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Fifty Year Old Nonprofit Provides Continued Youth Care in Varied Settings Amid Continuing Pandemic

In 1970 a group of parents realized their children weren't getting the mental health support they needed. Together they formed the organization we now know as Headway Emotional Health Services. Today, our work has expanded to include services for people of all ages but the passion we've always had for supporting children and adolescents in getting the mental and emotional healthcare they need remains a core tenet of our organization.

We offer children and families access to the services they need through a variety of methods. School-based therapists are placed into traditional school settings, and directly address mental health concerns, chemical abuse, and school success through formal therapy services, support and advocacy for families, and consultation with school staff. With their clients and families, they work to identify and eliminate blocks that interfere with a student's success. Headway School-Based Therapy Supervisor, Abbie Lane says, "When kids and families can have a positive experience with CMH services, it sets them up to get the support they need to improve their mental health AND it can reduce stigma if they need services ongoing or in the future. Early intervention is an investment in the emotional capacity of our future generations!" Highlighting that access to mental health services in schools "allows families to have access to needed services and facilitates collaboration between all the adults providing care to children and families; it makes so much sense!"

Our Day Treatment takes a slightly different approach, bringing students into a therapeutic setting with an academic component. Here they are focused on rehabilitation that lasts a lifetime. The goal is for students to leave our program emotionally strong, with high self-esteem and the resilience needed to cope with the normal social expectations of a mainstream school environment. As Jacqueline Arzapalo, Headway's Day Treatment Managing Supervisor puts it there is a "need for layered mental health services. Without Day Treatment the options left for clients are traditional outpatient services and hospitalization with nothing in between. This could potentially have kids being placed into ERs and Inpatient hospitalizations at a way higher rate. Then when it is time to discharge from the hospital, they wouldn't have enough support and would end up back in the hospital or worse."

We know that mental health needs are especially high as the pandemic continues, and there are a lot of children and families who do not have access to services due to a number of barriers, whether it be literal access in their area, cost, transportation, etc. It is our job to do whatever we can to support the children in our communities. Providing them mental healthcare when they need it, that's the least we can do.

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