



mental health matters

promoting resilience for chippewa valley youth

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Short film on youth resilience features Chippewa Valley places and faces

Local mental health coalition will use film as training tool for professionals, parents, and the community

Eau Claire, May 25, 2023 — A local mental health coalition is debuting a powerful short film about youth mental health and resilience, featuring many Chippewa Valley residents and produced by an Emmy Award-winning creative duo.

The film, titled “Shaping Destiny,” takes a close, sensitive look at how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) impact kids’ mental health and how youth can build resilience. The public can watch the film [here](#).

“Shaping Destiny” features 22 Chippewa Valley residents, including adults, youth-serving professionals, and youth. Viewers will hear firsthand personal testimony from adults who have overcome adversity that happened during their childhoods – and hear what local youth have to say in lively unscripted conversations.

The Mental Health Matters Coalition is a group of more than 20 partnering organizations in Eau Claire and Chippewa counties. It works to support and improve youth mental health in the Chippewa Valley.

The coalition hopes the short film will be an insightful training tool for everyone in our community, but especially professionals who work with kids – teachers, medical professionals, coaches, counselors, social workers, and more.

“My hope is that we can come together as a community and help support our kids – we know they’re struggling,” said Brenda Scheurer, project director of Mental Health Matters.

According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 32% of youth in Eau Claire County and 28% of youth in Chippewa County felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities. The survey also found that only 22% of youth in Eau Claire County and 21% of youth in Chippewa County get emotional support when needed, most of the time or always.

“There are ways we can help,” Scheurer said. “Making sure kids have social connections is so important – it’s the number one protective factor to help our kids be resilient.”

The coalition decided to make the film after designing a two-hour workshop about building youth resilience and overcoming ACEs. The workshop was so popular that in 2022, the coalition worked with local creative duo Story Time with Steve & Micah to create a condensed, 30-minute film inspired by the workshop. The short film first premiered at last month’s B.R.A.I.N. Conference in Eau Claire.

For more information about the Mental Health Matters coalition, visit www.mentalhealthmatters.org/. The Mental Health Matters project is funded by the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

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