



# Youth Mental Health 2021 Return to “Normal”?

DEB LEVINE, MA, CONSULTANT

ACT FOR YOUTH CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

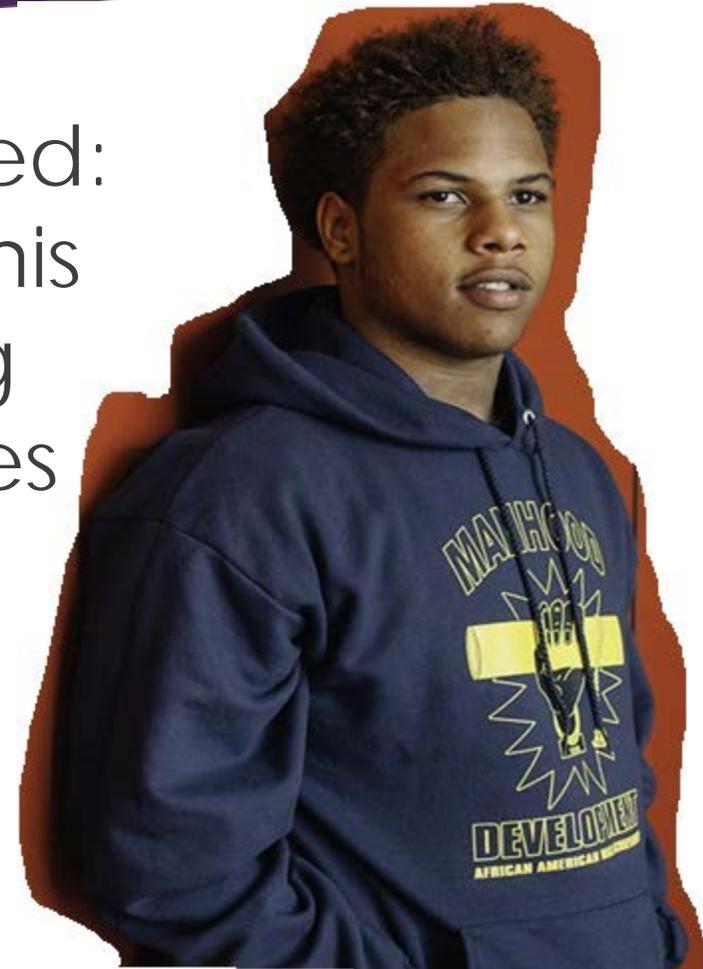
A PRESENTATION FOR NEW YORK STATE PROVIDERS, SUMMER 2021

# Overview

- ▶ No doubt the pandemic has affected our children deeply. They are experiencing loneliness, anxiety, isolation and in some cases, despair, as the pandemic passes the end of its first year, and the Delta variant rages.

# Adolescent Development

- ▶ Adolescent development is interrupted: Our youth would usually be spending this time developing their identities, making meaningful contributions to their families and communities, and having novel experiences – aka having fun.



# Return to “Normal”?



- ▶ There really is no return to “normal” post-pandemic; there is, instead, an emergence into a new historic intersectional moment to be led by our youth.

[www.newdealforyouth.org](http://www.newdealforyouth.org)

# 2020: Youth Mental Health in NYS

35% of adults living in households with children said their kids felt nervous, anxious or on edge for more than half of the days or nearly every day in the past week, when asked in March, 2020 and March, 2021.



Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2021). Kids Count Data Center: Data by topic.  
[datacenter.kidscount.org/topics](https://datacenter.kidscount.org/topics)

# 2020: NYS Parents' Mental Health

Parents of adolescents are suffering too.

- ▶ 37% of adults in New York State reported poor mental health in October 2020.



Source: New York State Health Foundation, 2020  
<https://nyshealthfoundation.org/resource/mental-health-impact-of-the-coronavirus-pandemic-in-new-york-state/>

# Some Youth are OK

- ▶ Not every kid hated every part of the pandemic every day.
  - ▶ Some were relieved not have figure out who to sit with at lunch or what to wear every day.
  - ▶ Kids who have ambivalent feelings about sports/PE were happy to miss the season
  - ▶ Kids who had unsatisfying social lives got a break from rejection
  - ▶ Homebodies had more time to veg out and introverts (a hard thing to be as an adolescent) got a break.

