

MENTAL HEALTH WEEKLY

Essential information for decision-makers

Volume 34 Number 21

May 27, 2024

Online ISSN 1556-7583

IN THIS ISSUE...

An extensive joint investigation by the U.S. DOJ and the U.S. Department of HHS have found that Rhode Island violated Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act by routinely and unnecessarily segregating hundreds of children with mental health or developmental disabilities at an acute care psychiatric hospital. DCYF officials said they intend to work with federal officials to reach a resolution.

... See top story, this page

Report finds 'trusted messengers' play vital role in 988 support

... See page 4

Longer term treatment needed for patients with schizophrenia

... See page 6

Teens with classmates with MI more likely to be diagnosed

... See page 7

Ramaswamy Viswanathan, M.D., Dr.Med.Sc., takes office as APA president ... See page 8



FIND US ON

facebook

mhwnewsletter

© 2024 Wiley Periodicals LLC

HHS: Rhode Island violated civil rights laws by warehousing children with MI

A multi-year, comprehensive joint investigation by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights (HHS OCR) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) District of Rhode Island earlier this month concluded that Rhode Island is in violation of federal civil rights laws for unnecessarily segregating children with mental health and/or developmental disabilities at a state acute-care psychiatric facility.

The findings of the investigation reviewed youth in the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) care who were

treated at Bradley Hospital between the years of 2017 and 2022.

The investigation concluded that the Rhode Island DCYF and the State of Rhode Island violated Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), by failing to provide services to children with behavioral health disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. This failure results in children being routinely and unnecessarily segregated in an acute-care psychiatric hospital, officials stated.

U.S. Attorney for the District of Rhode Island, Zachary A. Cunha, and HHS OCR director Melanie Fontes Rainer, in a May 13 detailed letter, spelled out the results of the investigation to Rhode Island Gov. Daniel J. McKee and Rhode Island DCYF Director Ashley Deckert.

See **HHS OCR** page 2

Bottom Line...

A federal investigation found that Rhode Island left children in the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) care hospitalized at Bradley Hospital for far longer than necessary.

California campaign targeting youths will heighten awareness around ACEs

(Editor's note: In each issue of MHW during Mental Health Awareness Month, we will feature an innovative initiative in mental health advocacy/promotion.)

Motivated by data showing that 6 in 10 Californians reported having at least one Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), California health leaders this month launched an awareness campaign highlighting the effects of ACEs.

Leaders said they believe the Live Beyond campaign will resonate with its primary audience of youths and young adults, and its secondary target of parents, largely because the

Bottom Line...

Numerous stories of personal trauma and healing have informed the content of California's newly launched Live Beyond campaign to broaden public understanding around Adverse Childhood Experiences.

campaign has been informed by more than 250 young Californians who have shared their personal stories of heartbreak and healing.

"We wanted to create something different, something novel that really spoke to the target audience,"

See **ACE** page 5

around help seeking, but it will take some time.”

Key findings/ recommendations

Among the key findings from the 988 mixed-methods research study specific to trusted messengers include that:

- Approximately half of trusted messengers said they've heard of 988. Spouses/partners and friends are more likely to be aware and/or have heard of and are somewhat familiar with 988 compared with other groups;
- When they've heard about it, trusted messengers are most likely to have heard about 988 being available 24/7 and free;
- Most trusted messengers reported that they feel 988 is very/extremely valuable (especially people with Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander loved ones/close connections); and
- The majority of trusted messengers would consider using and/or recommending 988 when their loved one/close connection is struggling or in crisis.

Recommendations

From the qualitative and quantitative research conducted, the research team identified the following recommendations for organizations working to communicate with trusted messengers about how, why, and when they should contact 988 as a resource, or on behalf of a loved one/close connection, and to motivate them to recommend it to others when needed.

1. More awareness of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is needed;
2. Messaging to trusted messengers should specify what 988 is and how it works;
3. 988 has an opportunity to provide deeper resources for loved one/close connections and messengers; and
4. Consider motivators, barriers, preferences and differences among messenger groups and subpopulations.

Communications tool kit

A dedicated tool kit has been developed for each of the eight populations identified by the research project. This tool kit is designed to help organizations that reach the

public, including nonprofits, state and local government entities and others to build awareness and trust in 988 among trusted messengers to people disproportionately impacted by suicide.

The intended audience for the research and tool kit is the trusted messengers; as well as communicators working on social media, or putting ads in local papers. Advertising agencies and marketers working to raise awareness of 988 through public service announcements can also benefit from the research and tool kit according to the report.

“Lastly, anyone who is interested in making 988 more approachable and accessible for the populations they serve should read this,” said Box. The Action Alliance is currently working on disseminating the report and tool kit with their partners and a number of organizations at the national and state level in order for them to put this information into practice, noted Box.

“We now have the tools needed to develop a more holistic campaign,” said Box. “That’s really exciting.” •

Visit www.wiley.com

ACE from page 1

Diana Ramos, M.D. M.P.H., the state’s Surgeon General, told *MHW*. “We conducted focus groups throughout California. We heard their voices.”

