

# DATA

PROVIDING ACCESS TO HEALING

SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH  
COMMUNITY IMPACT INITIATIVE



United Way of  
Sheboygan County

# IMPACT REPORT

2021 - 2022



# A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Late last year, the U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy issued an advisory to call attention to what he described as a “youth mental health crisis.” Depression, suicidality, and other mental health challenges have been on the rise among our youth in the past decade, but Murthy believes, and recent Sheboygan County data supports, that the stressors and isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated an already alarming situation.

Providing Access To Healing (PATH) aims to alleviate the pressure this puts on schools and families while improving mental health for the youth in our community. During the 21/22 school year, over 550 students received therapy services through PATH. This brings the total number of students served to more than 1,900 since the program's inception in 2015! 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 96% of PATH students made progress towards their treatment goals last year and 91% felt better about life after starting PATH, hearing about the initiative from those who have benefited is much more meaningful. Of PATH, a Sheboygan Area School District (SASD) high school student, said, “Being able to talk through my thoughts and feelings... in a good healthy way helped a lot with my thinking, how I perceive things and how I look at my life. It made me see my worth and I couldn't be more grateful I'm alive.” Carla Vorpahl, a dedicated 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 to be celebrated, 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 therapists, 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, 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.

I 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 had the privilege of working with. Therefore, I am confident we will continue to make Sheboygan County proud.

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

With so much gratitude,

*Brianna Heusterberg*



**BRIANNA HEUSTERBERG**  
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# WHY IS SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH IMPORTANT?

**Mental health disorders are the leading cause of disability in children and adolescents.** According to NAMI, one in six U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year, and half of all mental health conditions begin by age 14. Undiagnosed, untreated, or inadequately treated mental disorders can significantly interfere with a student's ability to learn, grow, and develop. Since children spend much of their productive time in educational settings, schools offer a unique opportunity for early identification, prevention, and interventions that serve students where they already are. Research supports the notion that students are more likely to receive mental health supports if they are offered at school.

"This data echos a cry for help," said CDC Acting Principal Deputy Director Debra Houry, M.D., M.P.H. "The COVID-19 pandemic has created traumatic stressors that have the potential to further erode students' mental wellbeing. Our research shows that surrounding youth with the proper support can reverse these trends and help our youth now and in the future."

**If we pair these findings with the number of school-aged children in Sheboygan County, that would mean 3,245 youth in our community are struggling with a mental health disorder in any given year. Sadly, 44% (1,428 youth) will NOT receive mental health treatment, leaving thousands in our community to be undiagnosed and thus untreated.**

Enthusiastically, previous research has demonstrated that supportive relationships are a key protective factor against poor mental health in children, particularly amongst those who have experienced adversity. PATH has worked hard since the inception of the program in 2015 to serve more than 1,900 youth and works collaboratively to target, treat, and help youth experiencing mental health concerns including but not limited to trauma, depression, and anxiety. Understanding the importance of early intervention to reduce long-term consequences of mental health disorders, PATH serves youth as young as 3 years to 18 years of age.

## **School connectedness provided critical protection for students during COVID-19**

According to a 2021 CDC study: Findings also highlight that a sense of being cared for, supported, and belonging at school – called "school connectedness" – had an important effect on students during a time of severe disruption. Youth who felt connected to adults and peers at school were significantly less likely to report persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness (35% vs. 53%); that they seriously considered attempting suicide (14% vs. 26%); or attempted suicide (6% vs. 12%). However, fewer than half (47%) of youth reported feeling close to people at school during the pandemic. PATH creates opportunities to increase school connectedness and improve the lives of youth.

Source:

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/p0331-youth-mental-health-covid19.html#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20new%20data, hopeless%20during%20the%20past%20year>

*We all have a role to play in helping reduce symptoms that are adversely affecting the lives of youth. Together we can help students feel safe, supported, and increase their overall life satisfaction, allowing them to better reach their full potential.*

*Every partner, donor, and community member plays a role in the success of the children in this community - after all, it takes a village.*

# PATH: BRIEF OVERVIEW

United Way of Sheboygan County's Providing Access To Healing (PATH) is a school-based mental health community impact initiative that places licensed clinicians into the school setting to increase access to mental health care for students throughout Sheboygan County by removing financial and geographical barriers. PATH provides treatment and coping skills for students (3k-12) with common issues such as depression, anxiety, ADHD, and relationship stressors among other emotional and behavioral challenges.

PATH works to actively engage parents, community mental health providers, and school personnel in the lives of children and adolescents. There are definitive positives to offering these therapeutic mental health services in settings where children spend much of their day. In school-based settings, families, educators, and therapists are all focused on specific positive outcomes that improve the quality of life for the children and youth in their care. These services become embedded within an adaptive infrastructure of processes and relationships at the community level and support healthy pathways for youth and their families.

PATH has been operating in Sheboygan County for seven years with significant positive outcomes. In 2021/2022, PATH partners provided treatment and coping skills for students and their families struggling with mental health issues, among other emotional and behavioral challenges common to students today. The program launched during the 2015/2016 school year as a small pilot and is now servicing all (9) public school districts located in Sheboygan County as well as the Sheboygan County Head Start and Sheboygan Christian Schools.

For more information on how PATH is helping to address the mental health needs of youth in Sheboygan County, scan the code or visit the link below. PATH not only provides direct services but also connects youth and families to other community resource, narrowing the gap and increasing access to care.

SCAN ME



<https://www.uwofsc.org/news-and-events/news/may-blog-mental-health-awareness-month/>



2022 Sheboygan County Chamber Gala: Working Together Nomination

# 21/22 PROGRAM PARTNERS

**LAKESHORE COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE (LCHC)** Provider & Educational & Referral Services

**MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA LAKESHORE**  
Community Partner | Resource, Referral, & Educational Services

**OZAUKEE COMMUNITY THERAPIES (OCT)**  
Provider & Educational & Referral Services

**ROGER'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**  
Community & Funding Partner | Education & Referral Services

**PARTICIPATING SHEBOYGAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS:**

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

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

Community & Funding Partner | Referral Services

**UNITED WAY OF SHEBOYGAN COUNTY (UWSC)**

Funding Partner | Program Developer & Facilitator

## MEET OUR THERAPISTS

Lakeshore Community Health Care (LCHC)



[lakeshorechc.org/schoolmentalhealth](https://lakeshorechc.org/schoolmentalhealth)

Ozaukee Community Therapies (OCT)



[ozaukeecommunitytherapies.com/therapists.html](https://ozaukeecommunitytherapies.com/therapists.html)

## MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

During the 21/22 school year, 11 + full-time equivalent (FTE) therapists from LCHC and OCT provided services to partnered Sheboygan County school districts and Sheboygan County Head Start.

To meet the growing need, PATH looks to hire additional therapists for the 22/23 school year.

## SESSIONS PROVIDED

During the 21/22 school year, PATH provided 8,342 therapy sessions to students in Sheboygan County.

8,342



551

## STUDENTS SERVED

551 students received therapy services through PATH in 21/22, an increase of 11% from the previous school year. This *brings the total number of students served to more than 1,900* since the program's inception in 2015!

# DATA MEASUREMENT TOOLS

## ✓ 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)

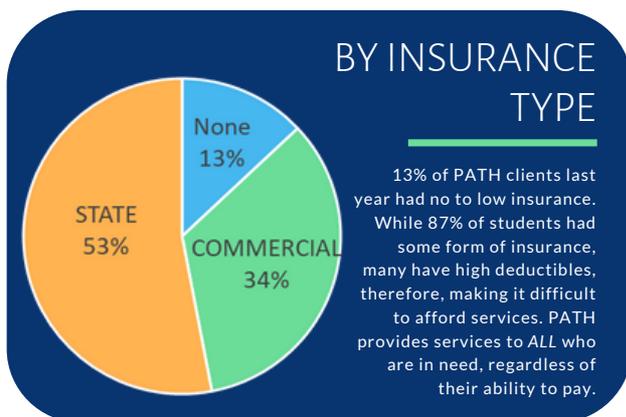
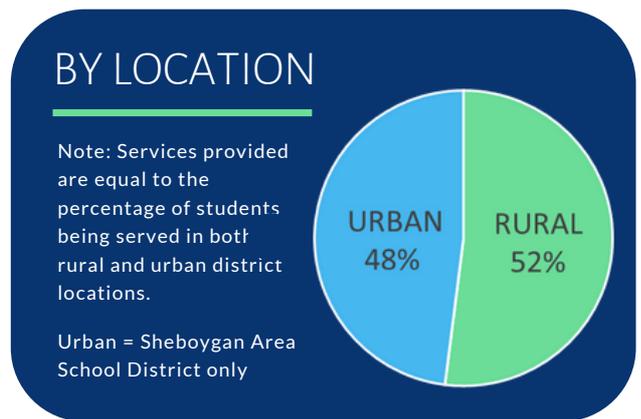
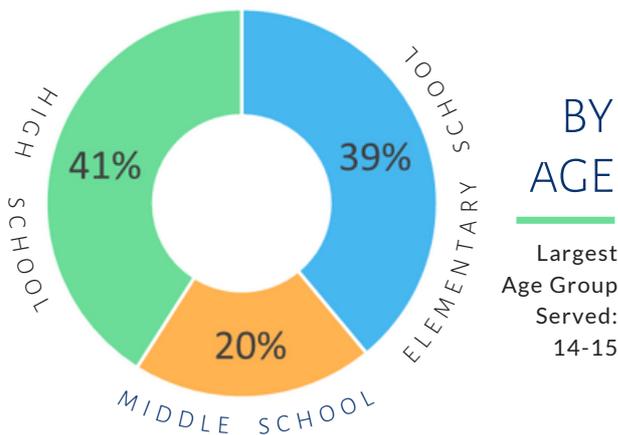
## ✓ PHQ-9 (MEASURES DEPRESSION)

## ✓ ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERINECE SURVEY (ACES)

## ✓ STUDENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SELF-REPORT SURVEY

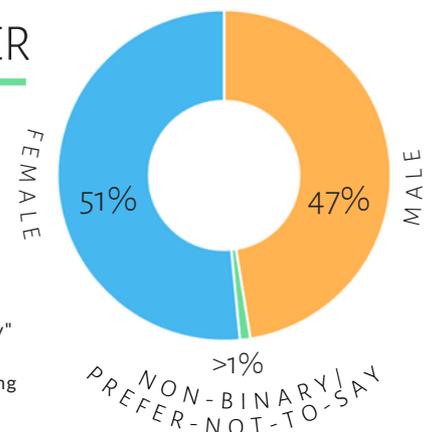


# POPULATION SERVED



## BY GENDER

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



# ACADEMICS + BEHAVIOR



**Almost 50%**

of the students enrolled in PATH showed improvement in their academic performance.

During the 21/22 school year, a third of PATH clients had fewer behavioral referrals and increased attendance (in comparison to 12 months prior to entering PATH).



