

# PATH



United Way of  
Sheboygan County

PROVIDING ACCESS TO HEALING

# IMPACT REPORT

2020 - 2021



# A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In 2017, I was hired to coordinate the collective impact efforts of United Way of Sheboygan County's (UWSC) Providing Access To Healing (PATH) Program in a part-time capacity while working at Mental Health America in Sheboygan County. Due to the growing need of mental health services in our community, especially those regarding youth, I am humbled to have been asked to join the UWSC team full-time as the Director of PATH. I'm grateful for this opportunity and will continue to work diligently alongside our partners to meet the need within our community. Our partners are some of the most dedicated, compassionate, and hard-working individuals I've ever had the privilege of working with. Therefore, I am confident we will continue to make Sheboygan County proud.

Last year, during one of the most challenging and difficult years for so many, PATH quickly pivoted - offering safe, hybrid services (telehealth and in-person therapy sessions) to the students in need within Sheboygan County. During the 20/21 school year, 495 students were able to receive therapy services through PATH. This brings the total number served, since the program's inception in 2015, to surpassing 1500 students! In a world where there is undoubtedly a shortage of behavioral health therapists, especially those who specialize in youth, we are extremely proud of this number. While I can keep sharing quantitative numbers on how the program impacts the lives of so many, like how 93% of PATH students made progress towards their treatment goals last year and 90% felt better about life after starting PATH, I feel that hearing about PATH from someone who is deeply tied to the program is much more meaningful. Of PATH, Carla Vorpahl, a dedicated Sheboygan Area School District (SASD) social worker, said, "I have been a social worker for 27 years... in all those years there has never been a program more important, more needed, and more successful than the PATH Program."

The outcomes and stories shared throughout this report are something to celebrate, yet there is still much work to be done. Many of the school districts we service have growing waitlists totaling hundreds of students who need school-based mental health services. It is because of the PATH behavioral health agencies and therapist, PATH Steering Committee, and our community partners and donors that we are able to continue to not only provide services to those in PATH, but also expand, as best we can, to meet the need of those still waiting for help. Without their tireless efforts, expertise, compassion, and contributions we could never achieve this level of impact nor reach the number of youth we serve each year. As the saying goes, it truly does take a village.

I end this with the fullest of hearts - again thanking all those who help make PATH possible. You are all true mental health champions - together, we make a difference.

With so much gratitude,

Brianna



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DIRECTOR OF PROVIDING ACCESS TO HEALING  
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# BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PATH PROGRAM:

Providing Access to Healing (PATH) is a United Way of Sheboygan County (UWSC) Community Impact Initiative that places licensed professional clinicians in the school setting to increase access to mental health care for students throughout Sheboygan County.

Partnering with Lakeshore Community Healthcare (LCHC), Mental Health America in Sheboygan County (MHA), and Ozaukee Community Therapies LLC (OCT), PATH provides treatment and coping skills for students and their families struggling with depression, anxiety, ADHD, and relationship stressors among other emotional and behavioral challenges common to students today. These licensed professional clinicians are based in the schools to ensure improved direct access to mental health treatment, assessment, and social support in a stressful environment; thus, lessening the likelihood of diminished school attendance and missed therapy appointments.

Assessment and treatment are provided regardless of an individual's ability to pay, however, when possible, private insurances are billed. UWSC views education as a cornerstone of individual and community success. It is not only essential to a prosperous career path but also to the success of the whole community.

For more information on how PATH is helping Sheboygan County address mental health in schools visit [sheboygancountypress.com](http://sheboygancountypress.com) and read this [article](#) written by Brianna Heusterberg, Director of PATH.

