



**Touchstone**  
FOUNDATION

Youth  
**Mental Wellness**  
Partners



# Youth Mental Wellness Needs Assessment

*2023 results from our “Youth Listening Tour”, Parent/Caregiver survey data, data comparisons, trend analysis, and resources for parents and caregivers.*

# Foreword

For over 10 years, our mission at Touchstone Foundation has focused on improving youth mental wellness in Lancaster County through strategic solutions that prevent our young people from diseases of despair, depression, anxiety, and mental illness. Unfortunately, our healthcare system is often focused on illness, not wellness. At Touchstone Foundation, we invest in youth mental wellness. Yet, at the same time, we recognize that there are many thousands of children who also need to be rescued from the struggles of depression, childhood trauma, and toxic stress.

In 2014, we commissioned an in-depth assessment of mental and behavioral health needs of children and adolescents in Lancaster County. The results of that study in 2015 led us to redefine our organizational planning to meet the most pressing needs, namely removing barriers to accessing mental health care.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated an already tenuous mental health care system for youth and families. In April 2022, we saw the first indications of the impact the pandemic had on youth mental wellness from the Pennsylvania Youth Survey data for Lancaster County<sup>1</sup>.

During 2022-2023, we kept considering funding requests for high need areas, such as maternal mental health, school-based mental health services, and supporting teens and adolescents as they transition from pediatric to adult mental health services. We remain especially interested in supporting efforts that bring mental health care to populations of youth and families who need more access, such as LGBTQIA+ youth, youth in the juvenile justice system, and youth in the foster care system, among others.

In this updated needs assessment, we share the results of a yearlong process which included both extensive qualitative interviews with over 100 young people, ages 14-26, and a comprehensive quantitative survey of parents and caregivers about their child's mental health. In this approach, we compare results back to our 2014 needs assessment and to the Pennsylvania Youth Survey.

It was a humbling experience to hear so many young people share their hopes and dreams about how they would change their mental health care. They also shared so many frustrations and challenges. We listened and we learned.

We stand committed to our mission to elevate the mental well-being of youth and children in Lancaster County. It is our hope that in sharing these learnings, we can provide a community platform for intentional partnerships focused on solutions that respond to the needs and concerns of our youth. We invite you to partner with us, as a volunteer, grantee, concerned citizen, mentor, guest speaker, or safe space facilitator.

With gratitude,

Anna Kennedy  
Executive Director  
Touchstone Foundation

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According to the 2021 Pennsylvania Youth Survey<sup>2</sup>, **suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth aged 10-24**, amounting to 6,500 deaths by suicide each year. In 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics<sup>3</sup>, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry<sup>4</sup> and Children's Hospital Association<sup>5</sup> declared a **national emergency in child and adolescent mental health**. Also in 2021, the US Surgeon General's Advisory<sup>6</sup> released a comprehensive study on youth mental health which included COVID-19 data and impact on youth.

In 2015, Touchstone Foundation, then Lancaster Osteopathic Health Foundation (LOHF) completed the Lancaster County Children's Behavioral & Mental Health Needs Assessment<sup>7</sup> published in January of 2015. The Foundation partnered with Millersville University and conducted focus groups with mental health professionals serving the area, and phone surveys with County parents/caregivers.

Since 2015, many changes and events have occurred throughout the County and the nation that have changed the overall landscape of mental health. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has been linked to increased diagnoses of depression and anxiety, and the effects of social isolation on developing brains are still being studied. In addition, social movements such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo have highlighted disparities based on race and gender.

In response, the Touchstone Foundation paused our children's behavioral health grants program in July 2022 to reassess the mental health landscape in Lancaster County. The intent of this pause was to listen and learn from youth, and to check in with parents and caregivers. This was done through two aspects: a listening tour targeted towards youth aged 14-26 who live in Lancaster County; and an online survey targeted towards parents and caregivers of Lancaster County students, ages 5-26.

This report is designed to serve as an introduction to the trends and common themes emerging. It is important to recognize that the experiences and perspectives captured in this report are not exhaustive, and additional considerations will continue to emerge.



# Youth Listening Tour

Touchstone Foundation

**6**  
FOCUS  
GROUPS

**14-26**  
YOUTH  
AGE RANGE

**100**  
YOUNG  
PEOPLE

**AUGUST 2022  
TO  
MARCH 2023**

The estimated 100 young people who participated in these conversations shared their experiences passionately, often sharing their experiences in seeking mental health services. Our qualitative analysis of the focus group conversations with youth resulted in several trends, most notably:

**The need for an option in mental health care that does not include clinical therapy or counseling, but rather the consistent presence of a safe and trusted adult mentor who shares a similar interest or can do an activity with the young person regularly.**

Each session hosted between 6 and 15 participants. Listening sessions averaged one hour in length and were kept entirely confidential. At least one adult moderator and a note-taker were present for each session. Facilitators asked two main questions in each session:

## Two Main Questions

What barriers or obstacles do you think prevent youth from accessing mental health care in our community?



What solutions or suggestions do you think would help improve access to youth mental health care in our community?

# Parent/Caregiver Survey

## Barriers

From December 2022 – January 2023, 1,813 survey responses were recorded. After data was cleaned regarding empty responses, responses where no children were indicated, and where respondents indicated that their children were enrolled in a school district outside of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 964 survey responses were analyzed.

The Parent/Caregiver Survey is quantitative and compares/repeats the questions from our 2015 needs assessment for trend analysis in the 7 years between the two studies. We compared results from our 2023 Parent Survey with our 2015 Parent Survey. The survey in 2023 asked some questions that were not asked in the 2015 survey and vice versa. The non-overlapping questions were not included in the trend analysis. Some questions pertaining to the same subject matter were phrased slightly differently and/or had different response options. The survey in 2015 included data from interviews conducted over the phone and focus groups while the survey in 2023 was conducted online via Survey Monkey.

## AFTER COMPLETING A TREND ANALYSIS, THE FOLLOWING TRENDS WERE IDENTIFIED

<b>Parent-Observed Behaviors</b>	<b>Parent-Reported Insurance Coverage of Children</b>	<b>Youth Health-Related Information</b>
<b>Sources of Health-Related Information</b>	<b>Bullying and Negative Behavior Towards Child</b>	<b>Social Supports</b>

# Accessing Mental Health Services

## Quantitative Data

Touchstone Foundation repeated our parent/caregiver survey about youth mental health in 2022-2023, in order to compare and understand changes in youth mental health from parent/caregiver perspective in the seven years between 2014-2015 and 2022-2023. We observed the following trends from parents and caregivers of children and youth:

**1** Accessibility to, and quality of, health care and/ or mental health services has improved while the perceived wellbeing of young people by their parents has declined.

**2** The largest increases over time in health problems experienced by children were behavior or conduct problems, hearing problems, and autism spectrum disorders. All health problems in this category experienced an increase.

**3** While parents' responses indicate that they trust their neighbors and neighborhood, this trust has declined since 2015.

**4** Parents report seeking health-related information from their child's healthcare provider, searching online, asking another family member, and asking on social media.

**5** Parents report their children being purposefully excluded, lied about, hit, or teased by other children about once a month.

# Accessing Mental Health Services

## Qualitative Data

We conducted six focus groups from August 2022 - March 2023, listening to more than 100 youth ages 14-26 in locations throughout Lancaster County, including: Youth Intervention Center (detention), Youth Intervention Center (foster care), Bench Mark Program, Manheim Township High School Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), Touchstone Foundation Rise Above Youth Summit, Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology Women's Club.

Touchstone Foundation's Youth Listening Tours provided insight into the barriers that youth face in accessing mental health care and possible solutions to these barriers. Participants suggested solutions such as **providing more options for activities during therapy sessions and allowing young people to access services without parental involvement**. The participants in the Youth Listening Tour expressed a desire for a **safe and trusted** adult mentor as an alternative to clinical therapy or formal counseling. Several trends were identified relating to accessing mental health services. These trends include:

- Pre-existing supports and coping mechanisms
- Barriers regarding access to therapeutic services
- Interpersonal barriers with peers and parents
- Barriers within the therapeutic environment

Upon analyzing data from our quantitative and qualitative studies, Touchstone Foundation has determined new funding recommendations. These recommendations include:

- Increasing access to mental health services by reducing wait times and funding transportation resources.
- Addressing stigma surrounding mental health through targeted programs and resources for parents and youth.
- Providing resources for youth mental health and addressing the impact of social media.
- Ensuring the accuracy of health information sources with tools for parents to evaluate online and non-medical providers.



# Seeking Mental Health Care

Barriers - Youth Listening Tour Qualitative Results

## PRE-EXISTING SUPPORTS AND COPING MECHANISMS

Focus group participants identified practices and activities that are beneficial when their mental health is deteriorating. For example, teens and young adults cited eating, sleeping, exercising, talking to supportive adults (including in therapeutic sessions), and creative outlets such as writing, journaling, and crafting.

