



# 2024 KANE COUNTY YOUTH VOICES Forum on Mental Health



Lifting Youth Voices and Perspectives on Mental Health

# 2024 Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health Report

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# Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health Report

## Purpose and Objectives

### Purpose

The Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health seeks to provide a platform for open dialogue and engagement between youth, educators, and mental health professionals. By fostering an inclusive and supportive environment, the forum aims to amplify the voices of young people, allowing them to share their lived experiences, insights, and suggestions for enhancing mental health services in schools and communities. This aligns with our overarching mission to create a more responsive and empathetic approach to youth mental health care, ensuring that every young person feels heard, understood, and supported.

### Objectives

#### 1. Amplifying Youth Voices

**Empowerment and Engagement:** Promote an environment where youth feel empowered to share their experiences, opinions, and ideas about mental health.

Encourage active participation from students across Kane County, providing them with the opportunity to express their thoughts on the support they receive and the challenges they face.

**Recognition of Youth Expertise:** Acknowledge the unique perspectives of young people as vital contributors to the dialogue on mental health. Recognize their insights as critical to shaping effective mental health policies and practices.

## 2. Facilitating Open Conversations

**Addressing Stigma:** Create a safe space for discussing mental health stigma, particularly within the Latino community, as identified during the forum. Highlight the importance of breaking down barriers and fostering open conversations around mental health to reduce stigma and promote understanding.

**Exploring the Impact of COVID-19:** Examine the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth mental health, focusing on the challenges of returning to in-person schooling and the social, emotional, and academic impacts experienced by students.

## 3. Promoting Holistic Support Systems

**Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Identify key areas where schools and communities can enhance accessibility to mental health resources, especially for marginalized groups such as LGBTQIA+ students, students with disabilities, and those facing socio-economic challenges. Advocate for trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and gender-affirming mental health services.

**Community Collaboration:** Strengthen the partnership between schools, families, and mental health organizations to create a cohesive support system for students. Encourage collaboration to ensure a comprehensive approach to mental health care that extends beyond the school environment.

## 4. Building Connections and Resilience

**Fostering Genuine Connections:** Emphasize the importance of building authentic connections among peers, educators, and mental health professionals. Promote initiatives that encourage positive relationships and emotional vulnerability, helping students feel validated, supported, and seen.

**Encouraging Resilience:** Equip students with the tools and knowledge necessary to develop resilience and coping strategies. Support efforts to empower young people to navigate mental health challenges and become advocates for their well-being.

## 5. Developing Actionable Outcomes

**Identifying Needs and Priorities:** Gather insights and feedback from students to identify Kane County's most pressing mental health needs. Use these findings to inform actionable steps and initiatives to address these challenges effectively.

**Creating a Roadmap for Change:** Develop a strategic plan outlining the key priorities and actions needed to improve youth mental health services. Engage stakeholders, including students, educators, public health professionals, and community leaders, in the implementation of these initiatives.

## About the 2024 Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health Report

The Kane County Health Department (KCHD) and Regional Office of Education (ROE), as part of the Kane County System of Care (KCSOC), hosted the 5th Annual Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health on February 2nd, 2024. Held at Elgin Community College, the event brought together students and staff from eight high schools across Kane County, along with professionals in public health and education, to discuss the state of youth mental health in schools and explore intentional improvements through collaboration.

The event began with a panel presented by NAMI Illinois' Mental Health Unmuted representatives. Mental Health Unmuted is a community for mental health advocates between the ages of 17 through 26 who have a commitment to mental health and provide education, leadership, and mentoring for young people. Following the panel, students courageously gathered to discuss questions created based on their experiences seeking mental health

support and services in their schools and communities. The students represented the following area high schools:

- Bartlett High School
- Dundee-Crown High School
- Elgin High School
- Geneva High School
- Larkin High School
- South Elgin High School
- Streamwood High School
- West Aurora High School

Prior to the Youth Voices Forum, the student facilitators received training rooted in community healing practices led by Dr. Piper Stratton from Dundee Crown High School. During this training, they collaborated on the development of topics and questions that would guide the discussions they would lead at the Forum. Students asked their peers questions, including:

- “How do students currently perceive the level of support for mental health issues in schools?”
- “What was the most difficult thing about seeking help?”
- “What was most helpful about the services you received?”

