

KINSHIP RESOURCE NEWSLETTER



Summer



MAY: NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH
JUNE: PRIDE MONTH, JUNETEENTH

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MAY NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



May is National Mental Health Awareness Month.

It is a time to raise awareness about mental health issues, reduce stigma, and promote support for those affected.

It is a time to focus on the importance of mental health for all, including children and youth in care, and their caregivers.

Relatives, often grandparents, aunts, or uncles, and like-kin provide care for children when their parents are unable to do so. They often face unique challenges and emotional burdens, making it crucial to address their own mental health needs.

There are resources and support for caregivers' well-being, such as therapy and support groups.

Resources & Support:

- the [Kinship Navigator Portal](#):
 - an online resource helps caregivers find services and support based on their specific situation. It provides information on various programs and resources, including healthcare, caregiver wellness, education, legal services, and child & youth mental health.
- the [Wisconsin Family Connections Center](#):
 - offers support and services to parents and caregivers across the continuum of kinship care, foster care, and post-permanency.
- local [Aging & Disability Resource Center \(ADRC\)](#):
 - provides information about resources and support on all aspects of life related to aging or living with a disability.
- the [Wisconsin Family Caregiver Support Programs](#):
 - Support groups and virtual resources for caregivers.
- the [Rainbow Project Child & Family Counseling & Resource Clinic](#):
 - Rainbow Project provides restorative healing and hope for young children and their families who have experienced trauma, helping them build a foundation for the mastery of life-sustaining skills.

Have questions about navigating mental health services in Dane County for your child?

Feel like you could use some parenting support? Are you finding that stress is impacting your ability to put parenting plans in place? Come chat with the out-of-home care behavioral health specialist, Kelsey Schroeder-Gasser. Kelsey is a Marriage and Family Therapist with her substance use specialty who has worked with children, youth and families for the last 12 years in clinical and crisis settings.

Kelsey will be hosting a weekly ZOOM meeting for kin parents to drop in for check ins/support. This will be hosted every TUESDAY FROM 11AM-1PM. Please join via the link below! Or reach out via phone/email to set up a time to meet with Kelsey.

Contact information:

Email - Schroeder-Gasser.Kelsey@daneacounty.gov

Phone - 608-332-7748

Kinship Behavioral Health Support

<https://countyofdane.zoom.us/j/92370398126?pwd=SFg2d0s4SzMOTXZd6YjBSUmpFbjJEQT09>

Meeting ID: 923 7039 8126

Passcode: 234654





IMPORTANT REMINDERS



- › Notify the Dept if you move
- › Notify the Dept if someone moves in to your home
- › Notify the Dept if the child is no longer living with you

TIME-OUTS VS. TIME-INS

Ouch! We do not throw toys. You're getting a time-out. I'll set the timer for 5 minutes, and then we can talk about your choices.

Your time-out isn't done. Please go back to the rug.

I hear you screaming. When your time-out is over and you're calmer, we can talk.



New approaches on your parenting journey.

Many of us know about “time-outs”. While they can give us a moment to catch our breath, they depend on our child’s ability to calm themselves down—a skill they’re still learning. For children who have experienced trauma, “time-outs” might make them feel abandoned or rejected, or even make their behavior worse.

Instead, try a “time-in.” This is when you stay with your child during tough moments. Rather than sending them away for bad behavior, “time-ins” focus on connection first, then helping them learn better choices. During a “time-in”, you remain physically and emotionally present with your child.

A “time-in” helps create safety and connection when the child in your care is upset. You don’t need to talk much during these moments. You can model deep breathing, sit beside them, offer gentle touch, or use a calm-down corner together. Later, when they’re calmer, you can talk about what happened and consider different choices for next time. When children feel safe and supported, they’re much more able to learn new ways to handle their big feelings.

Staying regulated together is the key to helping children with challenging behaviors and intense emotions.

LOOKING AT CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS
VIA A TRAUMA-INFORMED LENSE





GRANDPARENT WEEK



Grandparent Week (Sept 7-13, 2025)

The Ultimate Virtual Celebration for Grandparents! We experienced record-setting attendance at Grandparents Week last year with thousands tuning in from all over the world. It's become the largest online celebration and educational event for grandparents of its kind! This year adding some exciting showcases, giveaways, and other surprises! It's 100% online.

Register:

<https://training.grandparentsacademy.com/grandparents-week-2025>

CELEBRATING A REMARKABLE CAREER

After ssoooo many years of dedication and excellence, we bid a fond farewell to Dawn Douglas as she embarks on a well-deserved retirement. Throughout her time with Dane County, Dawn has been an integral part of our team, bringing expertise, passion, and a commitment to outstanding service that has left a lasting impact on colleagues and clients alike.

