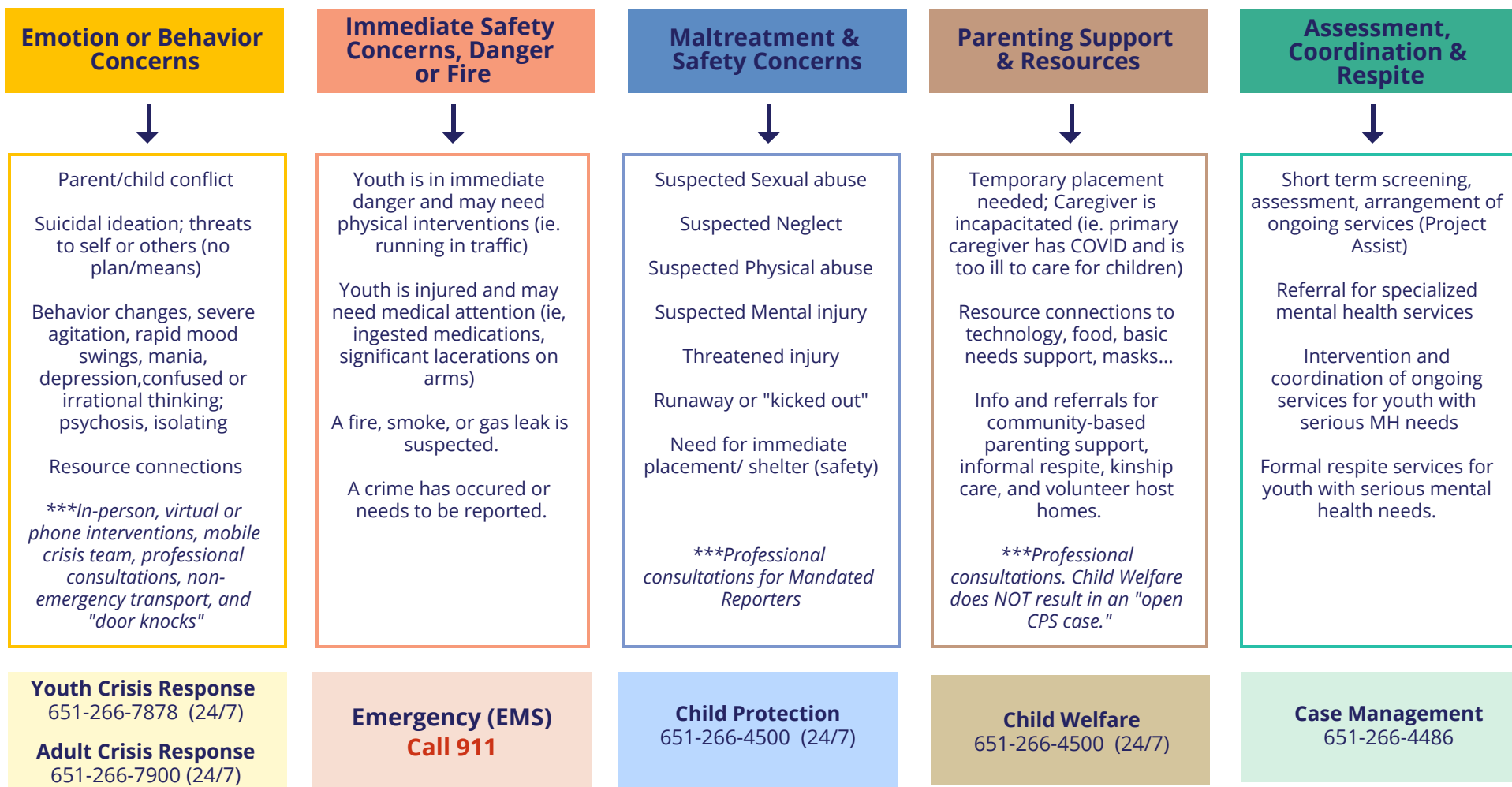




Supporting Youth & Families through Challenging Times

for School Staff & Family Service Providers

Increased stress and isolation are leading to increased mental health, substance use, and maltreatment issues. Please use this flow chart and the attached "Closer Look" pages to better understand Ramsey County and community-based options for supporting youth and families through challenging times. Ramsey County Children's Mental Health Collaborative is here to help too! We offer trainings, resources, family support, and community connections. For more info on RCCMHC, please email wendy@rccmhc.org or call 612-499-1121





A Closer Look: Youth Emotions & Behaviors During COVID19

"Events of the last several months can take a toll on young children. They may have experienced loss of friends as they moved from school or child care to staying safe at home. They may have had loved ones who were sick or lost a job. They may have witnessed violence in person, by listening to others or watching television. These can cause fears and anxiety... For many, especially children, the stress and trauma threaten to have long-lasting negative impacts on the body and brain." ([MN Department of Education](#)- June 18, 2020)

