

# MENTAL WELL-BEING OF ORANGE COUNTY'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH

A photograph of four children in a grassy park at sunset. Three girls in the foreground are reaching up with their arms outstretched, looking at several large, colorful hula hoops (red, green, yellow, blue) that are suspended in the air. A boy is visible in the background, also playing. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of the setting sun.

**In-Person Event**  
**Friday, May 13, 2022**

**8:00 a.m.** Registration, Refreshments and Networking  
**8:30 – 10:30 a.m.** Panelists and Q&A  
City of La Habra, City Hall-Atrium Room  
110 East La Habra Boulevard, La Habra, CA 90631

# Welcome!

We're glad you're here!



Chairman Chaffee  
Fourth District Supervisor  
Orange County Board of  
Supervisors



# Agenda

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## Opening Remarks

1. 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conditions of Children's Report: A Community Resource
2. Mental Health Wellness –A Parent Perspective
3. Mental Health Childhood Education
4. Ecosystem Partners in Education
5. Mental Health Disparities & Access to Care

## Q&A Panel

## Closing Remarks





## **Mental Health Wellness –A Parent Perspective**

**Sara Ursenbach**

Parent Ambassador

First 5 Orange County



# Mental Health and Childhood Education

**Trang Lai, Ed.D.**

Director of Child Development  
and Educational Services  
Fullerton School District

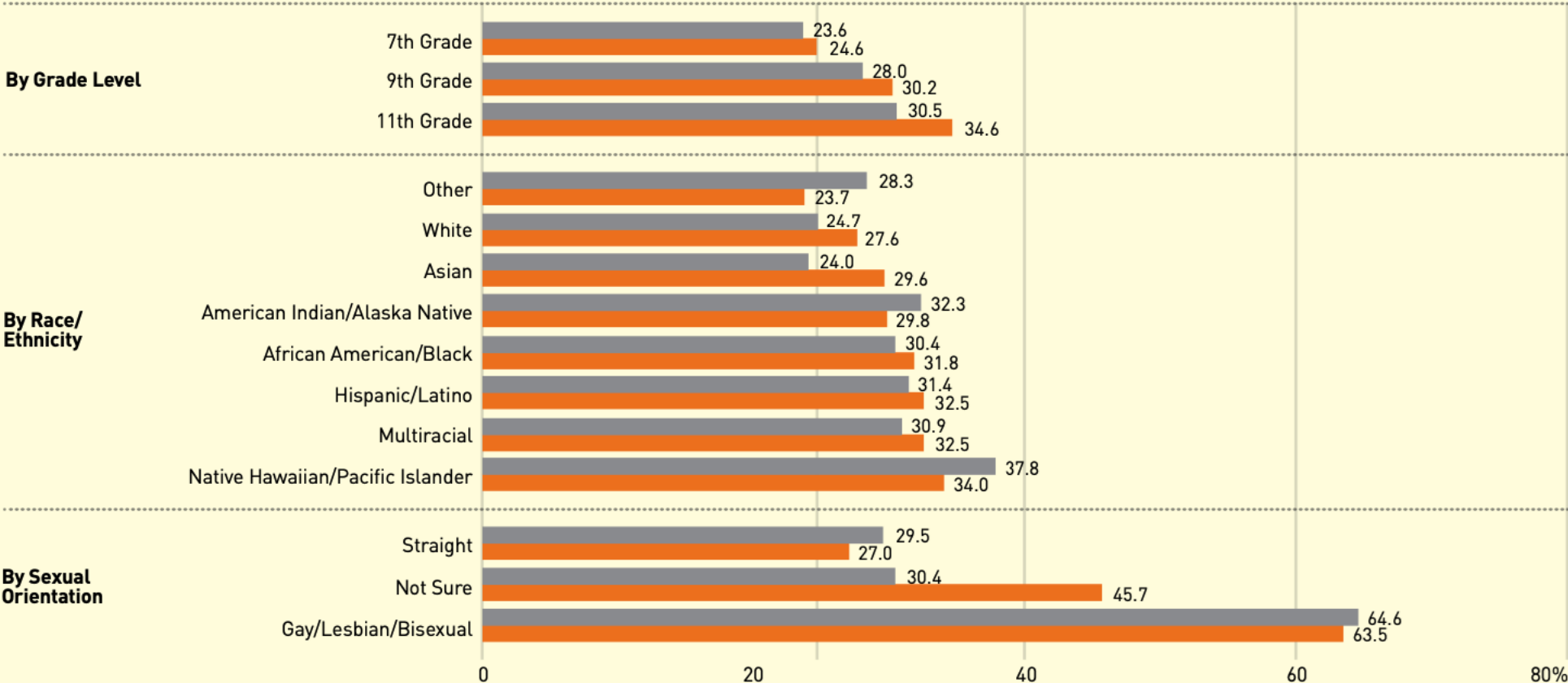


# Mental Health Trends



# Students who Reported Experiencing Depression-Related Feelings, by Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity and Sexual Orientation, Orange County, 2011-2013 and 2017-2019

● 2011-2013    ● 2017-2019

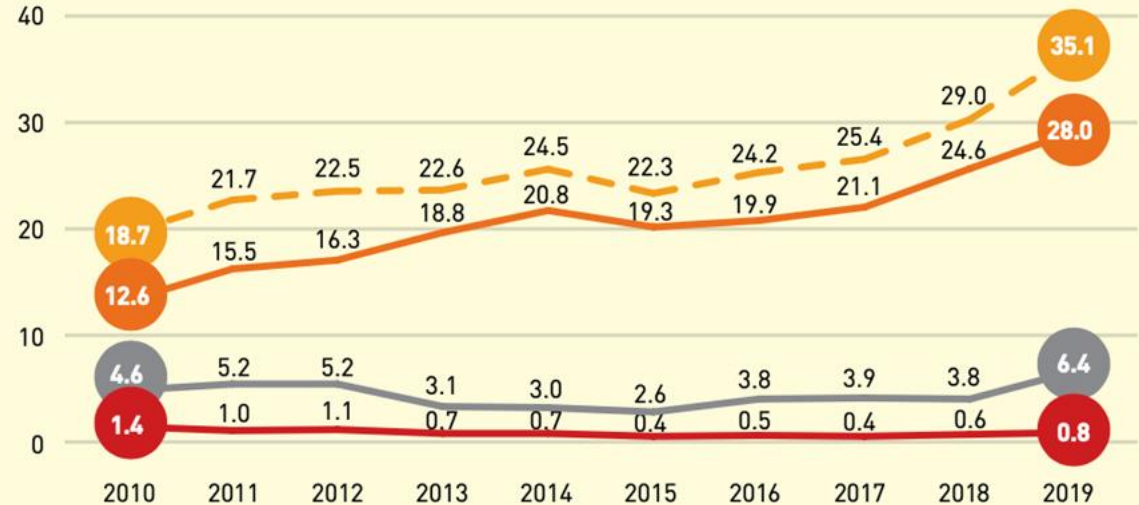


**Note:** Years presented comprise two school years (e.g., 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years are shown as 2017-2019). County and state level data are weighted estimates; school district-level data are unweighted.  
**Source:** California Healthy Kids Survey, 2019

