

THE STATE OF PLAY

Each month, we examine how the mental health conversation is evolving, with a focus on youth, women, and the justice system. Last month, we analyzed the intersections between mental health and the justice system. This month, we highlight the top issues relating to youth mental health.

The diagram below illustrates the conversation around youth mental health. It assesses 4,336 news articles from February to May 2021. Takeaways include:

School re-openings won't solve the youth mental health crisis.

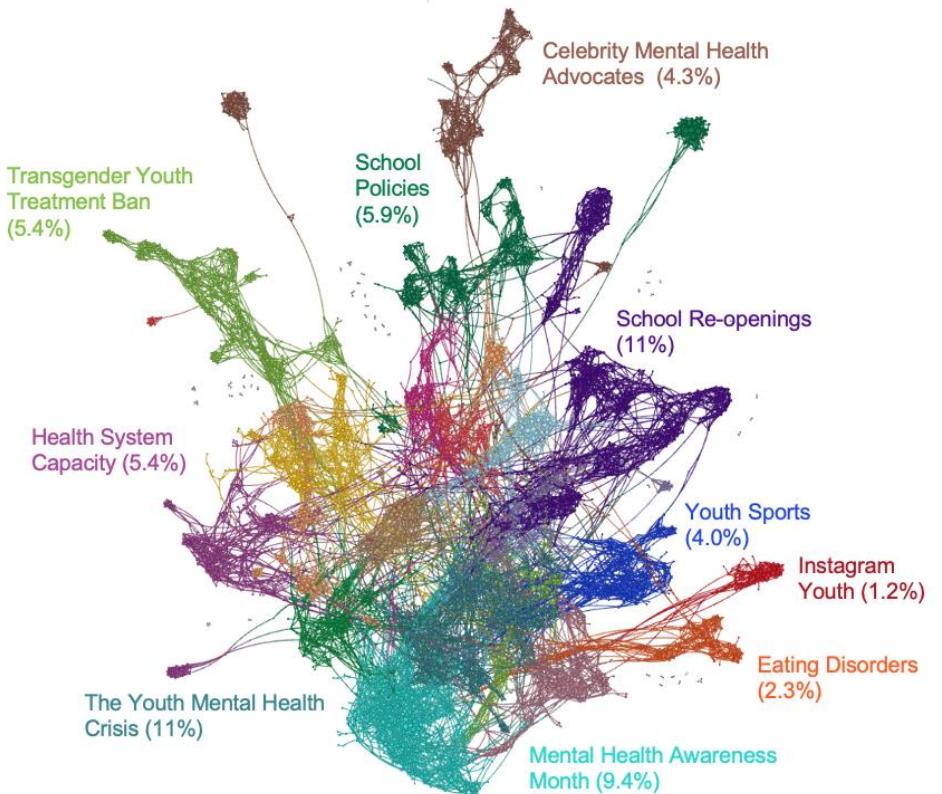
As schools begin to open, experts warn of ongoing depression, self-harm and suicide risk. Given concern about the capacity of health systems to respond to the youth mental health crisis, it is critical to see more collaboration and creativity from stakeholders. In Alabama, where funding is sparse, schools are collaborating with community organizations to fill gaps. In Idaho, parents, educators and advocates have collaborated to create 30 new recommendations to guide school mental health strategies in the upcoming year.

Youths are confronting trauma – and celebrities want to talk about it.

Transgender teens are “caught in the crossfire” of an intense culture war. Black youth – especially girls – are at high risk for suicide, triggered by socioemotional stress and racial trauma. Latinx youth witnessed COVID-19 ravage their communities, and AAPI youth confront intergenerational trauma and stigma. In response, celebrities like Oprah and Prince Harry are leading an international conversation about how to heal from childhood trauma and build resilience.

Youth Mental Health

February – May 2021



New risk factors on the horizon.

The pandemic has exacerbated the current mental health challenge among youth, but other risk factors – such as social media designed for kids – will still emerge and further complicate our response.

THOUGHT STARTERS

A roundup of thought-provoking pieces on mental health for youth, women, and the justice system.



Youth Mental Health: Code Pink in Canada

Children First Canada launched its #codePINK campaign, stating that the youth mental health crisis in the country has reached the point of “**life and death.**” The campaign is intended to urge the government to declare a “pediatric emergency.” The **Toronto Sun** explains:

“Children’s hospitals [are] reporting a 100% increase in suicide attempts admissions, a 200% jump in substance abuse disorder admissions, and a sharp rise in rates of child abuse...fully 70% of Canadian kids aged 6 to 18 report that the pandemic has harmed their mental wellbeing.”

Advocates are calling on Canada’s First Ministers to take immediate action to reopen schools, camps and parks and to scale up funding for new mental health and virtual care programs.



Women’s Mental Health: The After-Effects of COVID-19

The circumstances of the pandemic fundamentally changed the way that women make decisions about their own health – and the landscape of resources and support that are available to them. HealthyWomen investigated these behavior changes in a **recent report**, “Women and COVID-19: Understanding the Emotional and Physical Impacts on Women’s Behaviors and Health Decision-Making During and After the Pandemic.” The report provides rich insight for healthcare providers about how women will take care of themselves and their families in a healthcare environment forever changed by COVID-19:

“Some of the predictions about how the disease will leave its mark on the health care system include more prevalent telehealth, the possibility of reforming the U.S. health care system, fewer private practices and nursing homes, more home health aides and dramatic changes in how minorities access and receive health care.”



The Justice System: Policing Public Health

Law enforcement is designed to protect public safety, but what is the role of police when it comes to protecting public health? What does evidence show about the public health impact of current accepted police practices? A **new article** from the *Journal of Community Safety & Well-Being* explores these questions and offers forward-thinking solutions to a public health-informed approach to policing:

“The United States has over 18,000 law enforcement agencies. The nation will be on the road to real progress in police reform when police budgets are tied to public health metrics...and when officers’ performance and promotional paths are tied to public health outcomes...diverting and deflecting to health services should become the default practice.”

THE PUNCHLIST



3 ways to take action on this month.

1

Share:

On May 18th, NEXUS released a new white paper, **The Language of Mental Health: Our Greatest Success and Challenge**. Read it and share on LinkedIn, Facebook or other social media using custom social cards, downloadable [here](#).

2

Listen:

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) Young Adult Council member Olivia shared a moving story about her road from self-harm to recovery, and ultimately to becoming a bastion of support for her peers. Listen to her story in the **first episode** of DBSA's podcast, "I'm Living Proof: A Letter to My Younger Self."

3

Watch

What is Complex Trauma Disorder? How is it different from PTSD? And what role might gender play in the diagnosis and treatment of each condition? In **this 20-minute clip**, Professor Jayashri Kulkarni from Monash University in Australia explains it all.

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