While we will certainly miss her presence, we celebrate her incredible career and all the contributions she has made to our county and to the community.

Please join us in wishing Dawn a joyful and fulfilling retirement filled with new adventures, relaxation, and cherished moments with family and friends.

Thank you, Dawn, for everything!





BIG FEELINGS, LITTLE BODIES: CHILDREN AND TOXIC STRESS

Stressed Out!

Stress is a demand on our body's systems. While stress is completely “normal,” it can become a problem when it becomes overwhelming and persistent.



Types of Stress Responses:

1. Positive Stress Response – normal, but it is an essential part of healthy development. It's typically very mild and brief, helping children develop resiliency and coping skills. Examples include taking a test, public speaking, and participating in a sports competition.

2. Tolerable Stress Response – when children face longer-lasting and more severe situations or stressors. This stress response has the possibility of turning into toxic stress. However, with the buffer of a supportive and caring adult, children can better cope with the stressors. Examples of these situations include the loss of a loved one, a serious illness or injury, moving, or the divorce of parents or caregivers.

3. Toxic Stress Response – Predictable, prolonged, and extreme exposure to adversity, such as abuse (emotional, physical, sexual), chronic neglect, poverty/severe economic hardship, and exposure to violence can cause toxic stress in children. This can make their stress response system more sensitive and vulnerable.

Impact of Toxic Stress:

Toxic stress can have a lifelong affect on children's welfare. The signs, symptoms, and behaviors children show, due to toxic stress, can manifest unexpectedly and be baffling. Research consistently shows that toxic stress can significantly affect children's brain development, physical health, and emotional and behavioral health.

Brain Development – Exposure to toxic stress can alter children's brain development in several ways:

- Impact memory
- Cause difficulties with learning
- Develop issues with emotional regulation
- Impair cognitive functions
- Alter brain chemistry, such as increasing the stress hormone called cortisol
- Decrease the size and function of parts of the brain



Physical Health – Toxic stress also affects children's current and future physical health. It can increase the risk of:

- Asthma
- Autoimmune disorders
- Chronic pain
- Heart disease
- Sleep disturbances/disorders
- Gastrointestinal issues



Emotional/Behavioral Health – The constant activation of a child's stress response system can significantly affect emotional and behavioral health, manifesting in various ways, such as:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Emotional dysregulation
- Impulse control
- Anger/Aggression
- Hyperactivity
- Risk-taking behavior





INTERNET SAFETY FOR KIDS



Internet use among kids is pervasive — nearly all U.S. teens (96%) say they use the internet every day. It also begins early. The majority of parents with younger kids (89% with kids ages 5 to 11, 81% with kids ages 3 to 4 and 57% with kids 2 and younger) report that their children watch YouTube videos.

Why Is Internet Safety Important for Kids?

Childhood and adolescence are times of great social, behavioral and emotional growth. Exploring the online world can be educational, entertaining and a very interactive endeavor. At the same time, the internet anonymizes communication in many ways, making it easier for cyberbullying, predatory behavior and misinformation to thrive.

10 Essential Internet Safety Tips for Kids

Promoting internet safety for kids is a learning journey. Caregivers should set clear boundaries and expectations for a young person's activities online. Regularly check in with young users and seek to understand the sites, games and contacts that they are accessing online.

Internet safety tips for kids and adults to keep in mind when playing, learning and exploring online.

1. **Be smart about passwords.** Create powerful passwords that can't be found in a dictionary (incorporate numbers and special characters). Keep passwords private (sharing with parents is okay!) and change your passwords regularly.
2. **Check your settings.** Turn all privacy settings on, location tracking off and ensure they are set to minimize data collection.
3. **Do your research.** For parents: Check the recommended age rating before adding new content to a child's device — try Common Sense Media for apps and ESRB for video games. Read reviews, determine if ads or in-app purchases are part of the offer and explore demos to see if the content fits with your family's values.
4. **Stop and ask.** Young users should immediately stop and alert an adult if they experience something unusual or uncomfortable online. Stop and secure an adult's approval before proceeding — each time they get asked to purchase, upload or download content online.
5. **Don't fall for pop-ups.** Avoid clickbait quizzes or special offers, which often try to collect personal information.
6. **Stay unseen.** Keep webcams covered when not in use. Sticking a piece of tape over a device's camera is a cheap and easy way to prevent unauthorized viewing.
7. **Shrink the internet.** Use safe search options and parental controls to limit a child's exposure to inappropriate content and time limits to keep screen time in check.
8. **Support open surfing.** Keep technology centrally located to ensure a line of sight into a child's internet activities.
9. **Socialize skeptically.** Recognize the difference between real-life friends and online-only friends. Share what to do if an online-only friend asks for unique personal details, such as a person's full name, photo, mailing address or passwords.
10. **Protect when prompted.** Updating the apps, internet browsers and operating systems on devices is a must-do move for maintaining good online health.





STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING SIBLING CONNECTIONS

Why Sibling Connections Matter

Sibling relationships are often the longest-lasting relationships we experience. They can be our confidantes, partners in mischief, and comfort in chaos. Additionally, kids who endure removal from their homes to foster care will often find solace and familiarity when they share the experience with a sibling. They can maintain a connection to their family's identity and culture and continue building memories together that keep them connected and inform their identity.



8 Strategies for Maintaining Sibling Connections

1. Make it a priority to gather contact information. The earlier connections are initiated, the more likely they will remain strong.
2. Foster communication between siblings. Encourage regular communication through phone calls, video chats, emails, or old-fashioned cards and letters in the mail.
3. Maintain regular communication between adults.
4. Try to share photos and life updates regularly. Your efforts in this area will be critical if or when in-person contact is not an option. Consider your child's age and understanding of the relationship. Try to give your child a voice in what to share, pictures to send, or experiences to share.
5. Whenever possible, try to plan sibling visits. While geographical distance may complicate things, these in-person opportunities for your child and their siblings are beneficial.
6. Seek out and support the siblings' shared interests. They may be both good at basketball. Could you get them on the same team? Do they both have an interest in photography? You could offer to pick up your child's sibling so the kids can take a photography class together. These shared interests and activities create a common ground that makes connecting easier for the kids.
7. Expand your definition of family. Consider including your child's sibling and their family in your family's events. By including them, you help your child recognize that their sibling is family to you too.
8. Recognize that maintaining contact may not be in the sibling's best interest at this time. Additionally, what benefits one child might not necessarily be beneficial for the other, as each may be navigating life and processing trauma at their own pace.



source: <https://creatingfamilies.org>





SUMMER FUN!



Camp-To-Belong Sibling Camp

*** Applications for campers and volunteers are DUE JUNE 16! ***

Reconnecting separated siblings in Wisconsin Sibling Camp was created to help youth separated from their siblings in foster, kinship, or adoptive care spend a week of uninterrupted time together making memories.

Campers will take part in many standard summer camp activities, like swimming, boating & outdoor games, as well as intentional programs focused on strengthening the relationships between siblings.

They maintain between a 3:1 ratio of campers to volunteers. Volunteers are trained and supervised by staff.

Phone: 920-221-1262

Email: contact@belongwisconsin.org



[Check out Summer School Options at your child's school](#)



[Reading Programs for kids over the summer: WE READ Summer Reading Program Begins May 1 at Madison Public Library](#)



[WI Festivals – Preserve your child's family cultural heritage. 2025 Guide to Cultural Festivals in Wisconsin](#)

RELATIVE SUPPORT GROUPS



[Grandparents & Other Relatives](#) – This support group is for grandparents and other relatives who have become primary caregivers to family member's children.



[Wisconsin Family Connections Center](#) – Caregiver Support Coffee meet-ups on their calendar.



[Waisman Children's Resources & Support Groups](#) – Talking with other parents can be a big help when you are raising a child or youth with a special health care need.





JUNE PRIDE MONTH & JUNETEENTH



Pride Month

Pride Month, sometimes specified as LGBTQ Pride Month, is a month-long observance dedicated to the celebration of LGBTQ pride, commemorating the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer culture and community.

Madison Options:



CapitolQ Theatre Festival – This festival, hosted by StageQ, features new play readings, 10-minute shorts, and one-act plays by queer playwrights.



The Big Gay Market – This market offers a variety of queer and ally vendors, comedy shows, drag bingo, and more.



Outreach Magic Pride Festival – This festival includes a stage show with LGBTQ+ performers, a vendor area, games, food, and more.

Juneteenth Celebrations

On June 19, 1865, nearly two years after President Abraham Lincoln emancipated enslaved Africans in America, Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas with news of freedom. More than 250,000 African Americans embraced freedom by executive decree in what became known as Juneteenth or Freedom Day.



Juneteenth celebrations are festive occasions that mark the end of slavery in the United States and commemorate African American freedom and culture. They often include community gatherings, educational events, and celebrations of Black heritage and achievement.



Madison Options:



Warner Family Fun Night – Families can create art projects, play in the game room or the gym, watch a movie or win some prizes playing bingo!



Juneteenth in the Park – Historical Juneteenth Freedom Parade: Sat, Jun 21, from Village on Park. The Annual Juneteenth Parade.



Juneteenth Celebration @ Penn Park – This event is a long-standing tradition in Madison, known for its family-friendly atmosphere and celebration of Black history and culture.



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