## Mental Health and Substance Abuse-Related Hospitalizations, Rate per 10,000 Children, 2010 to 2019

--- Total  
 ● Mental Illness  
 ● Other  
 ● Substance Abuse

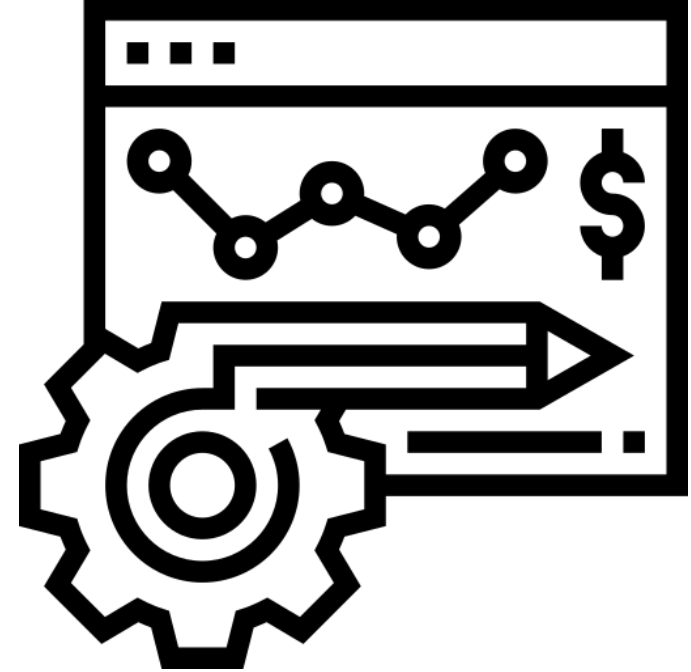
**Note:** 'Other' includes mental disorders such as other unspecified mood disorders, conduct disorders and disorders related to sleep, eating, elimination and pain.  
**Source:** Orange County Health Care Agency, Health Policy - Research



- Preschool Parent Survey about Mental Health
  - Relationship Skills
- K-8 Teachers
  - Saw increase in concerning behaviors
  - Need for strategies and expert support

# How did these trends manifest itself in preschool through 8th grades?

- Increased behavioral issues (pre-pandemic)
  - throwing/hitting, eloping
- Additional behavioral issues (pandemic +)
  - not fully potty trained
  - decreased self-awareness/social awareness
  - decreased self-regulation/relationship skills

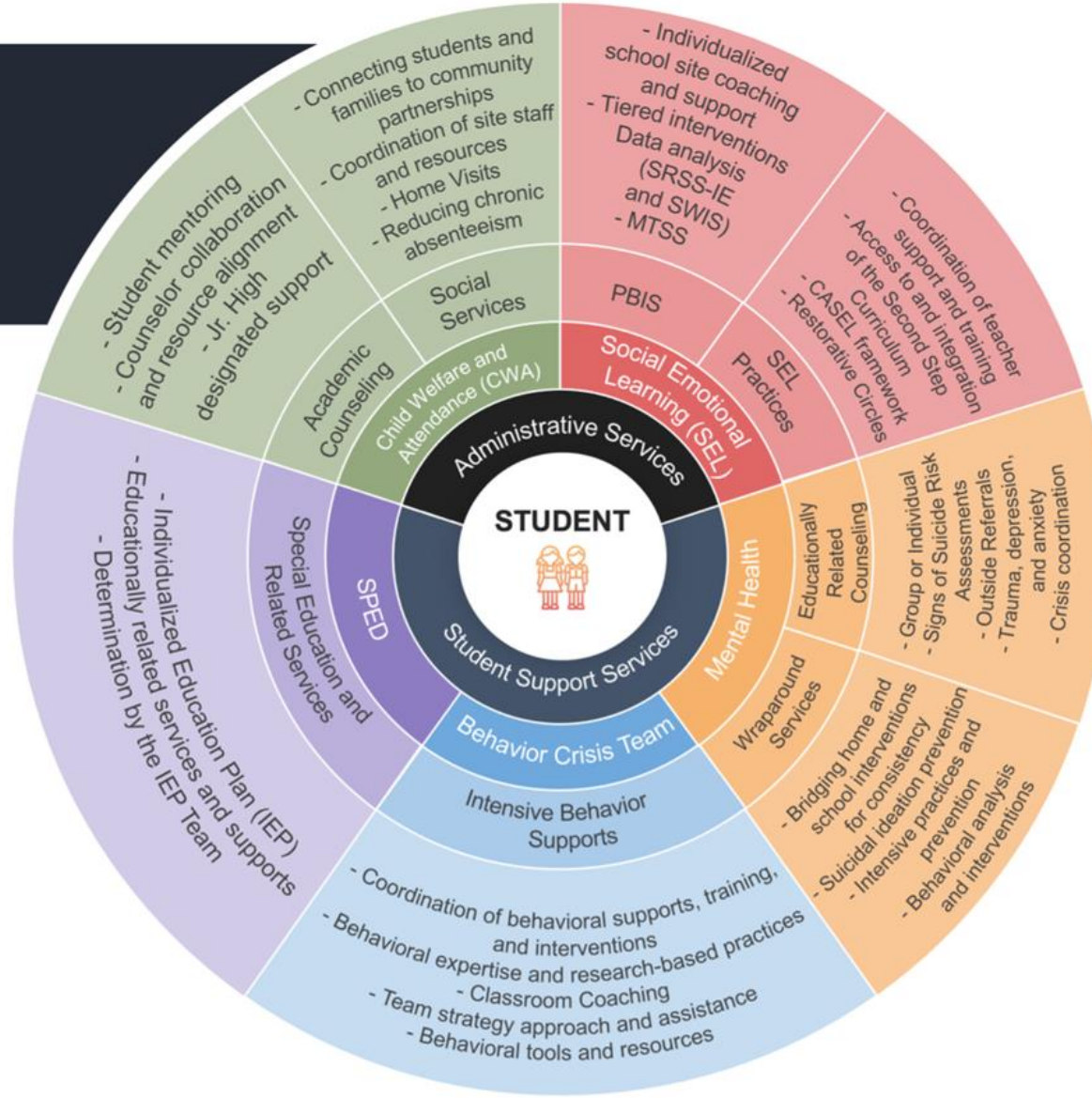


# Addressing Issues through Innovative Service Approaches



FSD: EDUCATIONAL SERVICES  
CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