To conclude the day’s event, speaker Darryl Bellamy led students in an energetic activity of releasing fears and worries into the “fire.” When sharing about this experience with Darryl, one student reported,

**“The speaker was my favorite part. I loved his energy and how he got the audience to open up about things kids are afraid of talking about or accepting.”**

## Importance of Lifting Youth Voices

Youth are the owners and experts of their own experiences, and they bring unique strengths and valuable insights that must be uplifted within organizations and institutions. Incorporating youth voices at all levels is essential in holistically addressing children's and adolescent's needs during this youth mental health crisis. Through recognizing and elevating youth and student voices in meaningful and authentic ways, we foster a profound sense of connection and respect, empowering them to actively shape their own lives and make positive impacts on their communities.<sup>1</sup> Intentionally integrating youth opinions not only increases program effectiveness and attendance but also promotes the development of problem-solving skills and a deeper understanding of systemic issues. When young people feel heard, they are more engaged and supported, further developing connections to their schools and communities.

## Key Needs in Kane County Identified by Youth at the 2024 Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health

1. Enhanced accessibility to trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, gender-affirming mental health resources in schools and our community with a focus on the unique challenges faced by the Latinx community
2. Increased knowledge and understanding of mental health challenges among families and school staff to break the cycle of stigma around seeking help and having conversations about mental health
3. Safe environments and relationships that provide opportunities to further develop social skills, healthy emotional vulnerability, and positive relationships
4. To feel validated, supported, and seen by the parents, caregivers, teachers, mental health staff, and peers in their lives

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<sup>1</sup> Alliance for Education Solutions. n.d. "Why is youth voice important?" AES Impact. Accessed June 5, 2024. <https://aesimpact.org/why-is-youth-voice-important/>.

# Challenges and Issues Identified

## Theme 1: COVID-19 Continues to Affect Youth

Though it has been over a year since the COVID-19 pandemic officially ended, the aftereffects continue to impact young people in our community and high schools. According to many students who attended the 2024 Youth Voices Forum, they experienced struggles adjusting back to in-person classes, a decline in mental health, loneliness, and challenges with relationships and friendships.

In addition to the impact on significant milestones and social development, youth also found it difficult to access mental health services. According to one student, they experienced a one to two-year wait for therapy at community-serving organizations. One student vented their frustrations, saying, “There is always a waitlist.” It is no surprise that waitlists remain long as the workforce shortage of pediatric mental health professionals continues.<sup>2</sup> The pandemic also brought to light the disparities that exist in black and brown communities when it comes to access to mental health services. Black and Hispanic Children often face inequitable access to mental health services, diagnosis, and treatment, leading to an increased likelihood of presentation to the emergency department for mental health reasons.<sup>2</sup> With Kane County being 32% Hispanic or Latino, we are also experiencing a lack of access to services, diagnosis, and treatment.<sup>3</sup> One community member mentioned, “When it comes to mental health needs, they experienced incredible wait times”.<sup>3</sup>

## Theme 2: Stigma in the Latino Community

Another critical aspect that emerged among the students at the Youth Voices Forum was the pervasive stigma surrounding mental health, specifically within the Hispanic community. In the United States, Latinos have higher rates of internalizing mental health challenges as compared

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<sup>2</sup> Hoffman, Jennifer A., and Susan J. Duffy. 2021. “Supporting Youth Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *Academy Emergency Medicine* 28, no. 12 (December): 1485-1487. 10.1111/acem.14398.

