

2020/21 BUCKS COUNTY RESILIENCY SURVEY Community Report

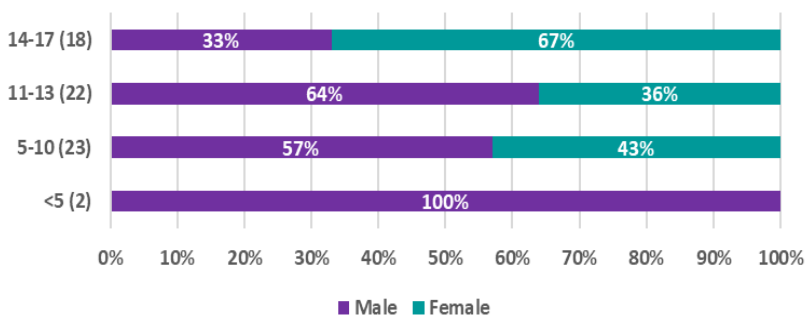
From December 2020 through January 2021, Voice & Vision, Inc. conducted interviews with 65 randomly selected parents of HealthChoices members ages 17 and under who had received at least one behavioral health treatment in a 6-month period in 2020. Interviews for this project took place during the pandemic which may have impacted certain data.

This study and follow-up recommendations were developed in collaboration with the Bucks County Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Programs, Magellan Behavioral Health, and the Bucks County Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc. The purpose of this project was to explore the experiences of HealthChoices members ages 17 and under in regards to the key issues of **resiliency, access, service delivery/treatment, outcomes, and overall satisfaction** and to track progress toward change over time as a result of Behavioral Health initiatives.

This brief summary of the data is provided to assist Bucks County agencies and Magellan Behavioral Health in incorporating resiliency principles more fully into all aspects of behavioral health treatment services for children. We thank all who made this project possible, especially the parents/guardians who took time to share their experiences with us.

Demographics:

Child Gender by Age



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were identified from the data and/or C/FST observations:

Outcomes and Satisfaction

➤ **Share** with providers the decrease in satisfaction with services and decrease in report of positive outcomes of child's quality of life. Discuss possible impacts of COVID restrictions.

Access

➤ **Explore** possible interventions to assist families when experiencing difficulties getting help for their child, including waitlists for services, delays in getting appointments, and lack of effectiveness with services provided.

➤ **Continue** efforts to educate parents about Interagency Team Meetings.

Services Delivery/Treatment

➤ **Promote** behavioral health and physical health providers speaking to one another to coordinate treatment.

➤ **Promote** behavioral health providers and the child's school speaking to one another to coordinate services.

➤ **Encourage** providers to speak to children/youth and their parents about substance use and provide preventive psycho-education about its risks, effects, and treatment.

➤ **Continue** to ensure that parents or children/youth are asked about trauma that may have affected the child's emotional or mental health.

➤ **When** telehealth is used, address any difficulties experienced. Explore options for those who find telehealth difficult and prefer in-person services.

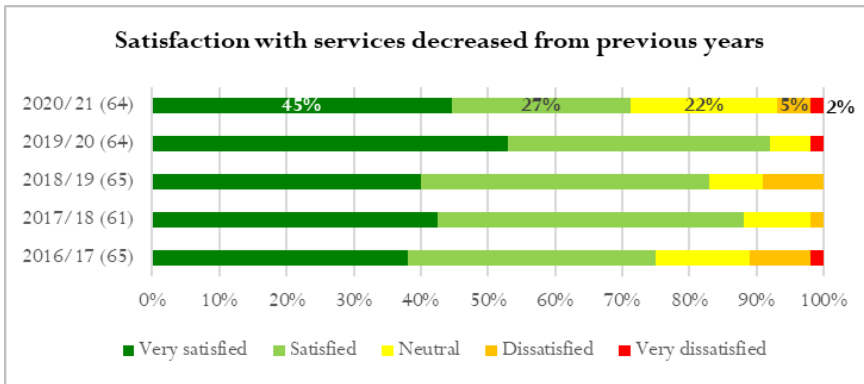
Resiliency

➤ **Consider** various ways to improve relationships between parents/child, including inclusion in therapy, sharing child's crisis plan and providing safety information, helping to learn self-care and healthy boundaries, and providing informative materials as appropriate.