**I SEE YOU**  
You are Important,  
and you matter.



# Staff Support

- Professional Learning Opportunities
  - Coaching
  - Classroom Lessons
  - Zoom
  - Workshops
- Social-Emotional Learning PD
  - All Staff
  - Online
  - Choose your own SEL adventure
  - Stipend
- Mindfulness through Social Connection & the Arts
  - Workshops for all staff
  - After work hours



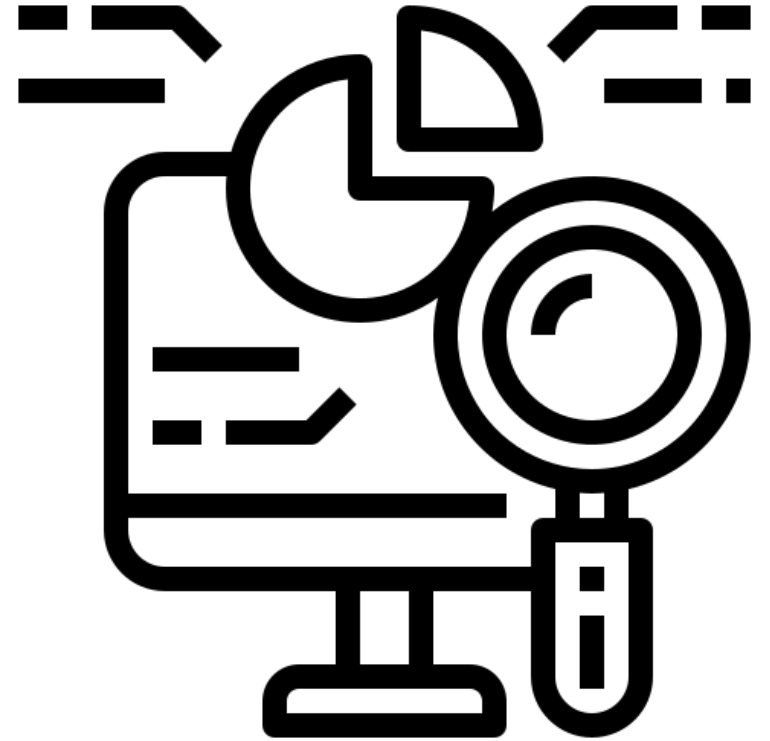
## Increase in Programs and Services

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
  - Clear expectations
  - Focus on student assets
  - Behavior Matrix; Contracts; Check-in/Check-out
  - Restorative Practices & Circles
  - Student Success Monitoring
  - Student Success Liaisons (junior high schools)
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)
  - Trauma-informed practices
  - Second Step Kit for P-8th grade
    - 11,650 students
- School Counseling
- Mental Health Associates at every site
- Stakeholder/Parent Groups & Partnerships
  - Focus Groups
  - OC Grips

# Gaps in Services

## What next?

- Preschool-8th Grade Integration
- Mental Health Services beyond the school day
- Assess program efficacy
- Be proactive





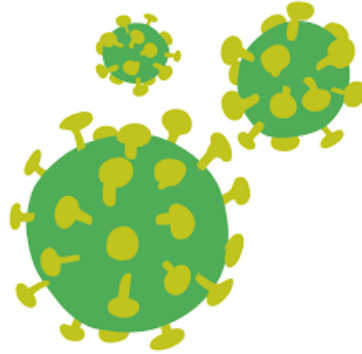
# CHOC and OCDE: A Unique Partnership

**Dr. Michael Weiss**  
V.P. Population Health  
CHOC

# National Mental Health Crisis

“almost a year into the pandemic, what began as a public health emergency is turning into a mental health crisis among our nation’s children and adolescents”

-Dr. Lee Beers, MD  
2021 AAP President



- Pediatric Suicide
  - Up 50% in the last decade
  - Summer 2020: 22.3% increase in 12-17-year-olds (attempts)
- Emergency Department Visits
  - 31% increase in mental health related visits for 12-17-year-olds (2020 vs 2019)
  - 24% increase in mental health related visits for 5-11-year-olds

<https://www.aap-oc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/09.30.21-Presentation-Slides.pdf>

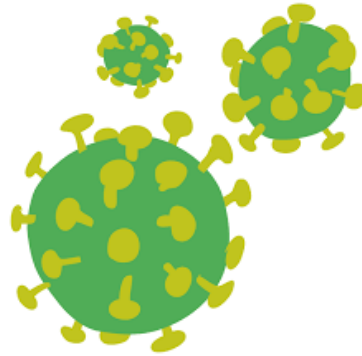
Youth Suicide: Too Young to Die – This is Our Epidemic  
Presented by the Partners for Child Fatality Prevention, an AAP-OC Project  
Thursday, September 30, 2021

