

# SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH



**REMOVING BARRIERS  
TO CARE FOR  
YOUNG PEOPLE**

# 20/50

**Studies show that about 20% of children and youth under age 18 have a mental illness; and up to 50% of them have acute mental illnesses that can impair their ability to function each day.**

**Our School Based Mental Health program doesn't wait for young people who need us to find their way to us. Instead, the program delivers outpatient mental health care to children where they are – at school. With this easy access to care, we serve children and youth who are unable to obtain care elsewhere in the community.**

**Our master's level-prepared, licensed therapists are currently at work in more than two dozen different schools, changing the world for children who need help and hope in their lives.**

## **Breaking through the barriers**

Why do children face barriers to mental health care? People of any age who have mental illness may have obstacles to treatment, including:

- Stigma associated with mental illness and treatment
- Lack of transportation
- Limited financial resources

Young people often have these additional barriers:

- Lack of parental support
- Conflicts with parent or guardian work schedules
- Conflicts with extracurricular activity schedules

All of these barriers can be removed when school based mental health care is available.



## How the program works

We work in close partnership with the schools; we don't take over or infringe on the role of any school personnel. School Based Mental Health is a service provided in addition to – not in place of – services provided by the school districts.

The schools provide space where our therapists can meet with students. We take care to keep each session private and confidential, building trust between the student and therapist. We work with each student to stagger their appointment schedules so that they don't continuously miss the same class to make time for therapy.

Common mental health issues experienced by students include depression, anxiety, grief over the loss of a family member or relationship, life transitions, trauma, stress, and family issues. We help students learn to cope and to develop self-confidence; to become more aware of others' views and experiences; to practice new behaviors; and to better understand how to deal with the problems life presents.



**“Within the first year, students who had continually struggled with attendance, defiance and grades were coming to school and finding success. Having mental health services at school clearly helped students build skills for resiliency.”**

*– Justin Heitl  
Principal  
Appleton Central  
High School*

## Program results

We're proud to share some results from one of our School Based Mental Health programs: a partnership with United Way in the Fox Cities, called Providing Access to Healing (PATH).

In 2014, the Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin conducted a cost/benefit analysis of PATH. For the 155 youth treated in single school year, the net benefits of the school-based mental health program in Appleton totaled \$7,472,000; or approximately \$49,000 per student.

The net benefits included:

- For the students, avoided medical costs; increased productivity; decreased risk of suicide; and increased quality of life.
- For the school districts, decreased truancy and decreased spending for behavioral and counseling services.
- For the wider community, cost avoidance in the criminal justice system.

## What the students say

From May 2008 through March 2014, of 806 students served by the school-based mental health program in Appleton:

- 69% experienced reduced symptoms and increased functioning
- 73% reported progress toward treatment goals
- 60% showed improved academic performance
- 58% showed improved school behaviors
- 96% said they would return to therapy if needed

**73%**  
**reported progress**

## Contact us

To learn more about our program, contact us at 920-730-1357 or [schoolmentalhealth@lsswis.org](mailto:schoolmentalhealth@lsswis.org).



[lsswis.org](http://lsswis.org)