

EXECUTIVE INSIGHTS

JUNE 28, 2021

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PRIORITIZING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Here's how health professionals are using research and innovative practices to address suicide prevention, trauma and substance use disorder in children and adolescents.

INSIDE:

Mental health and student athletes. [PAGE 5](#)
Strategies for excessive screen time use. [PAGE 7](#)



CRAIN'SCONTENTSTUDIO
DETROIT

2021 Child & Adolescent Behavioral Health Summit

The two-day virtual event, held April 13-14, 2021, invited professionals and insiders to address critical topics related to mental health, wellness, substance use disorder and suicide prevention. The event was designed for clinicians, social service providers, educators, parents, and anyone who works with youth. Participants had an opportunity to receive continuing education credits through the Michigan Department of Education, Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network and the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education.



Summit by the numbers

10

Main Stage Sessions

4

Virtual Networking Breaks

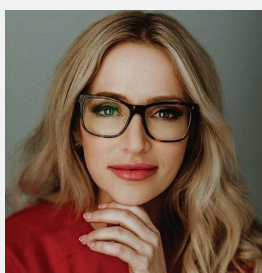
158

Registered Attendees

Countless ...

Children and Families Impacted

2021 Child & Adolescent Behavioral Health Summit presenters



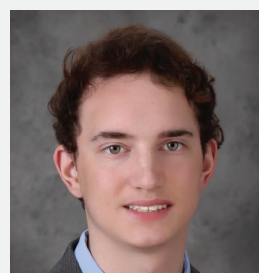
KEYNOTE:
Christina Meredith
Miss California 2013; Trauma and Foster Care Survivor; Commissioned Officer, U.S. Army; Author, "Cinder Girl: My Journey Out of the Ashes to a Life of Hope"



KEYNOTE:
Mark and Kym Hilinski
Co-founders Hilinski's Hope



KEYNOTE:
Libby Rapin
Co-founder BluWave Wellbeing



Daniel Ament
Founder Fight for Wellness



Matt Bell
Co-founder Midwest Recovery Center



Larry Burns
President and CEO The Children's Foundation



Nancy Buyle
Therapist, Alliance Professional Counseling Board Member, KnowResolve

ABOUT THIS PROJECT:

This recap report of the 2021 Child & Adolescent Behavioral Health Summit was produced by Crain's Content Studio, the marketing storytelling arm of Crain's Detroit Business. It was written by Laura Cassar; for questions about this report, please email Kristin Bull, Director of Program Content, at kbull@crain.com

“Dennis” has hit a wall. He has been struggling with his mental health since age 14, when his father died of suicide. Now, at 17, he equates feeling alive with feeling pain. He just wants it all to stop.

What Dennis and other kids like him need most is help from a mental health professional who is not afraid to go deep — maybe even “under water,” if necessary — to help them come out of the place where they feel as if they are drowning. “Talking about suicide is a skill and an art,” explained Nancy Buyle, a therapist who specializes in suicide prevention and counseling. “We need more people that are willing to ‘get in the water’ with patients.”

Buyle talked about her approach to suicide prevention and counseling as part of the recent 2021 Child & Adolescent Behavioral Health Summit produced by The Children’s Foundation, the state’s largest funder dedicated solely to advancing the health and wellness of Michigan children. The two-day virtual conference brought together community leaders, families and health providers to share behavioral health best practices for children and young adults.

“We need more people that are willing to ‘get in the water’ with patients.”

– Nancy Buyle
Therapist, Alliance Professional Counseling;
Board Member, KnowResolve

As part of a roleplay exercise during the summit, Buyle played the part she knows well: that of a therapist counseling an adolescent with suicidal feelings. The part of 17-year-old “Dennis” was played by Dennis Liegghio, founder of KnowResolve, an organization dedicated to connecting with children who are suffering from depression and thoughts of suicide. The roleplay was intended to provide mental health professionals with tools for establishing a relationship with someone who is suicidal. Dennis told his therapist during the roleplay that he tried therapy years