**isolation from friends**

**loss of loved ones**

**financial hardship**

**loss of childhood  
developmental and  
social milestones**

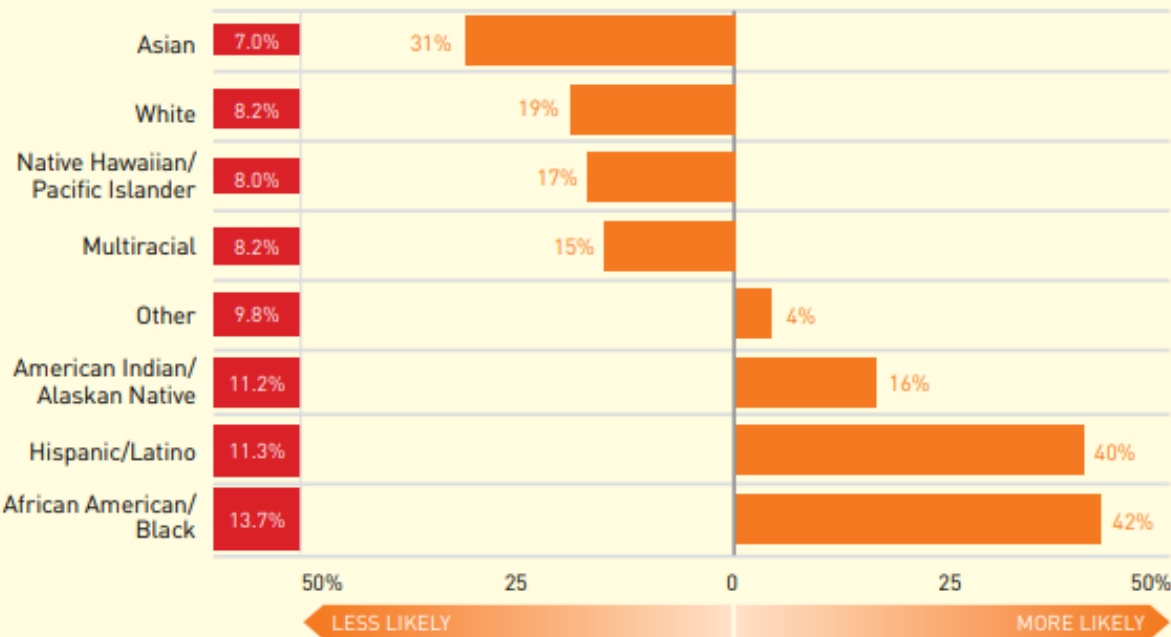


**national and local  
increase in rates of  
mental and behavioral  
health concerns in  
school age children  
and adolescents**

# Percent of Young Children Socially and Emotionally Vulnerable, by Race/Ethnicity, 2019

- Percent Classified as Vulnerable as compared to other Races/Ethnicities
- Likelihood of Being Vulnerable within each Race/Ethnicity

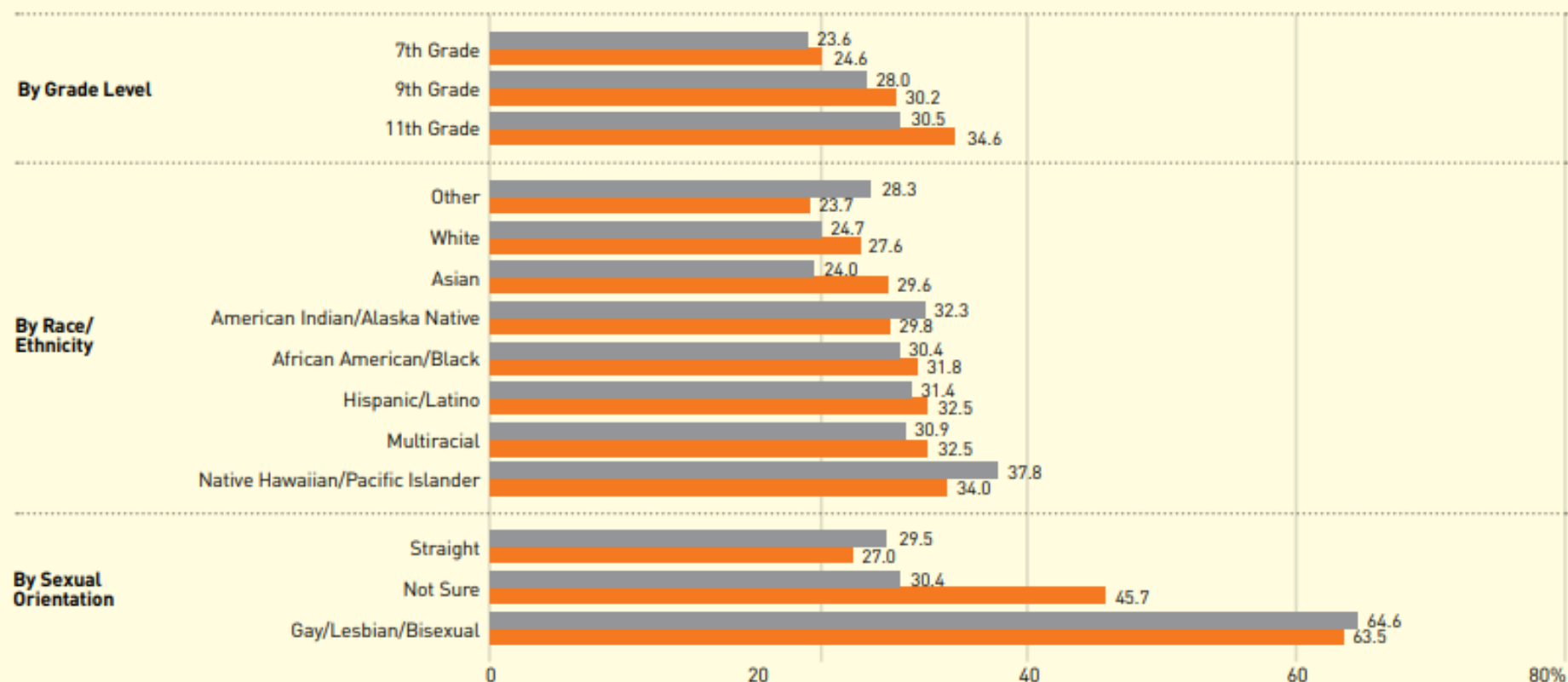
Source: First 5 Orange County, Early Development Index



## Students who Reported Experiencing Depression-Related Feelings, by Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity and Sexual Orientation, Orange County, 2011-2013 and 2017-2019

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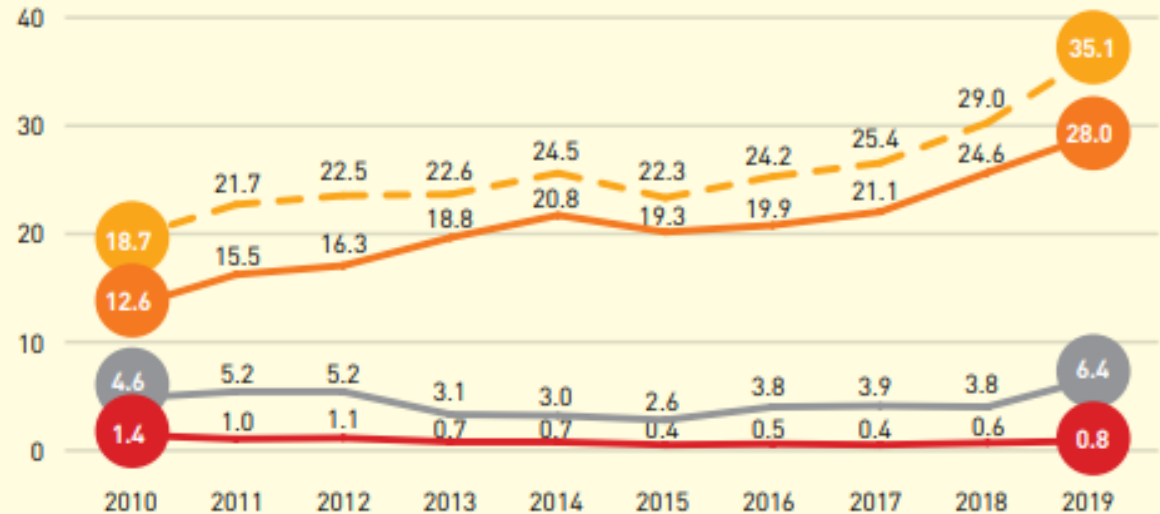
**Source:** California Healthy Kids Survey, 2019