<sup>3</sup> Hamilton, Sofia. “2023 Community Health Assessment”. Data presentation at Kane County Health Department, Aurora, Illinois, May 20, 2024.



to their white counterparts.<sup>4</sup> Latino families are also less likely to seek and use mental health services.<sup>4</sup> This hesitation could be for many reasons, one being knowledge about mental health challenges in youth and another being disagreement on the severity of problems relating to mental health.<sup>4</sup> However, stigma is often viewed as one of the most significant barriers to receiving mental healthcare. One student spoke of their experience and stated that their parents considered emotions a weakness; they said, “The Hispanic community has lots of stigmas about mental health. They consider that their emotions are a weakness. Now it’s better to break the cycle and normalize sharing your feelings, and it's okay to share and talk about your struggles.”

Mental health challenges can often be seen as being associated with a slew of negative connotations, such as a weak character, “*volviendose loco*” (going crazy, witchcraft), or having a lack of faith in God. Beyond seeking services for their children, parents also have to face the fear of stigmatizing the entire family. Several studies have shown that in the Latino community, family members experience stigma by association.<sup>4</sup> Another barrier the Hispanic/Latino community face is privacy; many families do not like to speak about the issues they are facing at home publicly. When we do not have open and honest conversations about mental health challenges, people are less likely to seek services, less knowledgeable about mental well-being, and less comfortable with looking for resources.<sup>5</sup> Still, another barrier faced by Hispanic and Latino families involves challenges within the faith community. Many families seek informal support from their churches or communities of faith. Though the faith community may offer support through grief and mental health groups, it is important to recognize when concrete supports are most effective, as not all communities of faith may have the resources or expertise to provide the necessary support.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Dixon De Silva, Louise E., Carolyn Ponting, Giovanni Ramos, Maria V. Cornejo Guevara, and Denise A. Chavira. 2020. “Urban Latinx Parents’ Attitudes Towards Mental Health: Mental Health Literacy and Service Use.” *Children and Youth Service Review* 109 (February). doi: 10.1016/j.chilyouth.2019.104719.

<sup>5</sup> “Mental Health Challenges and Support: Latinx Communities.” n.d. NAMI California. Accessed July 8, 2024. <https://namica.org/mental-health-challenges-in-latino-communities/>.

## Theme 3: Connection and Support

Throughout the 2024 Youth Voices Forum, Kane County high school students identified the need for authentic connection and consistent support and noted the impacts of COVID-19 isolation are still evident today. When seeking academic or mental health support from school staff, parents, their peers, or even their community, students reported they were not met with the understanding and assistance they needed. This disconnection and lack of support deepened feelings of loneliness and isolation, intensifying damage to mental health and overall well-being. Seeking mental health support is already an incredibly vulnerable experience, and as one student said:

**“So many people don’t have the confidence to speak up and ask for help.”**

Loneliness and disconnection have been an ongoing problem in the United States. This was exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, which made high school students miss important milestones away from their peers. Events missed included birthdays, sports, school dances, and graduations. According to the Surgeon General, older and younger populations are most at risk for social disconnection<sup>6</sup>. This can be seen at the Youth Voices Forum. When youth spoke about their experiences, they often cited that forming connections with their peers was difficult. One student said, “This was during our developmental years, and it greatly affects us without the social interaction.” Many students from different cities and high schools felt the same way.

Social connection is crucial. Different studies have shown that social connection benefits health in surprising ways! Those who are better socially connected tend to live longer and are less at risk for cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, and infectious diseases. They also have better cognitive function, are less at risk for depression and anxiety, and are also less likely to be at risk for suicidality and self-harm<sup>6</sup>. According to the Office of the Surgeon General, a lack of social connection is even more detrimental to health than smoking 15 cigarettes a day, drinking

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<sup>6</sup> “New Surgeon General Advisory Raises Alarm about the Devastating Impact of the Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation in the United States.” 2023. HHS.gov. <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/05/03/new-surgeon-general-advisory-raises-alarm-about-devastating-impact-epidemic-loneliness-isolation-united-states.html>.

six alcoholic drinks per day, being physically inactive, or living in an environment with notable air pollution.

To heal this disconnection amid the “epidemic of loneliness” declared by the Surgeon General, Kane County must create space to foster healthy and caring relationships for children, adolescents, and adults alike. Promoting togetherness is vital within schools, where young people form some of their most impactful relationships and experiences.