**SHE'S REALLY SUPER NICE AND VERY RESPECTFUL AND UNDERSTANDING. I'VE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE MY GOALS.**

**-PATH STUDENT**

**IT'S GREAT JUST HAVING THAT PERSON TO TALK TO AND SOMEONE WHO TRULY LISTENS. PLUS HAVING A PERSON TO HELP ME UNDERSTAND WHAT ARE HELPFULL AND/OR UNHELPFUL WAYS TO DEAL WITH MY EMOTIONS.**

**-PATH STUDENT**

## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SATISFACTION SURVEY

Questions:	Clients Who Agree (by percentage):
My counselor treated me with respect.	99%
My counselor was caring and understanding.	99%
I have made progress on my goals.	96%
I learned to better communicate my thoughts + feelings.	93%
I feel better about life now than before I started PATH.	91%
I think PATH is helping me do better in school.	92%
I think PATH is helping me with my family.	88%
I think PATH is helping me with my friends.	88%
I would refer someone to PATH if they needed help.	96%
If I need help in the future, I'd go back to my PATH counselor.	95%

# PREVALENCE OF ANXIETY AMONG ADOLESCENTS

According to the National Institute of Health, nearly **1 in 3** of all adolescents ages 13 to 18 will experience an anxiety disorder. These numbers have been rising steadily; between 2007 and 2012, anxiety disorders in children and teens went up 20%. The rate of hospital admissions for suicidal teenagers have doubled over the past decade.

## What's causing the rise of severe anxiety in teenagers? How did we get here?

While there is uncertainty on the cause of the continued rise of severe anxiety, there are a number of factors that could be contributing. In addition to genetics, brain chemistry, personality, and life events, consider the following:

- **High expectations and pressure to succeed.** Between standardized testing and a culture of achievement, today's youth can feel pressure to succeed in ways previous generations did not. A survey done every year by Higher Education Research asks incoming college freshmen if they feel overwhelmed by all they have to do. In 2016, 41% of students said "yes," compared to 28% in 2000 and 18% in 1985.
- **A world that feels scary and threatening.** There is an increase in school violence, with drills and lockdowns in schools. There are shootings in public places. There have been terrorist attacks in the US and around the world taking many lives. From just watching or reading the news, it is reasonable for anyone to feel afraid in public spaces that previously would have felt safe.
- **Social media.** Today's children and teens are constantly connected to social media. It's not surprising that their self-esteem —and worldview— becomes connected to responses to social media posts. It's hard for them not to compare their life and social connections to what they see others posting on social media.

There are also some children who have unexpected and disproportionate reactions to normal developmental experiences like going to school, going to a party, going to a sleepover or going to camp; children who worry excessively about everyday life activities. This often starts in the years right before puberty. If the worry is practiced and reinforced, it has the potential to begin to interfere in children's and teen's lives.

## PROMIS Anxiety Screen

To monitor symptom reporting of anxiety, PATH utilizes the PROMIS Anxiety Screen, a tool developed to provide accurate and efficient assessment of anxiety symptoms.

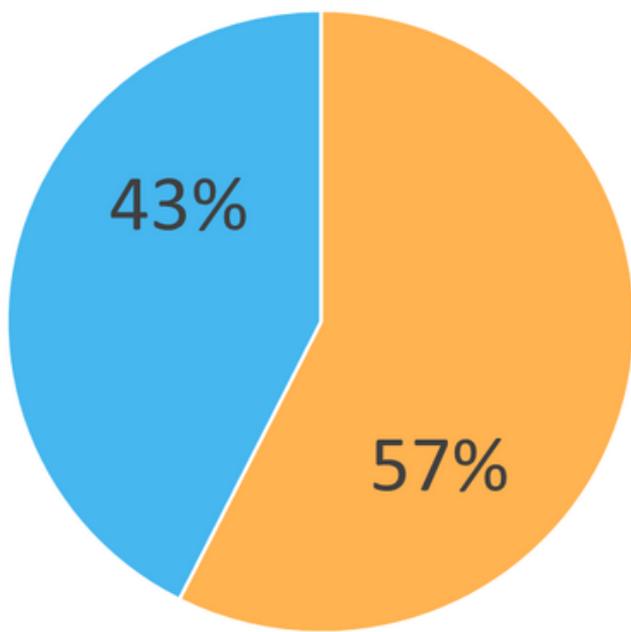
Source: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/Anxiety-Disorders.aspx>

BEING HEARD.  
KNOWING THERE IS  
SOMEONE WHO IS  
LISTENING TO ME AND  
HELPING ME SOLVE  
MY PROBLEMS.

-PATH STUDENT



# PROMIS: ANXIETY SCREENING



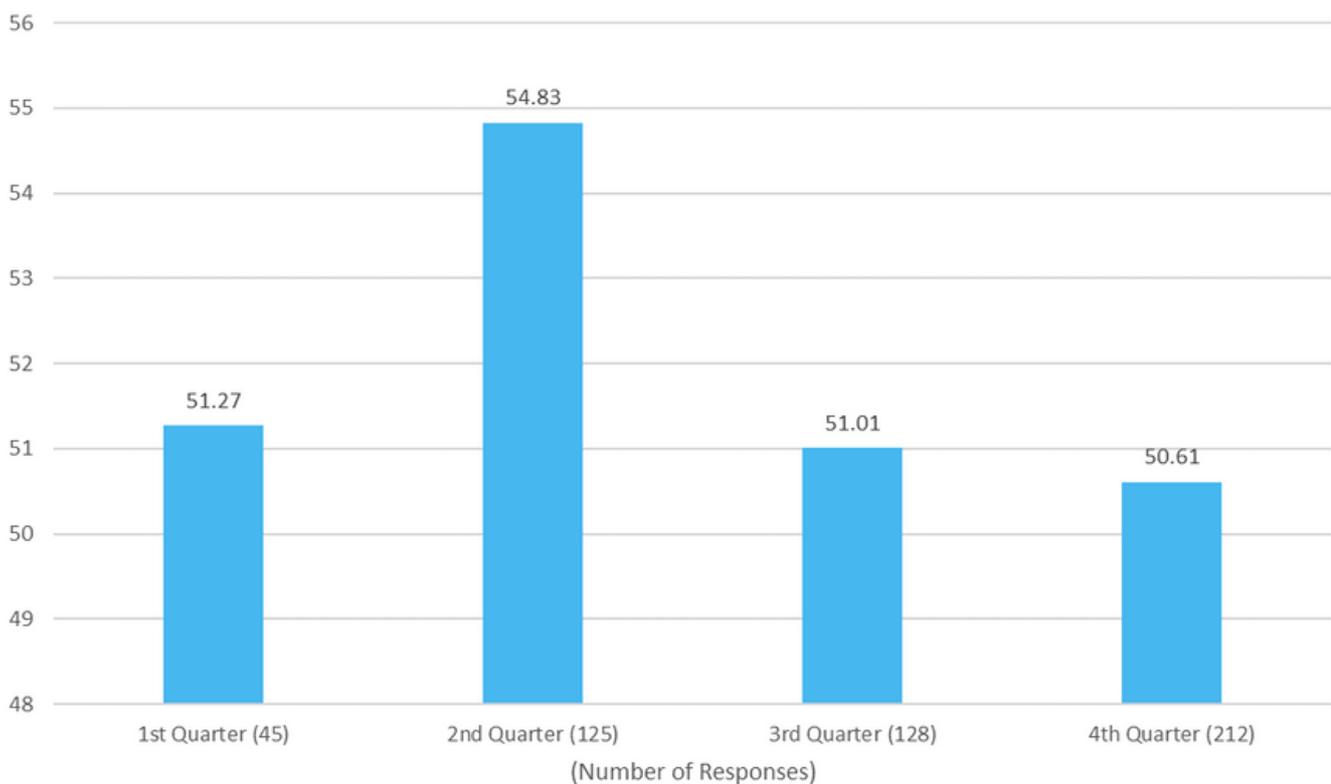
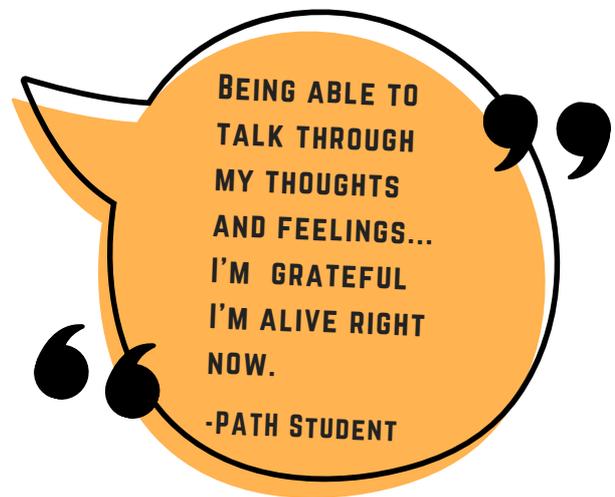
■ None or slight ■ Mild, Moderate, or Severe

In this section we will take a closer look at anxiety as it relates to PATH students.

During the 2021-2022 school year, 43% of PATH students struggled with anxiety.

## PROMIS: ANXIETY SCORES

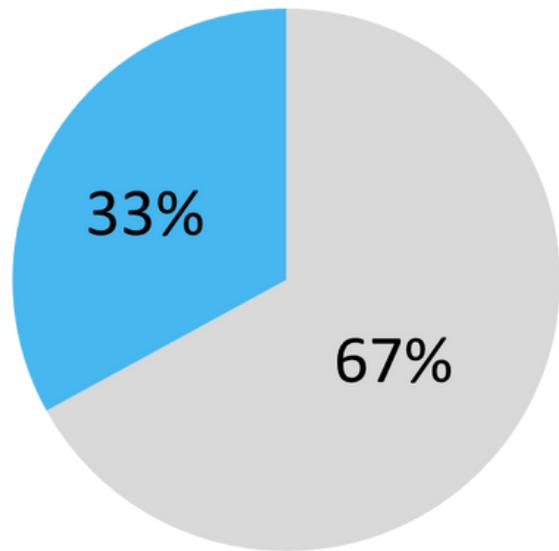
Symptom reporting of anxiety increases in the second quarter as the school year starts. By the end of the school year, PATH students experienced a reduction of overall anxiety symptoms by 8%.



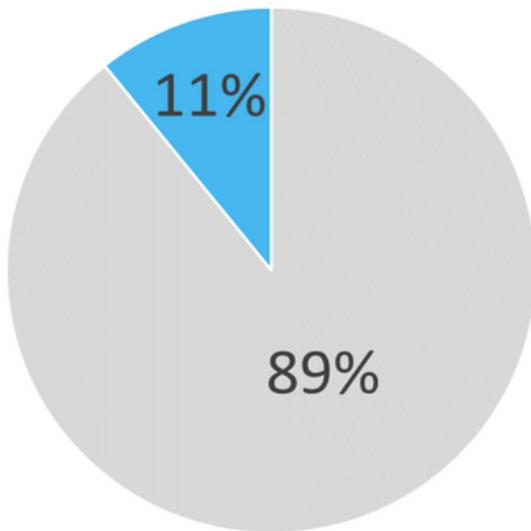
# A CLOSER LOOK AT ANXIETY

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More than a third of PATH students aged 11-17 worried about what could happen to them.



