



THE HACKETT CENTER

FOR MENTAL HEALTH



Putting Policy into Practice™:

Year Five Performance of The Hackett Center for Mental Health

2022 Annual Report for The Hackett Center for Mental Health



The Hackett Center for Mental Health, established in Houston, Texas in 2018 with a transformative gift from Maureen and Jim Hackett, is the first regional center of the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. Under the leadership of Dr. Quianta Moore, a nationally renowned expert in research and policy, The Hackett Center’s mission is to provide independent, non-partisan, and trusted policy and program guidance in Greater Houston and the Gulf Coast region to improve services and systems so that **all Texans can obtain effective mental health care.**

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Message from The Hackett Center’s Executive Director



*Dr. Quianta Moore, MD, JD,
The Hackett Center’s Executive Director*

I began my tenure as Executive Director of The Hackett Center with profound gratitude for the leadership, vision, and commitment that are at the heart of this organization. Over the last year, I have taken steps to fulfill the Center’s immense potential to impact Houston and the Gulf Coast Community. My journey started with a Listening Tour, where I engaged nearly 30 organizational leaders and The Hackett Center’s Leadership Cabinet members. Stakeholders were exceedingly generous with their time and with sharing their knowledge, experience, and perspective on what the Center could contribute to the mental health landscape in our community. There was consensus that real systems change is needed to improve mental health for youth and their families. In alignment with the founding principles and organizational mission and vision, The Hackett Center team set strategic priorities to advance mental health for all people in the Greater Houston region.

OUR CURRENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

- **Improving** evidence-based mental health care for children and families;
- **Building** capacity of mental health organizations and their leaders to increase their impact by engaging families and co-creating solutions for high-quality mental and behavioral healthcare;
- **Serving** as a neutral convenor, facilitating collaboration among systems, organizations, and healthcare institutions to achieve better mental health for children and their families; and
- **Collaborating** as a strategic partner of the Meadows Institute in bringing their expertise to Harris County and surrounding regions and leveraging the experience of our community to inform the work of the Institute statewide.

As we work to implement these strategies, I am pleased to report on our progress to date. None of this would have been possible without the outstanding generosity of The Hackett Center’s founding benefactors, Maureen and Jim Hackett. Thank you, Maureen and Jim. You saw the need for a catalytic partner in the mental health space in your community, and you took action to establish a Center to improve the wellness and well-being for all residents of this vibrant region.

The Hackett Center's Work for Systems Change

We are uniquely positioned to support changes at the system level that will benefit individuals and families.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT

Partnering with Massachusetts Association for Mental Health (MAMH) to work for systems changes and to share innovation

Following two years of virtual Summits due to the COVID-19 pandemic, The Hackett Center and MAMH reconvened for the fifth year in August 2022 in Austin, Texas to host the annual Children's Mental Health Summit. This esteemed group of dedicated mental health experts engaged in dynamic conversations and shared learnings and opportunities for the future. As a result, many promising practices and budding collaborations emerged to improve child, youth, and family mental health practices in their respective states and across the U.S.

The 2022 Summit included youth perspectives on mental health through PhotoVoice, a participatory photographic technique that equips people with lived experience to visually represent their experiences. The clarity and authenticity of these presentations influenced additional discussions on the national landscape of children's mental health and innovations to increase access to mental health services within schools and other settings.



HEALTH EQUITY ACROSS THE INSTITUTE

Working to ensure that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthy

The Hackett Center continues to lead the Meadows Institute's board-issued charge of embedding health equity into all work across the Institute. Our health equity leaders have promoted and advanced the Institute's strategy in this area through both internal and external projects. A variety of local, state, and national organizations have consulted with our team and leveraged the Center's expertise to deliver trainings, participate in panel discussions, and provide keynote presentations to share knowledge on topics, such as the importance of cultural humility in clinical practice, understanding the root causes of racial biases and disparities, and practical strategies to implementing anti-racist policies. This work is foundational to The Hackett Center's goal of enacting impactful systems change that benefits everyone.