Connectedness has proven to be a significant factor in students' wellness and mental health, especially during transient times. When students believe that their peers and adults within their school community care about their welfare as individuals, as well as their education, they are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors, feel supported and support others, and ultimately be more successful academically.<sup>7</sup> Students at the forum repeatedly called attention to the impact that family, school staff, and mental health staff have had on their experiences seeking help and navigating challenges, emphasizing the importance of accessible and compassionate support within the school community. Research has shown that when youth experience higher levels of connectedness, it acts as a protective factor against negative mental health symptoms and suicide, especially for students who are at an increased risk of social disconnection and isolation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> American Psychological Association. n.d. “School Connectedness.” American Psychological Association. Accessed June 5, 2024. <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/safe-supportive/school-connectedness>.

<sup>8</sup> Jasman, Megyn. 2024. “A new study shows that connectedness is a protective factor against declining mental health – The Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring.” The Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring. <https://www.evidencebasedmentoring.org/a-new-study-shows-that-connectedness-is-a-protective-factor-against-declining-mental-health/>.



In response to the Youth Voices Forum, a student expressed:

“What I liked most about the event was that there were other people like me that had some ideas and some of the same things that I have felt for many years. So, it was really good to hear other people’s opinions, which made me feel like I wasn’t *alone*.”

Students also elaborated on the need for more structured and formal support from their schools and community to help address barriers to effectively accessing mental health services. For students who are at an increased risk of isolation and disconnection, including students experiencing homelessness, those with disabilities, students in the LGBTQIA+ community, and those who are chronically truant due to various determinants, ensuring these supports are approachable and accessible within the school and community is essential.<sup>7</sup> Experiencing family, peer, or life circumstances that increase hardship and stress can be an extremely vulnerable experience for students, underscoring the importance of protecting and expanding upon supportive and inclusive environments that nurture their mental and emotional well-being. While formal support and services are an integral part of confronting youth mental health challenges, conversations at the forum also highlighted students' desire for validation of their experiences and opinions, empathetic listening, and being connected to valuable resources they can use to empower themselves. Cultivating spaces and communities, especially in schools, where students feel seen and heard can positively impact their relationships and mental health.

The insights shared during the 2024 Youth Voices Forum reinforce the compelling need to ensure school resources are readily available for students, their capabilities of accessing these supports continue to increase, and we persist in fostering environments that inspire connection and healing.

## Strategies for Improvement and Growth

Community collaboration and investment in comprehensive and culturally competent services are at the heart of striving to improve mental health systems and outcomes for youth and their families. By developing partnerships between established support networks, we can further increase the effectiveness and overall reach of interventions. These holistic efforts ensure that services and supports are accessible, informed, and aligned with the needs of the diverse community we serve. Below are recommendations for those with significant roles in the lives of youth that aim to nourish an effective mental health framework that will better support their mental well-being.

### School Staff and Leadership

- Lift youth voices by incorporating community-building practices in classrooms and throughout schools
- Invest in school mental health staff to increase access to social workers and school-based services
- Create Student Advisory Committees that are active stakeholders in relevant school issues
- Utilize restorative justice practices or alternative disciplines that encourage community building, restoration, and empowerment
- Create safe and supportive environments in schools that promote connectedness and emotional safety
- Place value in social-emotional learning and development, acquiring coping and reflective skills, positive examples of conflict resolution, and ensuring equity for all students and staff
- Involve parents and caregivers in the school community and encourage language access
- Continue to educate staff on mental health challenges, LGBTQIA+ awareness, cultural competency, and the impacts of trauma
- Prioritize staff wellness and staff mental health supports

## Parents and Caregivers

- Practice self-care and compassion through reflection on own mental health, identity, and trauma history
- Seek support from other adults and professionals when needed
- Lean into curiosity about your child's feelings and interests
- Develop empathetic listening skills
- Allow your children to feel and express distressing emotions without trying to fix them
- Read books about subjects that may be difficult to discuss: grief, sexuality and gender expression, body and safety, disability and difference, generational trauma, substance abuse
- Educate yourself about common mental health challenges from accurate sources
- Develop healthy social media habits to share with your children
- Involve yourself in supportive communities

