

Questions and Answers



Pediatric Providers Webinar

Last update: 5-7-20

Questions Asked May 7, 2020

"COVID & Mental Health Support for Children and Adolescents"

**Presentation by Lisa Giles, MD, Medical Director for PCH Behavioral Health Service Line, and
Brooks Keeshin, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, University of Utah**

- 1. Is anyone in your field having discussions with Utah's Department of Education to let high schoolers across the state have the option of taking their classes pass/fail this semester? There are so many factors out of the teen's control which are being reflected in worsening grades and causing many kid's anxiety to sky rocket.**

Answer: Lisa and Brooks said they are involved with a network of schools and this is an ongoing conversation. Some kids also have decreased anxiety with canceled school attendance. Pediatricians have the ability to write letters on behalf of patients and send to schools. Providing support could possibly result in system change.

- In Utah, these decisions are in the hands of each district. Alpine and Jordan Districts have done this – perhaps reach out to your local district and advocate for the teens.

- 2. We know our patients that may be at higher risk of problems during this time – should we be reaching out? If we do, a challenge experienced is difficulty screening over the phone or video visit. Any suggestions?**

Answer: Yes, this is a great time to utilize a registry of patients if you have access to this. Then you can reach out to your patients with known mental health issues and screen for current issues. A script has been developed by Intermountain to assess a few key questions in order to triage and then you can offer something the child or parent could do right now or connect to therapy if needed. Please refer to BITS material here: <https://intermountainhealthcare.org/ckr-ext/Dcmnt?ncid=529796906>

- 3. Concern about potential increase in behavioral health needs and possible increase in prescribing medications – thoughts?**

Answer: We all sense and suspect mental health needs are going to grow due to multiple challenges. Lots of kids are stressed. It's important to remember our first-line treatment is therapeutic intervention and medications are second-line. Kids need supportive parenting /care and connection to therapeutic interventions.

Resources Provided by Lisa and Brooks:

- <https://www.covid19parenting.com/>
- <https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/disasters/pandemic-resources>
- <https://www.aacap.org/coronavirus>

- Pediatric Behavioral Health Assessment, Referral, and Consultation Service (formally known as Intake) – 801-313-7711
- Safe and Healthy Families (Trauma Focused Therapy) - 801-662-3600
- Child Psychiatry Consultation Access Line – 12-4:30pm M-F – 801-587-3636
(<https://healthcare.utah.edu/uni/programs/call-up.php>)