



THE HACKETT CENTER
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Highlights from the
2020 MMHPI Annual Report

DETERMINATION.



MEADOWS
MENTAL HEALTH
POLICY INSTITUTE

Transforming mental health systems requires dedication, expertise, and, MORE THAN ANYTHING...

DETERMINAT

Our History, Mission, and Vision

The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute provides independent, nonpartisan, data-driven, and trusted policy and program guidance that creates equitable systemic changes so all Texans can obtain effective, efficient behavioral health care when and where they need it.

The Meadows Institute grew out of The Meadows Foundation's unyielding concern for the people of Texas. In 2014, The Meadows Foundation established the Institute as an independent nonprofit organization. A few years later in 2018, through a transformational gift from Maureen and Jim Hackett, the Meadows Institute created The Hackett Center for Mental Health in Houston as its first regional center.

With offices in Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio, and projects in every region of our state, the Meadows Institute has become Texas's most trusted source for results-oriented data and analysis of effective, efficient, and equitable policy and programs. We are also now growing that trust nationally to address the troubling mental health and substance use challenges that COVID-19 laid bare across both our state and our country.

We work at the national, state, regional, and local levels to help mental health and substance use treatment systems improve, share best practices, develop resources, and increase public awareness on the most effective ways to treat mental illness and addiction and help people recover. The Meadows Institute's vision is for Texas to be the leader in helping our state and nation meet the needs of all people with mental health and addiction challenges.



Table of CONTENTS

- 4 The Hackett Center: Taking on a Year Like No Other
- 6 The Hackett Center: Highlights of Our Ongoing Work
- 7 The Hackett Center: Nantucket Children's Mental Health Summit
- 8 The Hackett Center Welcomes the Trauma and Grief Center
- 8 **Spotlight:** Dr. Julie Kaplow

ION.



THE HACKETT CENTER

FOR MENTAL HEALTH

The Hackett Center: TAKING ON A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

Entering its third year of operations, [The Hackett Center for Mental Health](#) has established a strong reputation for credible and trusted work with a mission of “Putting Policy into Practice[®]” throughout the region, state, and nation. In the face of the unprecedented challenges of 2020, The Hackett Center took a leading role in a response to both racial justice and the broader hardships and losses of COVID-19.

The Hackett Center’s core work included support of the City of Houston/ Baylor College of Medicine’s System of Care grant, which began treating clients in 2020. This initiative provides community education about mental health and the mental health impacts of COVID-19 and natural disasters. Through the year, The Hackett Center shared its expertise through media interviews and television appearances, blog posts and op-eds, webinars, and through its new social media channels and webpage.

The Hackett Center also added critical capacity for responding to the impacts

of COVID-19 on children, youth, and families through its new Trauma and Grief (TAG) Center. Led by Dr. Julie Kaplow, the TAG Center aims to raise the standard of care and increase access to best practice care among traumatized and bereaved children, adolescents, and their families. The TAG Center’s experience working with youth exposed to trauma and loss, includes those who have faced Hurricane Harvey, the Santa Fe High School shooting, Hurricane Maria’s impact on Puerto Rico, racial trauma, community violence, and most recently, deaths due to COVID-19.

The Hackett Center also took the lead

in helping the Institute sharpen its health equity focus, with long-time Hackett Center senior leader Marcy Melvin taking on the role of Senior Director for Health Equity Strategy, and Senior Fellow Dr. Quianta Moore and Executive Director Dr. Gary Blau serving as key advisors. Through their work, The Hackett Center catalyzed the development and spearheaded the implementation of resource materials approved by the Institute’s Board to guide its equity work, establishing The Hackett Center as a growing authority in this area. Just like the people of the Gulf Coast Region, The Hackett Center rose to the challenges of 2020.



**“Determine that the thing
can and shall be done, and
THEN WE SHALL
FIND THE WAY.”**

— Abraham Lincoln

The Hackett Center: HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR ONGOING WORK

In response to the many new challenges in 2020, as well as the smaller individual and family tragedies experienced every year in a region that is home to over one quarter of our state, The Hackett Center for Mental Health continued to lead by “Putting Policy into Practice⁸⁹” in innovative ways. In addition to steering the Institute’s health equity work and becoming the new home for the Trauma and Grief Center, The Hackett Center continued to build relationships and implement programs to improve mental wellness in the Greater Houston and Gulf Coast region, across Texas, and throughout the nation.

Surveying Philanthropic Priorities for Children

The Philanthropy Roundtable called on The Hackett Center to survey over 80 of the nation's top philanthropists and foundations focusing on children's mental health. These funders were asked how they had been affected by the pandemic, if their plans for giving had changed, and if they needed additional technical assistance for themselves and their grantees. Results were presented at a Roundtable webinar featuring Dr. Gary Blau and The Hackett Center founding donor Maureen Hackett.

Respondents identified a number of priorities, including implementation of evidence-based practices in schools, mental illness prevention and treatment interventions, best practices in communities, and implementation of integrated care. The overwhelming majority of respondents reported they were concerned about increased stress on families resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly from parental unemployment and disruptions to family and child routines, including loss of childcare and the need to attend school

virtually. The survey also found that philanthropic organizations across all levels planned to either maintain current levels (62%) or increase (32%) funding in the wake of the pandemic.