■ Never or Almost Never ■ Sometimes or More



■ Never or Almost Never ■ Sometimes or More

# ANXIETY RELATED TO SAFETY

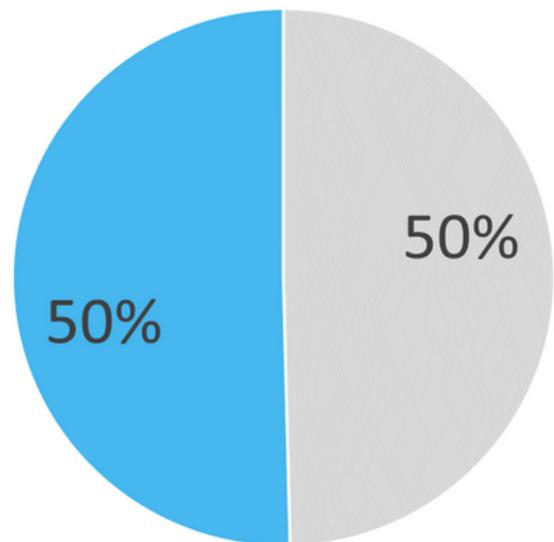
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11% of PATH students aged 11-17 worried they might die.

# ANXIETY RELATED TO STRESS + WORRY

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50% of PATH students identified that it was hard for them to relax.



■ Never or Almost Never ■ Sometimes or More



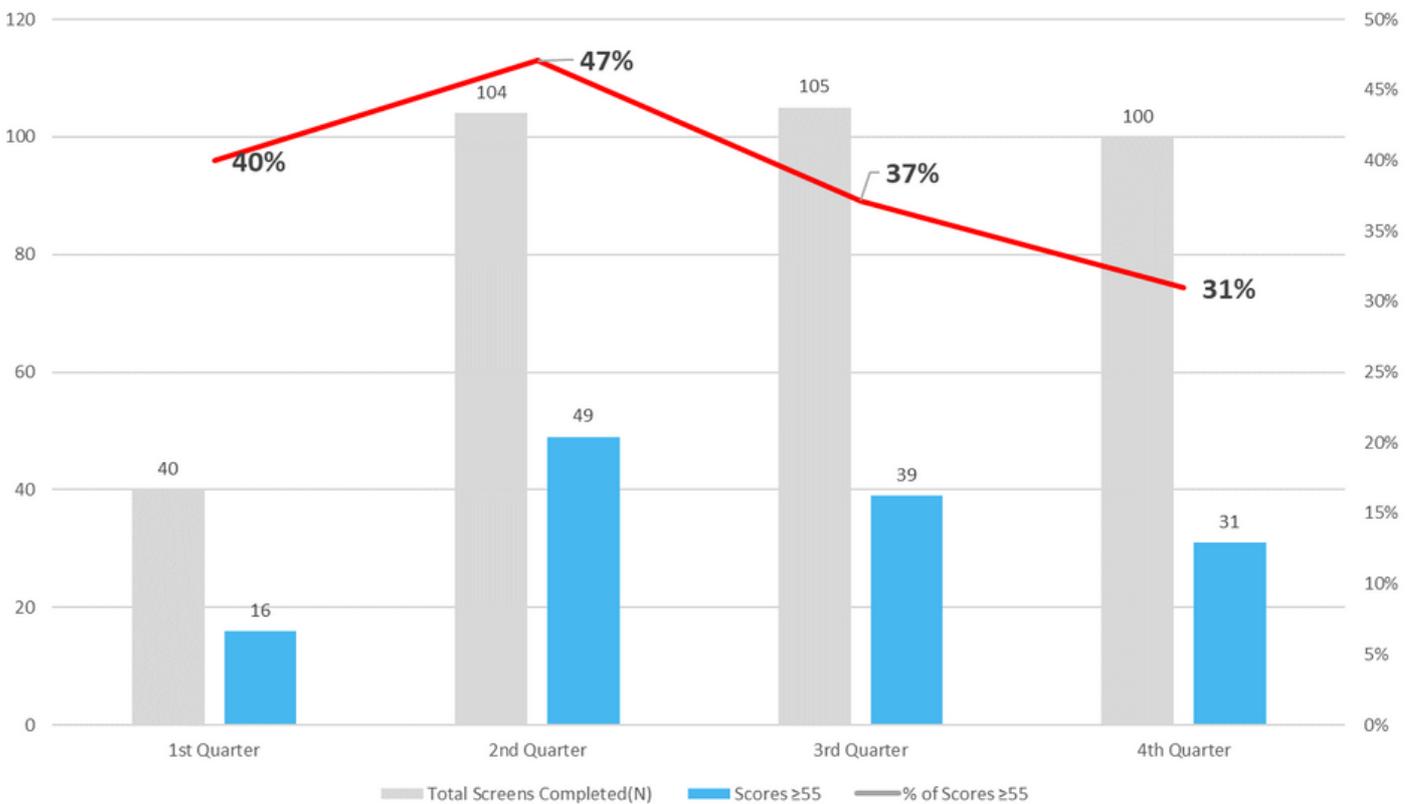
PATH therapists not only provide trusted relationships, they also help build coping skills to learn to minimize the effects anxiety can have on students' lives. Reducing the role of fear and anxiety offers growth for students to learn new behaviors, form new relationships, and experience an increase of resiliency.

# PROMIS ANXIETY:

## IMPROVEMENT OF SYMPTOMS VIA PATH

### HIGHLIGHTED: SHEBOYGAN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT (SASD)

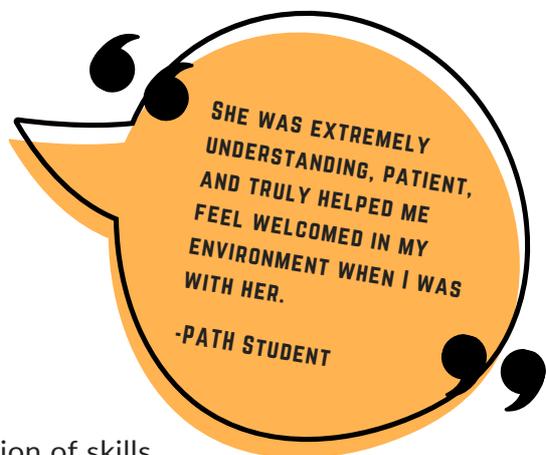
When focusing on students presenting with an anxiety issue, we are able to identify how PATH is able to help reduce symptoms of anxiety. Over the course of the school year, PATH students who reported mild to severe anxiety decreased from 47% during the peak of the 2nd quarter to 31% at the end of the 4th quarter (a decrease of 34%).



## BUILDING SCHOOL STABILITY

School-based treatments are particularly appropriate for anxiety disorders as schools provide unique opportunities for identification of anxious youth, treatment, and generalization of skills.

For example, youth may display significant anxiety in academic and social settings at school that may not be apparent or easily triggered in a more comfortable home environment with family support.



# PREVALENCE OF DEPRESSION AMONG ADOLESCENTS

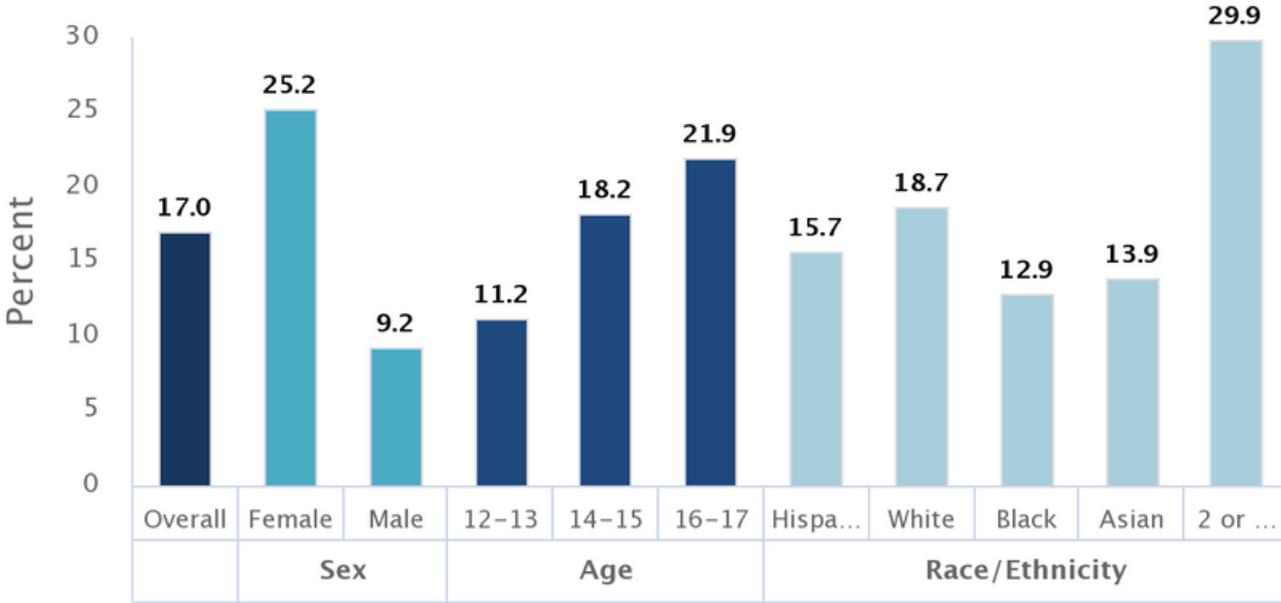
## Prevalence of major depressive episodes among U.S. adolescents in 2020:

- An estimated 4.1 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 in the United States had at least one major depressive episode. This number represented 17% of the U.S. population aged 12 to 17.
- The prevalence of major depressive episodes was higher among adolescent females (25.2%) compared to males (9.2%).
- The prevalence of major depressive episodes was highest among adolescents reporting two or more races (29.9%).

Note: during a depressive episode, a person will typically experience low or depressed mood and/or loss of interest in most activities, as well as a number of other symptoms of depression, such as tiredness, changes in appetite, feelings of worthlessness and recurrent thoughts of death.

## Past Year Prevalence of Major Depressive Episode Among U.S. Adolescents (2020)

Data Courtesy of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



## Major Depressive Episode with Impairment Among Adolescents:

- In 2020, an estimated 2.9 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 in the United States had at least one major depressive episode with severe impairment in the past year.
- This number represented 12% of the U.S. population aged 12 to 17.

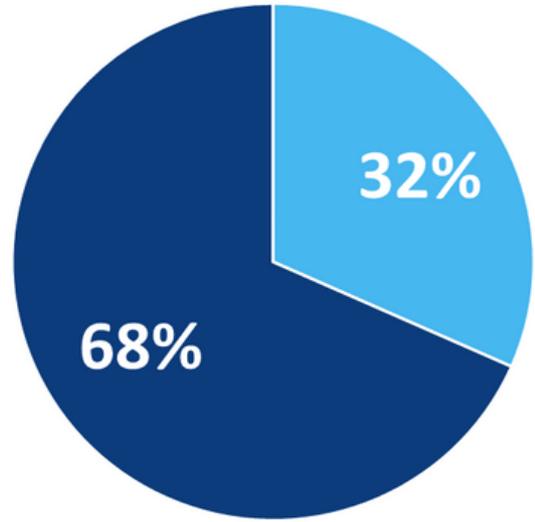
## Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)

To monitor symptom reporting of depression, PATH utilizes the PHQ-9 Screen, a tool developed to provide accurate and efficient assessment of depression symptoms.