## Students

- Practice self-care and compassion by giving yourself grace, focusing on your strengths, and doing things that make you happy i.e. hobbies, art, music, time with friends, time in nature
- Talk to and spend time with someone who cares about you—whether this be a friend, family member, or trusted adult
- Join or start a group at school or in your community related to something you're interested in or passionate about
- Learn new coping skills that are uniquely useful to your experiences
- Educate self and bring awareness to social media algorithms' impact on mental health, body image, and self-worth

## Conclusion

The 2024 Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health has provided an invaluable platform for Kane County's youth to share their experiences, challenges, and hopes regarding mental health support in their schools and communities. This event underscores the critical need to elevate youth voices in our ongoing efforts to address the mental health crisis among children and adolescents.

As we reflect on the insights and stories shared at this year's forum, it becomes clear that there is a pressing need for continued collaboration between students, educators, public health professionals, and community leaders. The themes discussed—ranging from the enduring effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to the pervasive stigma in the Latino community and the essential need for genuine connection and support—highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of youth mental health issues.

We are reminded that addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that recognizes and respects the unique perspectives of young people. By actively listening to and incorporating their voices into decision-making processes, we can create more effective and responsive mental health services that truly meet their needs.

Looking forward, the Kane County System of Care remains committed to fostering environments that promote mental well-being, connection, and resilience. We will continue to advocate for and support initiatives that amplify youth voices, reduce stigma and ensure that every student has access to the care and support they deserve.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all the students, educators, community members, and partners who made the 2024 Youth Voices Forum possible. Your dedication and passion for improving youth mental health inspire us to keep striving for a future where every young person feels heard, valued, and supported.

Together, we can build a community that not only addresses the mental health crisis but also empowers our youth to thrive.



## About the Kane County System of Care

The Kane County System of Care (KCSOC) was formed and is sustained by a 7-year grant from the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation to strengthen the existing local care system for children's and adolescents' mental health. Also known as the Children's Mental Health Grant, its initiatives are driven by the collaboration of Kane County Health Department Staff, community organizations and institutions, and parent leaders who are all deeply committed to improving mental health outcomes for youth and their families in our community. The grant promotes the principles of the Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASPP), advocating for child-centered, family-focused, community-based, and culturally competent multilevel systems.

The Kane County System of Care Initiatives Include:

- **Parent Council** - Lifting parent voices with education, outreach, and advocacy
- **Parent Cafe Support Network** - Peer support through sharing, leadership, and connection
- **Training Series for Mental Health Professionals** - Improving the quality of community care
- **Implementation Team** - Coordinating partner agencies for action
- **Flex Funds** - Financial support as unique as the communities we serve
- **Youth Voices Forum** - Amplifying youth voices to improve program quality

## Acknowledgments

We at the Kane County System of Care are exceptionally grateful for the school mental health staff, school and community leaders, and remarkable students who have dedicated their time and effort to helping organize the annual 2024 Youth Voices Forum on Mental Health. Their commitment to supporting community mental health and lifting youth voices has continued to encourage and inspire our efforts at the Kane County Health Department.

A heartfelt, grateful acknowledgment to Josh Axelson, Marisa Herrell, and Araceli Ascencio at the Kane County Regional Office of Education for their leadership and efforts in bringing the 2024 Youth Voices Forums to fruition. Your dedication is invaluable.

Every year, the student's willingness to be honest and open regarding challenging and painful mental health experiences embodies schools' and communities' need to listen. The stories shared maintain the importance of continuing to create safe, supportive, and inclusive spaces for all.

## Report Authors

### **Maria Leon, MPH, Bilingual (Spanish), Program Manager Kane County System of Care, Kane County Health Department**

Maria brings several years of community outreach and family engagement experience in the Elgin, IL area. As the new program manager for the Children's Mental Health Initiatives, her focus has been fortifying initiatives surrounding parent engagement, the mental health training series for professionals, process improvement, and supporting Kane County's Integrated Referral and Intake System (IRIS). Maria's background is in public health and health promotion and has a special interest in health equity and community collaboration.

