



WHY IS CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH IN HAWAI'I ESSENTIAL RIGHT NOW?

PRIOR TO THE ONSET OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS, HAWAI'I YOUTH WERE ALREADY AT RISK FOR A NUMBER OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES

RELATIVE TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE, HAWAI'I YOUTH ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE:

- Attempted suicide in the last year
- Experienced sexual violence
- Experienced physical dating violence
- Used, frequently used and daily used vaping products
- Used cocaine, methamphetamines, ecstasy or injected any illegal drug

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at: www.cdc.gov/yrbs.

SINCE THE STATE EMERGENCY ORDERS WERE PUT INTO PLACE IN MARCH 2020, LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS HAVE WITNESSED SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO SERVICE USE



The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division provides mental health services for eligible children and youth who have severe emotional and/or behavioral challenges. They reported 66% fewer applications in April 2020 relative to April 2019.



Early Intervention Section provides federal and state-mandated services to support the development of infant and toddlers from birth to three years of age. They noted a 30% decrease in referrals in March 2020 relative to March 2019 and a 65% decrease in referrals in April 2020 relative to April 2019.



The Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Services Division reported a 33% decrease in CWS intakes between March 2020 and April 2020.

Decreases to service use are concerning, because it suggests that youth and families who need supportive services might not be accessing or receiving the services they need.

HAWAI'I CRISIS SUPPORTS HAVE REPORTED INCREASES IN USE SINCE MARCH 2020



The Crisis Text Line reported a 54% increase in number of texters (who utilized the ALOHA keyword) between March and April 2020 with anxiety and COVID-19 as major topics in those conversations.

The Crisis Line of Hawai'i reported that between March and mid-April 2020 there was a definite increase in calls as compared to the same time last year. During that time the callers were primarily focused on the effects of the pandemic with concerns of having or contracting COVID-19. From mid-April until May 2020 the callers have been presenting with more anxiety and concerns around financial loss and economic stressors.

Children's Mental health services are essential and vital far beyond the pandemic's resolution due to their lasting economic, social, and psychological impacts. We must work together now to support and protect our local communities.