## BARRIERS WITHIN THE THERAPEUTIC ENVIRONMENT

Once a young person can successfully access therapeutic services, they report barriers that may prevent them from continuing services. For example, youth expressed difficulties in connecting with therapists that may not share common factors such as their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Many youths want to be able to feel comfortable during sessions, which they say is difficult when they are sitting and talking in an isolated office with a clinician. Many young people advocated for wanting options such as going for a walk or participating in different activities during each session, in addition to talking about their mental health. Young people shared other reasons for seeking mental health services, like how play therapy takes place with younger people.

# Seeking Mental Health Care

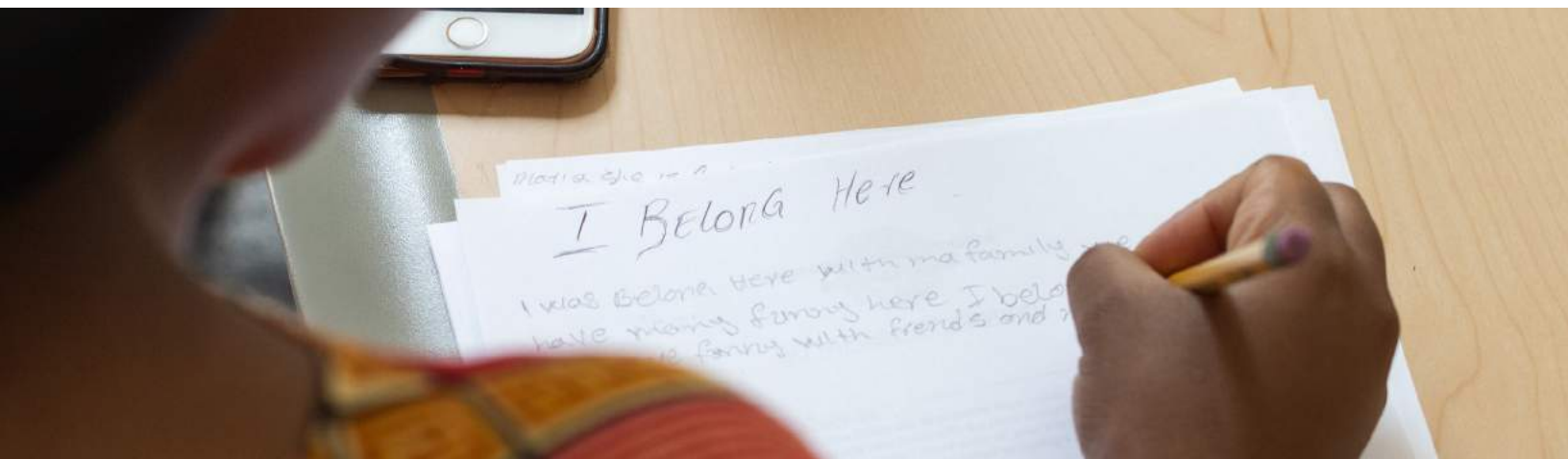
## Barriers - Youth Listening Tour Qualitative Results

### INTERPERSONAL BARRIERS REGARDING ACCESS TO THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

Another significant trend that emerged was the lack of support from other people when a young person is interested in receiving therapeutic services. Multiple participants reported a stigma for young men to “be tough” and not seek out mental health services, as doing so would be seen as a sign of weakness.

There is also a trend described where young people tend to compare themselves to social media influencers on apps such as Instagram and TikTok. This has led to the development of a negative self-image and can both worsen their mental health and deter them from seeking help from others. Even when discussing relationships with friends, they stated that they were hesitant to refer them to help if needed due to the stigma and feeling like they would be “ratting them out” or breaking a friend’s trust or confidentiality.

Parents were also cited as a barrier towards accessing mental health services. Youth experience challenges when a parent is unable to transport them to therapeutic services. Numerous young people also reported that their parents were not supportive of their desire to receive mental health services and would sometimes discourage them from seeking mental health services. Many mental health services cannot be accessed without information from their parents /caregiver such as birth certificate or insurance cards. Young people frequently said that they would like to be able to access services without parental involvement.



# Seeking Mental Health Care

## Barriers - Youth Listening Tour Qualitative Results

### STRUCTURAL BARRIERS REGARDING ACCESS TO THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

One of the most prominent trends regarding a deficit in Lancaster County's mental health landscape are the barriers present when a young person is interested in receiving mental health services. Young people report long wait periods (weeks or even months) to be seen by a new provider, and this wait can be even longer when a young person is trying to receive a diagnosis or services related to neurodivergences such as autism spectrum disorders. This highlights the effects of the well-known and well-studied national provider shortage and supports the need for further solutions. This study<sup>8</sup> conducted in 2018 found that by 2024, the country will be short between 14,280 and 31,109 psychiatrists. Over 150 million people in the United States live in federally designated mental health professional shortage areas<sup>9</sup>. The Health Resources and Services Administration<sup>10</sup> designates Lancaster County as a Medically Underserved Area (MUA) which identifies a shortage of primary care health services within geographic areas, and a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)<sup>11</sup> which indicates a shortage of primary, dental, or mental health care providers.

Additionally, young people face significant barriers once an appointment is secured. For example, transportation is a hurdle for many young people who do not have their driver's license or access to a car. Some parents or guardians may be unable or unwilling to drive them; this is discussed in more detail below. Young people also have varying amounts of insurance coverage, which can lead to services being unaffordable.



# Importance of Trauma-Informed Care

Children who have been exposed to trauma face unique challenges that are often misinterpreted. Youth who have endured adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including emotional/physical abuse, neglect, household violence, unstable environment, etc. are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors and present behavioral issues, which can be misunderstood by adults. Children also struggle with self-regulation. If staff struggles with managing these behaviors, it can lead to an environment that activates the child and escalates the standing challenges. Providing direct care workers with the fundamental skills needed to understand their needs is crucial.

A study by Residential Treatment for Children & Youth<sup>12</sup> addresses the impact of creating youth-serving trauma-informed programs. They instated their own service, EQ2<sup>13</sup> (Empowering Direct Care Staff to Build Trauma-Responsive Communities for Youth), a trauma-informed intervention for youth. This incorporated trauma-informed knowledge, mindfulness-based practices, increase staffs' self-awareness and regulation (intended to help them monitor their reactions to highly charged and emotional events), and practices from restorative justice. Several specific components were included to assist staff in leading their interventions with this approach, including:

- Building safety
- Increasing trustworthiness and transparency amongst staff
- Promoting peer support
- Enhancing collaboration and mutuality
- Bolstering staff empowerment

Following the implementation of this program, staff reported positive outcomes in their understanding of trauma and trauma-impacted youth. 93.5% of the staff reported an increase in understanding of trauma history and how it influences behavior. 96.8% reported that they got skills which helped them respond positively with challenging youth behavior. And 19.8% of staff made comments pertaining to gaining a new perspective on youth who have experienced trauma and have gained more patience as a result. Trauma-informed knowledge should be at the center of all mental health care to properly understand and help the individual. This not only provides a safe and nurturing environment for the child, but for the care worker as well.

Touchstone Foundation partners with the [Lancaster County Trauma-Informed Initiative](#)<sup>14</sup> to help Lancaster County become a trauma-informed community that reduces and addresses adverse childhood experiences.