<https://www.sheboyganpress.com/story/news/2018/05/21/sheboygan-county-mental-health-america-working-address-mental-health-schools/628766002/>

# PROGRAM PARTNERS

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## **MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA**

Fiscal Agent & Community Resource & Referral Services

## **SHEBOYGAN COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (SCHHS)**

Funding Partner

## **ROGER'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

Funding Partner

## **PARTICIPATING SHEBOYGAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS:**

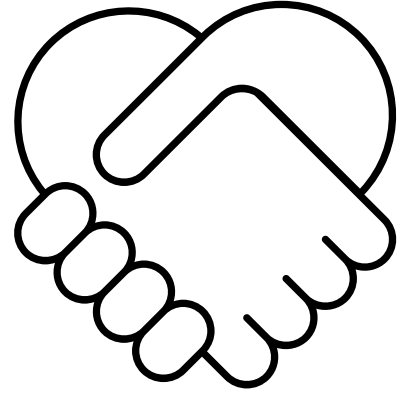
Cedar Grove Belgium, Elkhart Lake, Howards Grove, Kohler, Oostburg, Plymouth, Random Lake, Sheboygan, Sheboygan Falls, & Sheb Co. Head Start

## **LAKESHORE COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE**

Provider

## **OZAUKEE COMMUNITY THERAPIES**

Provider



## LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

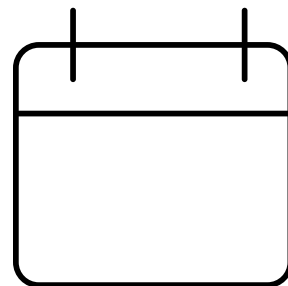
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During the 20/21 school year there were 11 full-time equivalent (FTE) therapists in Sheboygan County schools / Head Start funded through the investment of UWSC, SCHHS, and nine Sheboygan County School Districts, with service provided by LCHC and OCT. To meet the growing need, we are looking to hire additional therapists to the PATH program for the 21/22 school year.

## SESSIONS PROVIDED

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During the 20/21 school year, the PATH Program provided 7,892 therapy sessions to students in the Sheboygan County School Districts.



## STUDENTS SERVED

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During the 20/21 school year, 495+ students received therapy services through PATH. This brings the total number served, since the program's inception in 2015, to 1,520 students!

# DATA CURRENTLY COLLECTED

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## ✓ STUDENT INTAKE & DISCHARGE/END-OF-YEAR DATA WHICH INCLUDES

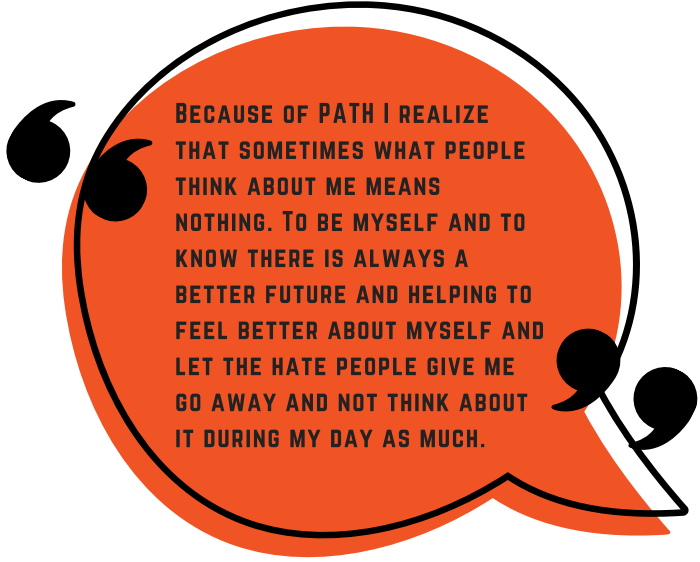
Student ID  
Gender  
Start/Discharge/End-of- Year date  
Academics  
Behavioral Referrals  
Attendance  
IEP/504

## ✓ PROMIS (MEASURES ANXIETY)

## ✓ PHQ-9 (MEASURES DEPRESSION)

## ✓ ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERINECE SURVEY

## ✓ STUDENT SELF - REPORT SURVEY

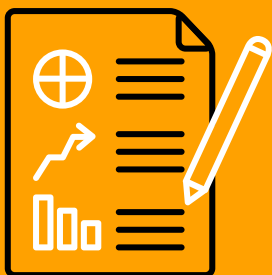


BECAUSE OF PATH I REALIZE THAT SOMETIMES WHAT PEOPLE THINK ABOUT ME MEANS NOTHING. TO BE MYSELF AND TO KNOW THERE IS ALWAYS A BETTER FUTURE AND HELPING TO FEEL BETTER ABOUT MYSELF AND LET THE HATE PEOPLE GIVE ME GO AWAY AND NOT THINK ABOUT IT DURING MY DAY AS MUCH.