Shenandoah Chefalo
Author & Advocate,
Garbage Bag Suitcase
Faculty, Center for Trauma
Resilient Communities



Dr. Sarah Domoff, PhD
Associate Professor and
Licensed Psychologist
Central Michigan
University



Thomas Dorney
Director
The Root Cause Coalition



Luanne Thomas Ewald
Chief Operating Officer
University of Michigan
Health System’s
CS Mott Children’s
Hospital



Dr. Arash Javanbakht, MD
Director of the Stress,
Trauma and Anxiety
Research Clinic (STARC)
Wayne State University



Dr. Elizabeth Koschmann
TRAILS Program Director
University of Michigan
Medical School
Department of Psychiatry



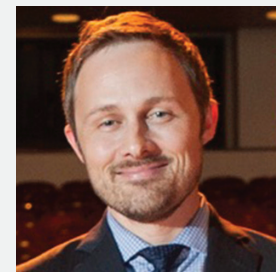
Dennis Liegghio
Founder
KnowResolve



**Anthony Muller, MA, LPC,
CAADC, CCS, SPADA**
Vice President, Substance
Use Disorder Services
& Clinical Services
Development, Samaritas



**Dr. Katherine Rosenblum,
PhD**
Professor
University of Michigan



Kirk Smith, MHSA
President and CEO
Greater Flint Health
Coalition

ago but quit because he felt judged.

Teens like “Dennis” are not alone. According to a nationwide survey shared as part of the summit, 60 percent of surveyed adolescents have experienced at least one traumatic event and 50 percent have experienced mental illness, with 22 percent claiming severe impairment from their mental illness.

“The numbers are staggering,” said Larry Burns, president and CEO of The Children’s Foundation. “As a foundation, we are committed to taking the lead on supporting children’s health and wellness by guiding future policy, awarding grants to community partners, and producing signature events like this summit.”

Trauma: For many, where it all begins

“What is the worst stress you’ve experienced in your life?” This question can help mental health professionals get to the core of a patient’s distress. But, according to Dr. Arash Javanbakht, director of the Stress, Trauma and Anxiety Research Clinic (STARC) at Wayne State University, it often goes unasked.

Javanbakht led a session on the role of trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during the summit. He explained that about 8 percent of Americans suffer from PTSD, described as an overgeneralization of fear, when memories are not where they belong in a person’s timeline. With PTSD, the brain reacts as if things are happening now, not as a memory. The brain

Athletes have two jobs: be tough and win.

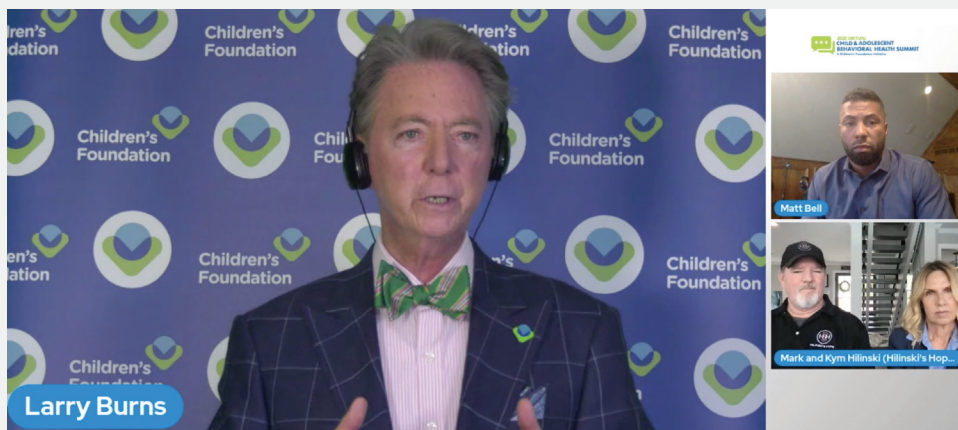
But how does this unique mindset impact the mental health of student athletes?