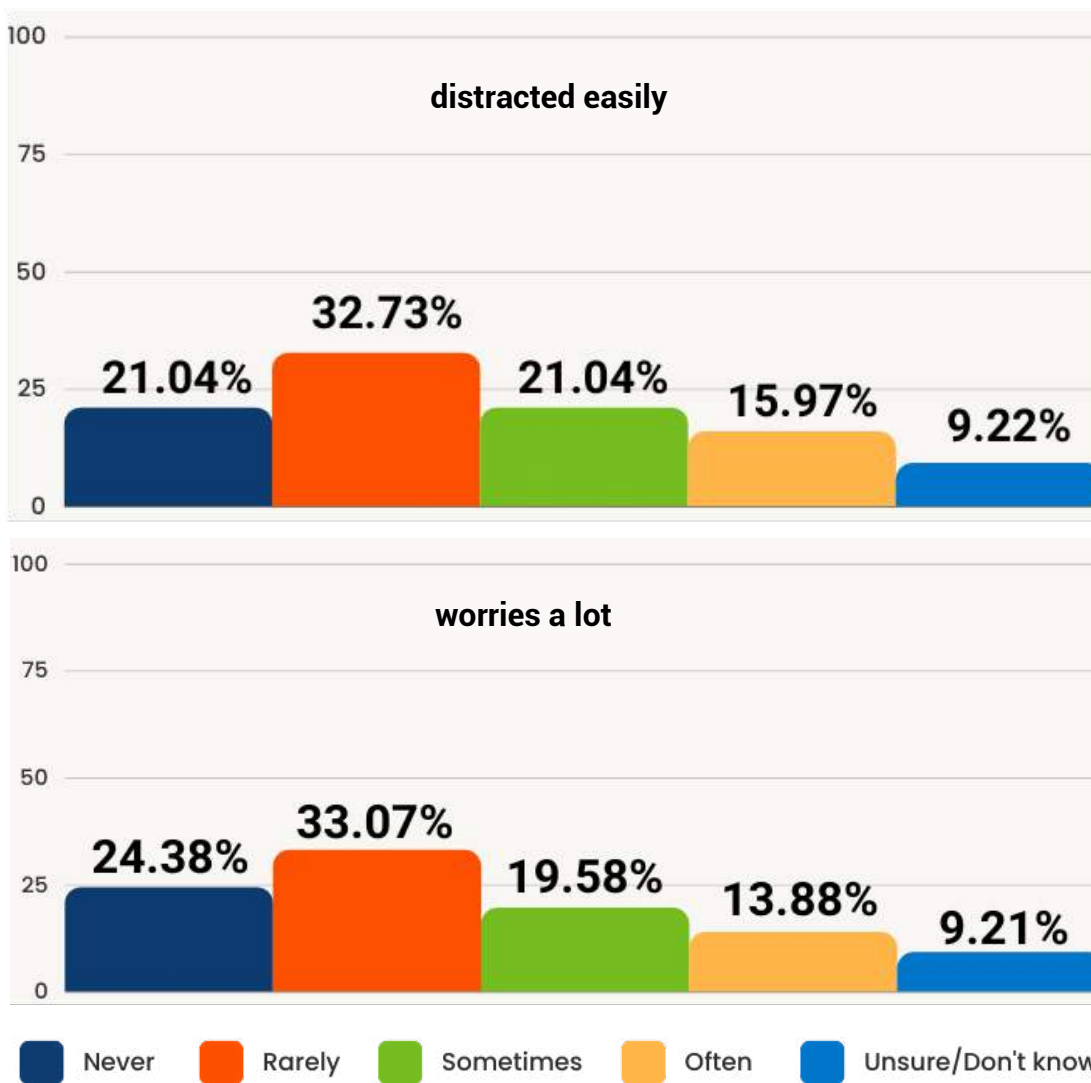
# Parent/Caregiver Survey

## Parent-Observed Behaviors of Concern

We asked parents and caregivers about certain behaviors and symptoms that their children exhibited to the best of their knowledge, and asked if they noticed it "never", "rarely", "sometimes", or "often".

To the best of your knowledge, how often was your child:

Answered: 774      Skipped: 138



The most frequently noticed behaviors:

1. Being distracted easily
2. Worrying a lot
3. Having trouble concentrating
4. Not understanding other people's feelings
5. Not following rules

It's important to note that while these were the most seen behaviors, they were not seen often.

Parents stated that they were seen between "rarely" and "sometimes", but more frequently stated they were seen "rarely" rather than "sometimes".

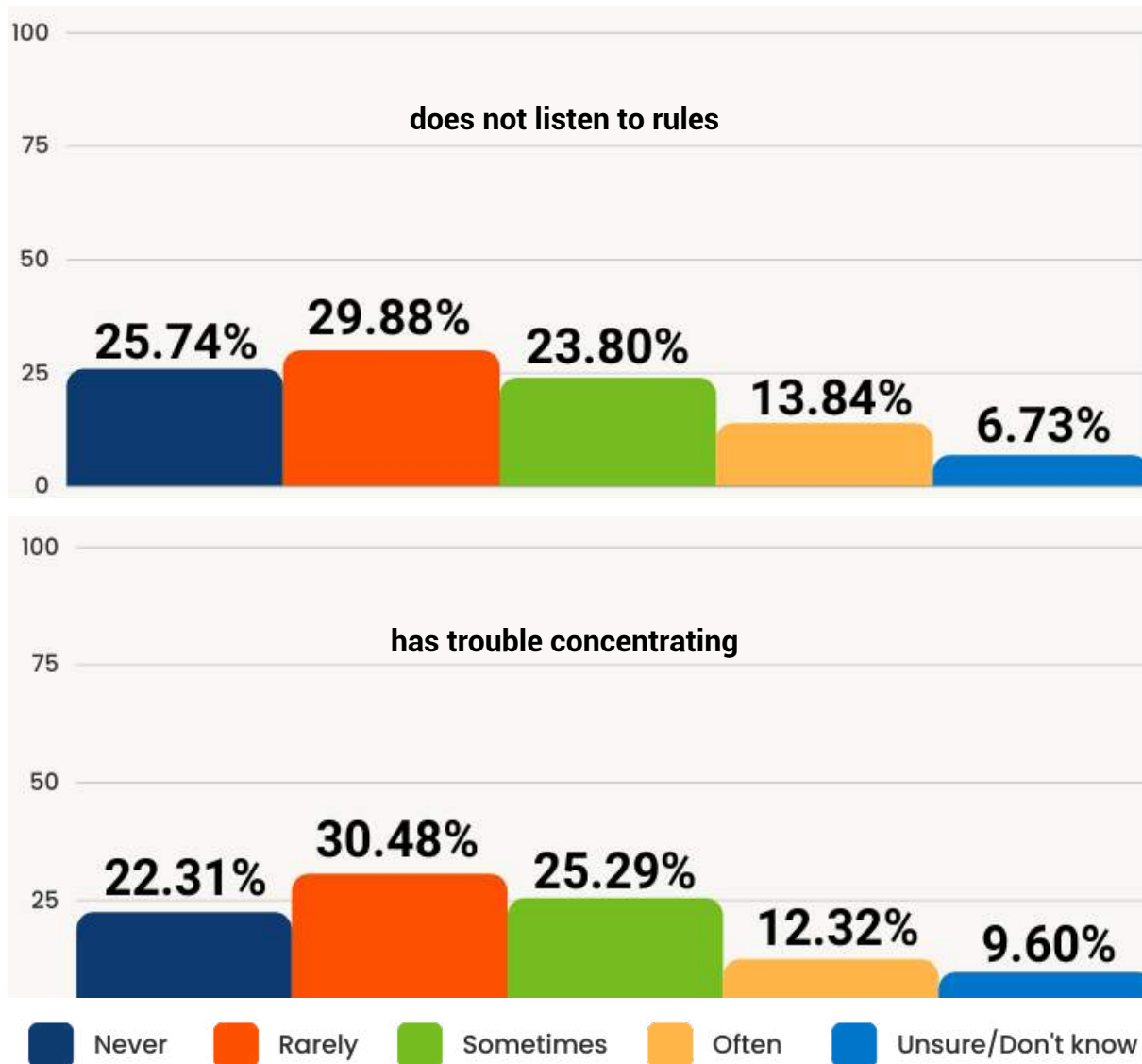
[Full data set for question 12, here](#)

# Parent/Caregiver Survey

## Parent-Observed Behaviors of Concern

To the best of your knowledge, how often does your child:

Answered: 774      Skipped: 138



While this data seems hopeful with responses of 'rarely' or 'never' being the most common responses given by parents when asked if how often their children exhibit concerning behavior, parents appear to be out of touch with their children's feelings and behaviors. When asked how often their children feel sad or unhappy in our 2023 survey, 29.07% of parents responded 'never', 29.99% responded 'rarely', 21.64% responded 'sometimes', 11.34% responded 'always', and 7.95% responded 'unsure'. These responses do not comport with data from the 2021 Pennsylvania Youth Survey which reports that 38.5% of students in Lancaster County responded feeling sad or depressed MOST days in the past 12 months. The PA Youth Survey also reports that the most common depressed thought which was exhibited by 37.6% of youth in the county is "at times I think I am no good at all".

# Parent/Caregiver Survey

## Parent-Reported Insurance Coverage of Children

Most of the questions inquiring about accessibility of services and quality of health care indicated improvements in those categories between 2015 and 2023. The survey reflects an increase of:

- **children with health care coverage**
- **parents who reported receiving help from doctors or services to coordinate their children's care**
- **children's needs being met by their health insurance.**

In 2023, over 95% of parents reported that their children currently had insurance coverage, most commonly through the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), followed by Medical Assistance and private insurance through a parent's employer.

The survey indicated a 6.87 percentage point increase (7.57%) in parents who reported that their child has health care coverage. Parents were asked if they had received help arranging or coordinating their child's care and responses demonstrated that they had received help by an increase of 17.04 percentage points (48.83%) between 2015 and 2023. Responses indicating that children's needs are always or usually met by their health insurance coverage increased by 5.34 percentage points (6.04%). Not all questions yielded positive results however, with answers indicating that obtaining necessary referrals was a problem increasing by a staggering 34.11 percentage points (240.21%).