# COVID-19 PANDEMIC: IMPACT ON PROGRAM

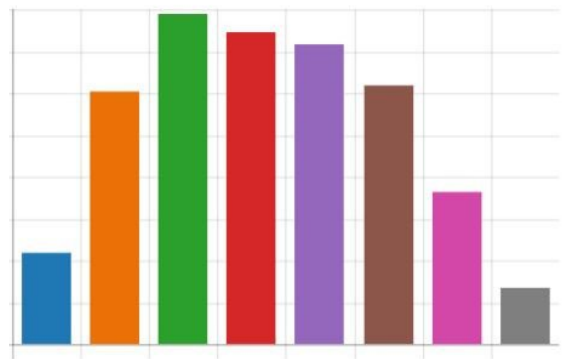
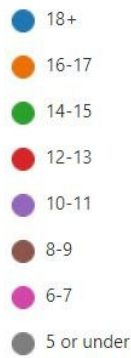
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Due to COVID-19 and the fluidity of the 20/21 school year, the PATH Program was challenged by a number of unforeseen circumstances including access to students/schools and therapist burn-out. While the program quickly adjusted to meet the unique educational environments and lack of therapists providing services, the amount of sessions we were anticipating to provide during last school year decreased. Regardless, the PATH Program aimed to serve as many students as possible and capture the student experience and impact. During this trying time, PATH has worked tirelessly to add therapists in order to continue to meet the ever growing need for youth mental health services and will continue to look at creative ways of expanding mental health services to students and teachers.



# AGE

Largest Age Group Served:  
14-15



I FOUND IT EASIER TO TALK TO ABOUT CONFLICTS THAT WERE GOING ON IN MY LIFE AT THE TIME WITH SOMEONE LIKE MY COUNSELOR.

# GENDER

Male: 49.5%

Female: 50.5%

Non-Binary/Other: less than .05%



The PATH Program aims to be inclusive of all individuals. With regard to gender, we recognize that the data collected surrounding gender is not a true representation of the clients that identify as "non-binary" or "prefer not to say." As an organization, we are working hard to correct this.

# ACADEMICS + BEHAVIOR



Over 1/3 of the students enrolled in the Sheboygan County PATH program showed improvement in their academic performance



Clients enrolled in the PATH Program during the 20/21 school year had fewer behavioral refers and increased attendance than prior to entering the program

Questions:	Clients Who Agree (by percentage):
My counselor treated me with respect.	99%
My counselor was caring and understanding.	98%
I have made progress on my goals.	93%
I learned to better communicate my thoughts + feelings.	96%
I feel better about my life now than before I started PATH.	90%
I think PATH is helping me do better in school.	94%
I think PATH is helping me with my family.	88%
I think PATH is helping me with my friends.	92%
I would refer someone to PATH if they needed help.	94%
If I need help in the future, I'd go back to my PATH counselor.	96%