WARNING SIGNS

- Mood/behavior change; mood swings
- Extreme energy or lack of energy
- Severe agitation; pacing; fighting
- Inability to cope; excessive worry
- Talking rapidly or non-stop
- Frequent nightmares
- Hyperactivity, impulsivity, difficulty concentrating, risk-taking
- "Baby talk"/ younger behavior
- Changes in school performance
- Substance use
- Suicidal thoughts & statements**
- Isolation from friends/family
- Self injury; threats to self/others*
- Poor eye contact/communication
- Rapid weight loss or gain
- Headaches, stomachaches etc.
- Changes in appetite/sleep
- Frequent temper tantrums
- Confused thinking; detachment from reality (delusions), paranoia or hallucinations



CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM

- **651-266-7878**
- 24/7 mobile response
- 24/7 phone intervention
- De-escalate before crisis
- Non-emergency transport
- Stabilization after crisis
- Assessments, resource connections



* The TOADS acronym (time, opportunity, ability, desire, and stimulus) can help determine imminence and intent of a threat (to self or others.) With increased isolation, TOADS components are likely to be more prominent (e.g., more time to ruminate, increased stressors, less supervision). [NASP Resources for the Virtual Environment](#)

** [Suicide Intervention Checklist](#) during distance learning (NASP)

PLAN, COORDINATE, & COMMUNICATE

Help caregivers prevent crises, track changes and share info with their care team. This online Care Organizer includes fillable sections for medical/ mental health, crisis planning, school etc.

- [Family Care Organizer](#)



TRAINING & SUPPORT

RCCMHC offers free mental health training and support for staff/providers AND families.

- [For Families](#)
- [For Providers/ Professionals](#)

RCCMHC will also connect you with other local trainings and community supports!



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Help families get connected. Often, the best supports are based in community and address whole-family wellbeing...

- [Mental Health Providers](#)
- [Basic Needs Services](#)
- [Local, Time-Sensitive Resources](#)



Visit the RCCMHC [Virtual Calm Room](#)



A Closer Look: Keeping Youth Safe During COVID19

Call **651-266-4500** to talk to a Ramsey County screener.

Research shows that family violence, child abuse and neglect can increase during times of great stress. As many of our interactions with youth and families have shifted to virtual platforms, we need to rethink how we assess and engage. In many ways, nothing has changed. For example- unexplained bruises are still a warning sign. But in other ways, everything has changed! For example- how do we interpret body language through zoom? Or, how do we create trusted connections via telehealth? The ideas and links below can help you to navigate our "new normal."



Increased Risks

- Past or current case with Child Protection
- Isolation; reduced connections
- Illness
- Financial distress; job loss
- Addiction/ substance use
- Mental health disorder or trauma history
- Family or community violence
- Cyber exploitation, bullying and "sextortion"
- [Increased Risks & Recommendations \(AAP\)](#)



Red Flags you might see/hear virtually

- Change in behavior, energy, speech, focus
- A caregiver using harsh physical discipline
- A dangerous object (ie. an unsecured gun)
- Unexplained bruises or marks on youth
- Talk about sex that is not age appropriate
- Young child caring for siblings/ left alone
- Weight loss or other health concerns
- Seems jumpy around caregiver
- Talk of suicide, sadness, anxiety



Connections & Questions

- Who is taking care of you? How are they doing?
- How is everyone getting along with each other? Is anyone having a hard time?
- What things do you like to do at home? What don't you like to do?
- [List of Sample Questions](#)
- [Building Rapport with Youth During Telehealth](#)

Help youth create a private space to talk (shutting door or using chat.) Remember that questions are not connections. To be a trusted adult, you need to listen and respond.

Most youth & families are stressed out!

It's important to remember that some signs are NOT related to abuse/neglect.

- An absent student may need support with technology or internet access
- A disengaged caregiver may need interpreter services.
- Emotional or behavioral changes may indicate an emerging or underlying mental health issue related to feelings of isolation, anxiety, or grief and loss.
- A child's clothing or home may seem dirty or disheveled because the caregiver is now juggling work, child care and online school.
- A distracted, tired, or overwhelmed teen may be taking on extra obligations because a parent is sick or out of work.

A screener can help identify the best way to support the youth/family.

Signs of Child Abuse & Neglect

- [Childwelfare.gov](#)
- [Mayo Clinic](#)

Youth Safety in a Virtual Environment

- [Best Practices \(ASCA\)](#)

Resources for Parents and Caregivers

- [Parenting in a Pandemic: Tips to Keep the Calm at Home \(AAP\)](#)
- [Keeping Kids Safe Online During COVID19](#)

A Closer Look: Child Welfare & Child Protection

Ramsey County intake and screening staff will make an immediate determination and screen into one of the categories below.
651-266-4500 (24/7 phone line)

Diversion

This is a NEW process. Child Welfare uses a team approach to provide prevention and early intervention supports or referrals for families.

If there is no child maltreatment, there is no "open CPS case." Instead, the family is referred to a voluntary Parent Support Outreach Program for short-term case management and support (help with housing, domestic abuse, transportation, employment, parenting, basic needs, and mental health services.)

