



A PROGRAM OF KIDS IN CRISIS

OVERVIEW



For more information on launching or expanding the TeenTalk program in your community, please contact Ellen Brezovsky, LCSW, Kids In Crisis Director of Outreach and Community Initiatives at ebrezovsky@kidsin crisis.org, or Denise Qualey, MSW, Kids In Crisis Managing Director, Crisis and Clinical Services at dqualey@kidsin crisis.org.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE



One Salem Street, Cos Cob, CT kidsin crisis.org **24-hour Helpline 203-661-1911**



Dear Guests,

On behalf of the board and staff of Kids In Crisis, we extend a warm welcome to the Annual TeenTalk Summit. We are thrilled to have you join us today as we focus on funding youth mental health programs in our schools and after-school programs.

Our TeenTalk programs are expanding into more schools and towns across Fairfield County, making sustainable funding increasingly critical. With over 1,500 students participating in TeenTalk counseling and groups this past year alone, the need for continuous support and resources is evident. We believe the insights shared by our esteemed speakers and TeenTalk student ambassadors will help us lay a blueprint for future funding and ensure that these vital services remain available to all who need them.

We are especially grateful to the town of Darien and Ox Ridge Elementary School for hosting us. Their support has been instrumental in bringing this event to life. We also want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our distinguished speakers, including students, government officials, private sector leaders, non-profit representatives, and education professionals, for their invaluable contributions today.

Most importantly, thank you for coming out and supporting youth mental health in your community. Your presence and engagement today are crucial in driving forward our mission to provide essential mental health support to young people across Fairfield County.

Shari L. Shapiro
Kids In Crisis Executive Director

Suzanne Koroshetz
Kids In Crisis Board Chair

WELCOME TO THE TEENTALK SUMMIT

AGENDA

July 22, 2024

Welcome from Dignitaries

Senator Blumenthal, Congressman Jim Himes, and Congresswoman Robin Kelly (D-Illinois)

Panel Members

Matt Remson – TeenTalk Student Ambassador, Norwalk High School Graduate, Student Marist College

Dr. Alan Addley – Superintendent Darien Public School

Why do you support mental health and TeenTalk at DHS through your BOE budget?

Dr. Alycia Dadd – Darien Public School Director of Mental Health

What was the turning point for you to push for TeenTalk in Darien?

Ms. Janet King – Executive Director, The Community Fund of Darien

Why was it important to the Community Fund to expand TeenTalk to MMS?

Dr. Tamu Lucero – Superintendent Stamford Public Schools

What challenges does an urban school face to secure TeenTalk funding?

Ms. Demetria Nelson – Commissioner Greenwich Department of Human Services

Why is municipal funding important to support mental health?

Mr. Michael Chambers – Director, Heidenreich Foundation

Why does the Heidenreich Foundation support TeenTalk and what do you hope to achieve in funding this program?

TeenTalk Student Ambassadors

Joely Lozado, Darien High School

Tanisha Joseph, Darien High School

Hope Whitley, Norwalk High School Graduate 2024

Many thanks to our
TeenTalk Summit
Breakfast Sponsor





TESTIMONIALS

NORWALK

The TeenTalk program offers our high school students an experienced counselor through Kids In Crisis. Without the services of TeenTalk, our teens who do not have IEP or 504 counseling would not have direct access to a professional to address their specific social/emotional concerns. Our TeenTalk counselor is a full-time member of our staff and contributes to the school beyond the TeenTalk role.

– Dr. Lynne Moore, Norwalk High School Principal

RIDGEFIELD

Students at RHS find the TeenTalk counselor to be a safe space that they can go to when they are feeling their most vulnerable. They find the individual to be a trusted source of comfort in those situations and feel safe talking to them about some of their most challenging experiences. Students report that providing a counselor not directly affiliated with the school puts them at ease and encourages genuine dialogue.

– Jacob Greenwood, Ridgefield High School Principal



Our TeenTalk counselor, Alex Avila has been an incredible addition to our student support staff. She serves as a multifunctional member of the team working in conjunction with our school counselors and families to provide much needed insight, counseling services, and resources. She often works directly with families to support a variety of needs or directs them to appropriate services. We are extremely fortunate to have Alex here with us at Scotts Ridge! She is awesome!

