

# Communications & Media Toolkit

## THE CHALLENGE

Children and families across the country are not receiving timely, coordinated behavioral health support. When systems respond too late—or not together in isolation—needs escalate, and families are left navigating disconnected services on their own.

Too often, children only receive help once they are in crisis or involved in high-cost systems like child welfare or juvenile justice. This approach is reactive, inefficient, and does not meet the needs of children and families.



**CHILDREN CANNOT WAIT**

## OUR RESPONSE

The Children's Behavioral Health Collective is a collective of national organizations working together to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families by strengthening behavioral health systems.

By aligning efforts across sectors, CBHC advances solutions that:

- ✓ **Support** children & families earlier
- ✓ **Strengthen** coordination across systems
- ✓ **Expand access** to community-based care
- ✓ **Improve outcomes** while reducing systems strain

The Collective serves as a unified voice for action, focused on practical, scalable **solutions that can be implemented now.**

## CORE MESSAGE

Children's behavioral health is a shared responsibility.



When systems work together to provide early, coordinated support, children and families experience better outcomes—and fewer crises.

**THE SOLUTIONS EXIST. THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW**

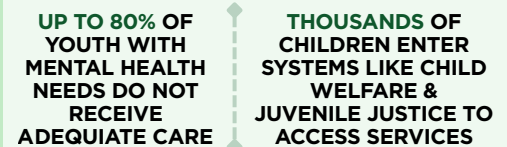
## KEY DATA POINTS

### SCOPE OF THE NEED



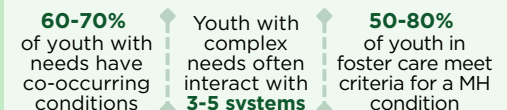
**WHAT THIS MEANS:** Early identification & response are critical

### ACCESS GAPS



**WHAT THIS MEANS:** Systems are functioning as default entry points—not intended supports.

### COMPLEXITY & SYSTEM IMPACT



**50-75% OF YOUTH IN JUSTICE FACILITIES HAVE PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS**

**WHAT THIS MEANS:** Fragmentation increases complexity, costs & poor outcomes.

## COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH

### All communication should:

- \* Emphasize urgency & action
- \* Reinforce shared responsibility across systems
- \* Focus on solutions, not blame
- \* Use clear, accessible language
- \* Highlight community-based support & early intervention

### Consistent Phrases to Reinforce:

- \* Children cannot wait
- \* The urgency is now
- \* Every system has a role & a responsibility
- \* Start early, stay connected
- \* The solution is in the community

## KEY TALKING POINTS

**The need is urgent.** Children & families are not receiving timely behavioral health support & needs escalate when systems respond too late.

**Early support changes trajectories.** When children receive support sooner, outcomes improve & reliance on crisis systems decreases.

**No single system can solve this alone.** Coordination across systems improves continuity, reduces inefficiencies & leads to better outcomes.

**Families should not navigate this alone.** Strong partnerships across systems & communities create more accessible & effective support.

**Community-based support works.** Investing in community-based care improves outcomes & reduces unnecessary system involvement.

**This is solvable.** Proven approaches exist today & can be scaled through coordinated action.

**The Collaborative is driving action.** It brings partners together to align solutions, strengthen accountability & accelerate progress.

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## CAMPAIGN LANGUAGE

### CORE CAMPAIGN PHRASES

- \* Children cannot wait—act now.
- \* Every system has a role—and a responsibility.
- \* Start early. Stay connected.
- \* Support families now. Build better systems for tomorrow.
- \* Coordination is care.
- \* The solution starts in the community.

### SHORT MESSAGE LINES

- \* Children need support that is timely, connected & easy to access.
- \* Acting early leads to better outcomes.
- \* Community-based support keeps children where they belong.
- \* Coordination across systems leads to better care.
- \* Supporting children early strengthens families & communities.
- \* Better connections create better futures.

## USING DATA EFFECTIVELY

- \* Pair data with a clear message
- \* Keep it simple—use 1-2 strong stats at a time
- \* Explain why the data matters
- \* Tailor your audience
- \* Always connect data to solutions
- \* Use qualitative stories to bring data to life



## CALLS TO ACTION



Align funding & policy across systems to support early intervention



Invest in community-based behavioral health



Strengthen coordination & shared accountability



Build pathways that connect families to support before crisis



Partner across systems to deliver integrated care



Invest in what works for children & families

## WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

Use shared language in your communications

Highlight cross-system coordination in your work

Elevate community-based solutions

Build partnerships across agencies & sectors

Bring these messages into policy, funding & practice decisions

## TAILORING MESSAGES BY AUDIENCE



### POLICYMAKERS

Focus on outcomes, cost-effectiveness, system performance

Frame as a smart investment that improves outcomes & reduces long-term costs

Align funding, policy & accountability across systems



### PROVIDERS & PRACTITIONERS

Focus on coordination, care delivery, practical impact

Emphasize collaboration to better serve families

Improve partnerships & referral pathways



### COMMUNITIES

Focus on access, trust & local impact

Position communities as essential partners

Build partnerships & reduce stigma



### EXECUTIVE STATE LEADERSHIP

Focus on cross-agency alignment & leadership

Reduce fragmentation & improve outcomes

Align strategy, resources & goals

## SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN: CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

### Week 1

#### The Challenge

Children cannot wait. The urgency is now.

### Week 2

#### Collaboration

Every system has a role & a responsibility.

### Week 3

#### Quality & Impact

Coordination is care.

### Week 4

#### Community

The solution starts in the community.

### Final post

Let's keep moving from awareness to action.