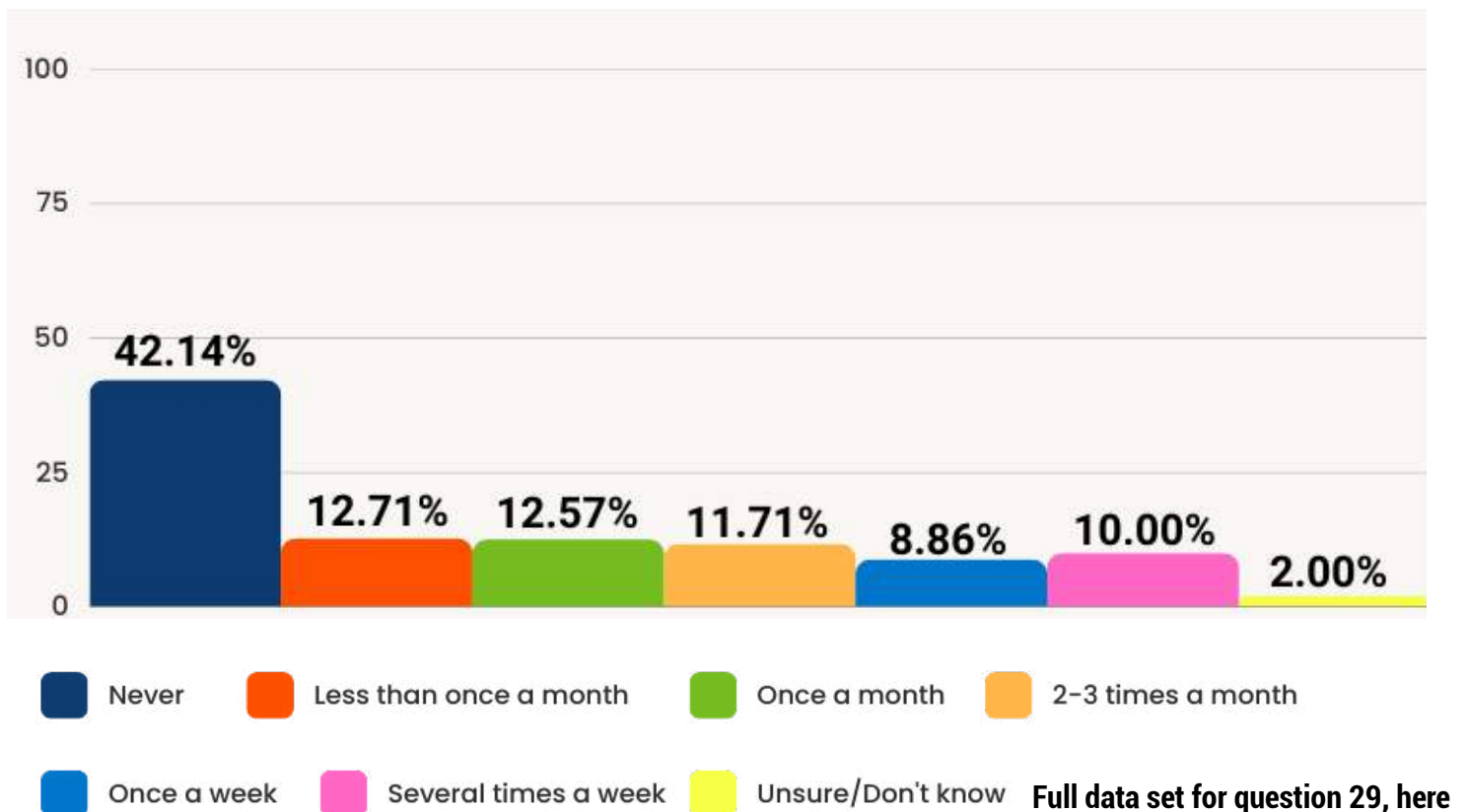
# Parent/Caregiver Survey

## Bullying and Negative Behaviors Towards Child

Parents from the 2023 Parent/Caregiver Survey reported that, to their knowledge, their child was purposefully excluded by other children/students from non-academic activities approaching once a month. Less frequently, they reported their children being the subject of lies or false rumors spread by other children/students, being hit or kicked by other children/students, and being teased in a hurtful way. While parents are overall seeing these behaviors infrequently (less than once a month), we do know that these behaviors are occurring.

According to the PA Youth Survey, 25.2% of all students reported experiencing bullying over the past 12 months, including cyberbullying. They reported that this bullying most often happens on school property, which could explain the lack of parental knowledge regarding the incidents. What's also interesting to note is that bullying most commonly takes the form of emotional abuse, insults, and name-calling, rather than the social isolation the parents noticed. Bullying and cyberbullying have a serious impact on mental health and suicidal ideations. According to the PA Youth Survey, students who have experienced bullying or cyberbullying are at an increased risk of feelings of hopelessness, considering suicide, making a suicide plan, and attempting suicide.

**To the best of your knowledge, how often was your child: purposefully excluded by other children/students from non-academic activities?** Answered: 702 Skipped: 210





# Parent/Caregiver Survey

## Local Support Network



When given statements related to their local support network, parents commented that they felt like their child is safe in the current neighborhood they live in, and that there are trusted adults that could help if their child was hurt or scared. Appropriately, the least agreed to statement was regarding moving to a safer neighborhood.

While most parents in 2023 indicated having a sense of trust in their local support network, this feeling of trust has decreased between 2015 and 2023. Parent's trust of their neighbors and neighborhood has declined although it is important to note that the survey in 2015 did not provide survey participants with the opportunity to indicate a neutral response to many of the questions (i.e., neither agree nor disagree) while the survey in 2023 included a neutral response option.

When asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding trust in their neighborhood and feelings of support from their community, parents in 2023 indicated feeling less trust and less support than they did in 2015. When responding to the statement "We watch out for each other's children in my neighborhood", parents that indicated agreement decreased by 23.68 percentage points (27.57%) and parents that indicated disagreement with the statement increased by 9.47 percentage points (94.7%). When responding to the statement "I am getting the support I need to cope with the everyday demands of parenting", parents that indicated agreement decreased by 21.63 percentage points (25.81%) and parents that indicated disagreement with the statement increased by 2.62 percentage points (18.99%).

**Full data set for question 30, [here](#)**

# Parent/Caregiver Survey

## Health-Related Information

### YOUTH HEALTH-RELATED INFORMATION

The Parent Survey in 2015 and 2023 asked parents if their children had ever experienced the following conditions:

- Hearing problems
- Vision problems that can't be corrected with glasses or contact lenses
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Behavior or conduct problems such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder or Conduct Disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Developmental delay.



Each health problem listed above increased by at least 14 percentage points between 2015 and 2023. The largest changes over time in health problems observed by parents in their children were behavior or conduct problems which increased by 28.85 percentage point (351.83%), hearing problems which increased by 30.3 percentage points (452%), and autism spectrum disorders which increased by 31.74 percentage points (473.73%).

As reflected by the increase in health problems experienced by youth over time, parents have become less satisfied with their children's overall health by 11 percentage points (11.51%).

### SOURCES OF HEALTH-RELATED INFORMATION

**When you have questions about your child's health, where do you go?**

Answered: 727      Skipped: 185

**Full data set for question 23, here**

When parents have questions about their child's health, parents reported most frequently asking their child's healthcare provider, followed by searching online, asking another family member, and asking on social media. This is encouraging, assuming their medical provider is providing accurate information, but also highlights opportunities for increasing health literacy tools and knowledge related to information found online to assure that the same quality of information.

Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from the Parent Survey and Youth Listening Tour focus group sessions revealed a need for positive, trusted adult role models for youth in Lancaster County.



Touchstone Foundation will issue a Request for Applications for our new Youth Mentorship Partnership Program. Our goal is to support the development and training of adult mentors who partner with us and local youth serving organizations. These mentors will serve as the trusted, caring, safe, consistent presence that youth are requesting. Mentors will have all current background checks and child abuse clearances. They will receive training on Youth Mental Health First Aid and understanding adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and complex trauma.

Trained adults serving as youth mentors in our community can further assist in providing the long-term relationships that teens and young adults seek. Partnering youth with mentors is an accessible way to set youth up for success, regardless of whether or not their socioeconomic status allows them to afford therapy. We consistently heard the request from participants in our Youth Listening Tour for someone the teen or young person could go to, talk with, share activities like video games, hiking, fishing, questions about school, navigating friendships, help with applying for jobs, and more.



# Recommendations for Funding

## Programs and Tools, Youth Mentorship

As previously mentioned, it is important to note that the responses described are not complete. However, based on the response trends described, there are opportunities for funding grant proposals addressing the following areas:

Increasing provider availability and decreasing the wait time for therapeutic appointments. Touchstone Foundation is addressing this matter through our mental health care scholarship and clinical fellowship programs.



Investigating modalities of therapeutic services outside of the traditional talk therapy model.

Programming and tools related to encouraging students to disclose bullying to their parents (assuming their parents are seen as safe people to disclose to).



Programs addressing the stigma surrounding mental health services.

Programs and resources addressing the impact of social media/celebrity influences on youth mental health.



Programs and resources targeted towards parents addressing the stigma surrounding their child(ren) accessing mental health services.



# Recommendations for Funding

Transportation, Mental Health

Tools to help parents evaluate online and non-medical provider sources of health information to ensure accuracy.



Funding and transportation resources for individuals to access therapeutic services once an appointment is secured.

Increasing access to mental health services by reducing wait times and funding transportation resources.



Addressing stigma surrounding mental health through targeted programs and resources for parents and youth.

Providing resources for youth mental health and addressing the impact of social media.



Ensuring the accuracy of health information sources with tools for parents to evaluate online and non-medical providers.