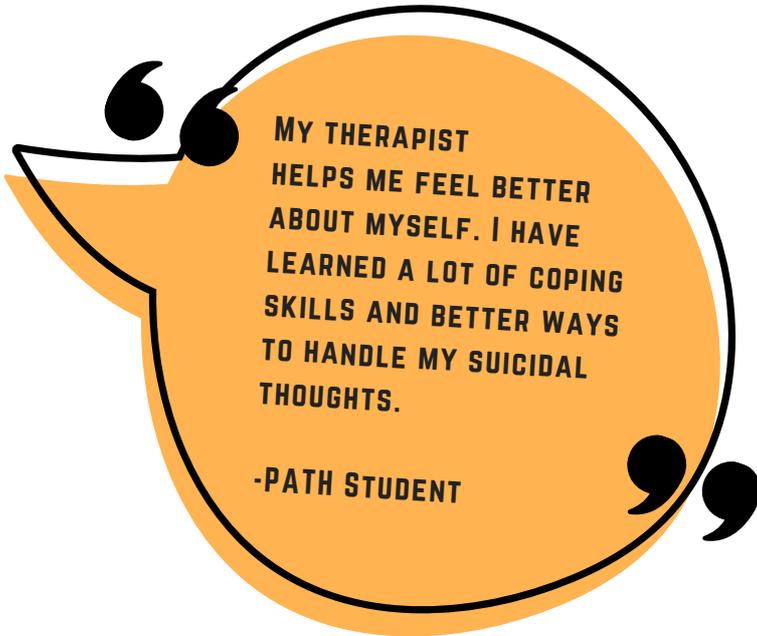
# PHQ-9: DEPRESSION SCORES

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During the 2021-2022 school year, 68% of PATH students experienced symptoms of depression.



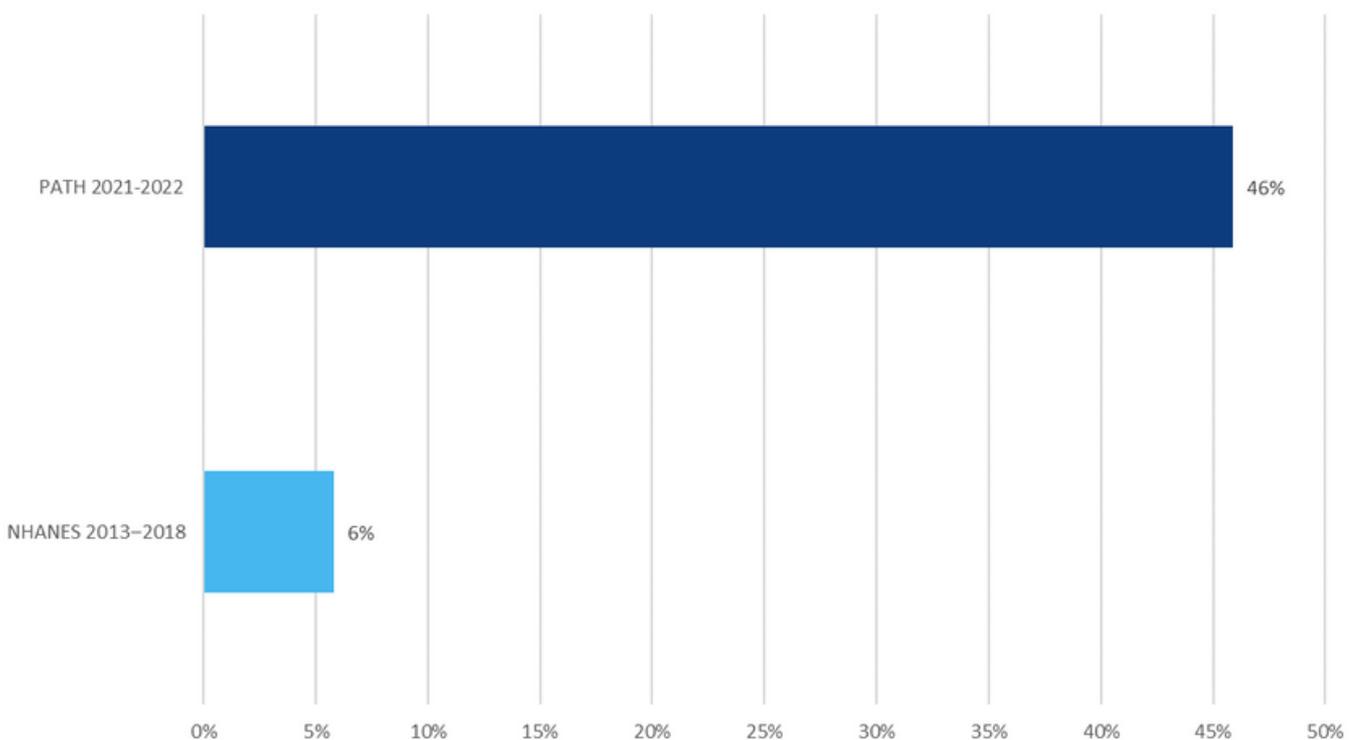
■ None-minimal ■ Mild or Greater



## PHQ-9: DEPRESSION REPORTING

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During the 21/22 school year, PATH students who reported moderate to severe symptoms of depression (a score of 10 or more) were more than 7x that of adolescents aged 12-17 nationally (2013-2018 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey).



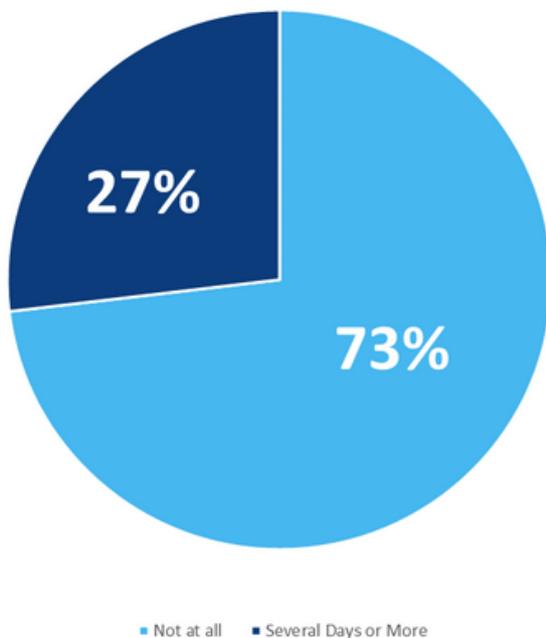
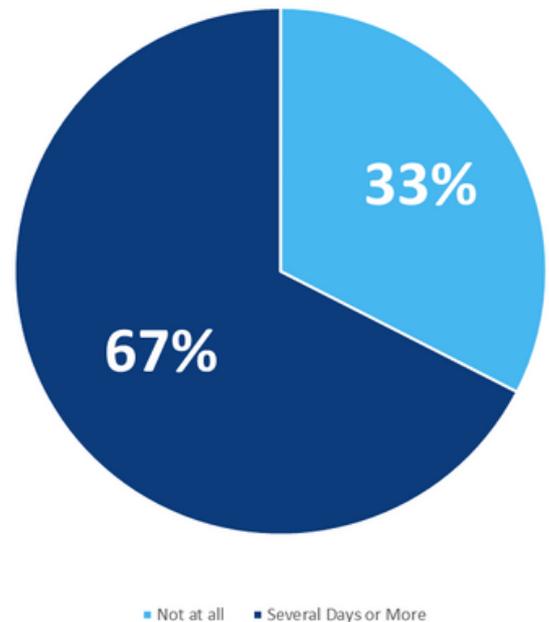
NHANES Source: [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/su/su7102a1.htm#T3\\_down](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/su/su7102a1.htm#T3_down)

# A CLOSER LOOK AT DEPRESSION:

## HIGHLIGHTED: SHEBOYGAN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT (SASD)

In SASD, 67% of youth, ages 12-17, reported several days or more of feeling down, depressed, or hopeless last year.

In comparison, in 2021, 44% of youth in the United States, ages 12-17, reported they persistently felt sad or hopeless.



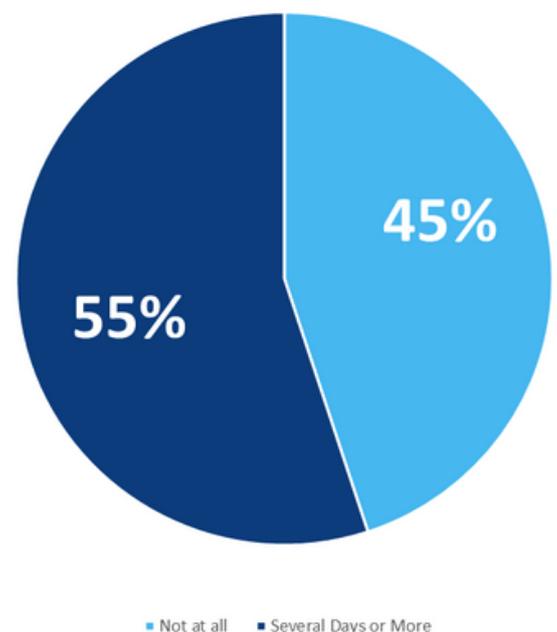
## THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE:

Based on the most recent data from Youth Risk Behaviors Survey (YRBS), in 2019, nearly 19% of high school students in the United States and 16% in the State of Wisconsin considered attempting suicide.

In 2021, 27% of SASD students (ages 12-17) reported having thoughts of suicide, being better off dead, and/or hurt themselves in some way.

## NEGATIVE SELF THOUGHTS

55% of SASD PATH Students reported feeling bad about themselves, that they are a failure, and/or that they have let themselves or their family down.



