

Dept. of Health Services: OCMH and Wisconsin teens create social media campaign focused on connection

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The Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) today announced a week-long [social media campaign](#) designed to demonstrate how relationships can address the youth mental health crisis. Created in collaboration with teens participating in [ArtWorks for Milwaukee](#)'s CAPE Mental Health Movement, social media posts address how to build healthy connections that can benefit everyone.

The youth mental health crisis began before the pandemic, with almost 60% of students in grades 9-12 experiencing depression, anxiety, self-harm, or suicidal ideation in 2019. Then, during the first year of the pandemic, insurance companies reported a 100% increase in the percentage of self-harm, substance use, and mental health claims for teens compared to the prior year. Clearly challenges for youth continue and many young people are speaking out about how to address them.

"We are so pleased to be able to bring forward teen voices as we look at addressing the youth mental health crisis," said Linda Hall, Office of Children's Mental Health Director. "Our office identified social isolation and excessive screen time as challenges to youth well-being. The youth then created hashtags and images to portray people having meaningful moments together."

All Wisconsinites are encouraged to share [the four messages](#) on their social media platforms to show their support for the state's youth and encourage connections for better mental health:

- Connection Saves Lives

- The Little Things
- Connection is Worth It
- Unplug to Reconnect

Children's Mental Health Week runs May 1-7. Governor Tony Evers is proclaiming May 5 to be Children's Mental Health Awareness Day in Wisconsin, and urges we all reaffirm our commitment to support the mental health of our state's youth.

ArtWorks for Milwaukee combines arts engagement with workforce development in intensive paid internships for teens throughout the year. While operating under the umbrella of Artworks for Milwaukee, CAPE Mental Health Movement is a paid internship program of nine high school students who utilize graphic design to help increase mental health awareness and education, and encourage acceptance. The group aims to improve access to resources and rebuild healthier perceptions concerning mental health.