### **Clarissa Murphy, Community Health Initiatives Coordinator, Kane County Health Department**

Clarissa is a new addition to the Children's Mental Health Program. As an Elgin, IL native, she brings several years of academic experience in Human Services. She focuses on enhancing parent collaborations and youth mental health initiatives within the grant and has a passion for increasing the accessibility of mental health tools, resources, and services to all populations.

# Appendix 1: Agenda

## YOUTH VOICES FORUM ON MENTAL HEALTH 2024 AGENDA

**Event date:** 2/2/2024

**Start time:** 9:00 am

**End time:** 1:30 pm

**Location:** Elgin Community College, Building E

**Student group details:** Provided name tags will have designated groups on them. Following the NAMI Mental Health Unmuted panel, please find your designated group's location. Groups will be sorted by animal.

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
9:00 am - 9:10 am	Arrival and Check-In	Building E lobby
9:10 am - 9:40 am	Welcome from KCHD & ROE introducing NAMI Mental Health Unmuted Panel	Siegle auditorium E125
9:40 am - 9:50 am	Break with ROE dismissal, facilitators to hang back to meet with Piper, then find groups	
9:50 am - 11:15 am	Break out discussion groups, when finished gather in auditorium	Designated group location
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Speaker - Darryl Bellamy	Siegle auditorium E125
12:45 pm - 1:15 pm	Lunch	Dining room E121
1:15 pm - 1:30 pm	Closing & goodbye from KCHD & ROE	Dining room E121 to buses



## Appendix 2: About the Speakers

### NAMI Mental Health Unmuted

Mental Health Unmuted is a group of young adult advocates who are part of NAMI Illinois Young Leaders. Through their podcast and speaking engagements, they're committed to providing education, leadership training, and mentorship for young adults facing mental health challenges. They aim to create an inclusive community and reduce cultural stigma surrounding mental health and seeking support. More information about their podcast and mission can be found here: <https://namiillinois.org/your-journey/mentalhealthunmuted/>

### Darryl Bellamy

As the founder of "Fearless Inside," Darryl Bellamy partners with educational institutions across the United States to bring keynotes, workshops, and programs to students that encourage them to embrace their fears and foster a sense of belonging with other students. "Fearless Inside" invites students to reflect on their fears and worries together as a community by writing them down and having them anonymously shared in the supportive environment created. Through this, Bellamy shows that students are not alone in their worries. With the finalization of a ceremonial act of throwing their fear in the (fake) fire, the intention is not to get rid of fear but to be able to move through worries, fears, and anxieties. More information about the keynote speaker and his movement can be found here: <https://fearlessinside.com/>

# Appendix 3: Resources

## IRIS



The Kane County Integrated Referral & Intake System (IRIS) is a free web-based communication tool featuring over 190 Kane County area organizations that provide a variety of free or low-cost services. IRIS is a tool providers and schools can use to make referrals on behalf of their clients and students to meet their unique needs. For example, a school social worker can refer a student for a mental health assessment and outpatient counseling, link their family with resources for food or utility/rental assistance, and link the student's parent with an organization that provides parenting education. Consent from a parent or adult is required to make referrals through IRIS. IRIS is HIPPA compliant and offers a collaborative platform to strengthen community partnerships amongst schools and providers to help children, youth, and families thrive in Kane County.

Contact one of our IRIS System and Data Managers for more information:

Kim Peterson Director of Community Health <a href="mailto:PetersonKim@kanecountyil.gov">PetersonKim@kanecountyil.gov</a>	Michele Meyer Assistant Director of Community Health <a href="mailto:meyermichelle@kanecountyil.gov">meyermichelle@kanecountyil.gov</a>
Lorena Nunez Early Childhood Programs Manager <a href="mailto:nunezlorena@kanecountyil.gov">nunezlorena@kanecountyil.gov</a>	Maria Leon Program Manager Children's Mental Health Grant <a href="mailto:leonmaria@kanecountyil.gov">leonmaria@kanecountyil.gov</a>
Kaitlin Soriano Violence Prevention Coordinator <a href="mailto:sorianokaitlin@kanecounyil.gov">sorianokaitlin@kanecounyil.gov</a>	