Child Welfare can also facilitate kinship or voluntary placement if a caregiver is suddenly unable to provide care for a child/ children for a short period of time.



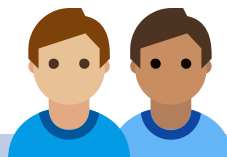
Family Assessment

Child Protection Assessment provides intervention and support for abuse or neglect concerns when there is no substantial child endangerment, sexual abuse, or egregious harm.

Examples can include;

- Marijuana use by caregiver if it affects their ability to care for the child
- Supervision concerns (minor)
- Minor physical abuse

All family assessments are assigned a 5-day response time.



Family Investigation

Child Protection Investigation provides intervention and support for serious reports of harm/neglect to children. All investigations are assigned a 24 hour or 5-day response time

Examples can include;

- Sexual abuse
- Child fatalities or near fatalities
- DWI with child in vehicle
- Significant physical abuse
- Previous termination of parental rights

If there are immediate safety threats, Child Protection may place youth in kinship care, shelter, foster home, hospital, or other inpatient care until an investigation can be completed. Typically, youth up to age 12 will first be assessed at Children's Hospital.



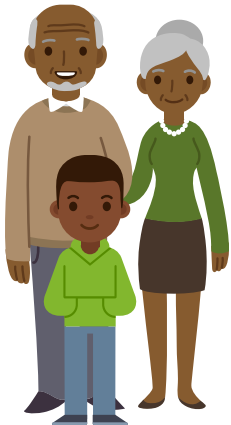


A Closer Look: Respite (a "break" for caregivers)

Every caregiver needs to take breaks. Setting up regular, scheduled respite breaks can be helpful- especially when one or more children may have a mental, physical, or developmental health challenge that requires extra care and attention. Unfortunately, Ramsey County does not have crisis respite or "drop in" respite services. If there is an immediate need for respite or temporary out of home care... please call **651-266-4500** to discuss options.

Formal Respite- Ramsey County

- To be eligible for formal respite services, youth must have serious mental health needs.
- Youth must have a Ramsey County case manager.
- Formal respite services are provided in foster homes that are licensed by Ramsey County. (It takes time to make these arrangements.)
- Formal respite typically lasts 2 days (for example- a weekend) and may be scheduled for up to 4 days per month. There is a signed agreement.
- For more information, contact Case Management: **651-266-4486**



Informal Respite, & Kinship Care/Family Support

- Informal respite and kinship care are arranged by the caregiver. There are no signed agreements with Ramsey County. Any schedule/frequency can be agreed upon by the caregiver and the respite/kinship care provider.
- Some local agencies and community volunteers provide informal respite and family support. This may be hourly or overnight.
- Friends and family members may provide care for youth (this is called kinship care.) Reimbursement through the county may be available.
- Child Welfare can discuss options and make referrals: **651-266-4500**



**Safe Families
for Children**

Safe Families is a local agency that has a contract with Ramsey County Children's Mental Health Collaborative and the Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative. Services are provided for free by trained volunteers in faith communities.

"Circles of Support" include online Healing Circles, a resource friend, a family friend, a family coach, a service friend, daytime and overnight respite options, as well as a temporary host home if that is ever needed. If a parent/caregiver gets sick with the Coronavirus, Safe Families can help the family think through options and make plans. Families can self-refer. Call **1-888-290-7590** ext 0 (or dial ext 2 for the Safe Families FRIEND LINE)



A Closer Look: Out-of-home care or treatment

Call **651-266-4500** to talk to a Ramsey County screener.



Transport to ER (police transport hold)

In a youth mental health emergency, police must issue a transport hold when a caregiver is not present or is not able/willing to drive youth to the ER. Police or ambulance will take the youth instead. With caregiver permission, CPS and Crisis staff can facilitate non-emergency transport.



Voluntary Treatment and Admission

A doctor does an assessment and determines that a hospital or other inpatient treatment is needed. The caregiver agrees with the treatment plan and plan for admission. If needed, a case manager can facilitate non-hospital care.



Emergency Hold

If a doctor determines that hospital or inpatient treatment is needed but the caregiver does NOT agree, the hospital will request a Child Protection hold or an emergency hold with Peace or Health Officer Authority (PHOA) to ensure youth safety.



Child Protection Hold/ Placement

When there are immediate safety threats, Child Protection staff place youth in kinship care or assume temporary legal custody and place youth in shelter, foster home, hospital or other inpatient care. Typically, youth up to age 12 will first be assessed at Children's Hospital.



Voluntary Placement

When a caregiver is temporarily unable to care for a child and kinship care is not an option, Child Welfare staff can arrange a time-limited, voluntary placement to shelter or foster home. A voluntary placement agreement must be signed by the caregiver.



Kinship Care & Host Homes (volunteer)

County screeners can discuss informal care options such as kinship care (family/friend) or volunteer host homes through community-based groups. Informal arrangements are made by the caregiver and are not affiliated with the county.