# Some Youth are Not

- ▶ The range of suffering in the past year is extremely wide. Teens who were already experiencing stress, anxiety or depression before and early in the pandemic, topped with any of these additional stressors that occurred during the pandemic, are the ones most vulnerable to despair:
  - ▶ Kin and community deaths and illnesses from COVID-19
  - ▶ Prolonged school closures and sheltering in unsafe homes (inc non-LGBTQ+ affirming)
  - ▶ Isolation from trusted adults (school staff, family liaisons, after school folks)
  - ▶ Loss of family income and economic crises.

Source: New England Journal of Medicine

<https://www.jwatch.org/na51821/2020/06/18/loneliness-and-mental-health-young-people-possible-effects>

# Inequities Post- National Disasters

- ▶ Post-Katrina, 1 in 6 youth had lasting mental health problems; we expect the same post-COVID
- ▶ These youth were among those who had the highest exposure to stressors to related to the hurricane
  - ▶ Loss of income
  - ▶ Discrimination
  - ▶ Severe conflicts in their home relationships
  - ▶ Lost family member(s)
  - ▶ Lack of basic needs (food, shelter, love)

Source: American Psychological Association  
<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2006/08/katrina>

# Intersectionality

- ▶ Racism and #BLM
- ▶ LGBTQ+ discrimination, loss of rights for transgender youth
- ▶ Immigration rights and #DreamAct
- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Homelessness

# Meeting the Need

- ▶ The disproportional impact of COVID-19 builds on existing inequities, leading to a more profound impact on the emotional health and well-being of children of color.
- ▶ We need to reach out and connect youth who need immediate help with culturally responsive services; and support the rest of our students with tech-based mental health solutions for post-COVID life.

# The Summer of Healing

*"As our children emerge this summer, we may see them falling apart. Their buckets of resilience may be empty. They've lost connection, been confined to small spaces, cut all transitional time, all while managing disappointment, mistrust and a feeling of being cheated."*

- Karen Moon, Therapist on Finding Meaning, the Summer of Healing Podcast with Kelly Corrigan

<https://www.kellycorrigan.com/kelly-corrigan-wonders/karenmoon>



# 7 Tips

- ▶ 1. It's not possible to process during crisis. If the worst of the pandemic is really just about over, this work is waiting for us now.
- ▶ 2. Comparative suffering is not helpful. The feeling is meant to be felt. In fact, it will be felt, though you might wish otherwise.
- ▶ 3. Youth need the adults in their life - coaches, educators, counselors, bus drivers, and cafeteria ladies - we are the safety net.
- ▶ 4. Expectation defines experience, so, let us strike this sentence from the record: "High school is the best 4 years of your life."
- ▶ 5. We need to start bringing back interstitials: transitions space between home and work, between class and lunch, between friends and family.
- ▶ 6. To be heard is to be seen and to be known. We were all meant to be known.

# Social Media and Mental Health

- ▶ The fact that mental health problems and digital technology use has increased together over the last decade has led to (unfounded) claims that screen time, and more recently, social media use is driving increases in mental health symptoms in youth.
- ▶ ***Neither the amount of time adolescents spend online each day, nor the time they spend engaged in a wide range of online activities, including social media use, increase mental health symptoms among youth in multiple studies.***

Jensen, M., George, M. J., Russell, M. R., & Odgers, C. L. (2019). Young adolescents' digital technology use and mental health symptoms: Little evidence of longitudinal or daily linkages. *Clinical Psychological Science*, 7(6), 1416–1433. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167702619859336>

# Social Media and Mental Health

- ▶ Smartphones and social media are now entering conversations about youth mental health in a new way—not as a cause or contributor, but as potentially powerful tools for reaching and supporting adolescents who are struggling with mental health issues or who are searching for support.
  - ▶ Youth with moderate to severe depressive symptoms are twice as likely as those without depression to say they use social media almost constantly (34% v. 18%)
  - ▶ The percent of youth with depression who say social media is very important for getting support and advice has more than doubled from 2018 to 2021, from 11% to 26%.

# Social Media and the Pandemic



- 86% of young people say that social media has been very or somewhat important to them during the pandemic for staying connected and current events.
- 43% of young people say that when they feel depressed, stressed or anxious, using social media makes them feel better.
- Among youth with moderate to severe depressive symptoms, 29% say social media is important for getting inspiration from others, for feeling less alone, and for getting advice and support when needed.