– Timothy Salem, Scotts Ridge Middle School Principal



RIDGEFIELD

Having a TTC in our buildings is essential to meeting all of our students' needs. They provide extra support for our students and their work complements the counseling and mental health supports we already have in place. TeenTalk counselors may work with students who are experiencing an acute need like a difficult peer situation or family situation, or they may work with students on a more consistent basis as they deal with more persistent challenges like anxiety or stress.

Our TTC collaborates with the counseling staff often and we view them as part of the team even though they work for an outside organization. Through collaborative efforts they create supportive plans for students in school but also have the ability to provide wrap around services for after school hours. The initial connection with our TTC during school hours opened the door for these services outside of school, which the students and families may not have utilized otherwise.

– Jennifer Phostole, East Ridge Middle School Principal

STAMFORD

Our schools should not be alone in supporting and promoting mental health in schools. This effort requires collaboration between schools, parents, healthcare professionals, and community organizations to address the complex needs of our youth today. We are fortunate to have partnered with Kids In Crisis to bring TeenTalk to our students at Academy of Information Technology and Engineering High School. TeenTalk fosters an inclusive environment that supports students in seeking help without fear of judgment or discrimination. TeenTalk ensures that our students receive comprehensive support that extends beyond the school setting. We look forward to extending this valuable program to other schools to provide more students with the much needed social and emotional support.

– Mike Meyer, Director of Family & Community Engagement

NEW CANAAN

TeenTalk counselors have brought essential social and emotional support to our students at a time when mental health issues in youth continue to rise. They have assisted with individual counseling, peer mediation, academic guidance, prevention/education, group counseling, family meetings, and school avoidance cases. They have helped our students enormously with anxiety, depression, family issues, and academic stress. TeenTalk counselors have been critical to our success in supporting our students, and we are grateful to them for all of their expertise, professionalism and care.

– Susan Bliss, Student Support Coordinator



WESTPORT

TeenTalk has been invaluable for us at Staples. With the ever increasing mental health needs that arise for students, having more hands on deck is extremely helpful and having someone especially knowledgeable of community resources that is able to assist with connecting students directly to outside supports has been so incredible. Many of the students they meet with are resistant at first to any kind of counseling but through consistent relationship building and a bit of patience, they seem to come around and find the benefits of it when working with our TeenTalk folks. I think I can speak for our whole counseling department that we are grateful for the work that Melissa (and this year Martha as well) have done for our students and community. They truly go above and beyond and are an integral part of our team!



– Sarah Magilnick, School Counselor

Kids In Crisis' TeenTalk Program at Staples High School is an essential resource in addressing the emotional well-being of youth in Westport by offering flexible and responsive services that ensure every student has an outlet for support. The partnerships between the schools, the Town, and other community-based resources have enhanced our ability to meet the complex needs of youth and families while improving access to additional community supports.

Our Staples TeenTalk Counselor Melissa Rotante-Sportini understands the importance of relationships as a pathway to mental well-being and embodies that sentiment in her daily work with students.

– Elaine Allen Daignault, Director of Human Services

GREENWICH

The TeenTalk Program has become an essential element of school and a critical partnership in support of the youth in our community. The relationship we as a school have with the program and organization has been integral to the safety and success of countless children. Our TeenTalk Counselor is a wonderful addition to the school mental health team and provides an unparalleled service to the staff, students, and families of Central Middle School.

– Thomas Healy, Central Middle School Principal



NEWTOWN

TeenTalk is an invaluable resource for our students in the Newtown Schools. There is no other program out there that offers services 24/7 in cases where if something arises once school ends on Friday, there's someone available who can help. We have had so much success with the program at the high school that we brought the program into our middle school. I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to attend a seminar where I met one of the administrators, Denise Qualey and she spent quite a bit of time explaining the program to me. I did my research with other schools who were using the program then offered to bring the program into the Newtown Schools as a result. Every school should have a TeenTalk counselor!