The Center's equity leadership team participated in multiple external events throughout 2022. In addition, the team continued supporting other Institute teams to embed health equity in all stages of the Institute's various initiatives, from the proposal process through implementation and completion. Some of these projects include the Behavioral Health Emergency Response Funders Collaborative and the Dallas Area Rapid Transit project, as well as recent work with the College of Behavioral Health Leadership, which resulted in the creation of a health equity framework that will be leveraged across the Institute's work internally and externally. Finally, under the Center's leadership, the Health Equity Workgroup, a team comprised of representatives from across the Institute and charged with facilitating a health equity mindset and work culture across teams, continues to collaborate to increase health equity knowledge and understanding. It also functions to identify opportunities to embed a health equity lens into all of the Institute's work.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE

Helping shape national funding strategies to optimize the new 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

As a continuation of our systems change work and ahead of the July 2022 launch of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, the Meadows Institute partnered with The Mental Health Strategic Impact Initiative (S2i) and the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC) to identify trends and opportunities for philanthropic investment in behavioral health emergency response. The Hackett Center's team was a critical partner in ensuring the successful completion of this project.

The Funders Collaborative is a philanthropy-based partnership between the Pew Charitable Trusts, Ballmer Group, Blue Meridian Partners, Peg's Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Charles Koch Institute. This partnership aimed to develop a long-term investment strategy that will create an effective, equitable system for people experiencing behavioral health emergencies, leveraging and expanding work at the local, state, and national levels.

The Center provided essential expertise and project support for the Meadows Institute team as they worked with partners



and subject matter experts to develop briefs and presentations for discussion with the Collaborative. These briefs covered five critical topics within behavioral health emergency response improvement: Community Engagement and Transformation, Workforce Development, Data and Metrics, Technology and Innovation, and Financing. Throughout the six months of discussions, there was a focus on future philanthropic activities, specifically response coordination between the 988 and 911 emergency lines and the need to better support place-based initiatives that advance an equitable and effective behavioral health emergency response system. We are hopeful that the current climate represents an opportunity for the Funders Collaborative to take meaningful action with the potential for long-term impact.



The Hackett Center's Work in Early Relational Health

Approaching mental health and wellness along a continuum of care, including support for early relationships that build resilience in children and their caregivers

SUPPORT FOR EARLY RELATIONSHIPS AS POWERFUL PREVENTION

During her listening tour, Dr. Moore heard from many mental health experts and organizational leaders that there is a profound need for preventive, upstream community approaches to support and sustain mental health before issues become acute. Given Dr. Moore's expertise and the need to reduce the number of children in crisis, The Hackett Center continued Dr. Moore's work to support early brain development and maternal health to give every woman and child an equal chance for health and success.

A strong and growing body of research confirms the importance of a child's earliest years as a period of peak opportunity to build a strong and resilient brain. That early development forecasts mental and physical health outcomes, as well as success in school, work, and life. An interactive, responsive, and nurturing relationship between children and their caregivers is the mechanism for optimal early brain development and prevention of disease. When mental health struggles intervene in that relationship, neither the child nor the adults in those relationships can thrive as they might otherwise.



Brain Builders

Driven by this opportunity and mindful of the need for additional resources for new families, the Center worked to strengthen and lay the foundation for scaling its Brain Builders group-based, skill-building program for pregnant women and mothers with children under three. We provided this innovative, evidence-informed series of facilitated, online sessions to six cohorts of women, covering topics ranging from language development to managing stress and building resilience. The Center also developed and hosted its first Brain Builders facilitator training, which gave three community-based organizations the materials and technical assistance needed to host their own Brain Builders classes. The program will soon be offered in English and Spanish, and early evaluations indicate that participating mothers increase their capacity to manage stress and build connections to other moms – both critical factors in optimizing maternal mental health. We are encouraged by the impact Brain Builders is making in the lives of mothers of young children and are grateful for the generosity of our foundational philanthropic partners – Episcopal Health Foundation and The Powell Foundation – for their leading support of Brain Builders.



FOCUS ON MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH

The Hackett Center applies a multigenerational approach and a socioecological framework within all its work. In keeping with these frameworks, we identified uplifting and supporting maternal mental health as a strategic priority with lasting impact on multiple generations of Houstonians. In the coming year, we will host roundtables to connect maternal mental health partners, create a learning community around maternal mental health issues and possible solutions, promote awareness, and elevate best practices through a learning series. The Center will also serve as a subject matter expert to the Meadows Institute, providing federal policy priorities to uplift recommendations from local experts in Houston and amplify maternal mental health in the United States.