# Social Media and Injustice

- ▶ Despite widespread use, youth encounter bias and –isms on social media
  - ▶ The majority of LGBTQ+ youth (74%) encounter homophobic content online and on social media.
  - ▶ The majority of Black youth (69%) have encountered racist content online or on social media.
  - ▶ The majority of Hispanic and Latinx youth (67%) have encountered racist content online.

# Social Media and Tools

Select inclusive tools and social media accounts to follow that consider the intersectionality of complex youth identities.

# Instagram

11:11

hope\_irl

36 Posts 373 Followers 516 Following

**HopelRL**  
Websites & Blogs  
A zine by young people, for young people 🥰  
A project by @hopelab\_org 🌈  
Issue 2 OUT NOW!! 🌈  
bit.ly/HopelRL\_issue2  
Followed by margaretlaws, bsheoran and 8 others

Following Message Contact

Featured Launch

11:00

blackmentalhealthnyc

11 Posts 1,015 Followers 74 Following

**Black Lives Matter**  
Community  
WORKING ON BUILDING THERAPIST NETWORK PLEASE BEAR WITH US ❤️

Follow Message

NYC Clinics SuicideRes...

11:07

aimmentalhealth

481 Posts 2,156 Followers 674 Following

**AIM Youth Mental Health**  
We are building a movement devoted to the mental health of children, teens, and young adults by funding clinical research to find treatments + cures.  
linkin.bio/aimmentalhealth  
Followed by stanfordyouthmh, headstreaminno and 1 other

Follow Message Donate Contact

Self Care ED Depression ADHD+ADD Anxiety

# Instagram

1:27

< **crisistextline** 🔒



**940** Posts   **78.5K** Followers   **572** Following

**Crisis Text Line**  
Mental Health Service  
Free, 24/7 support at your fingertips. We're only a text away.  
To reach a Crisis Counselor, please text SHARE to 741741 or reach out on Facebook.  
[www.crisistextline.org/everybody-hurts/](http://www.crisistextline.org/everybody-hurts/)  
Followed by [cssalamedacounty](#), [mayabtwf](#) and 18 others

Following ▾

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FEEDBACK   PODCAST   TWEETS



1:26

< **btwfoundation** 🔒



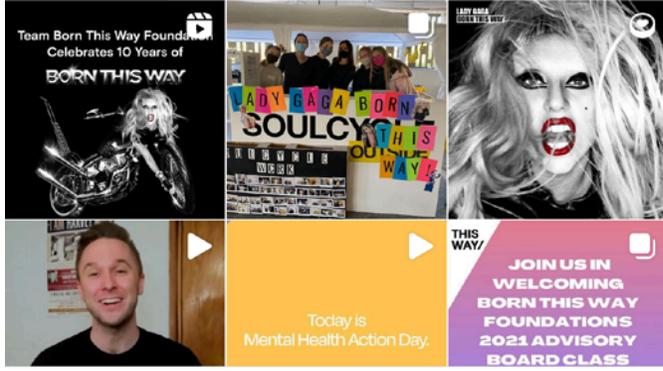
**942** Posts   **126K** Followers   **208** Following

**Born This Way Foundation**  
"In order to heal you have to feel." Together w/ [@ladygaga](#) + [@momgerm](#), we're building power in youth communities + sharing the value of kindness.  
[linktr.ee/btwfoundation](http://linktr.ee/btwfoundation)  
Followed by [hope\\_irl](#), [lavamaex](#) and 8 others

Fundraising for **Born This Way Foundation**

Following ▾

Message   Email   Donate ▾

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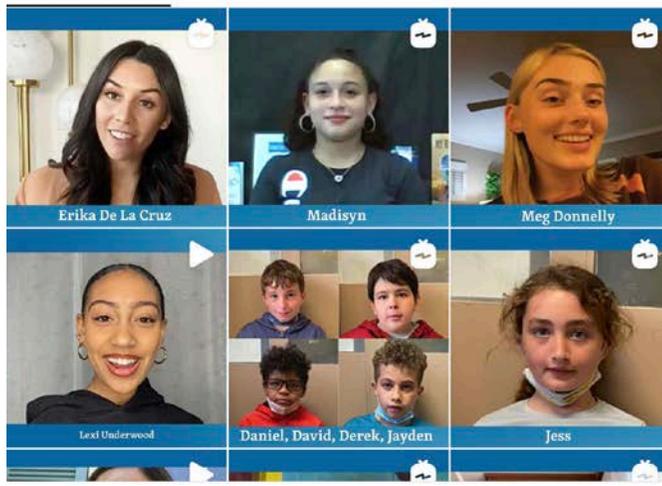
< **childmindinstitute** 🔒