The survey provided a much-needed look at the thinking of funders who are, collectively, a critical component of efforts to address and mitigate the negative impacts of this pandemic.

A Trusted Space

In the summer, The Hackett Center served as the clinical review team for the docu-film, *A Trusted Space: Redirecting Grief to Growth*, a collaboration between the nonprofit organization All It Takes and the creators of the documentary *Angst*. *A Trusted Space* addresses the grief, trauma, anxiety, and other emotional stressors resulting from the complex issues and feelings many students and teachers faced in response to the



COVID-19 pandemic and the year's other social upheavals. The Hackett Center also helped create an accompanying curriculum for educators, outlining ways to address the emotional issues many students and teachers have faced in the virtual classroom setting.

The film, which had its national launch on PBS Learning Media in the fall of 2020, also featured The Hackett Center's Marcy Melvin. In addition to promoting the film in Houston, The Hackett Center also hosted virtual screenings and panel discussions across Texas, reaching thousands of people.

Helping Region 4 Education Service Center Address Growing Mental Health Needs

With support from The Powell Foundation, The Hackett Center constructed a dashboard to help the Region 4 Education Service Center (ESC) prioritize needs for support across its 1.2 million students, featuring an interactive map that geographically represents mental health supports available to the region's 48 public school districts and 40 charter schools. The dashboard provides a broad array of information – including maps, figures, and tables – to help ESC 4 and district leaders respond to the mental health gaps, needs, and opportunities within the region.

Users can easily identify the school districts and charter schools outlined on the Region 4 map. With a simple click on a specific district or school, users can view information, including contextual data about the county in which that district or school is located and information from each local education agency's (LEA) response to a survey conducted by The Hackett Center during fall 2019.

Each district and school also received a total “support” score, reflected in a color code, allowing users to quickly and easily compare LEAs. As Region 4 Deputy Director Kelly Ingram, Ed.D., stated, “This excellent tool provides the



“This provides the foundation for our mental wellness work and gives us an incredible opportunity to engage in initial resource mapping that ESTABLISHES A BASELINE OF DISTRICT SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF STUDENTS.”

- Kelly Ingram, Ed.D., Deputy Executive Director, Division of Instructional Services, Region 4 Education Service Center

foundation for our mental wellness work. It represents a needs assessment for our entire region and gives us an incredible opportunity to engage in initial resource mapping to establish a baseline of district services. This data is essential as we apply a research-based framework model to expand and enhance our

supports. It also enables us to make deep connections and establish collaborative partnerships that will benefit the over 1.2 million students we serve.”

Based on this work, ESC Region 18, which covers over 37,000 square miles and includes Midland, requested the

development of a similar dashboard for its use, expanding the impact of the original dashboard. As students return to in-person school, this information will be crucial for districts in both Regions 4 and 18 to identify and support schools with the greatest needs.

The Hackett Center: NANTUCKET CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the Third Annual Nantucket Children’s Mental Health Summit to go virtual, and the pandemic was the central topic of this year’s work. Two dozen children’s mental health leaders from across the Texas Gulf Coast and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts focused on both the impact of COVID-19 on mental health and how the pandemic heightened attention on racial injustice and health disparities across the nation.

This annual gathering is sponsored by The Hackett Center for Mental Health and co-hosted with the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health. It brings together prominent children’s mental health experts from the two states to push the boundaries on ways to improve access to care and better align mental health professionals to help children and families, as well as

the schools and primary care providers that support them.

Previous summits have led to significant changes to mental health policy in Texas. For example, the Child Psychiatry Access Network (CPAN), now in place statewide, was a major focus of the first summit in 2018, and in 2019 the group focused on implementation of urgent responses, including the school-based infrastructure of the Texas Child Health Access Through Telehealth (TCHAT) program that reached over 1 million Texas students by the end of 2020.

Conversations at the 2020 summit included how COVID-19 has reshaped the delivery of mental health services, including the use of telehealth, as well as how the increased public awareness of racism and racist policy has generated

anxiety and depression, along with increased opportunities for change.

Through a virtual format, participants engaged in lively and meaningful conversations, and the group committed to join an “Interim Virtual Summit” in early 2021 to maintain momentum and collaboration on meaningful policy and practice change in both states.



The Hackett Center Welcomes the TRAUMA & GRIEF CENTER

The Hackett family established The Hackett Center for Mental Health in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey with an initial focus on addressing the storm's traumatic impact on children and families in the Greater Houston and Gulf Coast Region. The 2018 shooting at Santa Fe High School further underscored the need to address trauma and grief, and trauma response has continued to be a central component of The Hackett Center's work. The deep need in the region for more trauma and grief resources made The Hackett Center a natural home for the Trauma and Grief (TAG) Center.