# Hospitalizations

## Mental Health and Substance Abuse-Related Hospitalizations, Rate per 10,000 Children, 2010 to 2019

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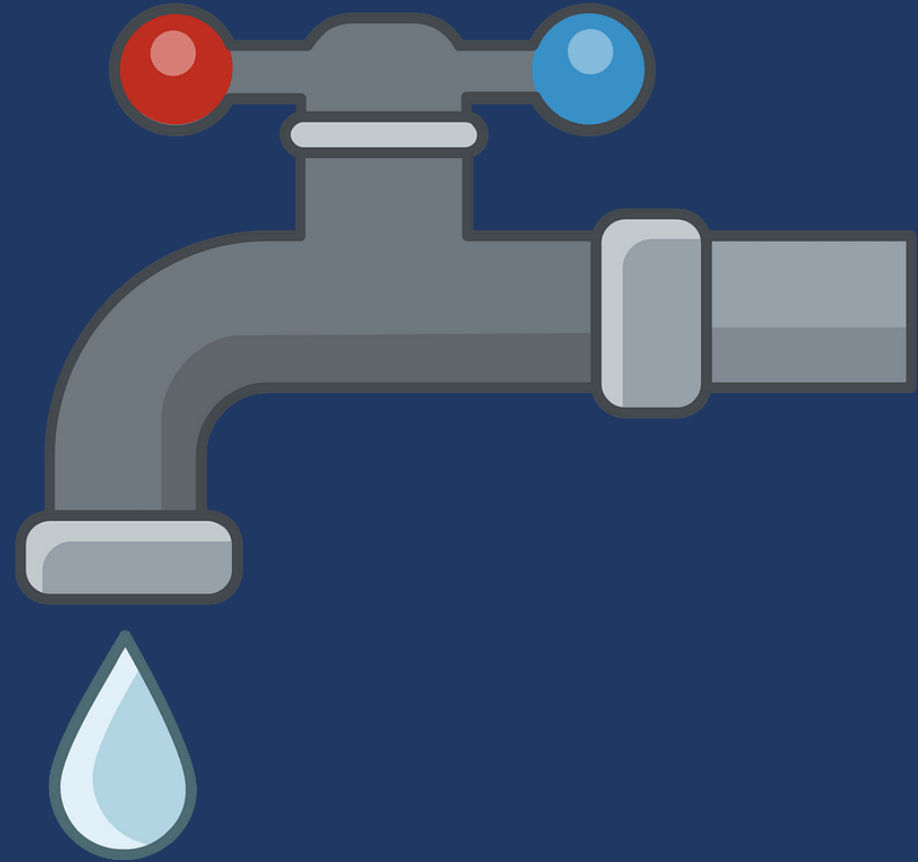
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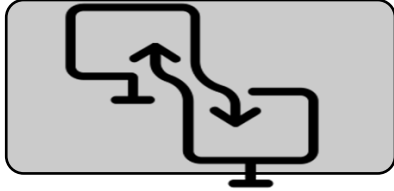
## The COVID Effect\*

- Approximately 1/5 of children exhibiting elevated levels of disruptive behavior
- Nearly ½ experiencing elevated sadness or worry

**Education, prevention,  
and early intervention  
can slow the flow of  
patients and families in  
crisis in the mental  
health pipeline.**