– Dorrie Carolan, Founder & Executive Director of Parent Connection

DARIEN

Anxiety, depression and self-harm is on the rise with teens, and Darien has not escaped its reach. I am thrilled for our students to have the additional support of a TeenTalk counselor that works within the school building but is a separate entity. TeenTalk provides the accessibility of mental health services within the school building but the confidentiality of a private counselor that the students need to feel comfortable.

– Tara Wurm, Darien Board of Education

WILTON



The TeenTalk program is an invaluable resource to our community. This program allows students an opportunity to meet with an outreach counselor in addition to our mental health staff. This becomes critically important for students in need of intensive family support, respite services or after hours care. The relationship with Kids In Crisis is an integral part of our comprehensive tiered support model needed in these times of increased mental health needs among our youth.

– Kimberly Zemo, District Safe School Climate Coordinator





CURRENT PROGRAMS

SCHOOL	TOWN	PRINCIPAL
Boys & Girls Club of Greenwich	Greenwich	Cristina Vittoria
Eastern Middle School	Greenwich	Marc Guarino
Central Middle School	Greenwich	Thomas Healy
Western Middle School	Greenwich	PJ Wax III
Hamilton Avenue Elementary School	Greenwich	Diane Chiappetta Fox
AITE	Stamford	Tina Rivera
Boys & Girls Club of Stamford	Stamford	Craig Baker
New Canaan High School	New Canaan	William Egan
Brien McMahon High School	Norwalk	Barbara Wood
Norwalk High School	Norwalk	Dr. Lynn Moore
Staples High School	Westport	Stafford Thomas Jr.
Ridgefield High School	Ridgefield	Jacob Greenwood
East Ridge Middle School	Ridgefield	Jennifer Phostole
Scotts Ridge Middle School	Ridgefield	Timothy Salem
Newtown High School	Newtown	Kimberly Longobucco
Wilton High School	Wilton	Robert O'Donnell
Middlesex Middle School	Darien	TDB
Darien High School	Darien	Ellen Dunn



TEENTALK • KIDTALK • CLUBTALK

TeenTalk, KidTalk and ClubTalk are mental health support programs based full-time in area elementary, middle and high schools as well as afterschool programs such as the Boys and Girls Club. The programs reach students through individual counseling, group sessions, and presentations with crisis intervention and outreach services available 24/7.

This report provides a summary of the children and teens served by the program from 7/1/23 through 6/30/24.

Total served: 4,065 students were reached this year

- **1,125 students** received one-on-one individual counseling
- **An additional 495 students** participated in Topic Groups
- **An additional 2,455 individuals** (students, teachers, parents) were reached through presentations made by the TeenTalk, KidTalk, and ClubTalk counselors.

LOCATION OF PROGRAMS IN DATA REPORT

GREENWICH

- Eastern Middle School
- Central Middle School
- Western Middle School
- Greenwich Boys and Girls Club
- KidTalk at Hamilton Avenue Elementary School [opened May 2023]

NEW CANAAN

- New Canaan High School
- Saxe Middle School

NEWTOWN

- Newtown High School
- Newtown Middle School

DARIEN

- Darien High School [open August 2023]