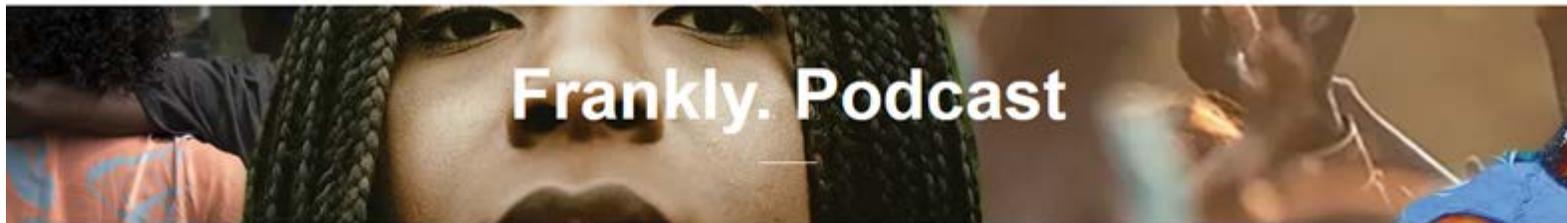
**1,159** Posts   **139K** Followers   **268** Following

**Child Mind Institute**  
Nonprofit Organization  
We are an independent nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children & families struggling with mental health & learning disorders.  
[childmind.org/gettingbettertogether](http://childmind.org/gettingbettertogether)  
Followed by [teenhealthdoc](#), [instadvancedmed](#) and 8 others

Follow   Message   Donate ▾

# Podcasts



## About

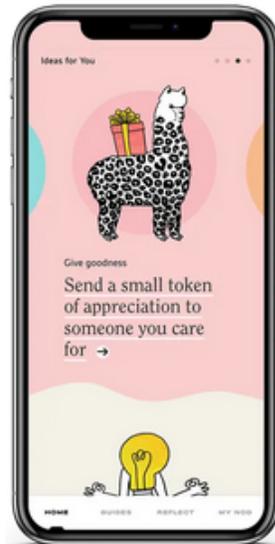
*Frankly.* is a podcast that explores the health and wellbeing of youth from the perspectives and lived experiences of young people on Chicago's South and West sides. Co-produced by Chicago youth Kaya Thomas and Alizha Vernon and the University of Chicago's Center for Interdisciplinary Inquiry and Innovation in Sexual and Reproductive Health, *Frankly.* is a seven-episode series that builds on the findings from Ci3's Adolescent X study, a research project that studies narrative methods to explore the messages that young people receive about their bodies, identities, and sexual health. *Frankly.* centers the voices of young people marginalized by race, gender, and/or sexual orientation as they navigate various social environments, develop their identities, and understand the world around them. *Frankly.* aims to contextualize the stories of young people by examining the ways in which structural barriers and institutions impede their health and wellbeing.

# Mobile Apps

H O P E L Δ B

[ABOUT](#)

[WHO WE ARE](#)



Enter Nod. Developed in partnership with [Grit Digital Health](#), the Nod app for college campuses offers higher education leaders a research-backed tool they can confidently share with students, knowing it addresses two critical threats to student mental health: loneliness and depression.

Nod uses evidence-based practices including principles of positive psychology, cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing and mindfulness self-compassion to equip students with the skills to build social connections whether they are on-campus or remote.

In a 2019 randomized controlled trial conducted with 221 first-year college students, four weeks of Nod use prevented loneliness and depression among those students most at risk at the start of the year. Additionally, there were similar patterns of improved outcomes for sleep quality, campus belonging