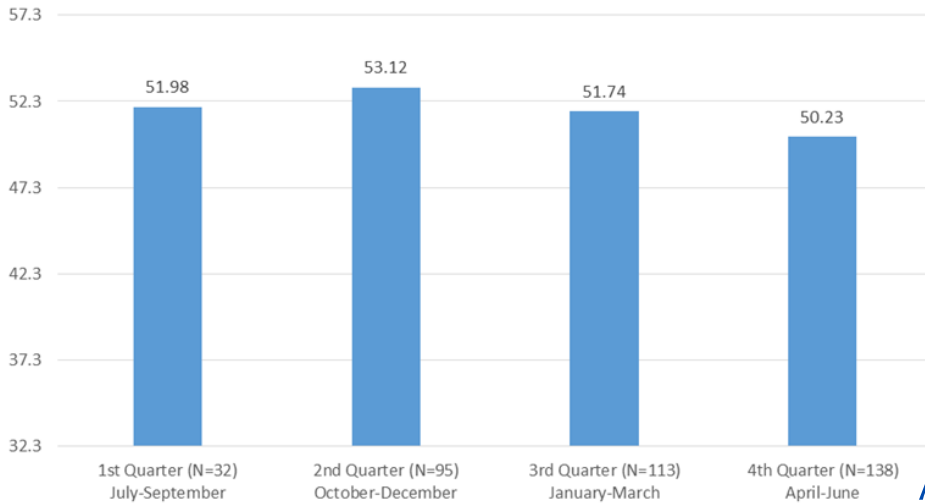
# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SATISFACTION SURVEY

# PROMIS: ANXIETY SCORES

The PROMIS Anxiety Screen measures the experiences of symptoms of anxiety from Sheboygan County students. Evidenced by the chart below, participated students experienced a reduction of anxiety symptoms.



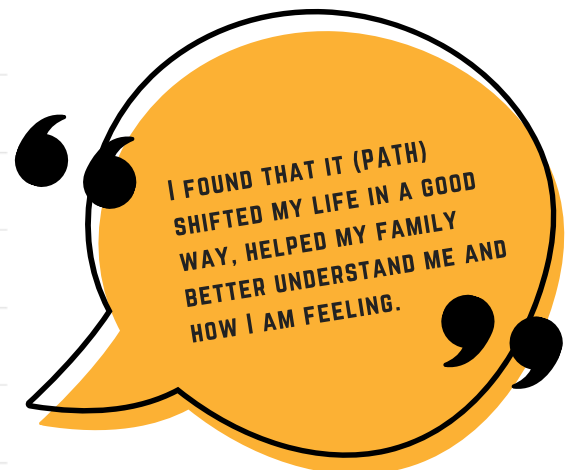
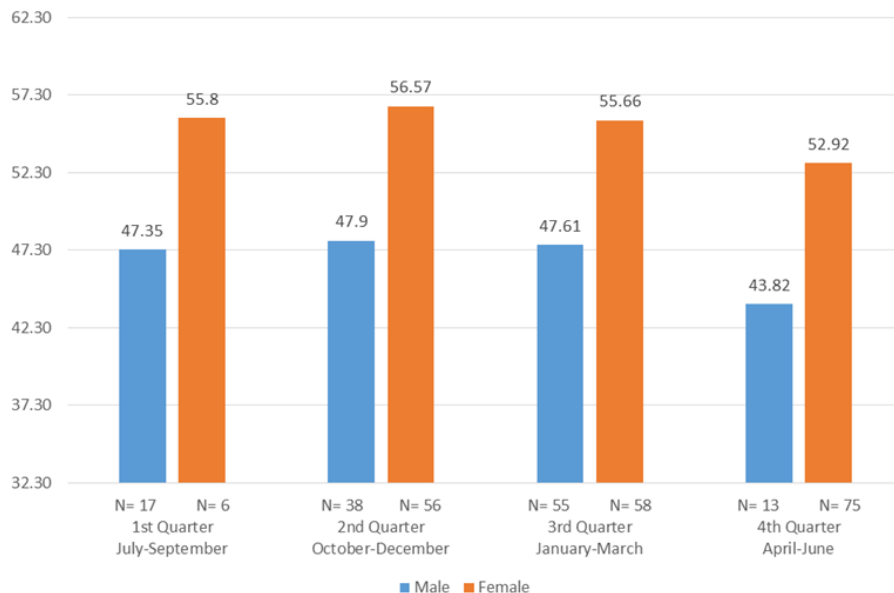
2020-2021 PROMIS Anxiety Scores



