

COVID-19 Vaccination Through a Social Work Lens: *Current Landscape and Special Populations*

February 24, 2022



CONNECT
TO END COVID-19

*Social Workers Support Informed
Vaccine Decision-Making*

Presenters

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NASW National Webinars

Webinar 1: November 9, 2021
(COVID-19 Basics, Myths/Facts)

Recording: <https://bit.ly/3tbg3QG>

Webinar 2: January 12, 2022
(Motivational Interviewing/SBIRT)

Recording: <https://bit.ly/3sbidyW>

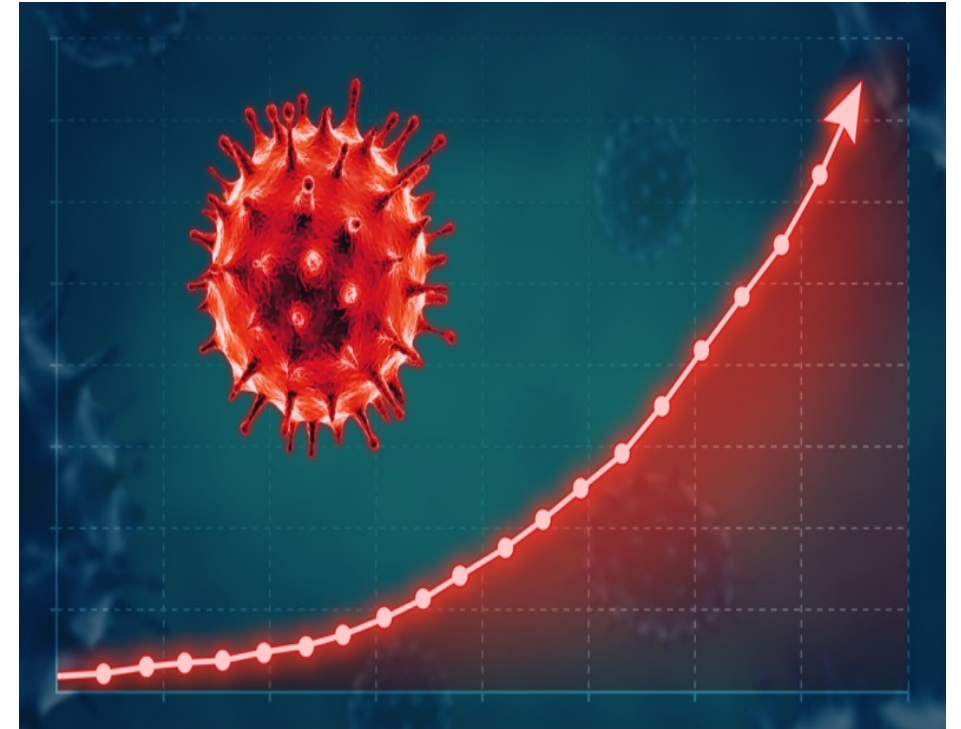
Webinar 3: TODAY

Agenda

3:00 PM	Welcoming Remarks	Angelo McClain, PhD, LICSW
3:05 PM	Connect to End COVID-19	Anna Mangum, MSW, MPH
3:15 PM	COVID-19 Landscape	Mona Gahunia, DO
3:45 PM	Special Populations	Anna Mangum, MSW, MPH
4:05 PM	Q and A	All

COVID-19 Vaccines: Context

- More than 930,000 deaths from COVID-19 in the United States as of Feb 23, 2022
- Despite availability of safe and effective vaccines, and decline of omicron variant surge, COVID-19 continues to spread, especially among certain subpopulations/communities
- 92% of counties: high community transmission level
- Vaccine uptake and boosters are essential, especially as mask requirements are being relaxed



Vaccination Data (as of today)

- 65% of total population age 5+ fully vaccinated
- 76% of total population age 5+ at least one dose
- 43% of those who are fully vaccinated and eligible to receive a booster have done so; low rate of booster uptake in some subpopulations

Broad state variation:

- RI: 80% fully vaccinated
- AL: 49% fully vaccinated



Vaccine Hesitancy



- Vaccines and vaccine boosters are highly safe and effective – but some people are “hesitant” to accept them
- World Health Organization definition (2015):

...(D)elay in acceptance or refusal of vaccination despite availability of vaccination services...It is influenced by factors such as complacency, convenience and confidence.

