

The Youth Mental
Health Project™

Annual Report

2020



MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Randi Silverman,
Founder and Executive Director, The Youth Mental Health Project™*

There is no question that COVID-19 has had an extraordinarily devastating impact on the mental health of children, teens, and young adults during 2020.

The mental health crisis became an epidemic within a pandemic, and finding solutions to help our youth recover is more essential than ever. We continue to believe that early intervention and prevention must become the norm in order to address the devastating consequences of the current mental health crisis, and that educating, supporting, and empowering families and communities to understand and care for the mental health of young people is crucial to the health of a compassionate society.

In reaffirming our commitment to improve mental health literacy and support for families, we found innovative ways to reach communities virtually. [The Parent Support Network](#) quickly transitioned to provide free, parent support meetings online and we are proud to report that we have been able to support hundreds of parents across 48 states in the nation as a result. At the same time, we have been able to provide ongoing support and training to the growing network of volunteer facilitators who make our work possible. Our program continues to expand as we try to meet the increasing demand.

Early in the pandemic, we created our own free video series, [Parenting in a Pandemic](#), to share knowledge and advice from experts in the field of mental health. We spoke with hundreds of students at multiple high schools, including a keynote speech at the Student Wellness and Leadership Conference, and a virtual mental health rally organized by the youth of Giving Tuesday Spark. During [Children's Mental Health Awareness Week](#), May 3 - 9, 2020, we held a week of virtual events, including a musical theatre cabaret, to promote awareness and engage with young people.

In July 2020, we had an article published on Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation's platform for storytelling, [Channel Kindness](#). And during the fall of 2020, we were featured on PBS [Wellbeings Tour](#) and collaborated with MHA New York State on an innovative and compelling video series [Family Lunch & Learn: Conversation on youth mental health](#).

While 2020 was incredibly challenging, it confirmed the urgent need for the work we do every day. We deeply appreciate the support of our donors, sponsors, and volunteers, without whom nothing would have been possible.

With sincere thanks,

Randi Silverman
Founder and Executive Director

COVID IMPACT IN 2020

Beginning in April 2020, the proportion of children's mental health-related ED visits among all pediatric ED visits increased and remained elevated through October.

Compared with 2019, the proportion of mental health-related visits for children aged 5–11 and 12–17 years increased approximately 24% and 31%, respectively.¹

(...) beginning in late-March to October 2020 than those during the same period during 2019



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WHO WE ARE

Mission.

We educate, empower, and support families and communities to better understand and care for the mental health of our youth.

Vision.

We envision a world made up of informed families and caring communities that realize and strengthen the mental health of our youth - a world where people are just as aware of their mental health as their physical health, where families are validated and able to readily access the care they need.

The Youth Mental Health Project is a group of individuals who believe that:

- Mental health lies on a continuum and includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.
- A healthy mind is as important to a child's development as a healthy body.
- In order to address the devastating consequences of the current mental health crisis, early intervention and prevention must become the norm.

With an emphasis on the mental health of children, teens, and young adults, we believe that educating, supporting, and empowering families and communities to understand and care for the mental health of young people is crucial to the health of a compassionate society.

1. Leeb RT, Bitsko RH, Radhakrishnan L, Martinez P, Njai R, Holland KM. Mental Health-Related Emergency Department Visits Among Children Aged <18 Years During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, January 1–October 17, 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2020;69:1675–1680. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6945a3external icon>.

SUPPORT and EMPOWER:

THE PARENT SUPPORT NETWORK™



Parents Helping Parents

The number of children, teens, and young adults who are struggling with mental health disorders is on the rise. During the pandemic, families were overwhelmed by the isolated more than ever. Parents have always been the most important.

The Parent Support Network™ provides all parents, guardians, and adult caregivers with the opportunity to find guidance and support from other parents.

We were dedicated to growing The Parent Support Network™ in 2020 in order to provide support to as many parents, guardians, and adult caregivers as possible.

We launched our virtual platform for support meetings, in collaboration with Support Group Central, and opened meetings to include any parent concerned about their children's mental health regardless of their location.

As always, The Parent Support Network™ is a parent-driven, family focused program that provides parents who are concerned about their children's mental health with a dependable and caring network, valuable peer support, and access to peer recommended resources.



