

Washington County Coalition for Children

the region's child advocacy organization, working to assure all children thrive-serving as **catalyst** and **facilitator** for community change via 3 primary roles:

Advocacy

Amplify Voices

To facilitate policy & systems change

Collaboration

Facilitate & Foster Partnerships

To develop workable strategies & solutions

Innovation

Spark Creative Solutions & Action

To achieve tangible change

Given the youth mental health crisis, our sole priority is **promoting child & adolescent mental wellness**. In 2025, we



ADVOCACY SUCCESSES

- ▶ Worked with Rep. Teresa Tanzi & Sen. Alana DiMario for the second year on **state legislation requiring commercial insurance coverage of Community Health Worker services (H6117/S0705)** and **youth Mobile Response & Stabilization Services (H6118/S0263)** - The CHW bill passed in the Senate for the 2nd year, but failed again in the House this year; the **MRSS Bill passed the Senate & House and was signed into law!**
- ▶ Established a **2025 state legislative platform**, supporting important children's mental health bills with the help of our first **Health Policy Scholar** (student intern), who prepared **FACT Sheets** to educate lawmakers and rallied support from across the state, providing **Action Tool Kits** to partners to prepare both oral & written testimony
- ▶ **Convened an 18-member Youth Advisory Council** to plan & facilitate our 2nd annual **Youth Mental Health Summit**
- ▶ **Organized the Summit with ~100 participants** (including local legislators, town council members, health/mental health providers & insurers, school administrators, social service agencies, youth program leaders, child advocates, & parents) in May 2025 to highlight the importance of **youth-driven spaces** one of the 4 components of the Youth Advisory Council's county-wide **ACTION PLAN for Mental Wellness**

- ▶ Partnered with Thundermist Health Center & Narragansett School System to provide **tele-behavioral health services** to students during the school day with the support of a Community Health Worker
- ▶ Teamed up with Narragansett High School Health Teacher Grace Handley to teach **teen Mental Health First Aid** to the entire sophomore class (86 students); Offered 5 other **Youth Mental Health First Aid** trainings (certifying 67 adults), including Jonnycake Center of Hope & Ocean Tides School staff
- ▶ United with Reach Out & Read RI to encourage parents of young children to read to their children and subscribe to **The Greatest 8™**'s Text Messaging Service (TMS) to build their kids' social-emotional skills
- ▶ Hired Community Outreach Worker & expanded **The Greatest 8™** outreach to CTC-RI, Ocean State Media, Providence Children's Museum, Ocean State Libraries, Providence Promise, Inspiring Minds, & more!
- ▶ Collaborated with the Chris Collins Foundation & URI Human Development & Family Science Dept. to continue to foster **youth engagement** via the **SYNC (Sharing Your Next Conversation) podcast**
- ▶ Leveraged data support from Brown Univ. Swearer Center-Data & Evaluation Partnerships to document on-going **youth mental health concerns** in **Washington County** to share at our Youth Mental Health Summit



WNS



- ▶ Rolled out *CenTEENial social media campaign* to highlight amazing teens from around the world (in honor of the 100th anniversary of the phrase 'teenager')
- ▶ Developed a variety of *Back-to-School resources* from *The Greatest 8™* to share with families, including Parent Tips, anti-anxiety strategies, & recommended booklists; Library Toolkits with copies of recommended books in English & Spanish shared with the state's 70 public libraries
- ▶ Created a set of *Parent Tip Sheets* (from *The Greatest 8™*) for PCPs to share with families at 10 well-child visits (1 week, 6 mos, 12 mos, 18 mos, 2 yrs, 3 yrs, 4 yrs, 5 yrs, 6 yrs, and 7 & 8 yrs)
- ▶ Launched new *SYNC* (*Sharing Your Next Conversation*) *youth mental health podcast series* on World Mental Health Day (Oct 10, 2025)

Why Do We Do This Work?

Mental health disorders affect nearly half (49.5%) of all teens, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

Youth
Mental Health
Matters!

2024 RIDE SurveyWorks! Results
Washington County 6th-12th graders

 **Nearly 1 in 2** student respondents said **stress interfered with activities** both inside & outside of school

 **1 in 4** students admitted that in the last year they **felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more** in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities

Our Work Is Made Possible by Generous Funding from:



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And donations from members and people like you!

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Organizational Growth & Development

- ▶ Coalition's youth engagement work focus of '*State of the State*' cable show in May and highlighted at *RI School Wellness Leaders Breakfast* in October
- ▶ Secured organizational development consultation for **Communications & Fund Development Planning**
- ▶ Strengthened partnerships with URI & Brown University School of Public Health to secure both class engagement & **5 student interns** this year
- ▶ Acquired \$42K in foundation grants & contracts to support continued growth of the Coalition & current programming
- ▶ Extended URI Mental Health First Aid contract thru June '26



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