# Where do we go from here?

## Youth Mentorship Program

Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from the parent surveys and Youth Listening Tour sessions revealed a need for **positive, trusted adult role models for youth in Lancaster County**. This revelation resulted in our proposal for a Youth Mentorship program. This would consist of clearance approved, trusted, trauma informed, and compassionate adults who would each get paired with a youth. PA Youth Survey recommends a social development strategy to promote positive youth development through every stage of a young person's development.

This strategy includes five key components:



Available [here](#) on page 109 of the PA Youth Survey

An impactful way to implement this strategy is through the fostering of meaningful connections between youth and their mentors. A trusted adult can provide additional guidance and be a professional and personal resource. For young adults (ages 18-26), this could involve one-on-one organized activities, supportive casual conversations, and emotional/physical support for the young child, teen, or young adult, which differs depending on the young person's needs.

“Location, wealth, and families influence direct access to mental health.”

— Student during a Youth Listening Tour session



# Resources

## PREVENTION RESOURCES

- Resources for [Suicide Prevention](#)
- Resources for [Bullying Prevention](#)
- Resources for [Cyber-Bullying Prevention](#)
- Resources for [Substance Use/Abuse](#)

## TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

- [Red Rose Access](#) provides door-to-door service and is limited to seniors and individuals with disabilities
- Red Rose Transit provides public transportation throughout [Lancaster City](#) and [Lancaster County](#).
- [Commuter Services of Pennsylvania](#) offers carpool, van pool, walking and other options for Lancaster County and several other counties in Pennsylvania.

## LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE RESOURCES

- Search engines: [Psychology Today](#) and [SAMHSA](#)
- Search engine for people with Medicaid: [Perform Care](#)
- Pennsylvania's support and referral help line: connects people with mental/ emotional support and to local resources (855-284-2494)
- [211 United Way Guided Search](#) - search for resources in PA 211's database of service providers
  - Includes crisis hotlines, mental health, community resources, substance use disorder resources
- [Lancaster County Behavioral Health and Developmental Services](#)
  - Case management services for people with behavioral health issues identified as serious mental illness



# Resources, URL

## PREVENTION RESOURCES

- Suicide Prevention: <https://touchstonefound.org/mental-health-resources/suicide-prevention/>
- Bullying Prevention: <https://www.stopbullying.gov/bullying/warning-signs>
- Cyber-Bullying Prevention: <https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying>
- Substance Use/Abuse Prevention: <https://touchstonefound.org/mental-health-resources/substance-use-disorder/>

## TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

- Red Rose Access: <https://www.redrosetransit.com/red-rose-access>
- Red Rose Transit transportation, Lancaster City: <chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnnibpcajpcgl-clefindmkaj/https://www.redrosetransit.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CityMap-9-4-18.pdf>
- Red Rose Transit, Lancaster County: <https://www.redrosetransit.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/lancaster-county-map.jpg>
- Commuter Services of Pennsylvania: <https://pacommuterservices.org/>

## LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH CARE RESOURCES

- Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/pa/lancaster> Search
- SAMHSA: <https://findtreatment.gov/locator>
- Medicaid Options: <https://tinyurl.com/5edryndu>
- Pennsylvania's Support and Referral Help Line: 855-284-2494
- 211 United Way Guided Search Database: <https://www.pa211.org/get-help/crisis-services-help-lines-warmline/>
- Case Management Services: <https://www.lancastercountybhds.org/101/Mental-Health>



# Trend Analysis: 2015 vs 2023

Access Full Trend Analysis<sup>15</sup> Data [Here](#)

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

It's important to note that all of these data trends are from the Parent/Caregiver Survey, which is quantitative data.

It appears that accessibility to/quality of health care/mental health services has improved while the perceived wellbeing of young people by their parents has declined.

While responses relating to issues of health care accessibility have generally improved, they worsened in the referrals category as answers indicating parents had problems with referrals increased by 34.11 percentage points between 2014 and 2022.

The largest increase over time in health problems experienced by children was behavior or conduct problems (28.85 percentage point increase), hearing problems (30.3 percentage point increase), and autism spectrum disorders (31.74 percentage point increase). All health problems in this category experienced an increase by at least 14 percentage points.

- Was there more awareness for these health problems in 2022 than 2014 that allowed parents to recognize symptoms? Were there more problems getting health problems diagnoses in 2014?
- When only including 'Yes' responses from 2022 that indicated a diagnosis from a doctor, all categories aside from anxiety experienced an increase from the 'Yes' answer in 2014.
- When only including 'Yes' responses from 2022 that indicated *no* diagnosis, all categories aside from anxiety experienced an increase from the 'Yes' answer in 2014

Parent's trust of their neighbors/neighborhood has declined although it is important to note that the survey in 2014 did not provide survey participants with the opportunity to indicate a neutral response to many of the questions (i.e., neither agree nor disagree).

Comparing the data under the School Climate and Safety category is slightly flawed as the response options between 2014 and 2022 are different and the phrasing of some of the questions did not line up. However, both years had 'never' as an option which is what we used as a benchmark to compare the two years.

For full Trend Analysis data set, [click here](#)

**If you would like to review this report as a written Document, please click here.**

### Youth Mental Wellness – Needs & Solutions

*Including results from our "Youth Listening Tour", findings from data comparisons, trend analysis, resources for parents/caregivers, and data from the 2021 PA Youth Survey.*

According to the [2021 Pennsylvania Youth Survey](#), suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth aged 10-24, amounting to 6,500 deaths by suicide each year. In 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Children's Hospital Association declared a national emergency in child and adolescent mental health. Also in 2021, the US Surgeon General's Advisory released a comprehensive study on youth mental health which included COVID-19 data and impact on youth.

In 2014, the Touchstone Foundation performed a series of community outreach initiatives aimed at analyzing the then-current state of youth mental health within Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The Foundation partnered with Millersville University and conducted focus groups with mental health professionals serving the area, and phone surveys with County residents.

Since 2014, many changes and events have occurred throughout the County and the nation that have changed the overall landscape of mental health. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has been linked to increased diagnoses of depression and anxiety, and the effects of social isolation on developing brains are still being studied. In addition, social movements such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo have highlighted disparities based on race and gender.

In response, the Touchstone Foundation paused our children's behavioral health grants program in July 2022 to reassess the mental health landscape in Lancaster County. This was done through two aspects: a listening tour targeted towards youth aged 14-26 who live in Lancaster County; and an online survey targeted towards parents and caregivers of Lancaster County students, ages 5-26.

This report is designed to serve as an introduction to the trends and common themes emerging. It is important to recognize that the experiences and perspectives captured in this report are not exhaustive, and additional considerations will continue to emerge.

Qualitative data from Touchstone Foundation's youth listening tours provided insight into the barriers that youth face in accessing mental health care and possible solutions to these barriers. Participants suggested solutions such as providing more options for activities during therapy sessions and allowing young people to access services without parental involvement. The participants in the youth listening tour expressed a desire for a safe and trusted adult mentor as an alternative to clinical therapy or formal counseling. Several trends were identified relating to accessing mental health services. These trends include

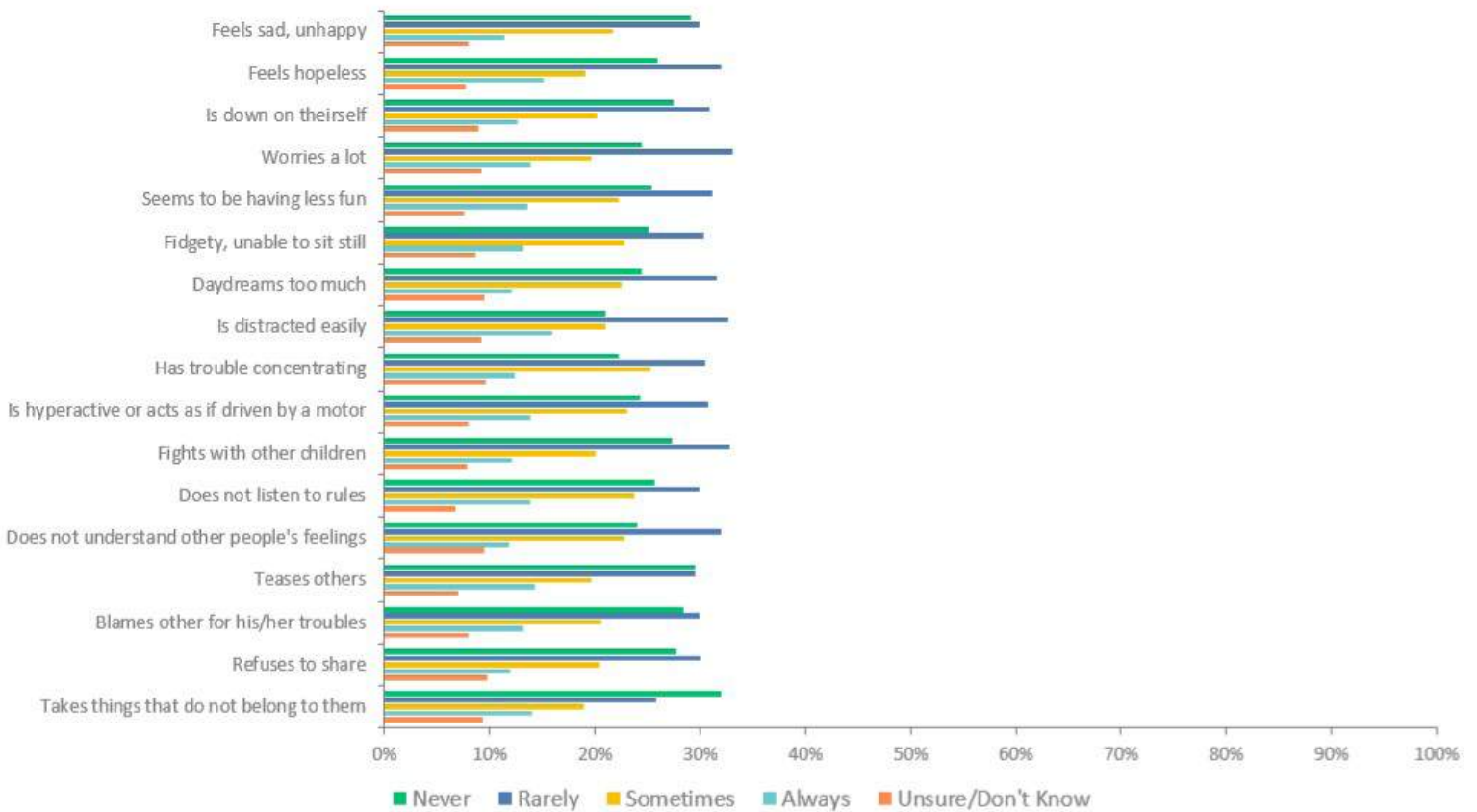
- Pre-existing supports and coping mechanisms
- Barriers regarding access to therapeutic services
- Interpersonal barriers with peers and parents
- Barriers within the therapeutic environment