# Mobile Apps

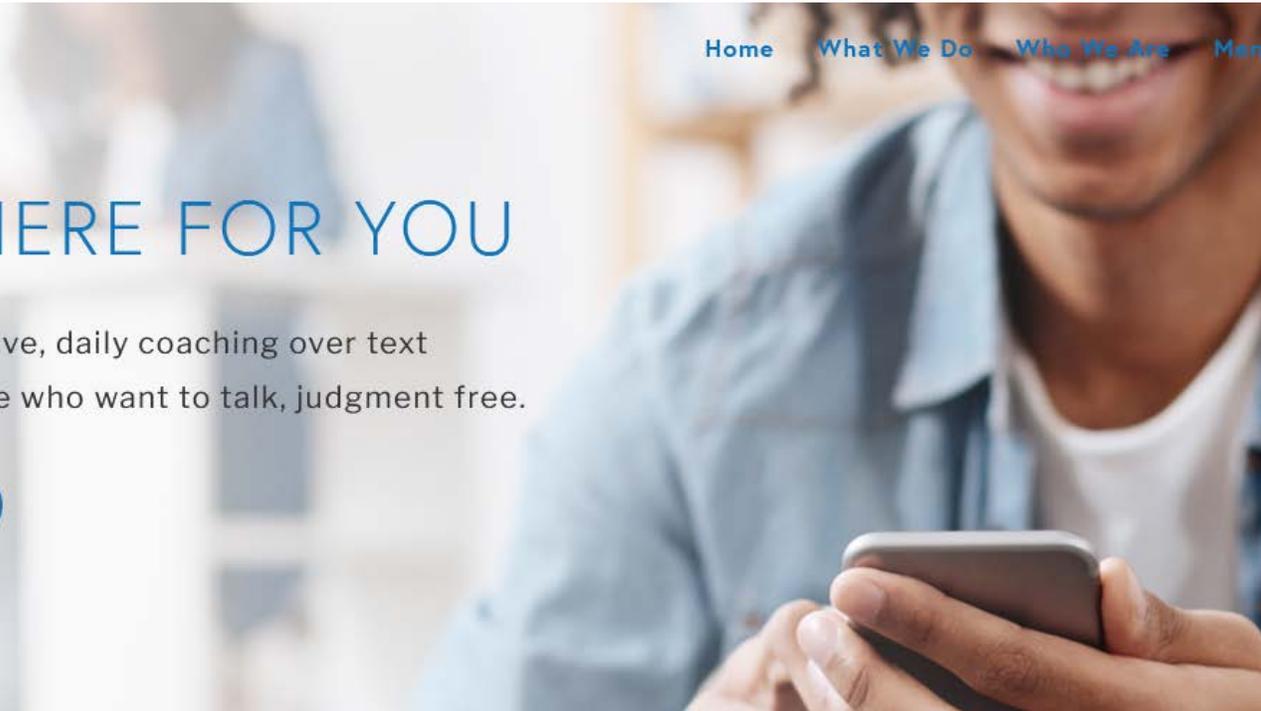
M/ND  
R/GHT

[Home](#) [What We Do](#) [Who We Are](#) [Members](#)

## WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

Culturally-responsive, daily coaching over text message for people who want to talk, judgment free.

[Become a member →](#)



# Supportive Group Chats: Give us the Floor

## 3 group focuses

But every group discusses every aspect of life, including accomplishments.

### MENTAL HEALTH

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Social Anxiety
- Loneliness / Isolation
- Mental Disorders
- Stigma
- Discrimination
- and anything else teens dealing with mental health difficulties may struggle with

### LGBTQIA+

- Gender Identity
- Sexual orientation
- Stigma
- Loneliness / Isolation
- Acceptance
- Discrimination
- and everything that LGBTQIA+ folks may struggle with

### LIFE CHALLENGES

- Relationships
- Loneliness / Isolation
- Academic Pressure
- Self-Love
- Bullying
- Family tensions
- Discrimination
- Abuse
- Sleep issues
- and anything else members may struggle with

# Group Chats Combatting Loneliness

▶ <https://youtu.be/kx7nPTrzJSI>



#GiveUsTheFloor #ByTeens4Teens #mentalhealthsupport  
"I Don't Feel Lonely Since I Joined"

2,000 views · Dec 17, 2020

SHARE SAVE

# Bottom Line

- ▶ We have to support our young people's developmental needs for identity development, novel experiences, and meaningful contribution to their communities in order to support their mental health recovery post-COVID.
- ▶ That means including youth as part of the recovery process, and integrating mental health support into our sexual health education work.
- ▶ There's a triage process that needs to happen, with youth who have experienced the most trauma during the pandemic needing access to immediate culturally appropriate support and counseling.
- ▶ Trusted adults have a role to play in offering discreet, technological resources for healing this summer and fall.

# Q&A

## Let's talk

- ▶ Deb Levine, MA, Consultant
- ▶ She/her/hers
- ▶ [Linkedin.com/IN/deblevine](https://www.linkedin.com/in/deblevine)
- ▶ [levinedeb@gmail.com](mailto:levinedeb@gmail.com)
- ▶ @DebLOakland