Sources:

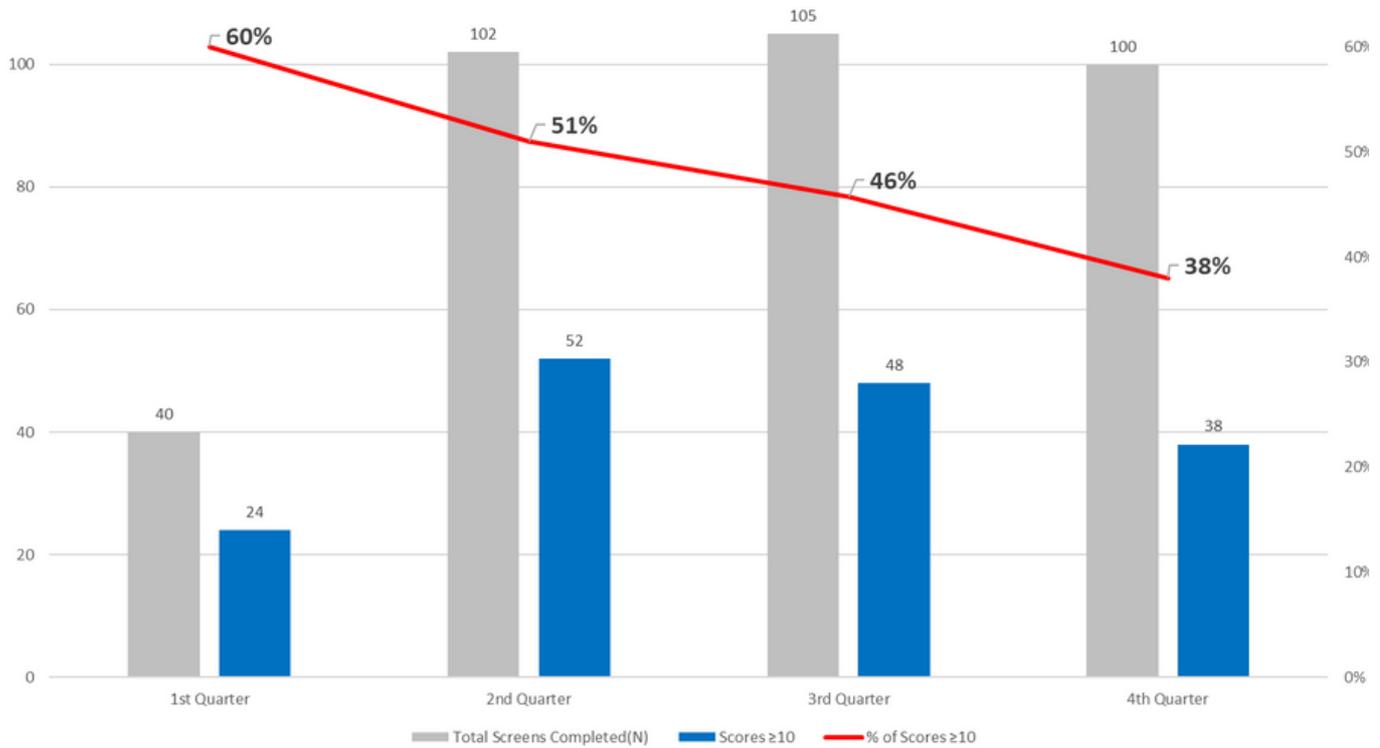
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/major-depression>

[nccd.cdc.gov](https://nccd.cdc.gov)

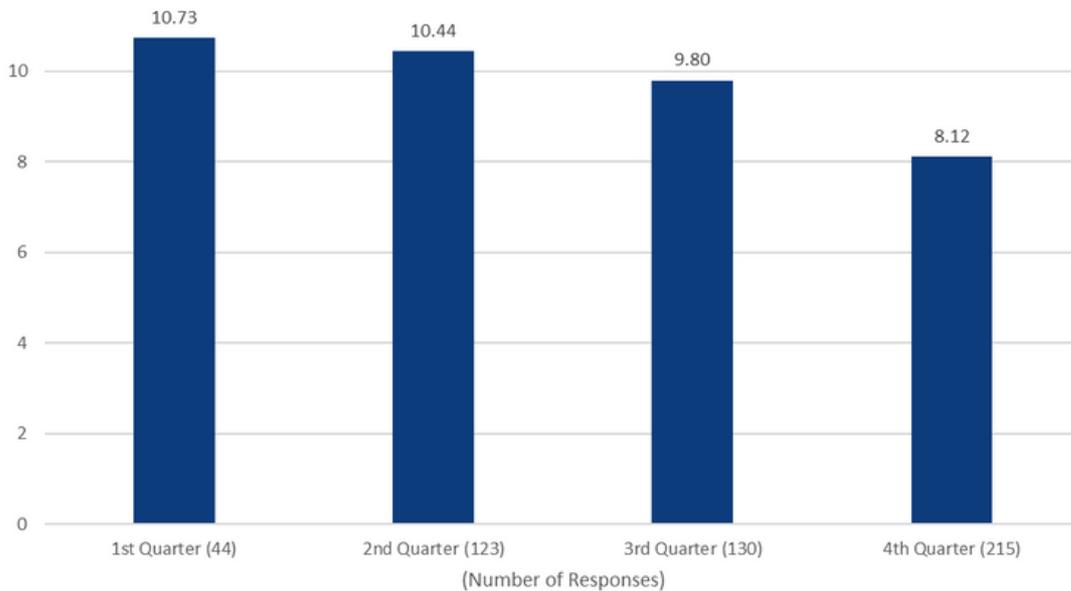
11 <https://psychcentral.com/news/teenage-mental-health-pandemic-cdc-report>

# PHQ-9: PATH IMPROVEMENT OF SYMPTOMS

Sheboygan Area School District PATH students' rate of self-reporting moderate to severe symptoms of depression decreased from 60% during the 1st quarter to 38% in the 4th quarter; **a decrease of 37%!**



Additionally, the average PHQ-9 score decreased over time during the 2021-2022 school year. This reflects a nearly a **25% reduction** in symptoms of depression!

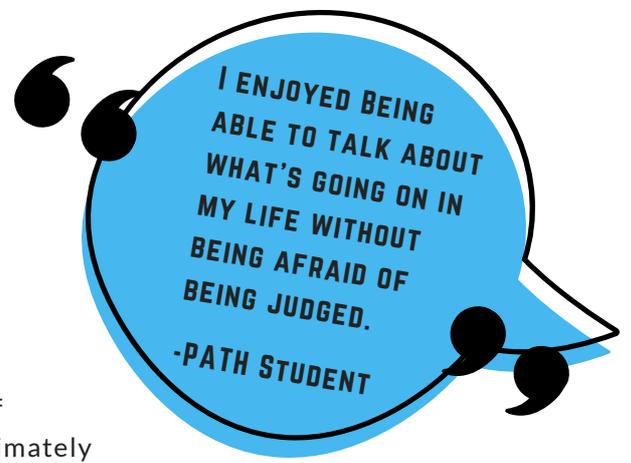


## BUILDING SCHOOL STABILITY

Childhood and teen depression contributes to behavioral and educational difficulties such as school absenteeism, poor educational attainment, social problems, substance misuse, and suicidality (International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards).

School-based mental health services, like PATH, promote academic engagement, healthier coping styles, and social connectedness (NAMI).

# TRAUMA: ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES



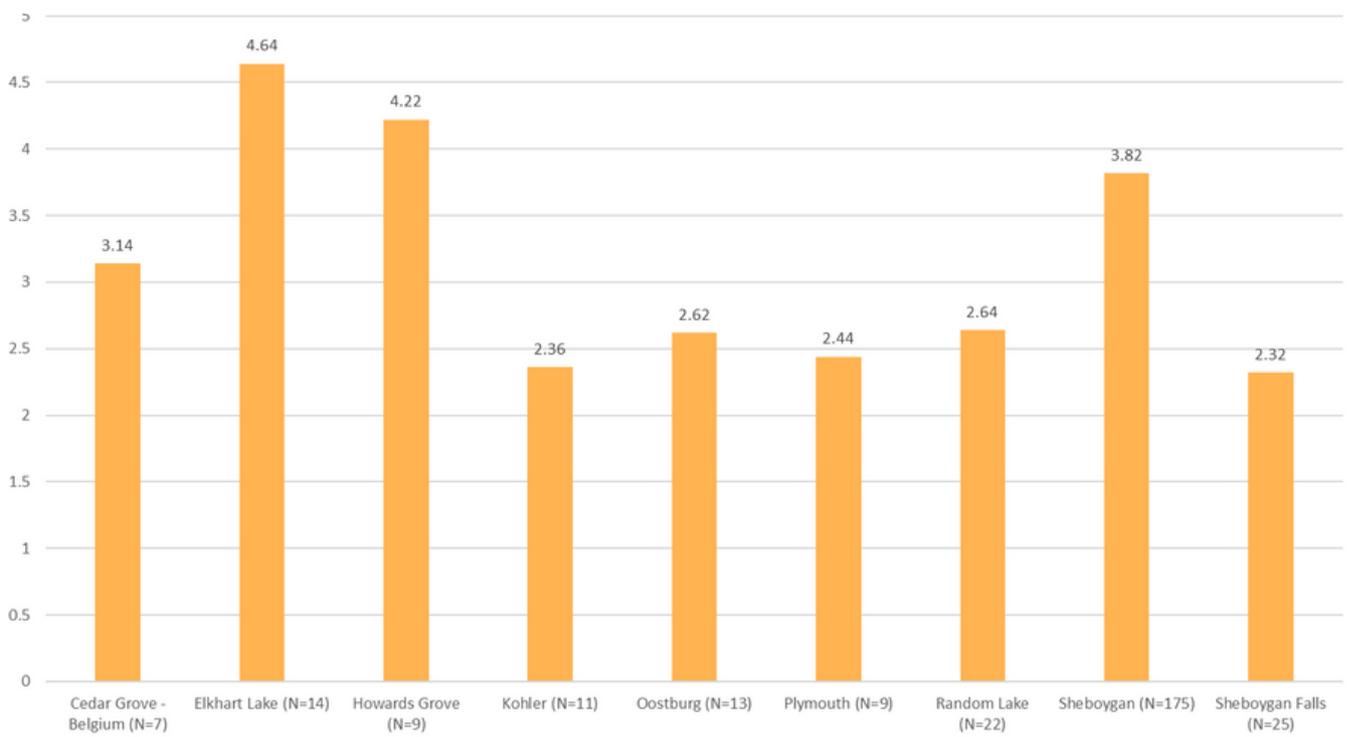
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include a range of experiences that can lead to trauma and toxic stress - ultimately impacting children's brain development and physical, social, mental, emotional, and behavioral health and wellbeing. Providing mental health treatment in the school system supports 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 34 million children, nearly half of all U.S. children ages 0-17, have at least one of ten ACEs, and 20 percent experienced two or more ACEs. In fact, JHBSPH also reports children, ages 6-17, with 2+ ACE scores are **twice as likely to be disengaged in school**. Currently, **74% of PATH students experienced two or more ACEs**, over four times the rate of all U.S. children according to JHBSPH.

Research out of the National Center for Biotechnology also found that children who have multiple ACEs are at greater risk for many health conditions such as violence, mental illness, and substance use. Of the 550+ students that participated in the PATH program in Sheboygan County 2021-2022, an average ACE score of **3.2** is reported.

ACEs have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity. PATH aims to create neighborhoods, communities, and a Sheboygan County in which every child can thrive.



Average ACE scores across school districts in the PATH Program. The number of surveys received may not be statistically significant; however, it offers a snapshot of a community's experience.