Today’s world is more competitive than ever, according to Matt Bell, a former college athlete recovering from substance use disorder who co-founded Midwest Recovery Center, an outpatient facility that specializes in treating individuals with substance use disorders. While athletes are taught to take care of their physical health, their mental health is often put on the back burner, or even hidden, due to its associated stigma.

“As an athlete I worried that by sharing my struggles with my coach, I might lose my spot or scholarship,” Bell said of his college career at the University of Toledo. “I thought I was hiding it, but everyone knew. My coach asked me what was going on, but I wasn’t ready to talk. I feared the consequences too much.”

Shattering the stigma of mental illness, as well as promoting awareness and education of mental health and wellness for student athletes, is the mission of Hilinski’s Hope Foundation. The nonprofit was started by Mark and Kym Hilinski to honor the life of their son, Tyler, a Division 1 college quarterback who died of suicide in 2018. Tyler never showed any signs of depression or struggle. “Love doesn’t end with death,” said his mom, Kym Hilinski. “We use that love to help other people.”

Hilinski’s Hope funds programs that provide student athletes with the tools and resources they need to support their mental



A panel of experts, moderated by Larry Burns, President & CEO, The Children’s Foundation, discussed mental health and student athletes.

health and wellness.

“If even the brightest and the strongest are no match for the disease of depression, what chance do the rest of us have?” asked Tyler’s father, Mark Hilinski. “These kids don’t often want to leave; they want to be out of the pain.”

In America there are 123 suicides a day; it is the second leading cause of death in youth. According to Bell, it is time to elevate mental health care and have the uncomfortable discussions.

“Sure, it’s easier to let them go to their room, but when you have a gut feeling, you have to pursue that to all ends,” said Mark Hilinski. He encouraged parents to change their vocabulary and the way they joke about toughness; he encouraged them to talk about suicide. “You don’t ‘commit’ suicide, like you don’t ‘commit’ cancer,” he said.

is trained to be in a constant survival mode, making normal life nearly impossible to enjoy.

Javanbakht said that diagnosing PTSD is not always a part of a children's mental health professional's training. "The two things you have to ask about are usually not volunteered: sex life and trauma," he advises mental health professionals. "Trust is hard, especially when it comes to painful memories."

Intrusive PTSD symptoms don't go away just because a person is removed from a traumatic environment. In addition, 50 percent to 70 percent of those suffering from PTSD will also suffer from other mental health conditions like anxiety and substance abuse.

Javanbakht discussed different treatments for PTSD, including a variety of therapy options as well as medications. He said it's important to see PTSD as a disease that can be treated. "We can fix it and we will fix it," he said.

Teens recovering from substance use

"Sarah" hated feelings. She had so many bad ones — social anxiety was the worst. Drinking helped; Xanax was even better. Sarah started taking the drug in seventh grade, and by age 15 she was hooked, going to school every morning drunk and high.

Sarah told her story of addiction and recovery as part of a panel discussion with teens during the summit. Anthony Muller, vice president of substance use disorder (SUD) programming at Samaritas, moderated the discussion. Founded in 1934, Samaritas is a statewide human services organization serving more than 20,000 individuals each year. Samaritas works with at-risk families, helping the homeless, offering refugee services, foster care and adoption, affordable living, home health services and senior care. After seeing a rising need for substance use treatment and counseling services for youth in its foster care program, Samaritas invested in a statewide SUD treatment program, including 10 clinics across the state. Its SUD treatment model includes individual and group counseling, medication-assisted treatment case management and recovery coaching.

For Sarah, help came January 11, 2017. After months of trying to cut back on her drug use to focus on her first semester at college, she binged on a week's worth of cocaine in one night. The result scared her into recovery and detox — a painful process she said she "never wants to experience again."

When asked by Muller what adults are missing in helping adolescents who are struggling with substance abuse, Sarah answered honestly: "They just need to be there to listen non-judgmentally."

Addressing the social determinants of health

COVID-19 exposed multiple cracks in the mental health system.