Vaccine Hesitancy (cont'd)



Vaccine hesitancy can reflect, among other things:

- Perceptions about personal level of risk
- Negative prior experiences with health care providers/systems/treatments
- Religious and/or philosophical beliefs
- Socio-political views
- Perceptions of vaccine development process
- Beliefs about health and prevention
- Social/peer group norms, perceptions
- Communication/media environment

Lower Vaccination Rates

Racial/ethnic disparities in vaccine rates have narrowed, but lower vaccination rates present among:

- Children
- Adolescents and young adults
- Pregnant people
- People who are unhoused
- People in rural areas
- Marginalized and vulnerable people
- Immigrants/refugees



- Vaccine confidence initiative undertaken by NASW, the NASW Foundation and the Health Behavior Research and Training Institute at The University of Texas at Austin Steve Hicks School of Social Work
- Funded by CDC
- Multi-level effort to inform social workers about COVID-19 and the vaccines, and engage them in supporting clients in vaccine decision-making



SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Long COVID

- Presents 4 to 8 weeks after COVID-19 illness
- Common symptoms: fatigue, brain fog, loss of sense of smell, chest pain, depression
- Estimated to affect as many as 30% of people who have had COVID-19; majority of people were not hospitalized
- Research is ongoing; many questions remain
- Vaccination reduces the risk of developing COVID in the first place – and therefore reduces the risk of Long COVID

Long COVID (cont'd)

- Long COVID conditions and symptoms, including depression and anxiety, are real; patients benefit from validation of this fact
- School and workplace accommodations are available for those meeting eligibility requirements

Long COVID: Resources

US Department of Education

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/ocr-factsheet-504-20210726.pdf>

US Department of Labor

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/topics/coronavirus-covid-19-long-covid>

CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects/index.html>

COVID-19 and ACEs

- 2022 British Medical Journal study suggests that vaccine hesitancy may be linked to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- Examples of ACEs: parental separation/divorce; abuse; neglect; parent with mental illness and/or substance use disorder
- Hesitancy 4 times higher among those with 4+ ACEs
- Over 50% of Americans have experienced at least one ACE; 5.7% have experienced 4+ ACEs

BMJ Open. 2022 Feb 1;12(2):e053915. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2021-053915.

COVID-19 and Risk of Mental Disorders

- Major new British Medical Journal (BMJ) study based on analysis of large US dataset found substantial *risks of new mental health disorders in COVID-19 survivors* even if they were not hospitalized, had a mild or asymptomatic infection.
 - anxiety
 - depression
 - stress and adjustment disorders
 - substance use disorders
 - cognitive decline
 - sleep disorders

BMJ 2022;376:e068993

COVID-19 and Risk of Mental Disorders (cont'd)

- The coronavirus can be found in the brain, including the amygdala and the hippocampus, which regulate moods and other functions related to mental health
- Identification and early treatment is crucial to prevent long-term mental health impacts of COVID-19
- Underscores the importance of vaccination in preventing infection and potential mental health impacts