# ACES- WHY DO THEY MATTER?

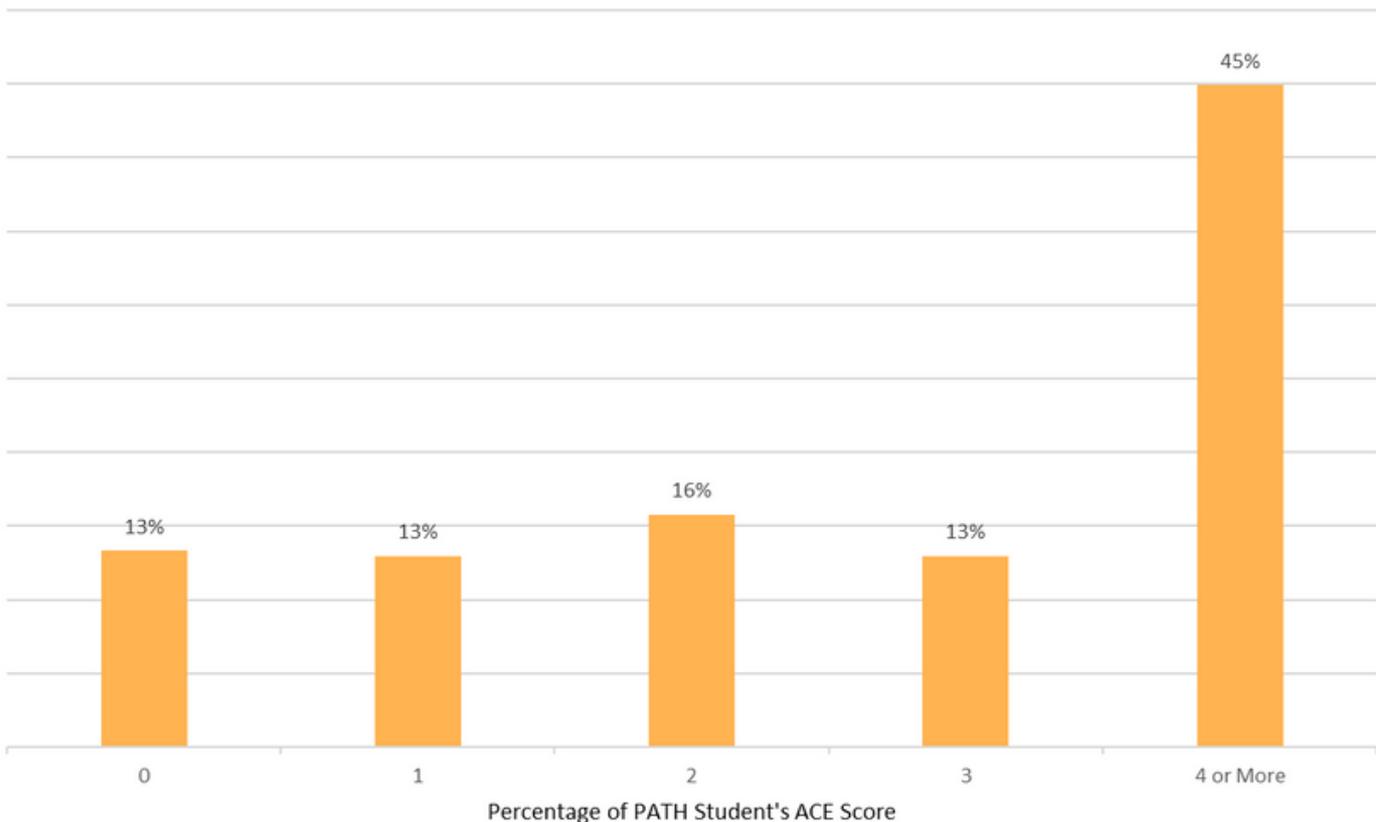
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic events that may have a lasting impact on children's health and well-being. Early experiences have a broad and profound impact on an individual's development and subsequent emotional, cognitive, social, and biological functioning.

The relationship between ACEs and health was first described in a 1998 study, which found a higher number of adverse childhood experiences was associated with a higher number of risk factors for leading causes of death in adults. A recent study found that adults with four or more ACEs (compared to adults with none) are associated with a number of adverse health outcomes including:

- Drug abuse and interpersonal and self-directed violence (very strong associations).
- Sexual risk-taking behaviors, poor mental health, and alcohol abuse (strong associations).
- Smoking, heavy alcohol use, poor self-rated health, cancer, heart disease, and respiratory disease (moderate associations).
- Physical inactivity, overweight or obesity, and diabetes (weak or modest associations).

There are also socioeconomic challenges associated with ACEs including not graduating from high school, being unemployed, and lacking health insurance. These negative experiences place a great economic burden on families, communities, and society, costing an estimated **\$748 billion** in North America.

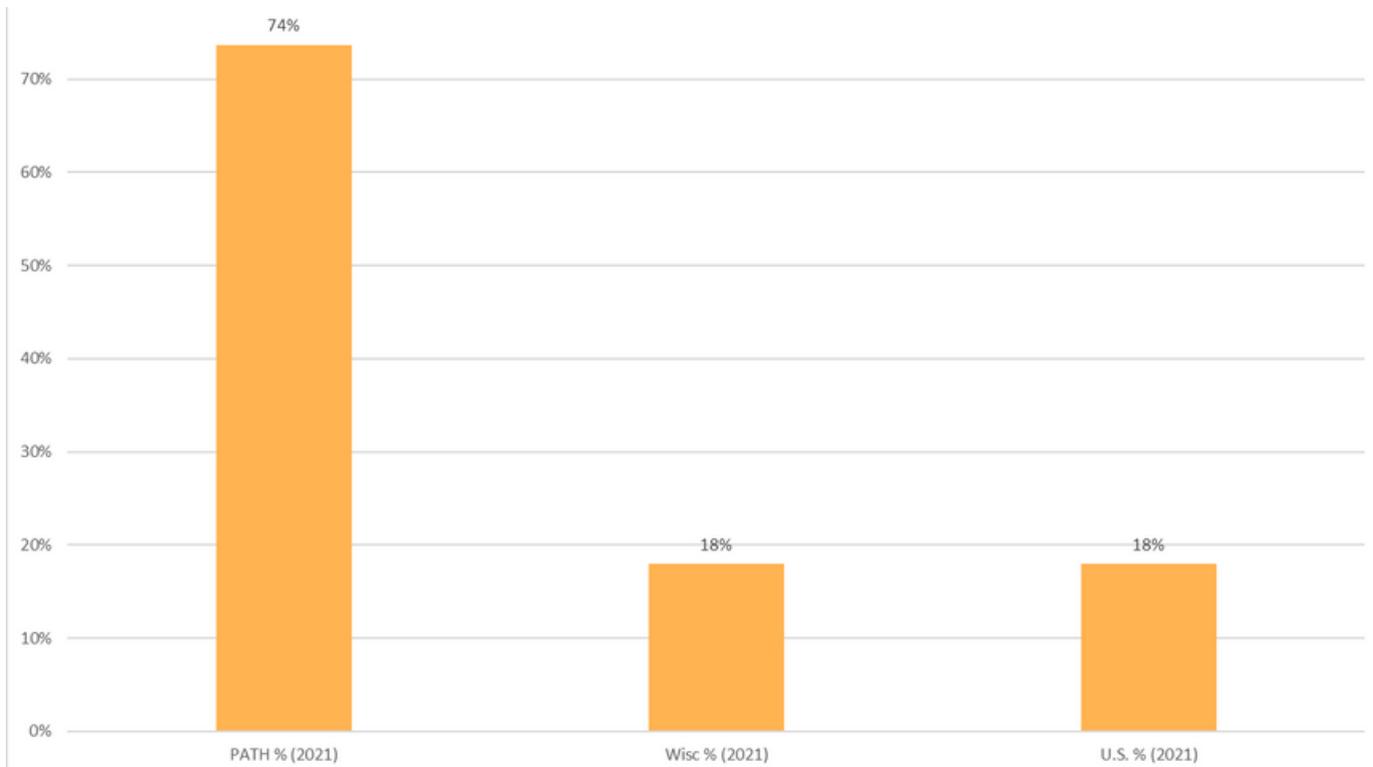
The below chart illustrates the prevalence of adversity in students in PATH is high and deserves pause for thought. Nearly **45%** of PATH students experience 4 or more ACEs.



Source: [https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/ACEs\\_8/state/U.S](https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/ACEs_8/state/U.S)

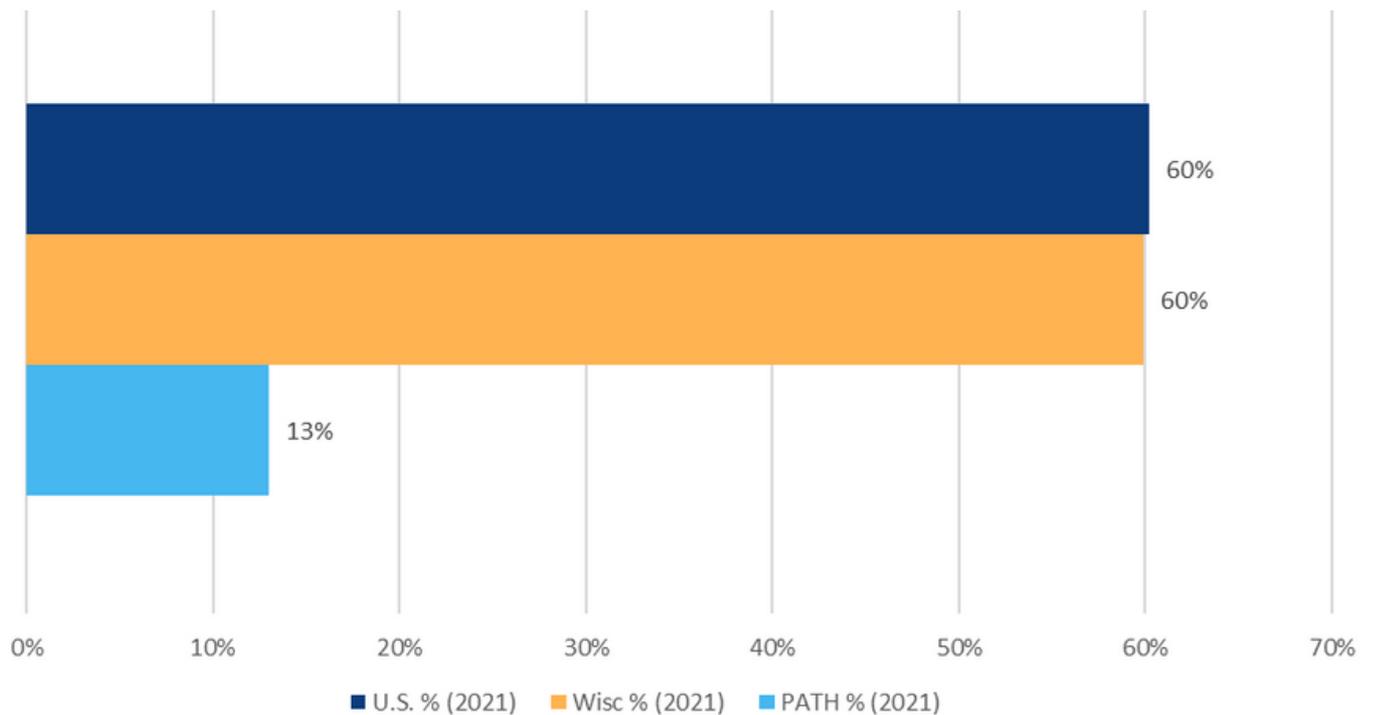
# ACES- PREVELENC

PATH is able to compare 2021 data with the rates of Wisconsin (2019-2020) and the United States (2019-2020) percentage of children. Looking closely, the 2021-2022 PATH Program reflects a rate of **74% of students who reported two or more ACEs.**



