

THE STATE OF PLAY

Each month, we examine how the mental health conversation in the media is evolving, with a focus on youth, women, and the justice system. Last month, we looked at the connections between youth mental health and trauma. This month, we investigate issues of trauma and women’s mental health – and find meaningful intersection with the justice system.

The diagram below illustrates the conversation around trauma and women’s mental health. It assesses a 384 news articles from July to September 2020. Takeaways include:

Trauma-informed investigations

On August 26th, in honor of Women’s Equality Day, Michigan Representative Elissa Slotkin announced the **Trauma-Informed Investigation Act**. The Act is being considered by the Committee on Education and Labor and would mandate that any investigation of sexual misconduct at an institution of higher education be “conducted with a science-based understanding of sexual trauma” to ensure that victims do not re-live trauma while seeking justice. The Act aligns with recent efforts by the **U.S. military** to reform the way that sexual misconduct is addressed and investigated.

Supporting women’s trauma in domestic violence cases – even as perpetrators

A initiative launched this summer in **Nova Scotia** aims to assuage the trauma women experience in domestic violence courts – whether they are victims or perpetrators.

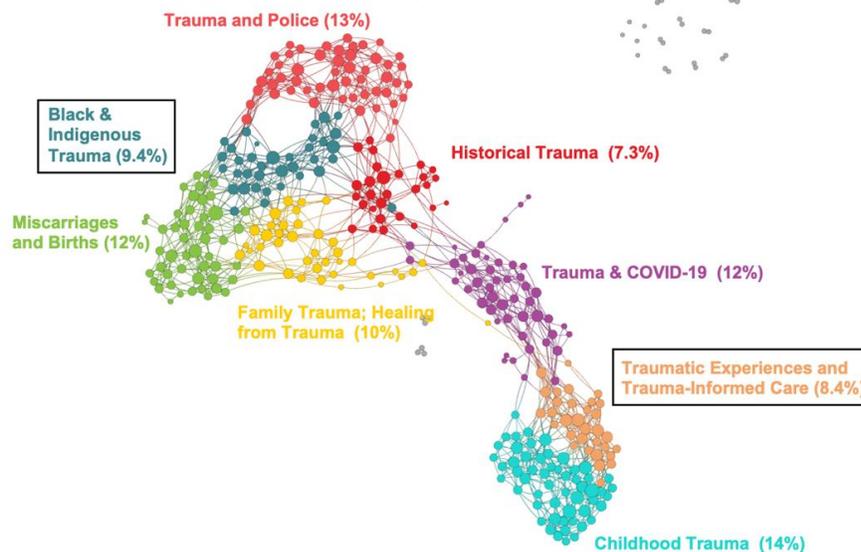
The program was inspired by frustration with the level of focus on men’s issues in domestic violence cases and seeks to give women a greater voice and a path to recovery, even if they are charged.

The importance of self-identifying trauma – especially for BIPOC women

The Black Girl Freedom Fund wrote an **open letter** about Black Lives Matter, claiming: “Black girls and young women still remain adultified, victimized by violence, and erased from the very same social justice movement for which they continue to risk their lives.” The letter encourages women to share their **stories** of trauma to inspire others to seek support and overcome stigma.

Trauma and Women’s Mental Health

July to September 2020



THOUGHT STARTERS

A roundup of thought-provoking pieces on mental health for youth, women, and the justice system.



Youth Mental Health: Empathy 101

As colleges welcome students back to campus, stories abound about students **breaking rules** and disregarding the seriousness of the pandemic. The **fiery letter** from the Syracuse University administration provides the most overwrought example. Yet mental health experts have begun to contend that this narrative causes more harm than good, especially as students navigate isolation, Zoom fatigue, and loss of the sports and group traditions that have traditionally defined the college experience. A **CNBC article** weighs in:

“When you look at public sentiment, I feel very strongly that college students get a bad rap for not caring about anyone and really only caring about themselves,” said Jessi Gold, an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. “There’s this belief that all they want to do is go out and drink and be selfish and spread Covid-19,” she said.



Women’s Mental Health: “Why Is Mommy So Stressed?”

Working mothers are falling deeper into the double bind of COVID-19. A new **paper** from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and the U.S. Census Bureau reveals the disproportionate caregiving burden being carried by women:

“While advancements have been made over recent decades regarding women’s rights, wage equality, and participation in formal labor markets, this pandemic has made it clear that something has got to give...without more formal and intentional systems of care, mothers will forever be vulnerable to career scarring during any major crisis like this pandemic or any other event that triggers an increase in domestic tasks within her household.”



The Justice System: Buffalo’s Band-Aid?

In mid-September, Buffalo Mayor Myron Brown announced the Buffalo police department would now include a Behavioral Health Team to respond to mental health crisis calls. The announcement drew immediate **criticism** from mental health experts and social workers in the city – more than 160 of which signed a letter opposing the initiative, calling it a “band-aid solution.” Key arguments include:

- That mental health professionals should respond to mental health calls independently of police;
- The need for a Behavioral Health Advisory Council to help determine how to best meet the crisis mental health needs of community members; and
- The need for more adequate funding for crisis prevention and intervention-focused mental and behavioral health programs, including a redistribution of the BPD budget.

THE PUNCHLIST



3 ways to take action on this month.

1 Listen:

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our podcast series, Voices of NEXUS. Our first four episodes are available for download [here](#), and also available on Spotify, Apple Podcast, TuneIn, Google and Stitcher.

2 Watch:

Every week, One Mind President Brandon Staglin hosts “Brain Waves Interviews: Conversations With Mental Health Experts and Brain Scientists.” In September, Mary Michael, Vice President of Patient Advocacy and Stakeholder Management at Otsuka, was featured alongside Chris Edmonds-Waters, CHRO of Silicon Valley Bank, in an episode about [workplace programs for mental resilience](#).

3 Pledge:

World Suicide Prevention Day is recognized every year on September 10th. In 2019, a consortium of workplaces, along with the American Association of Suicidology, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and United Suicide Survivors International, developed National Guidelines for Workplace Suicide Prevention. [Take the pledge](#) and get more information on how to prioritize suicide prevention at your place of work.

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