## Further Readings

[Alliance for Education Solutions - Why is Youth Voice Important?](#)

[Kane County System of Care Mental Health Training Series](#)

[Mental Health America - Talking to Adolescents and Teens: Starting the Conversation](#)

[Mental Health of Children and Parents - A Strong Connection](#)

[National Alliance on Mental Illness - How to Help a Friend](#)

[National Alliance on Mental Illness - Hispanic/Latinx Identity](#)

[National Alliance on Mental Illness - What You Need to Know About Youth Suicide](#)

[Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools - An Action Guide for School and District Leaders](#)

[The Safe Zone Project - LGBTQIA+ Awareness and Allyship Training Workshops](#)

# Appendix 4: Kane County Mental Health Resource Guide



## Kane County Mental Health Resource Guide

### Did you know?

Mental health support can be affordable. There are numerous mental health resources in our county that accept Medicaid or have sliding fee scales!



Organization	Insurance & Services	Contact Information
<b>Ascension Adolescent Behavioral Health</b>	<p><b>Ages served:</b> 12-17 (18 if still in high school)</p> <p><b>Insurance:</b> Medicaid and most major plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary care provider (PCP) referred outpatient group-based therapies for adolescents with recreational, family, and individual therapies mixed into treatment</li> <li>• PCP referred psychiatry services available</li> <li>• Translation services available</li> </ul>	<p>77 N. Airlite Elgin, IL 60123 <a href="http://healthcare.ascension.org">healthcare.ascension.org</a></p>
<b>Association for Individual Development</b>	<p><b>Ages served:</b> Children, adolescents, adults, and seniors</p> <p><b>Insurance:</b> Medicaid, Medicaid Managed Care, self-pay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outpatient individual, group, and family therapy</li> <li>• Psychiatric services, residential services, and consultations for schools and other agencies</li> <li>• Victim services and grief support</li> <li>• Services available in English and Spanish</li> </ul>	<p>309 New Indian Trail Ct. Aurora, IL 60506 (630) 966-4000 <a href="http://www.aidcares.org">www.aidcares.org</a></p>
<b>East Aurora Counseling</b>	<p><b>Ages served:</b> Children, adolescents, adults, and seniors</p> <p><b>Insurance:</b> Medicaid, most major plans, sliding fee scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Onsite, offsite and in-home individual, group, couples and family counseling services</li> <li>• Diagnostic screenings, evaluations, case-management and assessments with transferable reports</li> <li>• LGBTQIA+ inclusive and gender-affirming mental healthcare through <i>Rainbow Wing</i></li> <li>• Services available in English, Spanish, and German</li> </ul>	<p>2755 Church Rd. Aurora, IL 60502 (630) 486-3800 <a href="http://www.eastauroracounseling.com">www.eastauroracounseling.com</a></p>
<b>Ecker Center for Behavioral Health</b>	<p><b>Ages served:</b> Children (4+), adolescents, and adults</p> <p><b>Insurance:</b> Medicaid, Medicaid Managed Care, Medicare, sliding fee scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling, case management services, and residential treatment</li> <li>• Mental Health Juvenile Justice program and support groups</li> <li>• Psychiatric and nursing services</li> </ul>	<p>1845 Grandstand Pl. Elgin, IL 60123 (847) 695-0484 <a href="http://www.eckercenter.org">www.eckercenter.org</a></p>
<b>Family Counseling Service</b>	<p><b>Ages served:</b> Children, adolescents, adults, and seniors</p> <p><b>Insurance:</b> Medicaid, Medicaid Managed Care, Medicare, Private Insurances, sliding fee scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling and case management</li> <li>• Psychiatric and psychological testing services</li> <li>• Services available in English and Spanish</li> </ul>	<p>70 S River St. Aurora, IL 60506 (630) 844-2662 <a href="http://aurorafcs.org">aurorafcs.org</a></p>