The state is devoting substantial resources to the campaign, which officially kicked off on May 1 and will run through June 2025. A total of \$24 million in funding from the state’s Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative, an effort to improve access to child and adolescent behavioral health services, will support the awareness campaign. The Children and Youth Behavioral Health initiative is part of a comprehensive state plan to address the factors that contribute to the mental well-being of children and youth.

Live Beyond is designed to

broaden Californians’ knowledge of ACEs and their impacts on everyday life, and then to use stories of hope and information about available resources to inspire young people to overcome the impacts of toxic stress.

The campaign’s website (<https://livebeyondca.org>) states, “ACEs might be a part of our story, but they don’t define who we are or what happens next. We can learn how to heal and live beyond what happened to us.”

Campaign origins

A RAND survey that was conducted late last year helped to fuel the state’s interest in launching an ACEs campaign. The survey asked youths aged 16 to 25 and parents of children aged 8 to 16 whether they had experienced a traumatic childhood event,

such as witnessing family violence or growing up with a parent with a mental health issue or substance use disorder. While 60% of respondents reported that they had experienced at least one ACE, only 12% of youths and 10% of adults had heard of the term and know what it stands for.

The survey also revealed a significant gap between those who believed healing from these experiences was possible and those who had actually pursued professional help for these challenges. Also, only slightly more than half of respondents accurately stated that individuals who experienced ACEs were more likely to have mental health problems in adulthood.

A campaign that will use multiple social media platforms for messaging

Continues on next page

Continued from previous page

likely can move the needle on awareness of the term. More importantly, however, state leaders want to inspire action that will change attitudes about the life events that young people experience, also reducing stigma around seeking help.

“We can reduce depressive disorders by 44% if we can address these issues by the age of 18,” Ramos said. “Talk about really making a difference.” (That statistic comes from Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data published in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* in 2019 and furnished by 25 states for the period between 2015 and 2017.)

She pointed out that in listening to young people’s voices, she has come to realize how pervasive stigmatization can be, and how it can run especially deep for many Latinx individuals.

Visitors to the campaign website can view videos in which young people share their stories of trauma and healing. In one of the videos, content creator and gamer Valkyrae (“Rae”) describes how gaming initially afforded her an escape from living in a household with an alcoholic parent, and how it later helped her build a supportive community of friends.

Rae expresses how she was initially shocked that a term existed for

what she had been experiencing, but then found it to be validating. She advises viewers that therapy can be helpful simply as a vehicle to talk to someone, and she describes such activities as a way to establish “little goals to work for.”

Ramos said these accounts will prove critically important in helping individuals understand that they’re not so different from everyone else and that they too can find help.

“We can reduce depressive disorders by 44% if we can address these issues by the age of 18.”

Diana Ramos M.D., M.P.H.

Ramos said Instagram and TikTok will be important social media outlets for reaching young people in the campaign, while Facebook will help to serve that purpose for parents. Campaign resources will include science-based information on ACEs and evidence-based strategies for healing.

“This is the first campaign about ACEs to directly focus messaging

toward youth and young adults,” Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative Director Sohil Sud, M.D., said in a news release announcing Live Beyond’s launch. “We’re hearing that they want to understand the science behind ACEs, how these events can negatively impact their mental and physical health and show up in their lives and relationships well into adulthood, and how to heal with evidence-based strategies.”

Broad-based approach

Ramos emphasized that the campaign also is seeking to broaden care providers’ understanding of ACEs and their impact, calling the overall effort a cross-collaborative initiative.

She said organizers of the campaign will track a number of outcomes over the course of the next year, including the number of youth exposures to the posted videos. In addition, RAND will be developing a report that will analyze the public’s understanding of ACEs before and after the campaign.

The state’s Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative also has made available two youth-focused apps: the BrightLife Kids app, for children up to age 12 and their parents/caregivers, and the Soluna app for youths and young adults aged 13 to 25. •

Longer term treatment needed for patients with schizophrenia

The majority of patients diagnosed with schizophrenia who were followed for over 25 years for a research study did not experience recovery or remission, according to researchers who indicated that understanding prognosis is critical to anticipating public health needs and providing care to individuals with psychotic disorders. The findings suggest that more treatment and support are needed for this population, the researchers stated.

The article, “Long-Term Course of Remission and Recovery in Psychotic Disorders,” was recently

published online in *The American Journal of Psychiatry*.

Psychotic disorders, in which individuals experience hallucinations and delusions, negatively impact quality of life, relationships, physical health and occupational function, researchers stated. However, remarkably little is known about the long-term course of remission and recovery among individuals with psychotic disorders, they said.

“The overall goal is to understand the prognosis of schizophrenia spectrum disorder and to get an idea on how effective our treatment

and health care is for the average person diagnosed with schizophrenia,” Sara Tramazzo research coordinator at Stony Brook University, and study co-author, told *MHW*.

Tramazzo was also research coordinator for the Suffolk County Mental Health Project, a longitudinal study following first-episode psychosis.

At the time of publication, this study represents the longest sample following first-episode hospitalization, said Tramazzo. “The study is now conducting its 35-year follow-up,” she said.