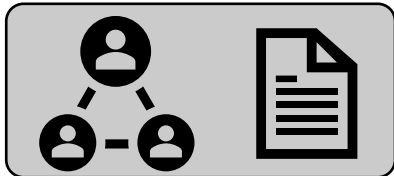
# Working with Schools: A CHOC Strategy



**Exchanging Data**



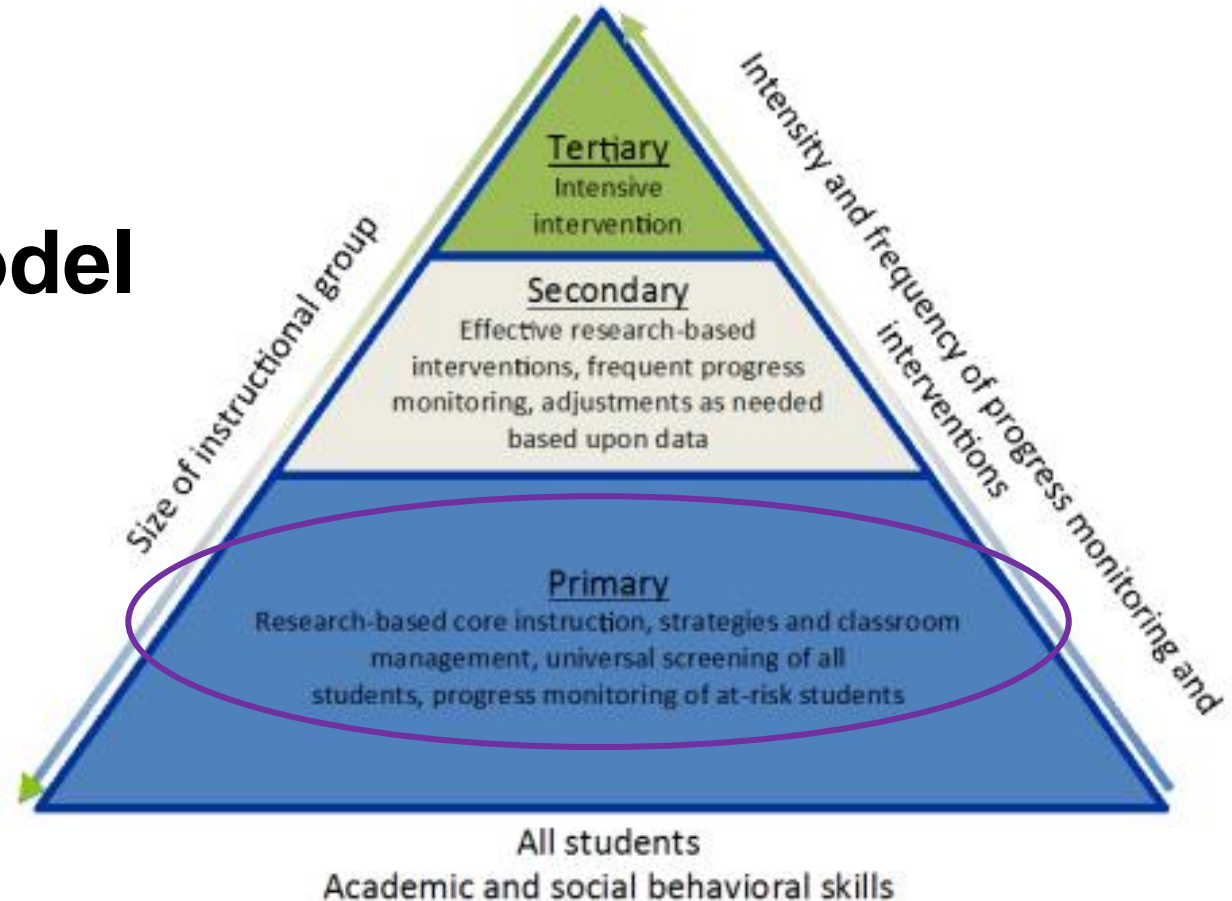
**Development of WellSpaces**



**Care Coordination**

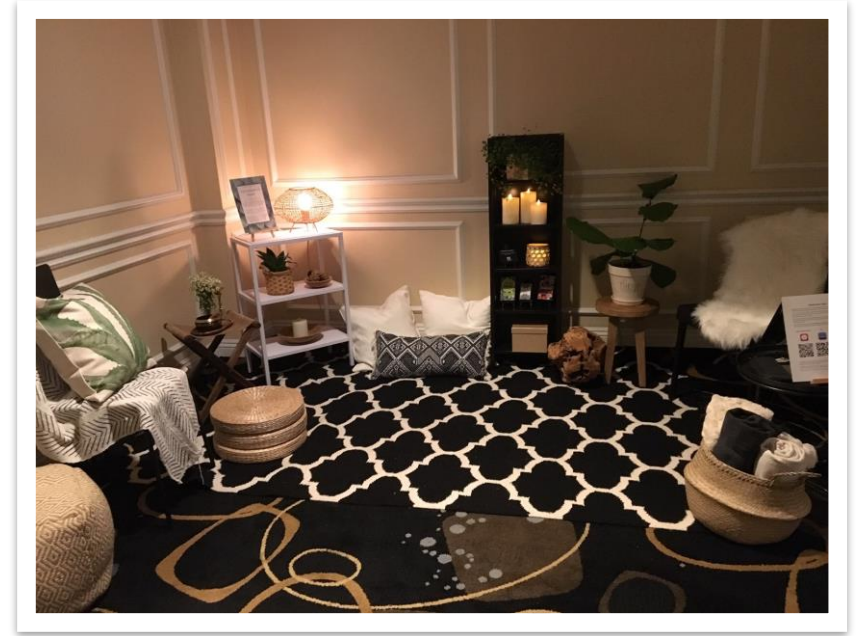
# The MTSS Model

Multi-tiered System of Support



# What is a WellSpace?

- **Permanent Space**
  - Like the library or cafeteria
  - Professional signage
- **Features**
  - Biophilic design
  - Home-like feel
  - Space of calm
  - Mindfulness
  - Meditation
  - Yoga
  - Educational resources