<p><b>Family Guidance Centers</b></p>	<p><b>Ages served:</b> Adults (18+)  <b>Insurance:</b> Medicaid and self-pay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health counseling</li> <li>• Psychiatry services</li> <li>• Substance use treatment and co-occurring substance use &amp; mental health treatment</li> </ul>	<p>751 Aurora Ave.  Aurora, IL 60505  (630) 801-0017  <a href="http://www.fgcinc.org">www.fgcinc.org</a></p>		
<p><b>Family Service Association of Greater Elgin</b></p>	<p><b>Ages served:</b> Children, adolescents, and adults  <b>Insurance:</b> Medicaid, Medicaid Managed Care, sliding fee scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual &amp; family therapy, case management, mental health assessment, pre-hospital screening, and crisis intervention</li> <li>• Psychiatric services</li> <li>• Mental Health Juvenile Justice, Family Linkage, and Family Support Service programs</li> <li>• Services available in English and Spanish</li> </ul>	<p>1140 N McLean Blvd. Ste 1  Elgin, IL 60123  (847) 695-3680  <a href="http://fraelgin.org">fraelgin.org</a></p>		
<p><b>Focus Group Wellness Partners</b></p>	<p><b>Ages served:</b> Children (6+), adolescents, adults, and seniors  <b>Insurance:</b> Medicaid, most major plans, sliding fee scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual therapy, group therapy, case management, family counseling, and play therapy</li> <li>• Parent coaching and anger management classes</li> <li>• Services available in English and Spanish</li> </ul>	<p>27475 Ferry Rd.  Warrenville, IL 60555  (312) 837-0099  <a href="http://www.focusgroupwellnesspartners.org">www.focusgroupwellnesspartners.org</a></p>		
<p><b>Fox Valley Hands of Hope</b></p>	<p><b>Ages served:</b> Children (6+), adolescents, adults, and seniors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grief support provided through counseling, peer support, or group programs</li> <li>• Individual and family services available</li> <li>• <b>No cost</b></li> <li>• Services available in English and Spanish</li> </ul>	<p>200 Whitfield Dr.  Geneva, Illinois 60134  (630) 232-2233  <a href="http://www.fvhh.net">www.fvhh.net</a></p>		
<p><b>Greater Family Health</b></p>	<p><b>Ages served:</b> Children, adolescents, adults, and seniors  <b>Insurance:</b> Medicaid, Medicare, most major plans, sliding fee scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual, family, and group counseling</li> <li>• Psychiatry services &amp; substance use disorder treatments</li> <li>• Services available regardless of immigration status</li> <li>• LGBTQIA+ inclusive</li> <li>• Translation services available</li> </ul>	<p>373 Summit St. Ste 100  Elgin, IL 60120  (844) 599-3700  <a href="http://greaterfamilyhealth.org">greaterfamilyhealth.org</a></p>		
<p><b>Tricity Family Services</b></p>	<p><b>Ages served:</b> Children, adolescents, adults, and seniors  <b>Insurance:</b> Medicaid, Medicare, most major plans, sliding fee scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual, couples, and family counseling</li> <li>• Psychiatric services and urgent assessments</li> <li>• Emotional Wellness Program workshops and support groups</li> </ul>	<p>1120 Randall Ct.  Geneva, Illinois 60134  (630) 232-1070  <a href="http://www.tricityfamilyservices.org">www.tricityfamilyservices.org</a></p>		
<p><b>VNA Healthcare</b></p>	<p><b>Ages served:</b> Children, adolescents, adults, and seniors  <b>Insurance:</b> Medicaid, Medicare, sliding fee scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual mental health and behavioral health counseling</li> <li>• Psychiatry services</li> <li>• Translation services available</li> </ul>	<p>620 Wing St.  Elgin, IL 60123</p>	<p>400 N. Highland Ave.  Aurora, IL 60506  (630) 892-4355  <a href="http://www.vnahealth.com">www.vnahealth.com</a></p>	<p>801 Villa St.  Elgin, IL 60123</p>



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