# Appendix B

## Parent/Caregiver Survey Data Sets

Q12: To the best of your knowledge, how often does your child:

Answered: 774 Skipped: 138

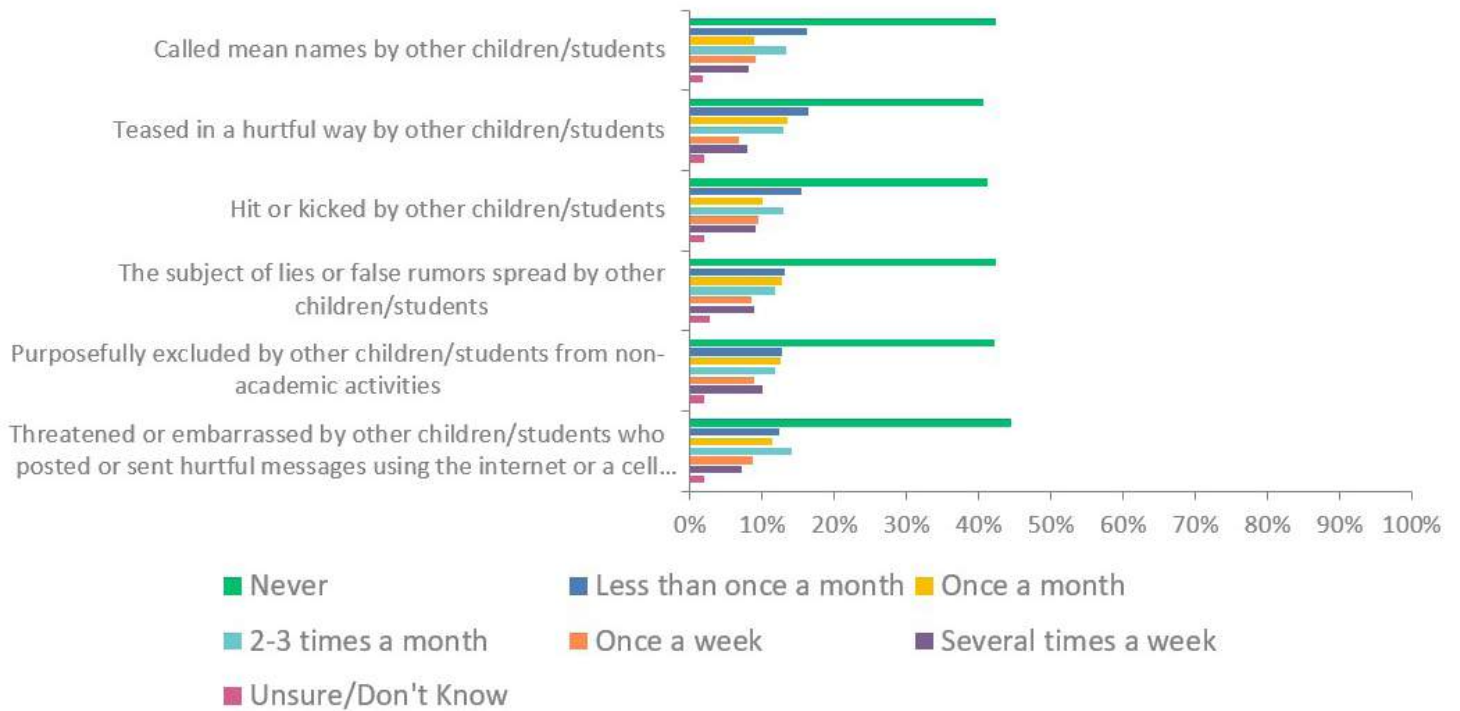


# Appendix C

## Parent/Caregiver Survey Data Sets

Q29: To the best of your knowledge, how often was your child:

Answered: 702 Skipped: 210

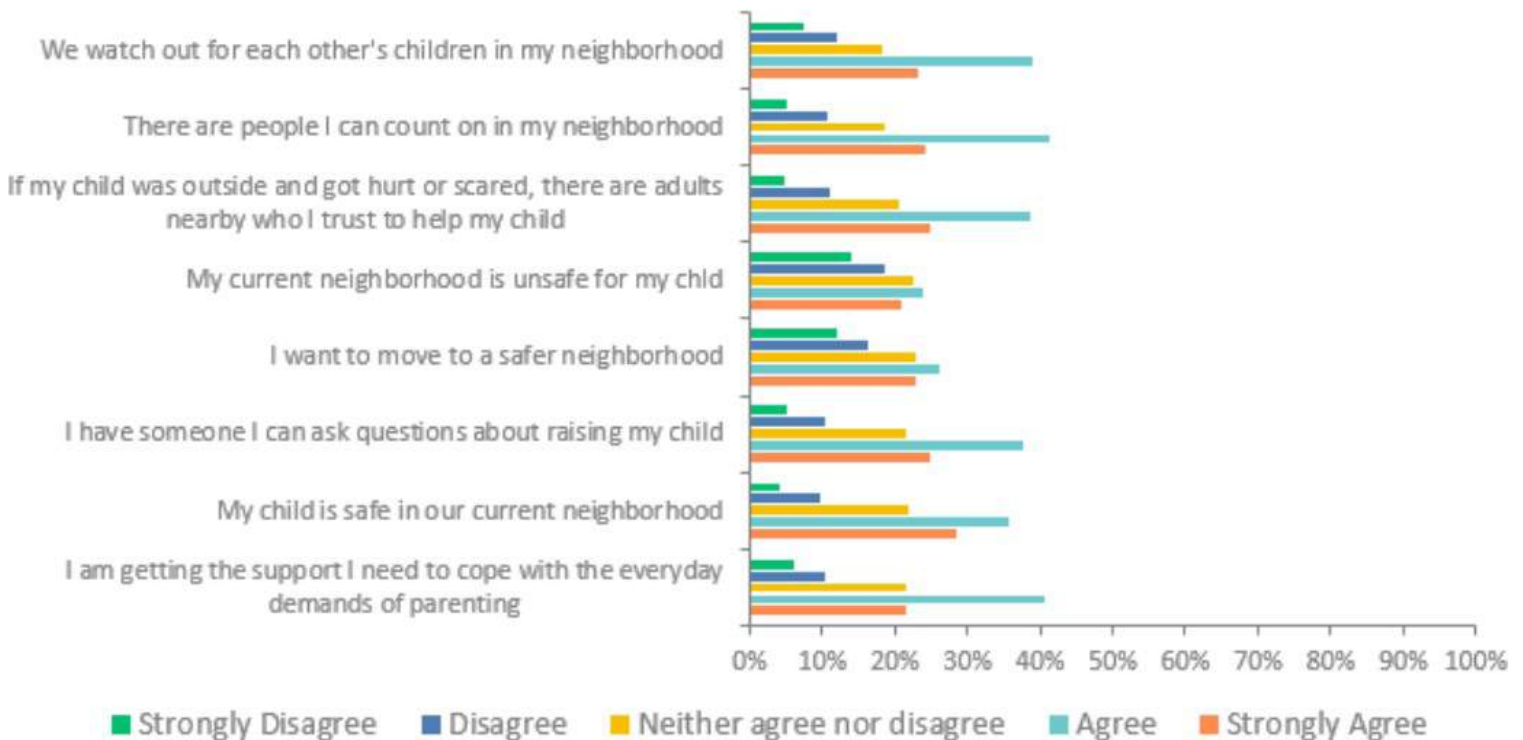


# Appendix D

## Parent/Caregiver Survey Data Sets

Q30: Please select how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Answered: 685 Skipped: 227