NORWALK

- Brien McMahon High School
- Norwalk High School

RIDGEFIELD

- East Ridge Middle School
- Scotts Ridge Middle School
- Ridgefield High School

STAMFORD

- AITE High School
- Stamford Boys & Girls Club

WESTPORT

- Staples High School

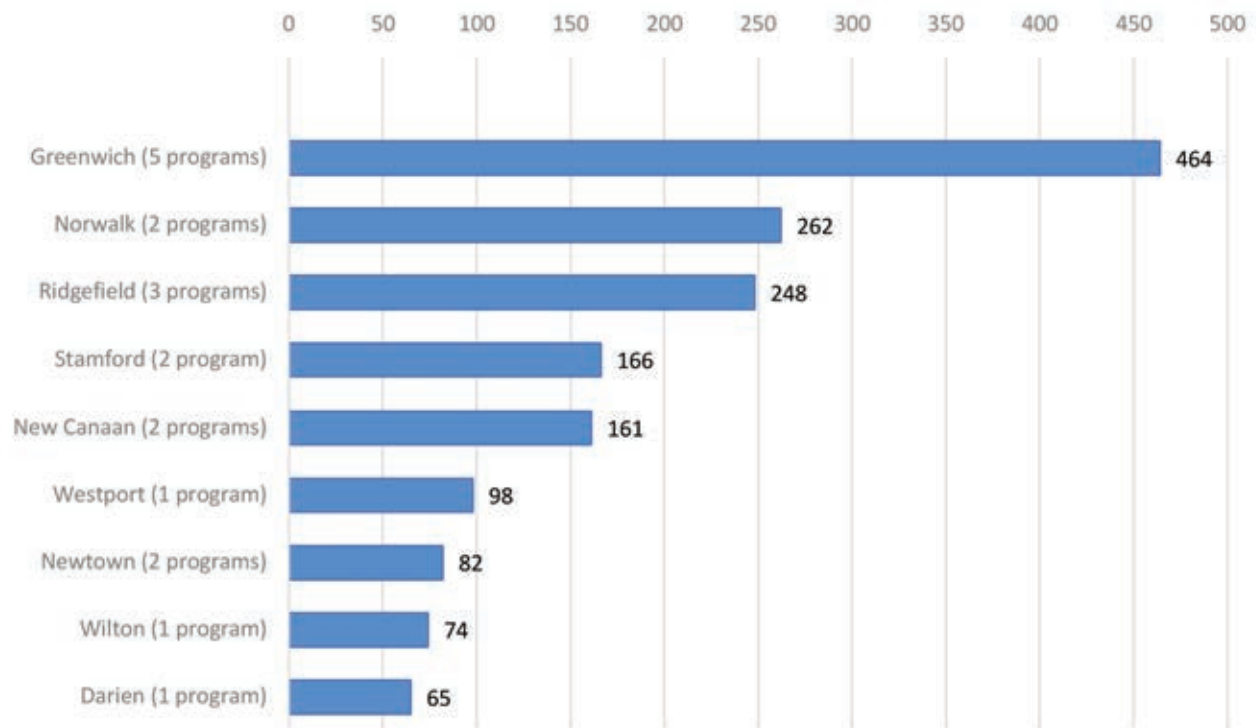
WILTON

- Wilton High School

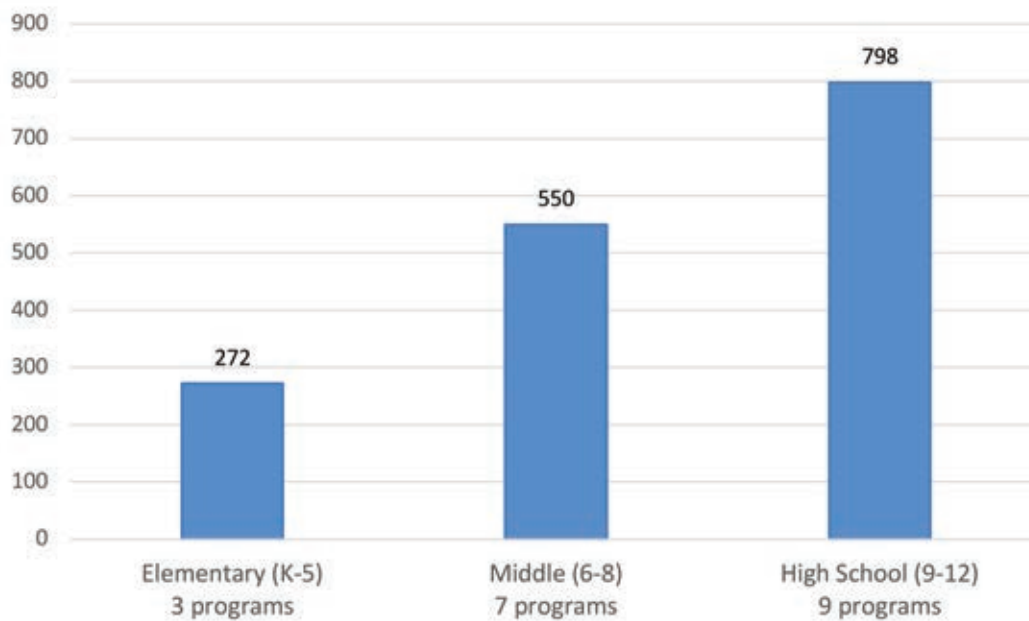


STUDENTS SERVED

Students served by town (# participated in counseling and groups)