## PROMIS: ANXIETY SCORES- GENDER

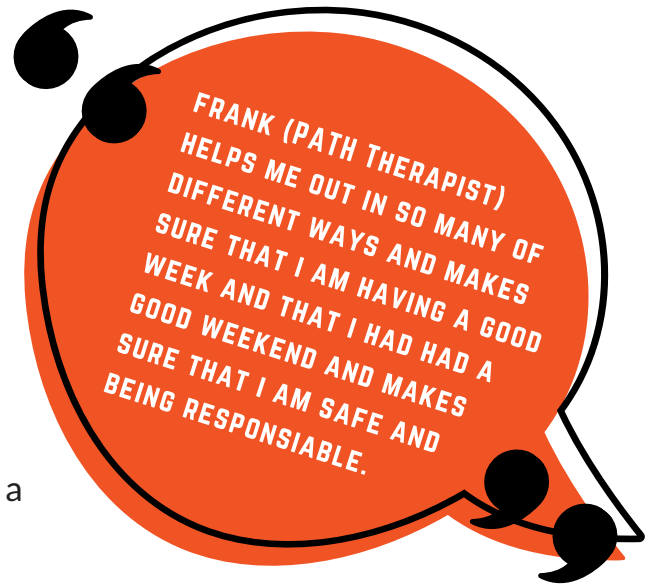
The PATH Program aims to be inclusive of all individuals. With regard to gender, the sample size was not large enough in order to provide outcome data that identify as "non-binary" or "prefer not to say."

2020-2021 PROMIS Anxiety Scores  
Gender

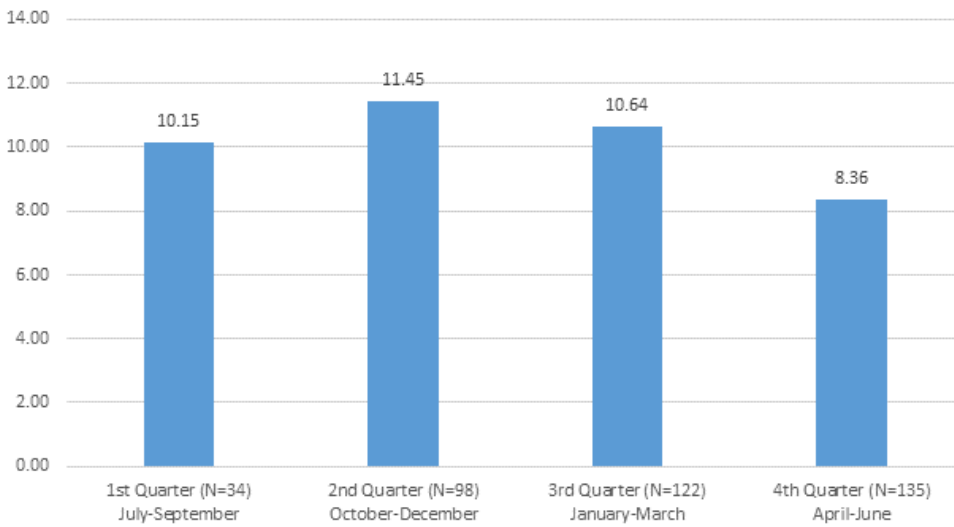


# PHQ-9: DEPRESSION SCORES

The PHQ-9 Depression Screen measures the experiences of symptoms of depression from Sheboygan County students. Evidenced by the chart below, participated students experienced a reduction of depression symptoms.