**THE CORNER**  
**WELLSPACE**  
**McAULIFFE MIDDLE SCHOOL** | IN COLLABORATION  
WITH CHOC & OCDE

# The Transformation

Before



After



Los Alamitos School District

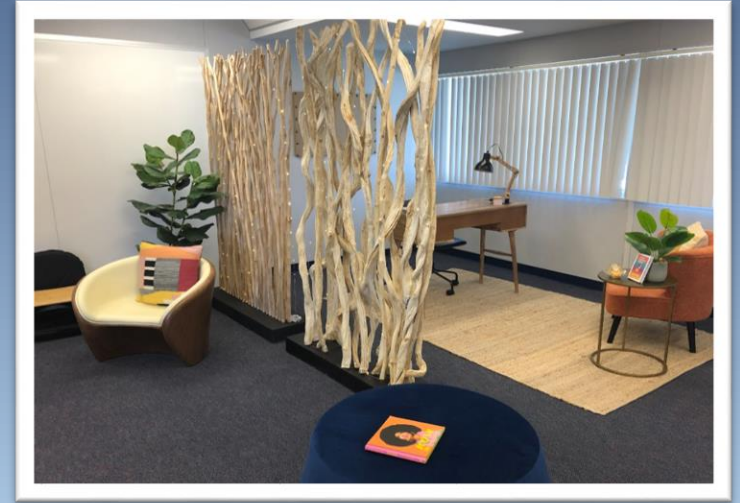
# Before



# After



## Beatty Middle School

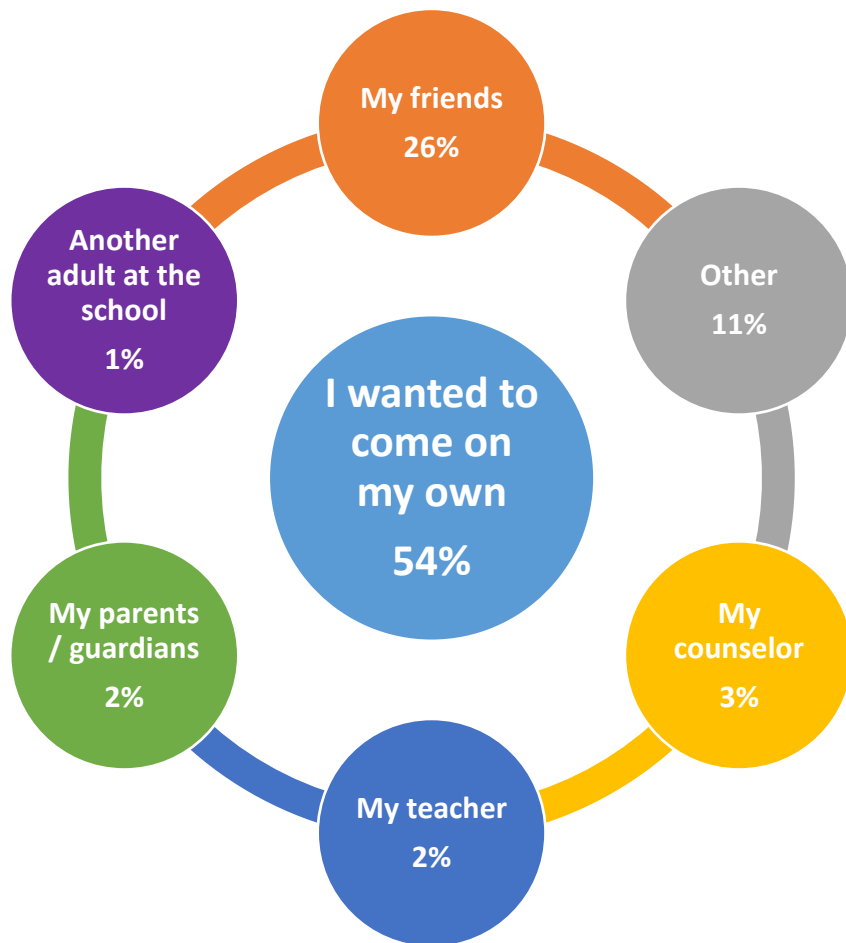


**Buena Park  
Middle School**





## Referral to WellSpace

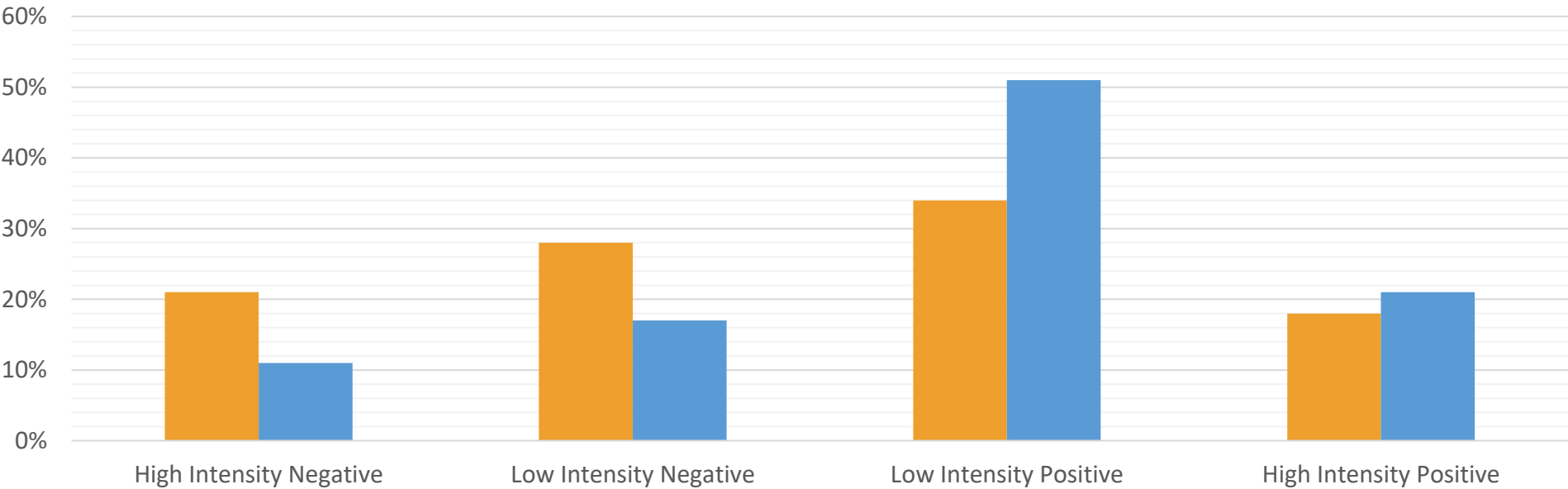


>3,000 responses



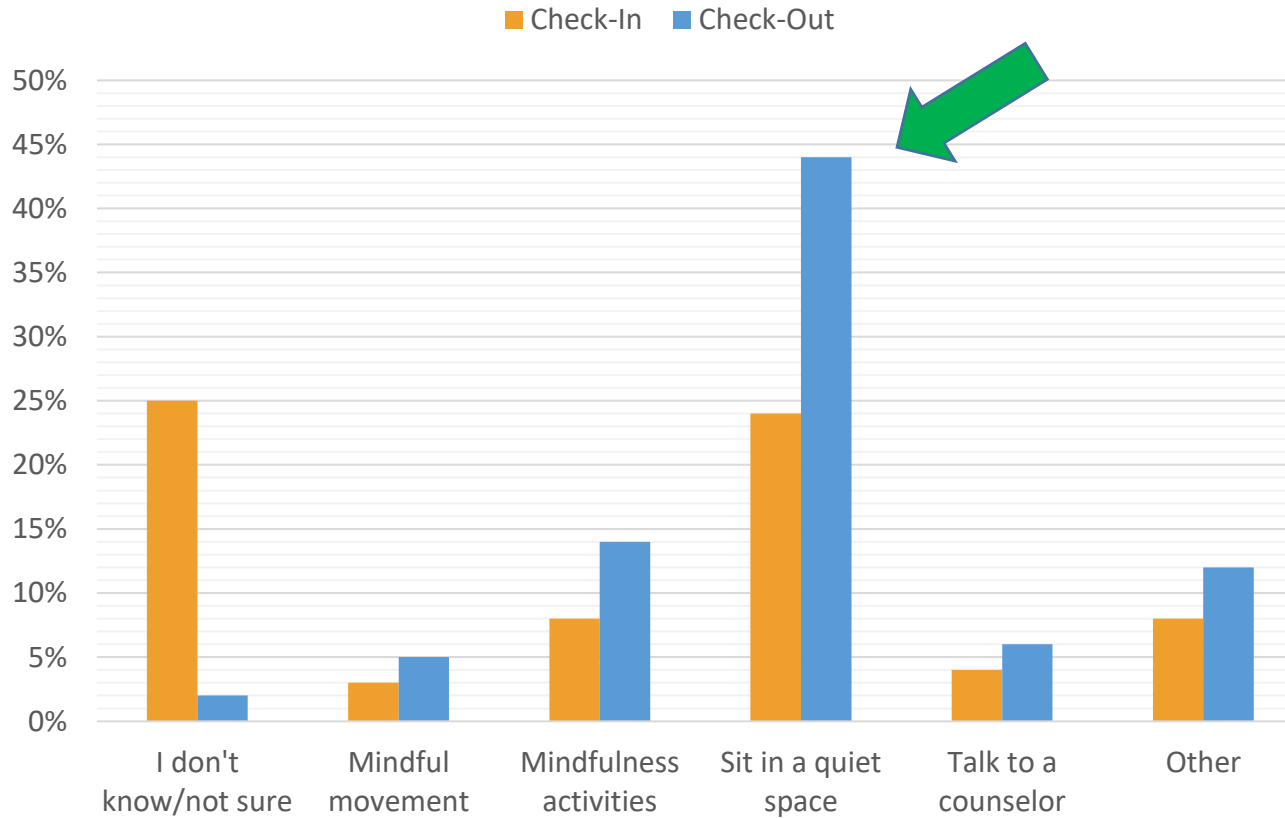
# Change in Mood

Check-In   Check-Out





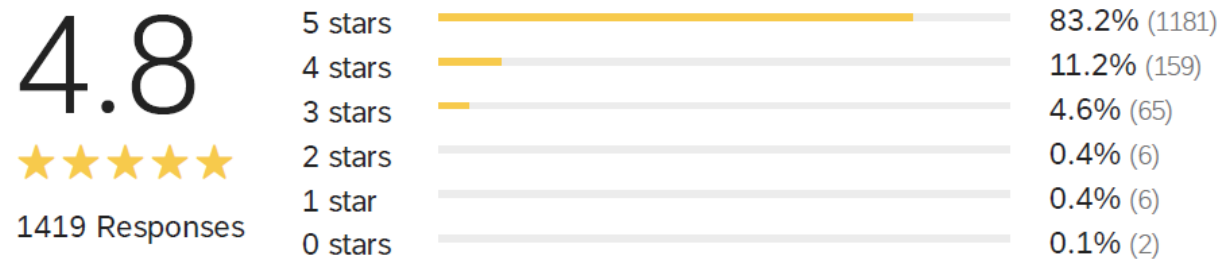
# Services & Activities Accessed



# Visit Satisfaction



How satisfied are you with your visit today? 1,419 Responses



# Savanna High School

- **Well Space Data**
  - **11/21-4/22: 235 student visits**
  - **78% report feeling calmer after the visit**
  - **Themes for visit: stress, anxiety, “need to take a break”**
- **Assertive Discipline Entries in the Aeries System**
  - **Down 52% from 2018-2019 school year\***
- **Assertive Discipline Incidents**
  - **Down 80% from the 2018-2019 school year**
- **Freshman Incidence of Defiance**
  - **Down 80% from 2018-2019 school year**

# Well Space Locations

## Current Locations

### LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED

- Oak Middle School
- McAuliffe Middle School

### BUENA PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Beatty Middle School
- Buena Park Middle School

### FULLERTON JOINT UNION

- Buena Park High School

### ANAHEIM UNION

- Savanna High School
- Brookhurst High School

### GARDEN GROVE UNIFIED

- La Quinta High School

## Upcoming Locations

### FULLERTON JOINT UNION

- Troy High School

### ORANGE UNIFIED

- Villa Park High School
- Yorba Middle School

### PRIVATE

- Mater Dei High School

### CAPISTRANO UNIFIED

- Niguel Hills Middle School

### SADDLEBACK VALLEY UNIFIED

- El Toro High School

### IRVINE UNIFIED

- University High School
- Irvine High School
- Venado Middle School
- South Lake Middle School

# Mental Health Disparities & Access to Care

**Dr. Veronica Kelley, LCSW**

Chief of Mental Health & Recovery  
Services



## Trends in Behavioral Health Post COVID

- Per Surgeon Generals Special Report : Protecting Mental Health of our Children
  - 2/3 parents report concern for the Pandemics impact on their children's cognitive development.
  - 57% of parents said their child could have benefitted from mental health treatment at the start of the Pandemic.
  - 167k children lost a parent or caregiver to COVID
  - Between April 2020 and October 2020, children 5-11 had an increase in ED visits for MH issues of 24% and 12-17 increased by 31%
  - First three quarters of 2021, children's hospitals reported a 14% increase in mental health emergencies and a 42% increase in self injury and suicide.

# Orange County Trends in Children's Behavioral Health Needs Post COVID

51% of parents indicated that their child was experiencing significant issues related to anxiety and depression

A majority of support coming from informal support by family, friends and social networks

One in four families sought professional health care regarding their child's stress or emotions

A common barrier parents faced was inconvenient or delayed appointments times or a need/preference for face-to-face services

52% reduction in the number of child abuse reports from education settings from May 2019 to May 2021

