



Teen Mental Health Initiative Overview
July 15, 2016

Palo Alto and the neighboring Peninsula communities have been significantly impacted by the mental health issues of teen anxiety, depression and suicide. These issues know no economic or geographical boundaries. Whether caused by environmental factors, biological factors or both, all kids have the potential to be impacted by the effects of anxiety and depression.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, many depressed or anxious teens who are at risk for attempting suicide never receive proper treatment due to stigma around talking about mental health, lack of awareness or knowledge about their symptoms, and/or lack of access to care. Many concerned community members from local schools, hospitals, clinics and organizations around the Bay Area have pulled together to draw greater attention to this community challenge. While much effort and many gains have been made to build awareness and advocacy, a gap in teen mental health services still remains. This gap continues to put teens struggling with depression and anxiety at great risk.

Children’s Health Council is leveraging our skills, expertise, and relationships to **create a web of mental health support for teens, their families and the community**. CHC specializes in Anxiety & Depression, has a long track record of success with community education and therapy, and we’ve established strong community partnerships. Our agency is well poised to take a leadership role and make a real difference by launching the **Teen Mental Health Initiative**. The Initiative’s four **goals** are to:

- Reduce stigma**
- Increase awareness**
- Connect those in need to those who can help**
- Reduce teen suicides**

In order to deliver on these goals, CHC will engage in three specific types of **actions**:

Convening: In partnership with Stanford, CHC will provide leadership and foster deeper connections between key stakeholders and local providers—engaging and mobilizing the community to leverage our collective strengths for teens. This convening group will

- Work together in program development to have an even greater impact
- Share resources and provide support to one another
- Increase awareness of each group’s role in helping our teens
- Address gaps in support and services
- Ensure accountability

Education: In response to community needs, and in partnership with schools, local universities, teen groups and organizations, CHC will deliver relevant mental health education options, including

- New series of classes and educational modules focused on teen mental health issues for parents, schools and public agencies, available in multiple languages
- Expert talks, lectures and panels, and an annual symposium
- Website with well-researched and practical resources and tools to help teens and parents

Therapy: CHC will offer a broad range of affordable teen therapy options for mental health, including

- Increased outpatient therapy services—individual, family, groups, psychiatry
- Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)
- Easy-to-access Teen Advice Line
- Virtual therapy solutions

The Teen Mental Health Initiative provides a tremendous opportunity to **remove the stigma, get people talking, and help our teens.** Visit our [website](#) for updates, information, and events.