<http://statehealthcompare.shadac.org/rank/243/percent-of-children-with-adverse-childhood-experiences-aces-by-total#1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34,35,36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47,48,49,50>

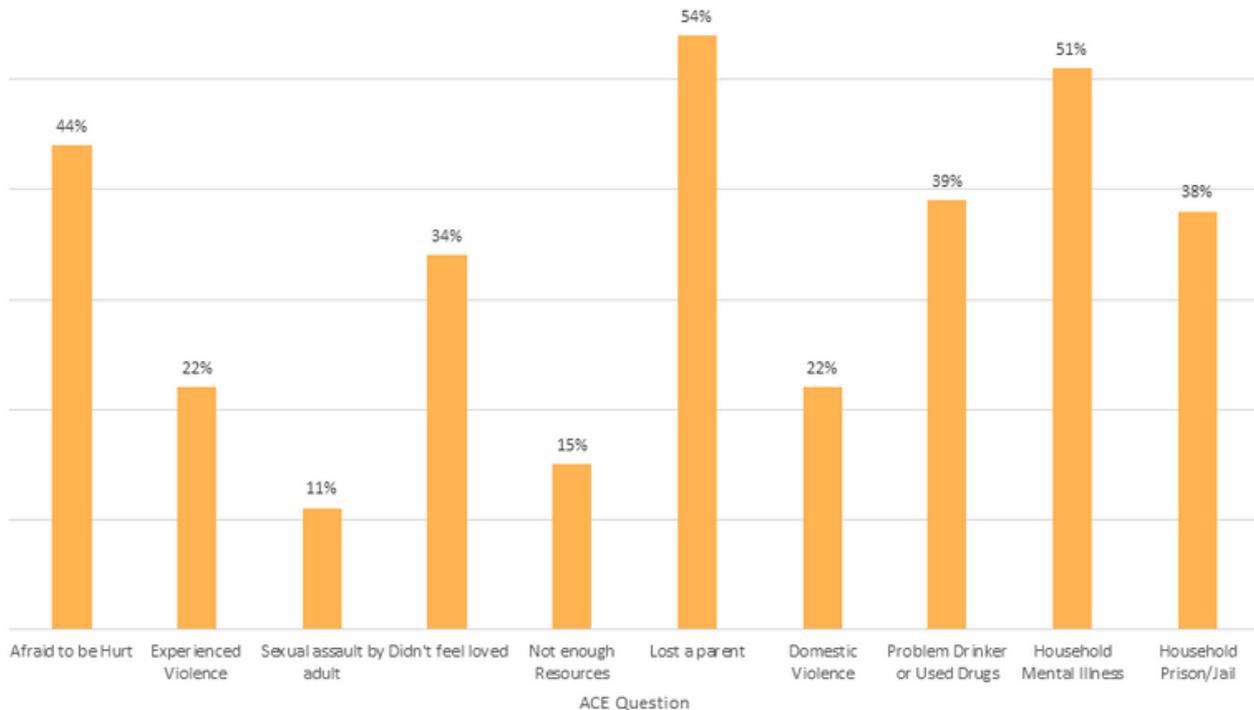
When looking at reported ACE responses of No ACEs, the PATH Program had 13% compared to the National and Wisconsin averages of 60%.



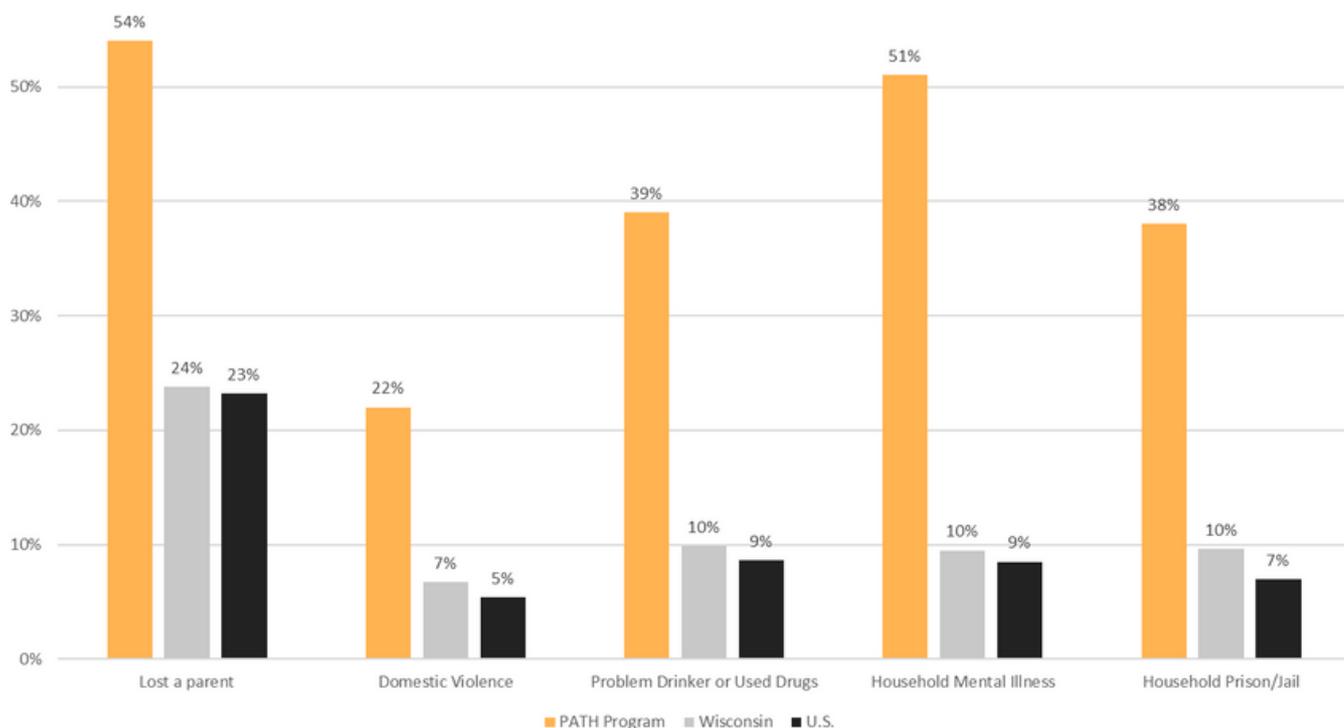
<http://statehealthcompare.shadac.org/rank/243/percent-of-children-with-adverse-childhood-experiences-aces-by-total#1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34,35,36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47,48,49,50>

# ACES- PREVALENCE

When we break down each question on the ACE Survey, we can identify prevalence of experiences for PATH students. Below is another chart reflecting the percentage of students who identified "yes" to an ACE question. As we can observe, 44% of PATH students identified feeling afraid to be hurt in their home; 54% lost a parent due to divorce, death, or abandonment; and 39% of students identified a member of their household experiencing problems with alcohol or drug use. Students in PATH experienced violence by family at two times the rate than the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) National data (11% compared to 22% of PATH students).



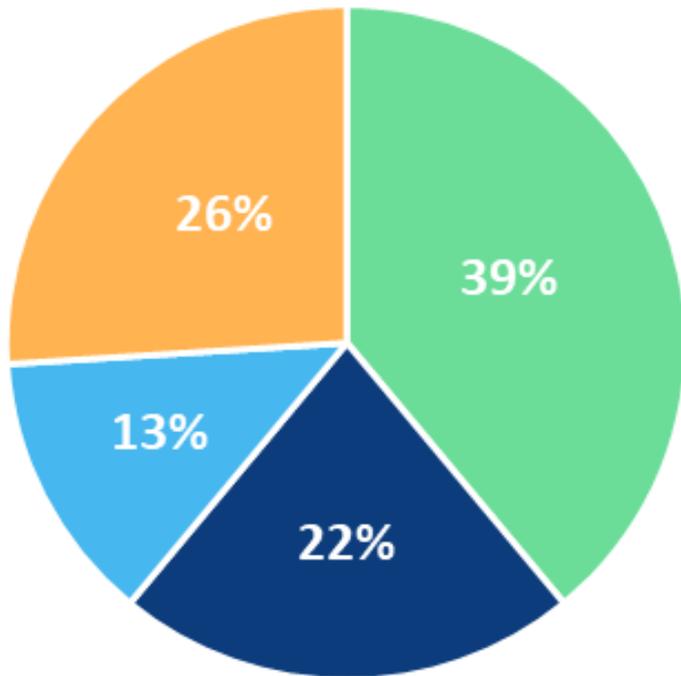
PATH students report an experience rate higher than Wisconsin and the United States. PATH students reporting a loss of a parent due to divorce, death, or abandonment is over two times greater than Wisconsin or the United States.



Source: [https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/ACEs\\_8/state/WI](https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/ACEs_8/state/WI)

PATH students reporting a family member who experiences depression, lives with a mental illness, or a household member who attempted suicide is more than five times the rates of Wisconsin or the United States.

# CO-OCCURRANCE OF ACES



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 on the left shows, more than a quarter of those who have any ACEs have four or more.

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

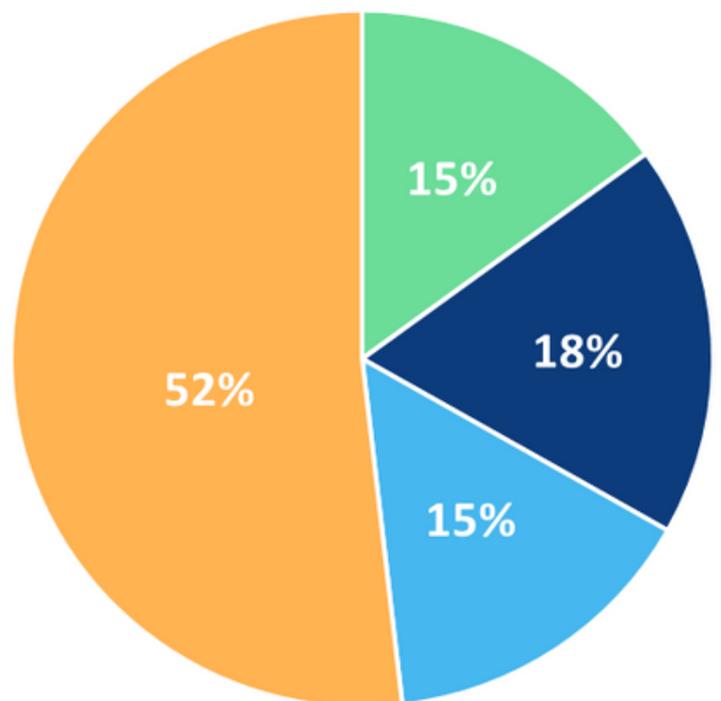
■ 1 ACEs ■ 2 ACEs ■ 3 ACEs ■ 4+ ACEs

## PATH PROGRAM: CO-OCCURRANCE OF ACES

Of the PATH students who reported at least one ACE:

85% have two or more ACEs (24% higher than Wisconsin)

Over 50% have four or more ACEs (26% higher than Wisconsin)



■ 1 ACEs ■ 2 ACEs ■ 3 ACEs ■ 4 or More ACEs

# WHAT WORKS ?

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**According to the CDC, prevention strategies to address ACEs include:**

- Home visiting programs for pregnant women and families with newborns
- Parenting training programs and social support for parents
- Intimate partner violence prevention
- Teen pregnancy prevention and parent support programs for teens
- Treatment for mental illness and substance abuse
- High-quality affordable child care
- Sufficient income support for lower-income families

**Policy recommendations for addressing ACEs include:**

- Increasing awareness of ACEs and their impact on health within both the professional and public spheres.
- Increasing capacity of health care providers to assess the presence of ACEs and provide appropriate treatment options.
- Training health care providers in trauma-informed care.
- Supporting research for more sensitive assessment tools.
- Enhancing the capacity of communities to prevent and respond to ACEs through investments in evidence-based prevention programming, trauma interventions and increasing access to needed mental health and substance abuse services.
- Encouraging nurturing home and classroom environments.