An innovative and highly respected leader nationally, Executive Director Julie Kaplow, Ph.D., A.B.P.P., launched her first TAG Center in 2012. The center's focus is to develop, evaluate, and disseminate evidence-based practices to address trauma and loss. The TAG Center at The Hackett Center provides a range of supports for clinicians caring for children, youth, and families with such experiences. Although the TAG Center is not a direct service provider, it is affiliated with a group practice, also led by Dr. Kaplow, called the Lucine Center. With support from the New York Life (NYL) Foundation, the TAG

The TAG Center has four primary aims:

1. Develop and disseminate evidence-based assessment and interventions for children and youth who have experienced trauma or loss.
2. Conduct research on adaptive and maladaptive responses to childhood trauma and loss, as well as on the effectiveness of treatments.
3. Provide training, professional education, and program consultation on trauma- and bereavement-related topics and interventions.
4. Translate trauma- and bereavement-informed best practices into policy.

SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Julie Kaplow wasn't too far removed from childhood herself the first time she discovered childhood **trauma and grief**.

A freshman at the University of Michigan, she had the chance to be part of the research team of field pioneer Albert Cain, and that work included direct conversations with children who had experienced the death of a parent. "It really opened my eyes, because it's every child's worst nightmare to lose a parent," she said. "To see how resilient they were, it started to get my wheels turning... What is it that is helping these kids to be okay?"

The experiences of these children thereby launched her life's work. In 2012, she created her first Trauma and Grief (TAG) Center at the University

of Michigan Medical School. Two years later, at a colleague's suggestion, she explored the possibility of relocating to Texas. While she hadn't been looking to move, she was drawn to the Gulf Coast Region's deep needs. "There was such a gaping need in Texas, particularly in Houston, around trauma and grief for children," she said. "I felt like there was more I could do in Texas than I could do in Michigan."

Since arriving in Texas, her work has steadily expanded. What started out primarily as a service-oriented center, aiming to help children and youth directly, evolved to include a significant research component. "I realized very quickly we needed to be doing, in parallel, research on this population, because the field was relatively stagnant,



Center spent the last quarter of 2020 preparing to launch a Virtual Learning Library on bereavement and grief in 2021, with free webinars and resources for clinicians, educators, pediatricians, law enforcement, youth and families, and policymakers. The NYL grant also provides support to develop a national “TAG Coalition,” composed of school- and community-based clinicians across the United States trained in the TAG Center’s evidence-based interventions, allowing for greater access to best practice trauma- and grief-informed care.

In late 2020, the TAG Center was the

recipient of a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant, *Developing Evidence-Based Trauma- and Bereavement-Informed Care for Puerto Rican Children and Families Impacted by Hurricane Maria*. In collaboration with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Puerto Rico, this grant focuses on effective methods to deliver evidence-based, culturally sensitive, and community-centered trauma- and bereavement-informed care to children and youth affected by Hurricane Maria, compounded by a recent earthquake, ongoing community violence, and pandemic-related losses. The TAG Center will train local clinicians to provide Trauma and Grief

Component Therapy and will adapt this treatment for the population. This grant will also allow the TAG Center to design a “blueprint” for how to respond to future disasters in underserved communities where ongoing trauma and loss is extensive and widespread.

The addition of the TAG Center is helping further realize the Hackett family’s vision for The Hackett Center for Mental Health to take the lead in addressing trauma and bereavement in the Gulf Coast Region and beyond.

Dr. Julie Kaplow

especially in terms of grief,” she said. “We built that into the treatment piece, allowing our clinical work and research to inform each other.”

Following that came the need to address another critical gap: training. “We recognized that most community-based and school-based clinicians had really never had training surrounding grief, nor how to recognize or treat trauma,” she said. Therefore, the Center added this third component. And it was yet another component that, in 2020, led Dr. Kaplow to establish her new TAG Center within The Hackett Center for Mental Health.

“The new mission was policy and its bi-directional connections to effective practice,” Dr. Kaplow said. “Now we

know what treatments work for which children. We know what schools need to be doing to better to address trauma and grief. So, how do we help every child and family across Texas gain access to these supports when and where they need them?” The Hackett Center’s mission of “Putting Policy into Practice®” was a perfect fit, and Dr. Kaplow and the TAG Center launched their new work here in September. “What I’m most excited about now is being able to take that next step and start to implement more policies that can have a larger impact,” she said.

The other core missions remain central. “Grief is on the tip of everyone’s tongue now,” Dr. Kaplow said. “Particularly because of COVID-19 and the fact that we’ve lost so many people, and more and

more grieving children are going to be going back to school in the fall. I think what makes the TAG Center unique is that – while there are lots of trauma specialty centers across the United States – there are almost none that focus on the important interplay between trauma and grief. “What we’ve often found is that children and youth are not able to grieve until they process the traumatic aspects of what they experienced. What tends to be most effective is addressing the trauma first, and then the grieving process naturally evolves after that.”

The Hackett Center is proud to have the TAG Center on board helping advance its mission of improving the lives of children in the Gulf Coast Region and beyond.



okay to say

MEADOWS
MENTAL HEALTH
POLICY INSTITUTE


THE HACKETT CENTER
FOR MENTAL HEALTH

MMHPI.ORG