Caring for the caregivers

Presenter Libby Rapin, Co-founder of BluWave Wellbeing, led an active participation session for summit attendees in which she taught mindfulness, meditation and other self-care for behavioral health providers. Rapin emphasized that those who are caring for our youth need to be sure to care for themselves as well. She suggested:

Rapin described self-care as not selfish, but a survival tool. "We are often too burned out to be the best version of ourselves," Rapin said. "When we are not well, everything suffers."

- She offered these tips to conference participants:
- Step away from distractions.
- Stop for 1 to 3 minutes; give yourself a break.
- Practice intuitive journaling.
- Create and maintain a tiny habit.
- Take a moment to breathe.
- Tune in to your body.
- Thank yourself for today.

In a recent national poll about children's health concerns, eight of the top 10 concerns were associated with changes in lifestyle — social media/screen time, internet safety, unhealthy eating, depression/suicide and a lack of physical activity — related to the pandemic. And when the findings were examined by racial/ethnic groups, Black parents rated racism as their top health issue. Racism impacts children's health in many ways, including higher rates of depression, anxiety and behavioral problems. Black parents were also the only group to include gun injuries and unequal access to health care as top concerns.

The poll was commissioned by Michigan Medicine's C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, and the hospital's COO, Luanne Thomas Ewald, said the findings have forced a more focused conversation on social determinants of health. She led a discussion on health disparities and social determinants of health during the summit.

Tom Dorney, executive director of The Root Cause Coalition, a nonprofit advocacy organization with a mission to reverse and end the systemic root causes of health inequities, agreed with Ewald that the pandemic brought these health disparities to light.

"For 10 years I have tried to have conversations, but no one was addressing social determinants and inequities of health,"

Dorney said. "It's a new trend that people actually care about this stuff."

Kirk Smith, CEO of the Greater Flint Health Coalition, noted that 80 percent of factors affecting health happen outside of the healthcare system.

His organization has spent the past five years focusing on health inequities. Its work has impacted more than 50,000 citizens, reducing ER visits and hospitalizations for children, showing an improvement in missed school days and participation in better health choices.

The Greater Flint Health Coalition's efforts also include addressing systemic inequities like transportation.

"It's not enough to just address the sickness or disease," Smith explained.

Toxic stress, whether caused by poverty, unaddressed mental health issues or community violence, and its effect on health are a focus of Dr. Katherine Rosenblum, co-director of the Zero to Thrive Program at the University of Michigan.

"Accumulation of stress overwhelms the body's ability to cope and adapt," Rosenblum said during the discussion. "Early relationships can help create resilience to mitigate the impact of stress. Supporting parents is key; we support the parent, so they can support their children."

With the evidence-backed belief that the earliest years of life are critically important and strong relationships are the foundation for a family's success, Zero to Thrive promotes the health and resilience of families from pregnancy through early childhood with research, education, partnership and service.

"To grow a more reliant tree, you need to have healthy soil," Rosenblum said.

Behavioral health therapy and educational outcomes

Here's an alarming statistic: while nearly 50 percent of adolescents suffer from a mental illness, only 20 percent receive effective treatment.

That lack of treatment has a detrimental impact on educational outcomes. Young people who are experiencing symptoms of



A panel of experts, moderated by Luanne Thomas Ewald, COO, University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, discussed the social determinants of health equity and their impact on children's health.

"The numbers are staggering. As a foundation, we are committed to taking the lead on supporting children's health and wellness by guiding future policy, awarding grants to community partners, and producing signature events like this summit."

- Larry Burns
President & CEO
The Children's Foundation

depression, anxiety or PTSD may be much more likely to avoid school, showing low attendance, low engagement and, of course, poor academic achievement and attainment overall.

The University of Michigan created a program in 2013 with a goal of making mental health services accessible in schools. The TRAILS Program (Transforming Research into Action to Improve the Lives of Students) trains teachers and school workers in evidence-based practices like cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) and mindfulness to reduce students' symptoms of depression and anxiety. The three-tier approach allows TRAILS to meet the needs of all students, whether it

is prevention and stigma reduction, evidence-based mental care or suicide prevention and intervention. Resource materials for students and teachers are provided at no cost. Teacher and staff support continues after training with additional resources, training and coaching/consultation.