# HOW DOES PATH HELP ACES ?

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According to the CDC, prevention strategies to address ACEs include:

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Recommended Approach</u>	<u>PATH Program Approach</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen economic supports to families</li> <li>• Promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity</li> <li>• Ensure a strong start for children</li> <li>• Teach Skills</li> <li>• Connect youth to caring adults</li> <li>• Intervene to lessen immediate and long-term harms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening household financial security</li> <li>• Family-friendly work policies</li> <li>• Public education campaigns</li> <li>• Social-emotional learning</li> <li>• Safe dating and healthy relationship skill programs</li> <li>• Parenting skills and family relationship approaches</li> <li>• Enhanced primary care</li> <li>• Treatment to lessen the harms of ACEs</li> <li>• Treatment to prevent problem behavior and future involvement in violence</li> <li>• Family-centered treatment for substance use disorder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PATH can cost \$0 to client</li> <li>• PATH Extension Programs aim to provide public education campaigns</li> <li>• Students' habilitation skills to develop awareness and skills to improve emotional regulation</li> <li>• Students' exploration of relationships, developing relationship boundaries, and effective communication</li> <li>• Families are supported through education and skill building to promote the health of their child</li> <li>• Provides a caring and trusted adult</li> <li>• PATH reduces barriers that prevent Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment</li> </ul>

# FINAL THOUGHTS + FUTURE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

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## **GENERAL**

Through identification of barriers to mental health counseling and steps to eliminate barriers, PATH has fostered opportunities for students and families who may not have been able to access to mental health counseling. Current trends indicate more help is needed than what is available in communities across the United States. A goal for PATH is to expand access to early interventions and helps improve students' and families mental health experiences and subvert long-term adversity.

## **TRAUMA**

While further investigation is needed, there are experiences of students who report a reduction in ACEs from year to year. It is possible that their perspective of the experience may have changed, thus potentially reducing their response to trauma. Implementing a Trauma Informed Care (TIC) approach, the need to understand a person's life experiences in order to deliver effective care and has the potential to improve engagement, treatment adherence, health outcomes, and provider and staff wellness is vital as the prevalence of trauma is extremely high for the students of the PATH Program.

## **RESILIENCY**

In addition to understanding the prevalence and rate of trauma experiences, PATH is motivated to collect and understand each students' resiliency, as well as to identify growth or reduction of students' internal and external resiliency. PATH's overarching goal is to promote resiliency in students to develop and enhance independent skills. Preliminary analysis seems to share elementary-age students report increased resiliency, indicating improved management of daily life stressors.

## **FUTURE OF THE PATH PROGRAM**

The PATH Program aims to strengthen the collaboration of community partners in Sheboygan County to promote the well-being of youth. There are many opportunities to grow the program, not only aiming to increase students served at each school district, but also to enhance programming at the school. Currently, PATH is focusing on youth psychoeducation groups and yoga, family and educator supports and interventions, and other educational and crisis programming to increase access and close gaps surround mental wellness in our community.

# STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

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## **PATH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT**

A 12th grade student who has participated in PATH since 9th grade was referred to the program due to problems with mood, anger issues, poor academic grades, and family conflict. She had a history of being suspended in 7th grade for bringing alcohol to school and 8th grade for fighting. Her initial depression and anxiety indicated moderate to severe symptoms.

Since January 2021, she has reported zero to minor symptoms of depression or anxiety, improved anger issues (no behavioral issues at school or suspensions), improved academic grades, and improved family relationships. She is graduating in 2023 with honors and taking college courses for her next goal to become a nurse!

## **PATH MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT**

An 8th grade student referred to the PATH Program due to relationship instability and school engagement difficulties exacerbated by mental health symptoms. At her first appointment she reported a PHQ-9 score of 24, indicating severe symptoms of depression.

At a session seven months later, she reported a PHQ-9 score of 5, a reduction of **79%**! Additionally, during the same timeframe, her reported symptoms of anxiety decreased **42%**. This student shared feeling more trusted by her mom, as well as noticed big changes in her mood. Of this the student stated, "I feel more optimistic and energized!" She also experienced success with creating healthier friendships, learned to prioritize self-care, including improved sleep, and performed better in school compared to the start of PATH.

## **PATH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT**

A 5th grade student who has participated in the PATH Program since 2nd grade. Consistent counseling throughout numerous school, family, and societal transitions has helped him learn to regulate emotions and develop a positive worldview.

Upon referral, school staff and parent described him as angry and dysregulated emotion, and it was noted that peers were sometimes afraid to play with him because of anger/aggression. He was open to talking about feelings of frustration and practicing coping strategies and social skills.

During 4th grade, he began to be proud of positive feedback from teachers. The student's parent and teachers originally noted high levels of concern in multiple areas; his most recent reporting from parent and teachers showed vast improvements in multiple areas and limited concern!

# ANNUAL EVENTS:

## PATH MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS GOLF DAY

Held annually, the PATH Mental Health Awareness Golf Day raises awareness and funding so PATH can continue providing care to the youth in Sheboygan County. Held on Friday, June 17th, 2022 at Sunset Hills in Sheboygan Falls, More than 100 community members participated/ supported this event raising over \$13,000.

Proceeds from the golf day not only help to continue the services and treatments being offered through PATH, but also helps to strengthen the amount of school-based mental health services students, families, and educators receive each year.



**Number of Participants:**

112

**Amount Raised:**

\$13,089.72

**Projected Sessions Provided With Fundraised Dollars:**

690



EVENT HELD ANNUALLY  
ON THE 3RD FRIDAY  
IN JUNE

# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

## EVENT SPONSORS:



## SILVER SPONSORS:



## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR ANONYMOUS DONOR!

**HOLE SPONSORS:** ANN BUECHEL HAACK FAMILY, BOYS & GIRLS CLUB SHEBOYGAN COUNTY, KNUTH + BLOCK FAMILIES, LONGHOUSE AXE BAR, MIESFELDS MEAT MARKET, MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA LAKESHORE, OZAUKEE COMMUNITY THERAPIES, REALTY 360, RK COMPLETE INSPECTION, SHEBOYGAN COUNTY CHAMBER, THE PRODUCTION FARM, UBUILDIT LAKESHORE, UNITED WAY OF SHEBOYGAN COUNTY, YOGA ON THE LAKE

**THANK YOU TO ALL THE INCREDIBLE COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR DONATIONS:** SHEEPS BREWING CO., 2873 BEER BAR. ABOVE & BEYOND CHILDRENS MUSEUM, AUTUMN RIDGE GOLF COURSE, BOOKWORM GARDENS, BOYS + GIRLS CLUB OF SHEBOYGAN COUNTY, BRAD & BRI HEUSTERBERG, BROADWAY POPCORN & CO., DENISE AND KEN CORNELL, DESTINATION KOHLER GOLF COURSES, DIONE KNOP, EL RANCHO VIEJO MEXICAN RESTAURANT, ERIN PEREZ/OZAUKEE COMMUNITY THERAPIES, FRANK SIMAC, IL RITROVO, KATE & MIKE BAER, LAKESIDE PEPSI CO., LARRY'S DISTRIBUTING CO., LONGHOUSE AXE BAR, MIESFELD'S MEAT MARKET, MEAT'S OPERA HAUS, SHEBOYGAN LAKERS FIGURE SKATING CLUB, WANDER SPRINGS GOLF COURSE, WEST SIDE BAKERY, WILLOW CREEK BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, + VANILLA SUGAR SPA



# ANNUAL EVENTS:

## EDUCATOR APPRECIATION SOCIAL

During Teacher Appreciation Week in May 2022, PATH Partners threw the first annual Educator Appreciation Bash as a way to say thank you to those who impact the lives of youth in Sheboygan County.

88 educators gathered at 3 Sheeps Brewing Co. in Sheboygan for refreshments, food, giveaways, and more.

Surveys were collected to learn more about the needs of educators in our community and how PATH can help fill the needed gaps (see below for responses).

**Number of educators who attended last year:**  
88

EVENT HELD ANNUALLY DURING TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK (1ST WEDNESDAY IN MAY)



## EDUCATOR VOICES: HIGHLIGHTED SURVEY RESPONSES

### What did you most struggle with over the last year?

- Burn out/ too much on plate
- Helping others understand trauma & impacts on behavior
- Staff safety & accurate information regarding crisis issues
- Lack of support & engagement
- Self-care & leaving work at work
- Short-staffing
- Balancing school life & home life
- VOLUME of students w/significant mental health struggles
- Student behaviors/parent support

### What behavioral, mental, social, + wellness programming would be helpful for EDUCATORS next year?

- Behavior management training (Over half of respondents agreed)
- More mental health/personal days (78% of respondents agreed)
- Compassion fatigue training (Over 80% of respondents agreed)
- More social events, like this, with co-workers
- How to access mental health on a budget

### What behavioral, mental, social, + wellness programming would be helpful to STUDENTS/DISTRICT?

- Intensive Outpatient-level care in school
- Basic parenting support/engaging families (78% of respondents agreed)
- Student mental health strategies
- How to meet goals/tasks expected of a student
- PATH, PATH, + more PATH (91% of respondents agreed)
- Impacts of social media and cyberbullying
- Self-awareness training

### What self-care tool/technique helped you last year?

- Voicing concerns to management
- Colleague support (Over 80% of respondents agreed)
- Frank (PATH therapist)
- Intentional time off
- Liquid courage
- Being outside/in nature (over half of respondents agreed)
- Using break time for self
- Exercise
- Spending time with kids and/or pets (40% agreed)
- Yoga, mindfulness, breathing (35% of respondents agreed)

# HOW TO SIGN UP YOUR CHILD TO RECEIVE PATH SERVICES:



CONTACT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL COUNSELOR TO SEE IF YOUR CHILD QUALIFIES FOR SERVICES AND/OR IF THERE IS AVAILABILITY AT YOUR SCHOOL.

SCAN ME



TO LEARN MORE AND/OR GIVE TO THE CAUSE



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



**LAKESHORE**  
community health care



Ozaukee Community Therapies



**Participating Sheboygan County School Locations:**



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



2022-2023  
PARTNERS

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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