sexual development in young people is intricately intertwined with supporting healthy relationships and mental health.



Resources for youth-serving adults

[ACT for Youth's Healthy Relationship Tools](#): Healthy relationships require communication and intimacy skills; they also rely on individual characteristics such as emotional self-regulation, social confidence, and empathy. Often youth programs do not focus explicitly on promoting healthy relationships, but they may include activities that practice pro-social behaviors and communication skills. On this webpage, you can find resources and tools to support young people in building healthy relationships including: [The Social and Emotional Learning \(SEL\) Toolkit](#); the SEL Toolkit's [Relationship Skills](#) page; [Romantic Relationships in Adolescence](#); and [Dating Violence](#) for resources on consent and coping with unhealthy relationships.

This [Telehealth FAQ](#) from the California Adolescent Family Life Program was designed to help guide virtual Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP) telehealth visits (phone and or video) during the COVID-19 state of emergency in order to maintain youth's safety, privacy and security. Includes a chart/comparison of communication platforms providing remote services that have been listed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as well as acceptable forms of youth contact, and ways to support youth during telehealth visits.

Navigating systemic barriers

[Disability and Reproductive Health, It's Time We Talked About It](#), a recent blog post from AMCHP, discusses disability in the context of sexual and reproductive health and the importance of lifting up lived experience. It links to related resources and tools, including: Oregon Health Authority's report, [Preconception Health Recommendations for Young Adults with Disabilities: A Final Report from an Action Learning Collaborative](#), developed as part of an AMCHP Action Learning collaborative project on preconception health; and [Our Sexuality, Our Health: A Disabled Advocate's Guide to Relationships, Romance, Sexuality, and Sexual Health](#), from the Office of Developmental Primary Care at the University of California, San Francisco.

[Facilitators Guide to Trauma-Informed Programming](#) from the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program, includes user-friendly checklists that facilitators can use before, during, and after program delivery to ensure that they are using a trauma-informed approach.

Resources by and for youth

topics, including contraception, STIs, LGBTQ health, and puberty.

[onelove #Real Time](#) offers real time ways (text, live chat, and hotlines) for young people to get support if they are experiencing or exhibiting unhealthy relationships or abusive behavior.

[Sex, Etc.: Love & Relationships](#), powered by Answer at Rutgers University, offers "sex education by teens, for teens," and other resources and articles on healthy relationships.

[Teen Talk: Sex, Love, Relationships, and More](#) from Power To Decide, the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy, presents unbiased facts so that youth can make informed decisions and live their best lives. Links to blogs by and for teens are provided.

professional development opportunities

[Register now for the 2022 Adolescent Health Summer Institute: Promoting & Protecting Adolescent Mental Health](#) hosted by the University of Minnesota School of Nursing. This virtual conference costs \$150 and will take place July 18-21. As we emerge from the pandemic, we have critical opportunities to support adolescents' mental health, as well as to change aspects of schools, community organizations, healthcare systems and other institutions that shape adolescents' daily lives. During the 2022 Summer Institute, you will explore patterns and trends in adolescent mental health; utilize developmental, social-ecological, and intersectional lenses to examine young people's mental well-being; and consider individual-, population- and systems-level approaches to promoting youth mental health. You'll strategize with other caring adults – health and social service providers, mental health professionals, counselors, juvenile justice professionals, teachers and school staff – who help young people thrive.

Registration is open for University of Michigan Adolescent Health Initiative's [2022 Conference on Adolescent Health](#). This hybrid event will take place August 11-12, 2022, for two days of dynamic breakout sessions, poster presentations, youth-led sessions, and networking events. The in-person portion of the Conference will be held in Ypsilanti, Michigan, at the Ann Arbor Marriott Ypsilanti at Eagle Crest.

The [Healthy Youth Development - Prevention Research Center](#) (HYD-PRC) provides **interactive, skills-building health education and training** to increase youth-serving professionals' and organizations' capacity. The HYD-PRC training team is deeply committed to addressing health disparities, and deliver content through a lens of equity, inclusion, and trauma-informed practice. With extensive experience providing training and professional development, they are sought-after as consultants, educators, and trainers, who can provide high quality, competitively-priced training and technical support on:

- 20+ [evidence-based](#) sexual health curricula like Making Proud Choices, Making a Difference, SHARP (Sexual Health and Adolescent Risk Behavior), Safer Sex Intervention, and Promoting Health Among Teens.
- [Evidence-informed](#) sexual health curricula like 3Rs (Rights, Respect, Responsibility) and It's That Easy! A Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Children.
- [Adolescent sexual health promotion](#) trainings that cover topics like Cultural Proficiency, LGBTQ+ Inclusivity, Trauma-Informed Approaches to Sex Ed, and Answering Sensitive Questions.

To explore how the HYD-PRC can support your training and TA needs, and ask for a quote, visit their [website](#) or contact Jill Farris, Director of Adolescent Health Training & Education, at farrisj@umn.edu.

states in action

State adolescent health coordinators (SAHCs) are managing a wide variety of adolescent health programming in their state health departments. In our fall 2021 survey of SAHCs, more than half report managing national or state Title V/MCH performance measures, grants, or other work related to sexual health (including teen pregnancy prevention), healthy adolescent relationships (including bullying and violence prevention), and other program areas that build young people's resilience and protective factors. Some states also focus specifically on youth mental health initiatives, including managing Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention grants from SAMHSA (see examples of this work in [New Jersey](#) and [Maine](#)).

One example of how state public health programs are working together to build youth resiliency is the Adolescent and Young Adult Health National Resource Center (AYAH-NRC) [Behavioral Health Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network](#) (CoIIN) led by the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs.

Now in its second cohort (2021 – 2023), the CoIIN is mobilizing multidisciplinary state health department teams from Arizona, California, Iowa, Ohio, and Pennsylvania to improve depression screening and follow-up for young people. The teams operate through their public health systems (led by state Title V/maternal and child health programs) and primary care systems (led by clinical partners and practices).

Arizona's Behavioral Health CoIIN Team was recently featured in an [AMCHP state spotlight](#). Angie Lorenzo, Chief of the Office of Women's Health (and State Adolescent Health Coordinator) at the Arizona Department of Health, who leads the state's CoIIN team, shares how their state team enhances equitable

further accelerating and building upon their Title V action plan through their CoIIN work.

If your state is interested in expanding a focus on behavioral health and building youth resiliency, but you don't know where to start, check out this [searchable database of SAMHSA grantees](#) – by state, grant type, and keyword – to find potential partners already focused on mental health.

about sahrc

The State Adolescent Health Resource Center (SAHRC) works to build a national network of states and territories in which adolescents and young adults (AYA) are bedrock priorities in practice and policy. Created by MCHB in 2000 to elevate AYA health as a state-level priority within the Title V/MCHB structure, we offer workforce development in the form of ongoing responsive leadership, technical assistance, research-based resources, and community-building opportunities. This newsletter is funded through SAHRC's partnership with The Adolescent and Young Adult Health – National Resource Center ("the Center") which also includes the [National Adolescent Health Information Center](#), the [Association for Maternal and Child Health Programs](#), and the [National Improvement Partnership Network](#). The Center is supported by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Services and Resources Administration, USDHHS cooperative agreement U45MC27709, Adolescent and Young Adult Health Capacity Building Program. The contents don't necessarily represent the views of or an endorsement by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government.



SAHRC respectfully [acknowledges](#) that the University of Minnesota stands on traditional Dakota lands. We #HonorNativeLand and you can too. [Find out whose land you're on.](#)

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