



Maine Resilience Building Network

The Mattering Initiative

How is MRBN using the latest data to start conversations and shift systems?

Mattering is strongly linked to the protective factor of Social Connectedness, recognized by the U.S. CDC's National Center on Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion as one of the five priority social determinants of health (SDOH) that can impact health and health equity. SDOH are the conditions where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health, quality of life risks, and outcomes.

For youth, the CDC indicates, "Connectedness refers to a sense of being cared for, supported, and belonging, and can be centered on feeling connected to school, family (i.e., parents and caregivers), or other important people and organizations in their lives." Youth who felt connected at school and home were 66% less likely to experience risk behaviors related to sexual health, substance use, violence, and mental health in adulthood.

The Maine Resilience Building Network (MRBN) launched Cultivating Mattering for Maine Youth in response to data and research that makes a compelling case for community involvement in promoting mental health and well-being among young people. Mattering is a protective factor for mental health issues and diseases of despair, including substance use disorder, anxiety, and depression.

The state of Maine uses Mattering as one measure of well-being in the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS). In the most recent survey, taken in 2021, 45% of middle and 49% of high school students did not feel they mattered in their community. In the same survey, 20% of middle and 18.5% of high schoolers said they seriously considered suicide.

According to the *2021 National Survey of Children's Health*, Maine has the nation's second-highest rate of children with anxiety and the eighth-highest rate of depression. Youth Mattering is a primary prevention strategy that benefits families, communities, employers, and Maine's overall economy.

MRBN serves as a catalyst, working across the public and private sectors to support community-developed approaches to increasing this crucial protective factor. MRBN supports community-level work by convening Community Conversations, conducting ongoing outreach and education to stakeholder groups, and introducing the *Maine Youth Thriving: A Guide for Community Action*. We have an incredible opportunity to work in communities with youth to help empower and support them. By working together, we can develop a shared vision. Please join the conversation.

Maine Youth Matter. Contact MRBN for information and education opportunities.

Mattering has the power to transform.

The essence of Mattering is the belief that you are seen, heard, and valued by others. It's more than being included or fitting in – feeling that you are contributing meaningfully. Others depend on you. Your absence would have an impact. At home, at work, at school, and in your community.

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