During 2020, The Parent Support Network™:

- 143 free, confidential parent support meetings
- 726 attendees, from 46 states in the US
- 12 new volunteer parent Facilitators trained, for a total of 47

62.5% increase in the number of meetings

4% increase in the number of parents served

860% increase in the number of states reached

Photo by [Artem Maltsev on Unsplash](#)

Parent Support Network Quotes - All are anonymous

“

I am so thankful and grateful for this support group. I do not feel so alone in the struggles I have with my son.

”

“

I am so thankful and grateful for this support group. I do not feel so alone in the struggles I have with my son.

”

“

Always such a well run group. we had a small turnout but lots of quality talk

”

“

It was nice to hear others who are experiencing similar thoughts and emotions as you are.

”

“

I was happy to find this group through a friend. To be able to share your feelings and experiences with other parents who understand was helpful.

”

“

I enjoyed my first meeting. It was nice to hear from other parents and know I'm not alone as a parent experiencing similar challenges.

”

“

It was good to meet up with people I didn't know because I had more privacy and zero judgement.

”

“

Opening up to anyone is difficult for some, but opening up to a group of strangers is frightening. I felt safe in this group and was able to learn from this great group of facilitators and members. Thank you.

”

“

As a new facilitator to the Parent Support Network, I feel energized by the group. The guidance and resources I have received from other parents going through similar challenges have far outweighed treatment recommendations provided by professionals. Parents are in the trenches and know their children best. They live with the struggles day in and day out and understand like no other the journey parents travel. I felt so alone before I attended my first meeting. Now I can lend a listening ear to another mom or dad, validating the experience.

Susan Minichello, PSN Facilitator

”

Photo by [Elisa Ventur](#) on Unsplash

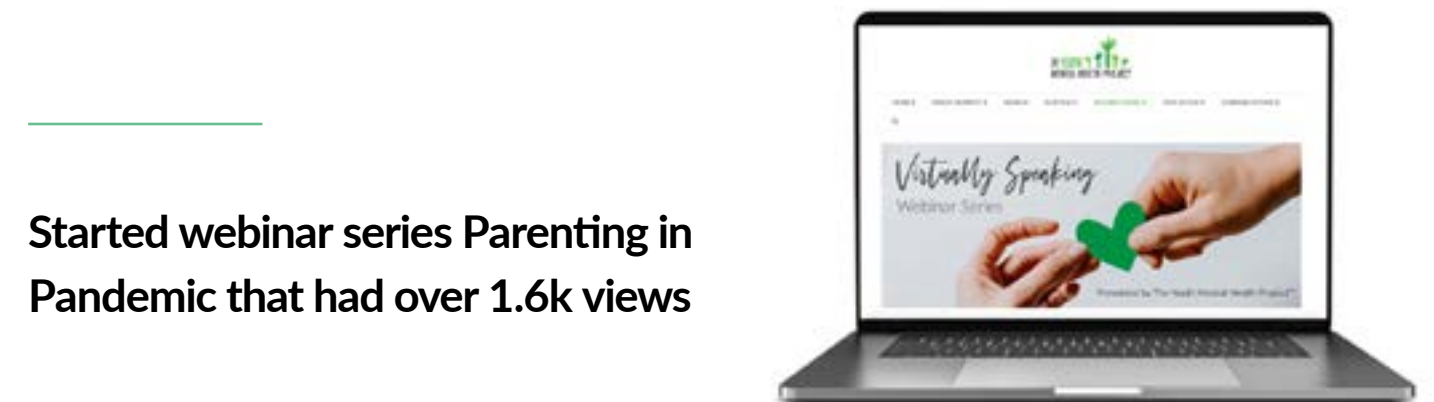
EDUCATION

Important at every stage of life, mental health affects the way a person thinks, feels, relates to others, and behaves. By inspiring open conversations about mental health, The Youth Mental Health Project creates opportunities for communities to promote education, awareness and understanding of how to care for and support the whole child.

We work hard every day to get the message and information out to the community.



Pageviews up 46% in 2020 and number of users up 41% on our website.



Started webinar series Parenting in Pandemic that had over 1.6k views



Presented at numerous events and reached over 1100 people

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