

Top of Mind:

Children's Mental Health in Racine

Highlighting facts and uncovering urgent needs

Good mental health is essential to a fulfilling and productive life. The consequences of leaving mental health issues undetected and untreated can compromise not only a child's future, but also a community's vitality. Yet across the country and especially in Wisconsin, unmet mental health needs are hurting children, families and communities.

Top of Mind, a new report from The Johnson Foundation, explores the importance of good mental health and how the unmet mental health needs of Greater Racine's children are affecting the community. The report findings are based in part on a series of in-depth interviews with 35 community stakeholders conducted by Foundation staff between August and December 2011. Through these interviews, the Foundation sought to better understand the challenges that children, families, providers and communities face when trying to:

- Help children already identified as having a mental health problem; and
- Help all children optimize their mental health.

Drawing from the interviews, *Top of Mind* identifies key challenges to improving the mental health of children in Racine County, including:

The Johnson Foundation conducted in-depth interviews with 35 community stakeholders, including:

Parents and Consumers
Advocates
Counselors
Psychiatrists
Psychologists
Social Workers
Public Policy Experts
Special Education Coordinators
Hospital Administrators
Researchers
Doctors

- **Poor system and service coordination:**
While many services exist in the Greater Racine area, they are disconnected, fragmented and lack coordination.
- **Multiple barriers to access care:**
For those who are seeking care, there are multiple barriers to access. These range from the cost of care to transportation, competing demands on caregivers, language barriers, a lack of clarity around how to access care, and the stigma associated with mental health issues.
- **High service costs and limited funding:**
The high cost of care makes treatment cost-prohibitive for those individuals and families who are without insurance, have plans with high co-pays or are experiencing an interruption in insurance coverage. Meanwhile, insufficient funding for children's mental health services severely limits access to and options for care.
- **Workforce and service shortage:**
Racine County faces a major shortage of mental health service providers for children and adolescents.

The Johnson Foundation's Community Program is committed to helping increase understanding and awareness around the need to help all children optimize their mental health so that they may grow up to lead healthy and vibrant lives. *Top of Mind* is a call to action and the first step in our commitment to begin working with the community to identify solutions.

For more information on *Top of Mind* and The Johnson Foundation's work, please visit www.johnsonfdn.org or contact:

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