

# WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being, and is an essential component at every stage of life including early childhood, adolescence, adulthood and senior years.

People who are exposed to adverse circumstances – poverty, violence, disability and inequality – are at higher risk of developing a mental disorder.

Your contribution will provide new and expanded programming within our health and educational systems, as well as increased social supports for the entire community:

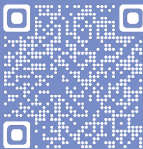
- **Student** mental health services in United Way Community Schools;
- Programs to combat social isolation among **older adults**;
- House, shelter and case management for **veterans**;
- In-home services for **babies and parents**, and more.

# CURRENT STATE

Across the nation, mental health needs are rising rapidly, creating substantial impacts on all parts of life including physical health, quality of life and even a student’s ability to learn in school. In fact, the U.S. Surgeon General has described declining mental health among youth as the crisis of our time. Here in the Greater Lehigh Valley:



- 43%** of teens report **feeling depressed** most days
- 25%** of seniors report **feeling isolated** from their community
- 40%** of adults report **symptoms of depression** or anxiety
- 17%** of young children have a diagnosed **mental, behavioral or developmental disorder**
- 34%** higher than the state average **suicide** rate

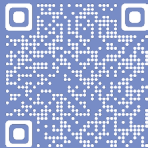


We invite you to join us and UNITE for Mental Health. Help to ensure that more children, families and older adults have access to the critical mental health services they need to survive, and a healthy and connected community we all need to thrive.

UNITED FOR  
*mental health*

Social connection is vital to community health and success. Our actions today can create sustainable changes to society and bring better health to all.

– U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory



United Way of the  
Greater Lehigh Valley

UNITED FOR  
*mental health*





## children and families



Children who are exposed to adverse childhood events including abuse, neglect, divorce, domestic violence and parents with mental illness and substance use issues are **2.6 times** more likely to have depression and **17 times** more likely to have learning or behavioral problems. Mental health challenges are the leading cause of disability and poor life outcomes in young people.

### SOLUTIONS:

**In-Home Prenatal and Early Childhood Visitation** partners first-time moms with nurse-home visitors throughout pregnancy and the first two years of baby's life.

**Unconditional Childcare** provides services to childcare centers and families when children under the age of five are struggling in the early childhood classroom due to social-emotional delays.

**School-Based Behavioral Health Providers** place behavioral health clinicians in Community Schools to quickly and easily link students and their families to critical services in the school setting.

**Handle With Care** trains school staff and law enforcement in an integrated crisis intervention system for students who have been exposed to trauma or violence.

**Mindfulness in Classrooms** teaches science-based, trauma-sensitive mindfulness tools to students and teachers.

### INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

**\$250,000:** expand Nurse-Family Partnerships to 200 families

**\$120,000:** provide social-emotional wellness mentoring to 400 children

**\$100,000:** fund a school-based behavioral health specialist in a Community School for a year

**\$50,000:** train staff in trauma-informed practices at five childcare centers or schools

**\$25,000:** provide Unconditional Childcare services to 10 children per year

**\$10,000:** support student mental health clubs at 10 local high schools

## seniors



Among older adults, chronic loneliness and social isolation can reduce the life span and increase the risk of developing Alzheimer's, dementia and cancer.

### INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

**\$200,000:** expand Community Hubs to five new sites that will serve 650 older adults per day

**\$50,000:** support a new Community Hub that will serve approximately 150 older adults per day

**\$25,000:** provide Savvy Caregiver workshops to 125 family caregivers per year

## community



Social connection is vital to community health and success. Socially connected communities enjoy better population-level health. They are more prepared for, and resilient in the face of, disaster situations. They also experience greater economic prosperity and reduced levels of crime and violence.

### SOLUTIONS:

**United for Mental Health Training Institute** provides a variety of resilience and trauma-informed trainings across the age spectrum.

**Resilient Lehigh Valley** convenes partner organizations, citizens, schools, law enforcement and health providers in a collective impact effort to increase youth resiliency through creating a trauma-informed and resilient community.

**Equity in Mental Health** supports culturally sensitive, equitable and racially just mental health approaches.

### INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

**\$250,000:** make a leadership-level founding contribution to launch the UNITED for Mental Health Training Institute which will train 1,500 community members per year

**\$100,000:** make a leadership-level founding contribution to the Equity in Mental Health fund

**\$50,000:** provide resilience training to 250 parents, teachers and other caregivers per year through the UNITED for Mental Health Training Institute

**\$25,000:** support the Equity in Mental Health fund

### SOLUTIONS:

**United Way Community Hubs** strengthen social connections and increase access to fresh food and healthcare for Lehigh Valley seniors.

**Savvy Caregiver** offers dementia family caregiver training to support family members, decreasing caregiver distress, burden and depression.

## adults and veterans



One in five American adults will have a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year. Almost a third (28.2%) of all adults with a mental illness reported that they were not able to receive the treatment they needed. Carbon County reports the highest suicide rate among veterans in Pennsylvania.

### SOLUTIONS:

**United for Veterans:** a new grantmaking initiative open to Lehigh Valley organizations that provide support and mental health services to veterans.

#### Trauma-Informed Care and Resiliency Workshops:

- **Compassion Resilience Workshops** combat compassion fatigue and burn out and increase engagement and satisfaction within helping professions.

- **Officer Resiliency Training Workshops** teach trauma-informed practices to law enforcement officers.

- **Train-the-Trainer** tools help parents develop trauma-informed skills and restorative healing practices

### INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

**\$100,000:** make a leadership contribution to the United for Veterans grantmaking initiative

**\$50,000:** provide 50 trauma-informed workshops and trainings per year, reaching 250 families, caregivers, professional staff and law enforcement officers

**\$20,000:** provide a year of grief and healing workshops to 75 individuals

### A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

By integrating new solutions into our existing networks, United Way can take swift, effective and meaningful action to tackle the mental health crisis in our community.

#### United Way Community Schools

31 schools throughout the Lehigh Valley meet the basic needs of over 20,000 students and their families each year while building trusting relationships and connecting students with the behavioral and mental health supports they need.

#### Community Hubs

Easily accessible gathering spaces that address social isolation and connect hundreds of older adults to critical resources like fresh food and health and wellness resources, which can increase their quality of life and boost life span by 50%.

#### Resilient Lehigh Valley

A cross-sector coalition of partner organizations, citizens, schools, law enforcement and health providers creating a trauma-informed and resilient community. It has trained over 15,000 individuals in trauma-responsive practices.

**For more information, contact Lindsey Parks at [lindseyp@unitedwayglv.org](mailto:lindseyp@unitedwayglv.org) or 610-807-5756.**