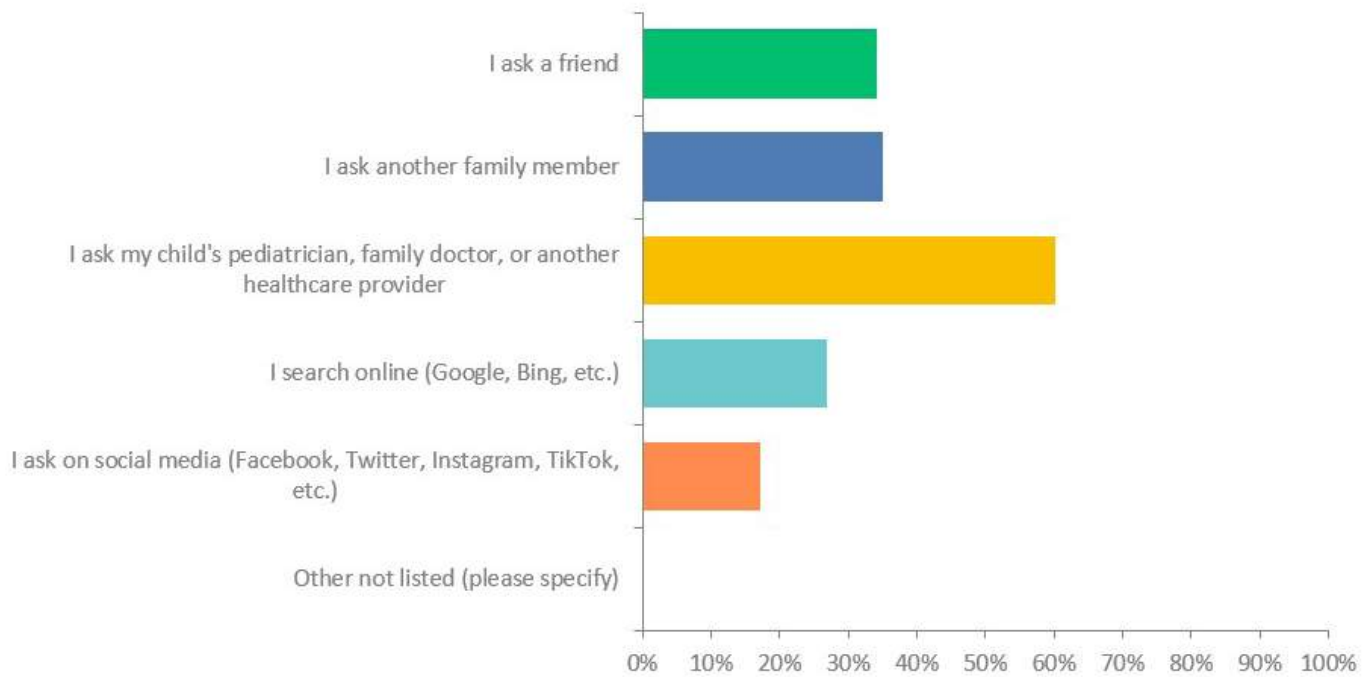


# Appendix E

## Parent/Caregiver Survey Data Sets

Q23: When you have questions about your child's health, where do you go?

Answered: 727 Skipped: 185



# Appendix F

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Mental Health Challenges

Question: To the best of your knowledge, have any of your children experienced any of the following:

### Hearing problems

2014			2022	
YES	6.7%		YES, AND A MEDICAL PROVIDER DIAGNOSED THIS	20.36%
NO	89.2%		YES, BUT A MEDICAL PROVIDER HAS NOT DIAGNOSED THIS	16.64%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	4.1%		NO	62.86%
			UNSURE	0.14%

### Vision problems that cannot be corrected with glasses or contact lenses

2014			2022	
YES	10.8%		YES, AND A MEDICAL PROVIDER DIAGNOSED THIS	18.86%
NO	83.6%		YES, BUT A MEDICAL PROVIDER HAS NOT DIAGNOSED THIS	19.97%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5.6%		NO	59.64%
			UNSURE	1.53%

# Appendix G

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Mental Health Challenges

Question: To the best of your knowledge, have any of your children experienced any of the following:

### Anxiety

2014			2022	
YES	23.7%		YES, AND A MEDICAL PROVIDER DIAGNOSED THIS	18.47%
NO	71.3%		YES, BUT A MEDICAL PROVIDER HAS NOT DIAGNOSED THIS	19.31%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%		NO	60.28%
			UNSURE	1.94%

### Depression

2014			2022	
YES	15.8%		YES, AND A MEDICAL PROVIDER DIAGNOSED THIS	19.47%
NO	78.7%		YES, BUT A MEDICAL PROVIDER HAS NOT DIAGNOSED THIS	18.35%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5.6%		NO	59.94%
			UNSURE	2.24%



# Appendix H

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Mental Health Challenges

Question: To the best of your knowledge, have any of your children experienced any of the following:

### ADD or ADHD

2014			2022	
YES	14.4%		YES, AND A MEDICAL PROVIDER DIAGNOSED THIS	15.69%
NO	79.2%		YES, BUT A MEDICAL PROVIDER HAS NOT DIAGNOSED THIS	18.21%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	6.5%		NO	64.01%
			UNSURE	2.1%

### Behavior or conduct problems, such as oppositional defiant disorder or conduct disorder

2014			2022	
YES	8.2%		YES, AND A MEDICAL PROVIDER DIAGNOSED THIS	17.83%
NO	85.9%		YES, BUT A MEDICAL PROVIDER HAS NOT DIAGNOSED THIS	19.22%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5.9%		NO	60.58%
			UNSURE	2.37%

# Appendix I

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Mental Health Challenges

Question: To the best of your knowledge, have any of your children experienced any of the following:

### Autism, Asperger's, or other Autism Spectrum Disorders

2014			2022	
YES	6.7%		YES, AND A MEDICAL PROVIDER DIAGNOSED THIS	17.69%
NO	88.3%		YES, BUT A MEDICAL PROVIDER HAS NOT DIAGNOSED THIS	20.75%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%		NO	59.61%
			UNSURE	1.95%

### Any developmental delay that affects your child's ability to learn (2014)

### Developmental delay (2022)

2014			2022	
YES	9.09%		YES, AND A MEDICAL PROVIDER DIAGNOSED THIS	17.79%
NO	85.92%		YES, BUT A MEDICAL PROVIDER HAS NOT DIAGNOSED THIS	71.51%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	5%		NO	62.75%
			UNSURE	1.96%

# Appendix J

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Mental Health Services

Question: Did your child need a referral to see any doctors or receive any services?

2014			2022	
YES	22.2%		YES	22.22%
NO	68.3%		NO	77.78%
DON'T KNOW	9.5%			

# Appendix K

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Health Coverage

Question: Does your child currently have any form of health care coverage (insurance)?

2014			2022	
YES	90.8%		YES	97.67%
NO	8.4%		NO	2.33%
DON'T KNOW	0.9%			

Question:

Was getting a referral a big problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all? (2014)

Were there any problems with getting the referral(s) needed? (2022)

2014			2022	
BIG PROBLEM	7.1%		YES	48.31%
SMALL PROBLEM	7.1%		NO	51.69%
NO PROBLEM	85.7%			



# Appendix L

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Health Coverage

Question: Did anyone help you arrange or coordinate your child's care among any doctors or services you used?

2014			2022	
YES	34.9%		YES	51.94%
NO	65.1%		NO	43.15%
			UNSURE	4.01%
			DON'T REMEMBER	1.03%

Question: How happy are you with the overall health of your child?

2014			2022	
VERY SATISFIED	75.7%		VERY SATISFIED	42.43%
SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	19.9%		SATISFIED	27.94%
SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	3.8%		SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	14.23%
VERY DISSATISFIED	0.6%		NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED	11.25%
			SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	3.49%
			DISSATISFIED	0.52%
			VERY DISSATISFIED	0.13%

# Appendix M

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Health Coverage

Question: Does your child's health insurance cover services that meet your child's needs?