Students served by grade level (individual counseling and groups)



SERVICES PROVIDED BY COUNSELORS

Counseling

- **6,130** Individual counseling sessions (“traditional” mental health counseling)
- **2,171** Informal sessions (brief or spontaneous “check-ins”)

Other services

- **1,063** Parent/guardian supports (in-person meetings, telephone/email conversations, information and referrals provided)
- **1,772** Case collaborations (working as a team with other professionals, clinicians and community members to meet students’ unique needs)
- **414** SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention & Referral to Treatment) assessments
- **262** School team meetings (student-centered meetings including, but not limited to, 504, PPTs)
- **503** school/staff meetings (team meetings including general staff, mental health team, teacher team, student concerns)
- **118** Referrals
- **471** Ohio scales initial assessments (**304** follow-ups)
- **121** Topic groups (ongoing meetings on a specific topic)
- **61** Presentations
- **23** Family counseling sessions
- **56** Translation services
- **25** Home visits

THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Children and teens are facing increased mental health challenges. The following data applies to the **1,125 students** who participated in individual counseling during the past year:

- **76** Crisis safety assessments provided
- **3** Students were accompanied to the hospital in crisis
- **36** Students presented initially with Crisis safety – suicidal ideation/self-harm/threat
- **293** Students presented initially with anxiety and depression
- **88** Students presented with Other Mental Health concern

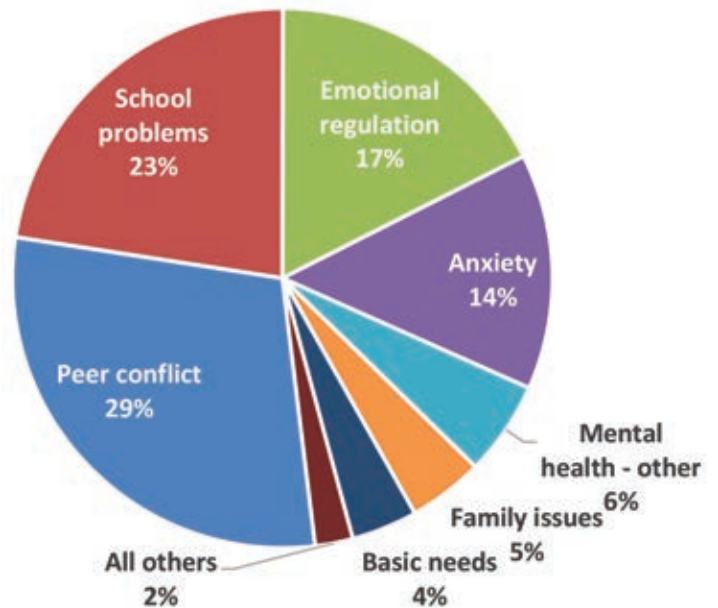
Through their work with their counselors, students identified the following additional issues they were experiencing (students allowed to identify multiple issues):

- **58** Students identified as expressing suicidal ideation
- **55** Students identified self-harming
- **402** Students reported anxiety
- **236** Students reported depression
- **31** Students reported substance misuse
- **52** Students were experiencing grief/loss