"Nearly 10,000 people have attended a TRAILS training and an estimated 90,000 students have benefitted from TRAILS

programming," said TRAILS founder, Dr. Elizabeth Koschmann. "With continued support and partnerships, TRAILS seeks to reach all students in Michigan."

To experience all of the summit content, visit <https://yourchildrensfoundation.org/2021-cabhs-videos/>. Please watch for information about the 2022 Child & Adolescent Behavioral Health Summit.

Screen time struggles

Tweens spend on average 4.5 hours a day on a screen; for teens, 6.5 hours is common. And like many health issues, demographics make a difference, with lower income adolescents spending three additional hours a day on a screen.

However, according to Dr. Sarah Domoff, an associate professor, licensed psychologist at Central Michigan University and an expert on screen time and children's media use, it's not only the number of hours that count.

"Content matters," said Domoff, who established the Problematic Media Assessment and Treatment Clinic at the Center for Children, Families and Communities at CMU. "What they see, who they engage with, the context of use — these things matter more than just pure hours."

Content can be modeled by children and teens, including violent, sexual or risky behavior, antisocial behavior, stereotypes and sexual activity at an early age. Those that already struggle with anxiety and depression are at a higher risk for the mental health challenges brought on by screen time.

In addition, screen time often leads to inadequate or disrupted sleep. Good sleep helps with depression and anxiety while bad sleep has a cascade effect, with moodiness and metabolic disturbances.

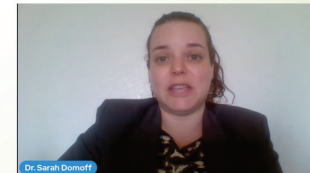
How does a parent find the balance between hours and content to know if technology is promoting good or bad behaviors?

Domoff shared the symptoms or behaviors that parents and health professionals can use to assess problematic media use:

- Screen time is hard for a child to stop.
- It's the only thing that motivates them.
- They are preoccupied and hyper-focused.
- It interferes with family activities.
- It causes problems with family, physical altercations or

Pandemic-related concerns

- Higher amounts of screen time
- More digital distractions
- Greater stress in the home
- Less access to social activities and school supports



Dr. Sarah Domoff, PhD, Central Michigan University, presented "Screen Time and Adolescent Mental Health: Assessing and Treating Digital Addiction" to summit attendees.

causes them to skip school.

- They are withdrawn.
- They have tantrums.
- Screen time keeps increasing.
- They are deceptive.
- It's the only thing that makes them feel better after a bad day — their only coping tool.

Should a parent determine that screen time is problematic, Domoff advises against a complete digital detox.

"Instead, increase other pleasant activities," Domoff suggested. "Involve them to make their own plan on managing their relationship with their phones and social media. Let them determine what they want to change. Help them develop healthy media habits, to recognize positive and negative content and promote balance."

Children's Foundation



OUR FOCUS AREAS

2021
ROUND 2
GRANT
AWARDS

NEW PARTNERS

13

2021 PROGRAMS
AWARDED

152

2021 AMOUNT TO DATE
\$5,994,056



Mental Health



Abuse & Neglect



Injury Prevention



Oncology & Cardiology Research



Nutritional Wellness

A Foundation on the move.

The Children's Foundation is the largest funder dedicated solely to advancing the health and wellness of children and families in the state of Michigan and beyond.

As the leader in health and wellness focused on children and families, our continued expansion into the state of Michigan and beyond allows us to make an even larger impact. The Foundation continues to partner with like-minded organizations to advance their individual efforts with grant support. The grants fund projects in community benefit, research and educational pillars.

In our second grant cycle for 2021, The Children's Foundation added 13 new community organizations to its list of grantee partners. This is in addition to maintaining strong relationships with existing partners that have been important to the evolution and growth of The Foundation.

The Foundation has granted over \$70 million since 2011 and currently has a total of 130 community partners across the state.

ROUND 2 2021 NEW COMMUNITY PARTNERS



For more information on how to get involved or to donate, please visit YourChildrensFoundation.org