2020-2021 PATH Program PHQ-9 Averages

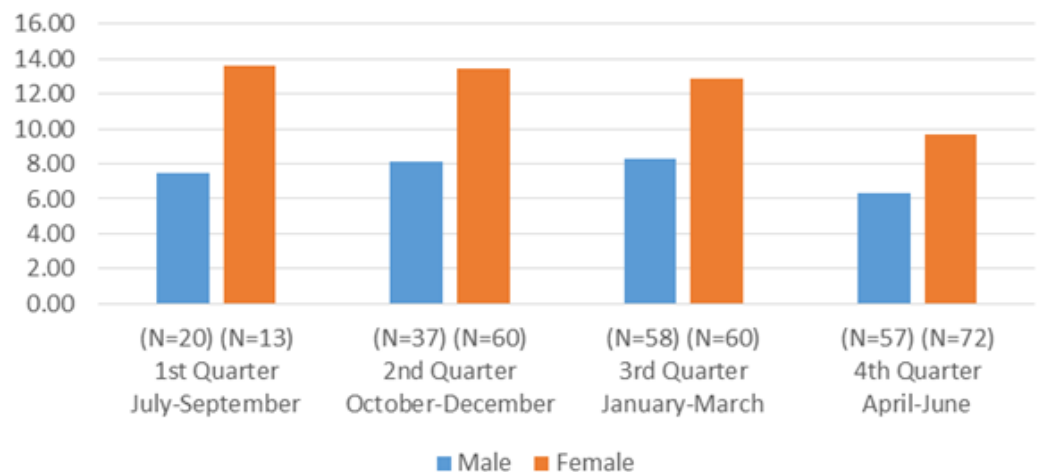


## PHQ-9: SCORES- GENDER

The PATH Program aims to be inclusive of all individuals. With regard to gender, the sample size was not large enough in order to provide outcome data that identify as "non-binary" or "prefer not to say." I



2020-2021 PHQ-9 Scores  
Gender





# ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE (ACE)



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include a range of experiences that can lead to trauma and toxic stress - ultimately impacting children’s brain development and physical, social, mental, emotional, and behavioral health and wellbeing. Providing mental health treatment in the school system supports children who have experienced trauma and/or toxic stress through eliminating barriers in seeking care and providing on-going consistent supports that benefit the child and the community at large.

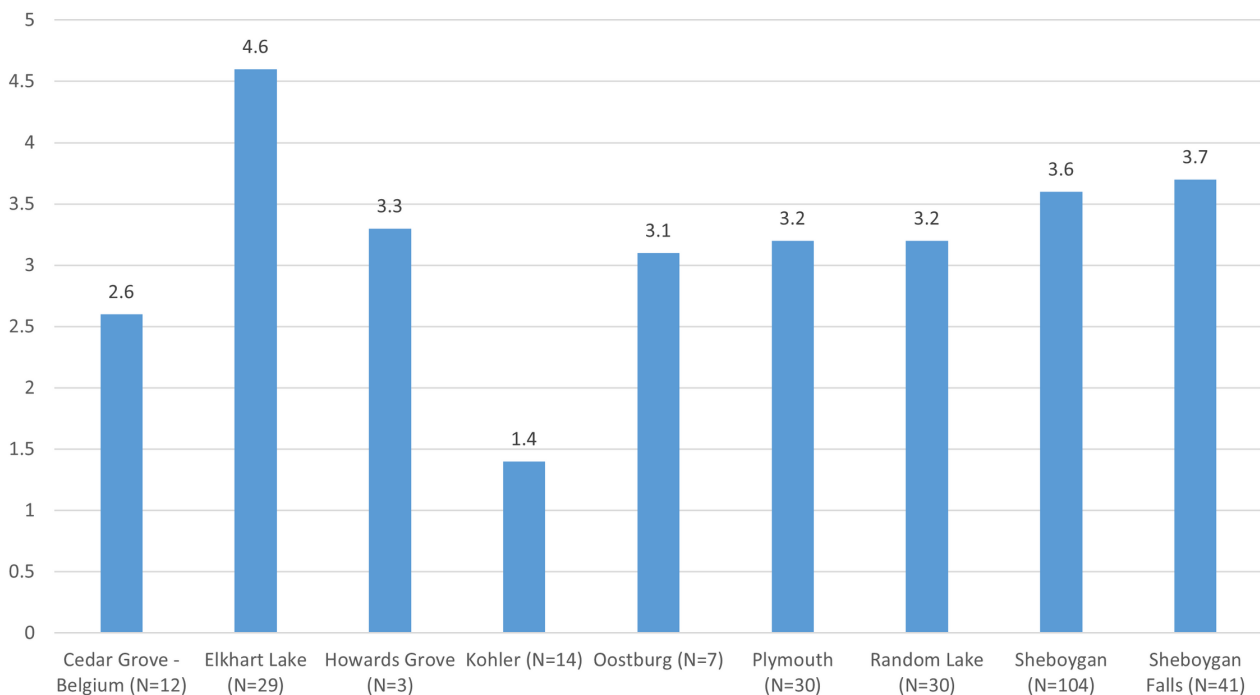
ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential.