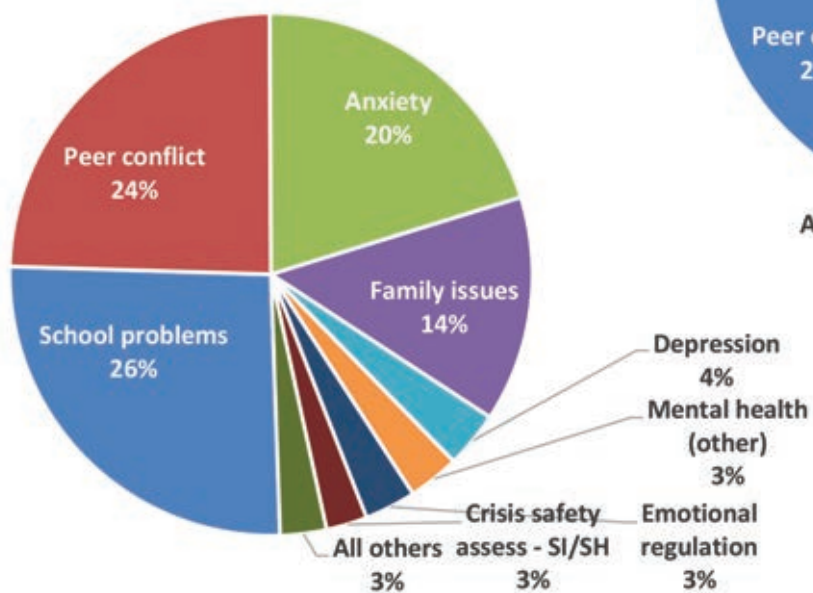


PRESENTING ISSUES

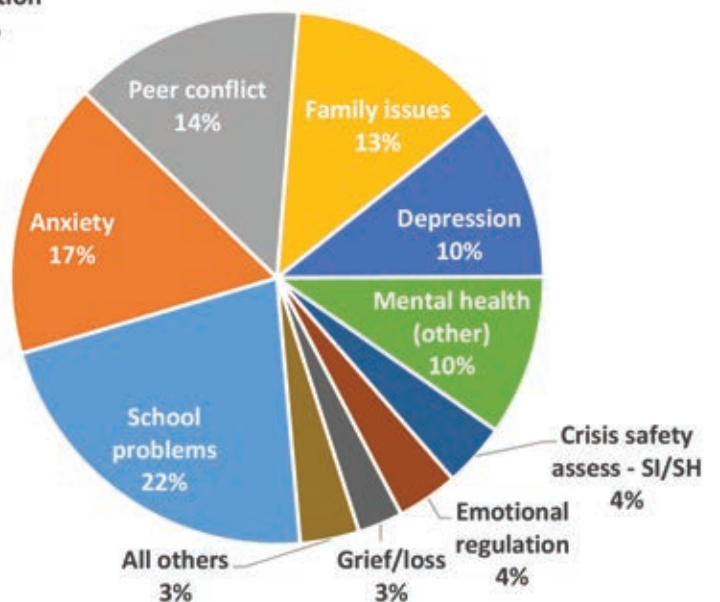
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



MIDDLE SCHOOL



HIGH SCHOOL





SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES

83.4% of students reported they were “Extremely Satisfied” or “Moderately Satisfied” with the services they received from their counselor

COUNSELOR-RATED PROGRESS

This measure was added to give the counselors an opportunity to subjectively measure student improvement by responding to the question: Looking back at the student's presenting problem, did the student achieve progress on this issue?

[951 students reported]

81.0 % students were rated as having a score of 3 (some improvement) or more

		%
5. A great deal of improvement	99	10.4%
4. Moderate improvement	306	32.2%
3. Some improvement	365	38.4%
2. Little improvement	159	16.7%
1. No improvement	22	2.3%





FY 2025 BUDGET

PERSONNEL	ANNUAL COST
Teen Talk Counselor - Salary	65,000
Teen Talk Counselor- Crisis On Call	1,082
Director of Outreach (Planning and Supervision)	6,672
Quality Assurance Associate Director (Program evaluation)	2,288
Crisis Services Counselors (24/7 wraparound support)	3,255
Sub Total Salary	78,297
FICA, UEI, Workers Comp Taxes	6,864
Health Insurance	11,544
Pension (3.0% of salary)	2,341
Sub Total Fringe	20,749
OTHER	
Program Supplies (\$30/week@ 36 weeks)	1,112
Insurance	803
Telephone (crisis line @ \$10/week/52 weeks)	536
Postage (.60 @ 10/week/52 weeks)	321
Printing/Publication (business cards, brochures, etc)	773
Transportation (.585/mile @ 20 miles/week/36 weeks)	486
Conferences/Trainings	773
Sub Total Other	4,804
Total Expenses	\$103,850





FUNDING DISTRIBUTION ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS

- Town or DHS – \$845,000 (44%)
- Private Funders – \$721,000 (38%)
- Board of Education – \$334,000 (13%)