# Post Pandemic

Opportunity to better address disparities and improve health outcomes for children and families.

- Family, child and community prioritization
- Moving from secondary prevention (reducing further impacts once they occur ) to primary prevention (before it occurs)
- A commitment measure and improve quality of programs
- Maximizing multi-collaborative strategies
- The launch of the OC Equity Map in July 2021 to measure progress made as a community towards improving the quality of life for every resident of OC.

## Response to COVID-19

- The creation of a countywide network of new regional mental health coordinators to work with school districts with the goal of:
  - Coordinating, facilitating, and integrating mental health services, care and support to meet the needs of individual students and families.
  - Providing technical assistance, consultation, resources and support to enhance district mental health systems and services.
  - Promoting a greater understanding of Adverse Childhood Experience.
- An opportunity to better address disparities and improve health outcomes for children and families through collaborative and thoughtful transformative efforts.
- Unlike previous years, COVID-19 did afford the opportunity virtual community town halls. This resulted in not only greater dissemination of data, but a wider audience for information and resource sharing on important and diverse topics.

## Access to Services for Youth

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Increased access to crisis  
evaluation services

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Increased hospital bed  
capacity

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Increased campaigns to  
decrease the stigma  
surrounding mental health

# Orange County Goals to Reduce Hospitalizations

**Build**

Build protective factors

**Increase**

Increase resilience

**Prevent**

Increase in prevention oriented services to strengthen families

# How Can We Do Better?

The integration of  
telehealth to provide  
services when  
appropriate

Continue to offer a  
Free Triple P (Positive  
Parenting Practices)  
license

Continue to build out  
a System of Care in  
OC that is family  
friendly

Build Out the  
adolescent substance  
use disorder  
continuum of care

Continue the work of  
stigma reduction

## Mental Health Resources

- Triple P Online – a Free online program that shows you practical steps you can take to help you child or teenager to feel calmer and more capable. [www.tripleparenting.com](http://www.tripleparenting.com)
- OC Links Behavioral Health Information and Referral Line is available 24/7 via telephone and chat services and provides linkage mental health resources (855) OC-Links (625-4657) or via chat at <https://ochealthinfo.com/oclinks>
- OC Equity Map - <https://www.equityinoc.com/map>

## Prevention Resources

- <https://wrongforyou.com>
- <https://lifeisgreaterthandrugs.com>
- <https://stigmafreeOC.com>

Thank You!

Dr. Veronica Kelley, LCSW  
Chief of Mental Health &  
Recovery Services, Orange  
County Health Care Agency

[vkelly@ochca.com](mailto:vkelly@ochca.com)

# Panelist Q&A with Dr. Chau





# Closing Remarks

## **Chairman Chaffee**

Fourth District Supervisor  
Orange County Board of  
Supervisors