The Hackett Center's Capacity Building Work

SYSTEMS OF CARE

Providing crucial evaluation to guide a program of intensive support for children experiencing serious mental illness and their families

The Hackett Center brings deep experience in qualitative and quantitative program evaluation and is a strong partner to established organizations in the Houston community. Through Houston's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded System of Care grant, Be Well, Be Connected (BWBC), and in collaboration

with the Institute's data team, The Hackett Center served for a third year as the evaluation and technical assistance partner alongside Baylor College of Medicine and the Houston Mayor's Office of Education. BWBC focuses on providing intensive behavioral health treatment services to youth ages 9-17 experiencing persistent disruption in their lives due to serious mental illness. As demonstrated in the Center's ongoing evaluation, this project has provided the unique opportunity to improve mental health outcomes for youth by expanding intensive, community-based service delivery and school-based care models, engaging with the Houston community, integrating across child-serving organizations, and creating long-lasting impact for youth who need intensive behavioral health treatment.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE HOUSTON HEALTH FOUNDATION'S BRAINY CLINICS PROJECT

Providing crucial evaluation to guide cultural change in clinics

The Hackett Center provided program and evaluation support to The Houston Health Foundation (HHF) as lead evaluator of HHF's Brainy Clinics program pilot. Developed as a strategy of the Houston Health Department's Basics

Houston public health campaign to improve pediatric outcomes, Brainy Clinics seeks to build a culture of learning and practice to optimize interactions with families of infants and toddlers in community clinic settings. The Center used its expertise in the IDEAS Impact Framework – an evaluation tool developed by Harvard University – to support program development and the creation of a rapid-cycle, actionable evaluation instrument and plan to measure impact and suggest program improvements in real time.

Trauma and Grief Center at The Hackett Center for Mental Health

Developing, implementing, and improving community and clinical care for children dealing with the mental health effects of trauma and grief

The Trauma and Grief (TAG) Center at The Hackett Center for Mental Health, led by Dr. Julie Kaplow, is dedicated to meeting the trauma- and grief-related mental health needs of diverse youth who have experienced traumas and losses, especially in the context of the pandemic and community violence. Two of the TAG Center's priority programs are highlighted in this report.

HANDLE WITH CARE

Creating a streamlined referral system for law enforcement to alert a child's school when a child has witnessed a traumatic event

The TAG Center, in partnership with Galena Park ISD and the Region 4 Education Service Center, and with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, implemented the nationally renowned, "**Handle with Care**" program to ensure that youth exposed to trauma and loss are quickly identified. Through a competitive application process, the TAG Center chose Galena Park ISD for the pilot program because district personnel were already interested in the program, and students there experience high levels of trauma and loss. Through this program, the school is immediately notified by police if they encounter a child exposed to trauma or

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— shared district Police Chief Bryan Clements.



bereavement. The child's primary teacher is trained to "handle the student with care" and refer the child for mental health services as needed. Of note, most perpetrators of school shootings had experienced childhood trauma and had been visited by police multiple times at home prior to committing mass violence. The **Handle with Care** program could potentially serve as a critical preventive measure to reduce the likelihood of future school shootings because it strengthens communication between police and schools and addresses childhood trauma before behavioral problems develop. "My anticipation is within a year you're going to see most of the school districts in Harris County participating — it just makes sense," shared district Police Chief Bryan Clements.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

Creating a trauma- and grief-informed community through training, consultation, and direct service

With support from the Behavioral Health American Rescue Plan Act Funding for Harris County, the TAG Center has forged strategic partnerships with local community-based organizations to achieve three primary goals: 1) increase the number of trauma- and grief-informed behavioral health providers in Harris County by providing trainings in evidence-based best practices for youth exposed to trauma and loss, 2) enhance the ability of adults with the most power to promote resilience in children (caregivers/ parents, educators, pediatricians) to identify trauma and grief reactions in youth and make appropriate referrals, and 3) increase access to trauma- and grief-informed, evidence-based care by partnering with the Lucine Center to provide no-cost teletherapy services to Harris County youth who have experienced trauma and bereavement, especially in the context of the pandemic. The TAG Center is committed to its coalition-building efforts to ensure that trauma and- grief-exposed youth in Harris County and beyond receive best practice mental health care.

THANK YOU

The work of the Hackett Center has had significant impact on the greater Houston and Gulf Coast region this year. We are grateful for the continued support of our work and look forward to another exciting year ahead.

The Hackett Center is thrilled to recognize its 2022 Donors

**Annie E. Casey Foundation
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