➤ **Assess** for both internal and external sources of stigma. Provide education about mental health diagnoses and substance use to help reduce stigma where encountered.

Outcomes and Satisfaction

Outcomes and satisfaction are two measures used to indicate the effectiveness of Behavioral Health services. In 2020/21, **parents' satisfaction with their child's services fell below 80%** for the first time since 2016/17. There was a **16% decrease in overall satisfaction** as compared to 2019/20 data.



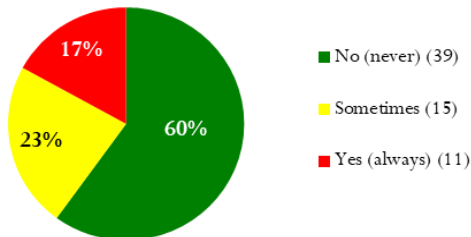
The 2020/21 year spanned the COVID-19 pandemic and shutdown when many providers had limited in-person services.

Similarly, the percent of parents reporting their **child's life was "much/a little better"** was below 80% as well. Of the 47 parents who indicated the quality of their child's life was better, **more than 50% indicated that the following areas were "better"**:

- Learning new skills (33)
- Doing better in school/job (28)
- More positive outlook (25)
- Better able to manage daily life (31)
- Symptoms reduced (26)

Access

Did you have problems getting help child needed? (65 respondents)

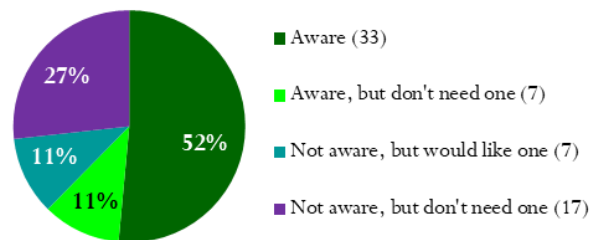


Twenty-six parents (40%) reported problems getting help in the previous 12 months. In the previous four years, the percent having problems did not exceed 30%. The **top four problems** experienced by parents were:

- Waitlists for services (10)
- Delays getting appointment (8)
- Ineffective services (7) (*services didn't meet needs*)
- Covid-related difficulties (7)

An Access issue of interest to the County and Magellan Behavioral Health is the **utilization of Interagency Team Meetings (ITM)**. Parents were asked if they were aware that they can ask for an ITM at any time. **Twenty-four parents (38%) were not aware** that they could ask for an ITM. Seven parents (11%) who were not aware expressed an interest in having an ITM.

Awareness of ITMs



Service Delivery and Treatment

Parents were asked about several areas impacting their child’s service and treatment experience including: choice, care coordination, trauma-informed care, and substance use. Because of the use of telehealth during the COVID-19 restrictions, parents were also asked about their experience with telehealth.

TELEHEALTH

Top 3 things parents liked about telehealth:

- ◆ Convenience
- ◆ Saves travel time/cost
- ◆ Reduces/eliminates transportation problems

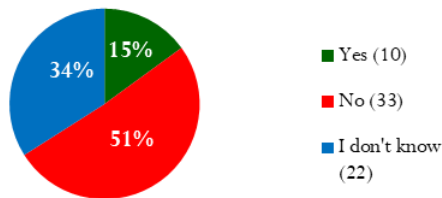
...and top 3 things they DIDN'T like:

- ◆ Too impersonal
- ◆ Technology problems
- ◆ Lack of privacy where they live

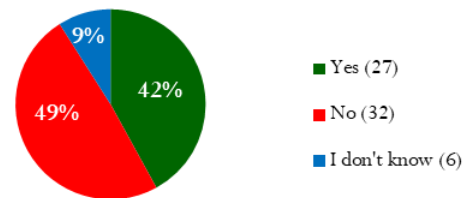
CARE COORDINATION

Care Coordination recognizes that resiliency for children with mental health challenges requires attention to other aspects of a child’s life. This survey asked about coordination with school and physical health providers.