John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHBSPH) reports thirty-four million children, nearly half of all U.S children ages 0-17, has at least one of ten ACEs, and 20 percent experienced two or more . In fact, JHBSPH also reports children with 2+ ACE scores, ages 6-17, are twice as likely to be disengaged in school.

Research out of the National Center for Biotechnology also found that children who have multiple ACEs have a major risk factor for many health conditions such as violence, mental illness, and substance use. Of the 300+ students that participated in the PATH program in Sheboygan County 2020-2021, an average ACE score of 3.5 is reported.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) has a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity. The PATH Program aims to create neighborhoods, communities, and a Sheboygan in which every child can thrive.

2020-2021 Average ACE Score by School District



## CO-OCCURRANCE OF ACES

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ACEs also tend to occur in clusters, such that people who experienced at least one ACE are likely to have experienced multiple ACEs in childhood. Of Wisconsin adults with at least one ACE, 61% have two or more ACEs. As the figure below shows, over a quarter of those who have any ACEs have four or more.

From:  
[https://media.wcwpds.wisc.edu/preservice/human\\_behavior/docs/WisconsinACEs.pdf](https://media.wcwpds.wisc.edu/preservice/human_behavior/docs/WisconsinACEs.pdf)

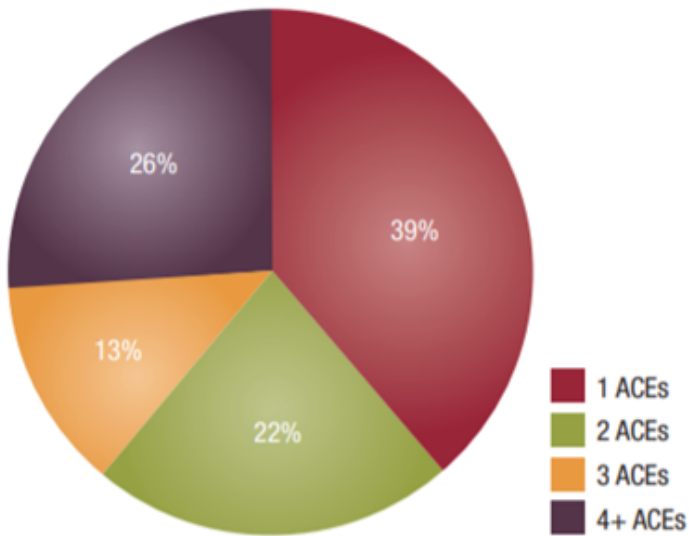
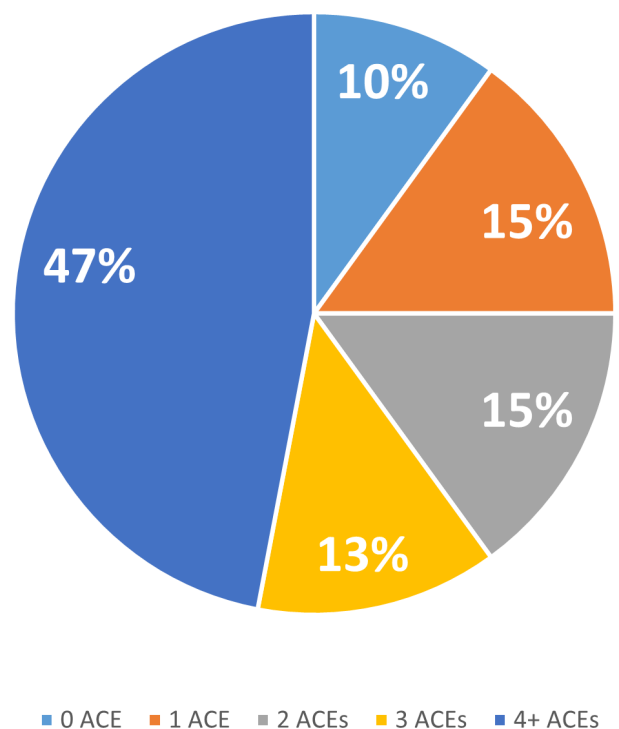