2014		2022	
ALWAYS	52.9%	YES, ALWAYS	54.1%
USUALLY	35.7%	YES, USUALLY	39.84%
SOMETIMES	5.4%	YES, SOMETIMES	5.92%
DON'T KNOW	6.1%	NO, NEVER	0.13%

Question:

When you need advice about your child's health, where do you get that advice MOST OFTEN? (2014)

When you have questions about your child's health, where do you go? (2022, can choose multiple)

2014		2022	
DOCTOR'S OFFICE	87.2%	FRIEND	34.11%
SCHOOL	0.6%	ANOTHER FAMILY MEMBER	35.08%
FRIEND OR RELATIVE	8.2%	CHILD'S PEDIATRICIAN, ETC.	60.11%
OTHER	1.7%	SEARCH ONLINE	26.96%
DOES NOT GO TO ONE PLACE MOST OFTEN	1.5%	SOCIAL MEDIA	17.19%
DON'T KNOW	0.9%	OTHER	0%

# Appendix N

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: School Climate and Safety

Question:

During the last school year, in what kind of school was your child enrolled? (2014)

Which best describes the school your child was enrolled in? (2022)

2014			2022	
PUBLIC OR PRIVATE	77.7%		PUBLIC	71.14%
PRESCHOOL	0.6%		PRIVATE	19.71%
HOME-SCHOOL	2.6%		HOME-SCHOOL	2.71%
NOT ENROLLED	16.7%		ONLINE SCHOOL	6.29%
DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED	2.3%		PRESCHOOL	0.14%
			OTHER	0%

# Appendix O

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: School Climate and Safety

Question:

Based on what you know, during the past school year, how often...(2014)

To the best of your knowledge, during the past school year how often was your child...(2022)

### Was your child called mean names, teased in a hurtful way, or hit or kicked? (2014)

#### Called mean names by other children/students (2022)

2014			2022	
SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK	1.9%		SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK	8.12%
ABOUT ONCE A WEEK	3.1%		ONCE A WEEK	9.12%
2 OR 3 TIMES A MONTH	2.3%		2-3 TIMES A MONTH	13.39%
ONCE OR TWICE A MONTH	12.6%		ONCE A MONTH	8.83%
NEVER	61.7%		LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH	16.24%
DON'T KNOW	17.2%		NEVER	42.45%
REFUSED	1.1%		UNSURE/DON'T KNOW	1.85%





# Appendix P

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: School Climate and Safety

Question:

Based on what you know, during the past school year, how often...(2014)

To the best of your knowledge, during the past school year how often was your child...(2022)

### How often did students tell lies or spread false rumors about your child? (2014)

#### The subject of lies or false rumors spread by other children/students (2022)

2014			2022	
ABOUT ONCE A WEEK	1.9%		SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK	8.84%
ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK	7.7%		ONCE A WEEK	8.56%
NEVER	60.5%		2-3 TIMES A MONTH	11.7%
DON'T KNOW	29.1%		ONCE A MONTH	12.7%
REFUSED	0.8%		LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH	13.12%
			NEVER	42.37%
			UNSURE/DON'T KNOW	2.71%

# Appendix Q

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: School Climate and Safety

Question:

Based on what you know, during the past school year, how often...(2014)

To the best of your knowledge, during the past school year how often was your child...(2022)

### Teased in a hurtful way by other children/students (2022)

### Hit or kicked by other children/students (2022)

2022	TEASED		2022	HIT OR KICKED
SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK	7.86%		SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK	9%
ABOUT ONCE A WEEK	6.71%		ONCE A WEEK	9.43%
2-3 TIMES A MONTH	12.86%		2-3 TIMES A MONTH	13%
ONCE A MONTH	13.57%		ONCE A MONTH	10%
LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH	16.43%		LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH	15.43%
NEVER	40.71%		NEVER	41.29%
UNSURE/DON'T KNOW	1.86%		UNSURE/DON'T KNOW	1.86%

# Appendix R

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: School Climate and Safety

Question:

Based on what you know, during the past school year, how often...(2014)

To the best of your knowledge, during the past school year how often was your child...(2022)

**How often did students use the internet or cell phone to threaten or embarrass your child by posting or sending hurtful messages? (2014)**

**Threatened or embarrassed by other children/students who posted or sent hurtful messages using the internet or cell phone? (2022)**

2014			2022	
2 OR 3 TIMES A WEEK	1.5%		SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK	7.14%
ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK	1.9%		ONCE A WEEK	8.71%
NEVER	80.4%		2-3 TIMES A MONTH	14%
DON'T KNOW	15.4%		ONCE A MONTH	11.43%
REFUSED	0.8%		LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH	12.29%
			NEVER	44.43%
			UNSURE/DON'T KNOW	2%

# Appendix S

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Protective and Risk Factors

Question: Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

### We watch out for each other's children in my neighborhood

2014			2022	
DEFINITELY AGREE	66.7%		STRONGLY AGREE	23.13%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	19.2%		AGREE	39.09%
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	3.5%		NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	18.3%
DEFINITELY DISAGREE	6.5%		DISAGREE	12.15%
DON'T KNOW	4.1%		STRONGLY DISAGREE	7.32%

### There are people I can count on in this neighborhood

2014			2022	
DEFINITELY AGREE	77.4%		STRONGLY AGREE	24.23%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	11.3%		AGREE	41.17%
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	1.2%		NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	18.69%
DEFINITELY DISAGREE	7.1%		DISAGREE	10.8%
DON'T KNOW	3%		STRONGLY DISAGREE	5.11%



# Appendix T

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Protective and Risk Factors

Question: Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

**If my child were outside playing and got hurt or scared, there are adults nearby who I trust to help my child**

2014			2022	
DEFINITELY AGREE	76%		STRONGLY AGREE	24.89%
SOMEWHAT AGREE	13.9%		AGREE	38.65%
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	0.6%		NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	20.64%
DEFINITELY DISAGREE	7.1%		DISAGREE	10.98%
DON'T KNOW	2.4%		STRONGLY DISAGREE	4.83%

**Generally speaking, do you feel you are getting the support you need to cope with the everyday demands of parenting? (2014)**

**I am getting the support I need to cope with everyday demands of parenting (2022)**

2014			2022	
YES	83.8%		STRONGLY AGREE	21.41%
NO	13.8%		AGREE	40.76%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	2.4%		NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	21.41%
			DISAGREE	10.41%
			STRONGLY DISAGREE	6.01%

# Appendix U

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Protective and Risk Factors

Question: In which, if any, has your child participated? Please choose all that apply (2014)

2014		
SPORTS TEAMS	57.6%	
BOY/GIRL SCOUTS	31%	
4-H CLUBS	7.2%	
FAITH-BASED ACTIVITIES	53.4%	
BOYS' AND GIRLS' CLUBS	3.6%	
NONE/DON'T KNOW/REFUSED	15.8%	

Question: Does your child currently participate in any of the following? (2022)

**School sponsored sports team (football, basketball, etc.)**

**Non-school sponsored sports team**

2022	SCHOOL SPORT		2022	NON-SCHOOL SPORTS
YES - CURRENTLY PARTICIPATES	39.91%		YES - CURRENTLY PARTICIPATES	34.61%
YES - PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED	41.23%		YES - PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED	44.04%
NO - HAS NEVER PARTICIPATED	19.01%		NO - HAS NEVER PARTICIPATED	21.5%

# Appendix V

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Protective and Risk Factors

Question: Does your child currently participate in any of the following? (2022)

**Scouting organization (cub/boy/girl scouts, venture crew, etc.)  
Academic Club (quiz bowl, National Honors Society, language club, etc.)**

2022	SCOUTING		2022	ACADEMIC CLUB
YES - CURRENTLY PARTICIPATES	31.09%		YES - CURRENTLY PARTICIPATES	31.82%
YES - PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED	45.75%		YES - PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED	43.65%
NO - HAS NEVER PARTICIPATED	23.31%		NO - HAS NEVER PARTICIPATED	24.53%

**Religious services or faith-based activity  
Volunteer/service group (4-H, Aavidum, peer support, etc.)**

2022	FAITH-BASED		2022	VOLUNTEER
YES - CURRENTLY PARTICIPATES	30.6%		YES - CURRENTLY PARTICIPATES	32.11%
YES - PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED	47%		YES - PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED	46.77%
NO - HAS NEVER PARTICIPATED	22.55%		NO - HAS NEVER PARTICIPATED	21.11%

# Appendix W

## Trend Analysis Results: 2015 vs 2023

Subject: Protective and Risk Factors

Question: Does your child currently participate in any of the following? (2022)

### Music/performance ensemble (band, orchestra, glee club, theater, etc.) Boys' and Girls' club

2022	MUSIC		2022	BOYS' AND GIRLS' CLUB
YES - CURRENTLY PARTICIPATES	35.67%		YES - CURRENTLY PARTICIPATES	29.35%
YES - PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED	48.1%		YES - PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED	45.58%
NO - HAS NEVER PARTICIPATED	16.23%		NO - HAS NEVER PARTICIPATED	25.07%

### Other, not listed

	2022	
YES - CURRENTLY PARTICIPATES	18.91%	
YES - PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED	32.34%	
NO - HAS NEVER PARTICIPATED	48.91%	



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Manheim Township High School, Gay-Straight Alliance and K Foley, LGBTQ+ Coalition  
Lancaster County Youth Intervention Center staff  
Touchstone Foundation Rise Above Youth Summit student participants  
Parents and Caregivers who completed our survey  
Franklin and Marshall College, F&M Works program, Ware Center for Civic Engagement

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### Millersville University students

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### Franklin & Marshall College students, Ware Center for Civic Engagement

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## Board Members

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