Have your child's behavioral healthcare and physical healthcare providers spoken together? (65 respondents)



Have your child's behavioral healthcare provider and school spoken together? (65 respondents)



CHOICE

89% of parents said they were always given the chance to make treatment decisions.

GETTING HELP FOR PHYSICAL HEALTH AND SCHOOL CONCERNS

Physical Health

100% of parents with a concern regarding their child’s physical health were receiving help to address their concern.

School

83% of parents with a concern regarding their child’s school were receiving help to address their concern.

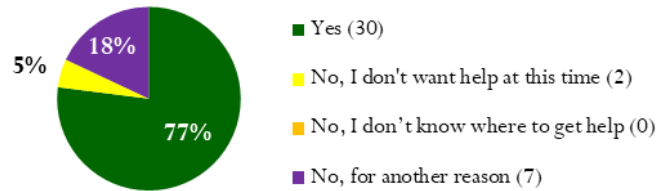
Service Delivery and Treatment continued...

TRAUMA –INFORMED CARE

Trauma and its effects may impact a child’s resiliency and behavioral health treatment.

Out of 65 respondents, **48 (74%) reported their child’s provider had asked about trauma** that may have affected their child’s emotional or mental health.

Are you receiving help to address concerns about the effects of trauma in your child's life? (39 Respondents*)



*25 parents had no concerns regarding trauma

SUBSTANCE USE

Questions about substance use were added to the Resiliency survey this year to find out if providers are speaking to children about substance use and its possible negative impact on their mental health and connecting them to treatment or resources when needed.

63% of parents reported their child’s provider (s) had NOT talked to their child about substance use. Three parents said they had a concern about substance use; one didn’t know where to get help.

Resiliency Indicators

STIGMA

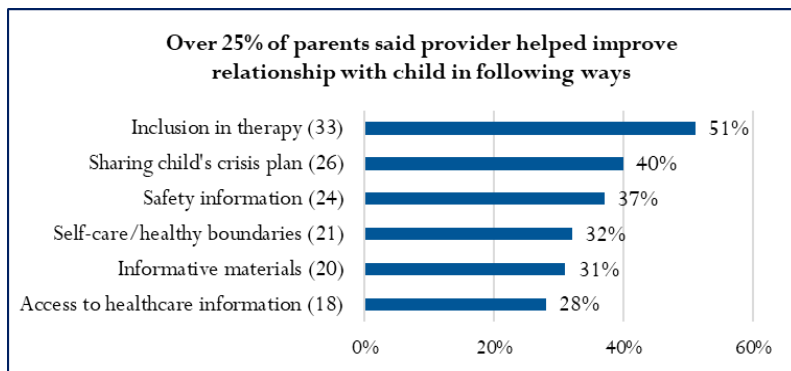
Twenty-five parents (40%) said their child had experienced stigma related to their mental health or substance use disorder. The top three sources of stigma reported by these parents were friends, extended family, and school.

Seven of these parents said that stigma had prevented their child from getting the treatment they needed.

Top 5 things parents would tell others to reduce stigma ...

- ◆ Educate people about mental health
- ◆ Mental illness can be biological
- ◆ People are people first
- ◆ Don't make judgements
- ◆ Avoid “internal stigma” - *Internal stigma occurs when a person internalizes negative messages about mental illness or substance use which can prevent them from talking about their experiences and getting the help they need.*

RELATIONSHIPS



COPING SKILLS

Parents reported a wide variety of strategies their child uses during stressful situations. Forty parents (63%) mentioned 3 or more.