Figure 4. Distribution of ACE Scores among Those with Any ACEs

## PATH PROGRAM: CO-OCCURRANCE OF ACES

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Of Sheboygan County PATH students with at least one ACE, 75% have two or more ACEs. As the figure below shows, nearly half of those with any ACEs have four or more.



# 2020 - 2023 OUTLOOK

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## **INCREASE DAYS OF SERVICE**

Even though the PATH program has expanded exponentially, there are a number of students in each district on a waiting list to access the program. The vision for this program is to increase availability for every student in Sheboygan County that is in need of mental health support. As additional resources are invested to support the program, it is our vision that school districts with the greatest need will receive therapy sessions.

## **ADDITION OF THERAPIST TO MEET INCREASED NEED**

To help meet this need, the partner agencies, LCHC and OCT are looking to add therapists to the program. Currently, there is a local, national, and even global shortage of behavioral health professionals; therefore, the hiring process has been challenging. We continue to work tirelessly to find quality therapists who specialize working with youth.

## **ADDED DATA ASSESSMENT TOOLS**

In order to deepen the story of the impact the PATH Program has on our community, we added three assessment tools including the PROMIS (measures anxiety), the PHQ-9 (measures depression), and the Adverse Children Experience (ACE; trauma). Adding these assessments not only allowed our program to gain more insight into what the youth we serve are going through but also affords us the opportunity for building greater impact as a collective community; thus, continuing to habilitate and generate support to create opportunities for the youth we serve.

We also know that when people experience trauma, and are receiving therapy, expecting changes in academics during a short school year is not always attainable. By collecting data using these three assessment tools, it helps us measure their anxiety and depression, and are better able to show the true impact of the program.

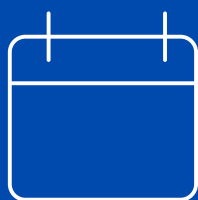
In addition to the above assessment additions, LCHC and OCT will also report on race, ethnicity, and insurance status during the 2021/2022 school year.

## **BROADEN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES PROVIDED TO SCHOOLS**

The 20/21 school year will be one like any other. While this will be a time to show our resiliency, it will also be a time where mental health services are needed - even more than ever. To help with the increased need for services, PATH is connecting with participating school districts to help meet this need, upstream, to stay head of the curve.

## **DEEPEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS/SCHOOLS/FUNDERS**

We will continue to facilitate on going provider only meetings to problems solve challenges; sustain advisory committee and work closely with current schools as well as broaden reach to schools who are not yet served; and cultivate current and future funder relationships aided by the plan to collect more comprehensive data. Rogers Behavioral Health became a welcomed partner as PATH aims to continue to strengthen the continuum of care for youth and their futures.



# IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



## Participating Sheboygan County Public School Districts:



- Cedar Grove-Belgium
- Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah
- Howards Grove
- Kohler
- Oostburg
- Plymouth
- Random Lake
- Sheboygan Area
- Sheboygan Falls
- Head Start

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL WHO HELP MAKE THIS  
COMMUNITY IMPACT INITIATIVE POSSIBLE



United Way of  
Sheboygan County

<https://www.uwofsc.org/our-impact/path/>

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