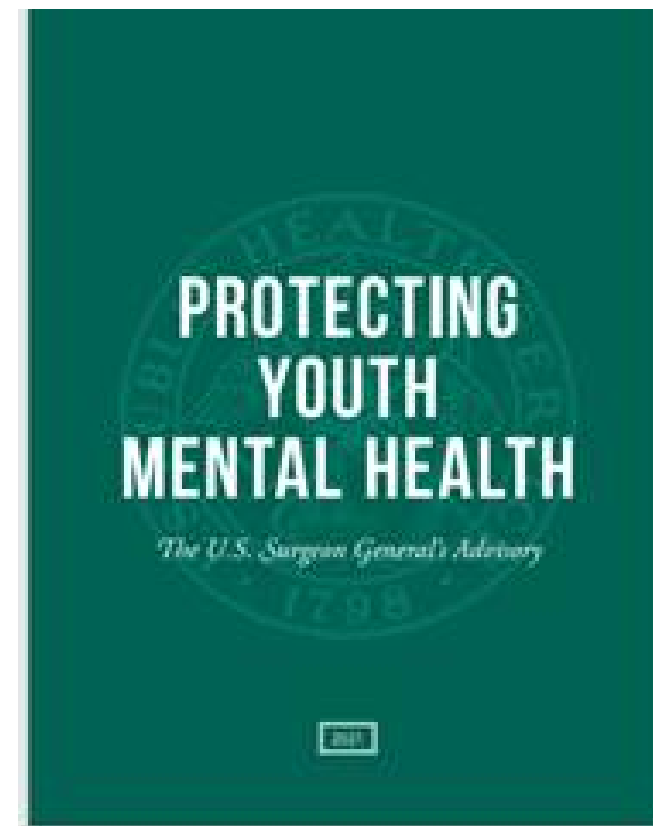
COVID-19 Outcomes Among People with Severe Mental Illness

- People with severe mental illness (SMI) disproportionately impacted by the pandemic
- More likely to have comorbidities (e.g., obesity, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease) that increase risk of severe infection
- *Even when controlling for comorbidities*, people with SMI, especially schizophrenia and substance use disorders, have higher risk of mortality due to COVID-19

Hassan, L., Peek, N., Lovell, K. *et al.* Disparities in COVID-19 infection, hospitalisation and death in people with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depressive disorder: a cohort study of the UK Biobank. *Mol Psychiatry* (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41380-021-01344-2>

Children's Mental Health

- Increasing level of mental health concerns and suicide among children/youth over the past decade were exacerbated by the pandemic:
 - October 2021: American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Children's Hospital Association declared a national state of emergency in children's mental health
 - December 2021: US Surgeon General issues advisory, *Protecting Youth Mental Health*



Protecting Youth Mental Health: U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory. (2021), https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf?campaign_id=9&emc=edit_nn_20220211&instance_id=52826&nl=the-morning&i_id=90542590&segment_id=82359&te=1&user_id=6a0f86cd1ea612a3b102c4a1649b1731.

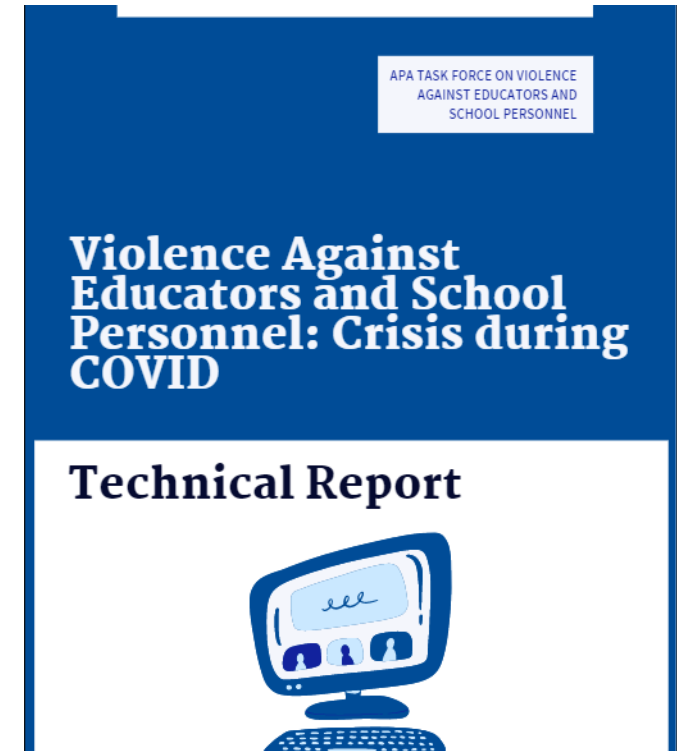
Children's Mental Health (cont'd)

- Recent study shines a light on these issues:
 - Although pediatric ER visits decreased overall during 2020, 2021 and January 2022, the weekly number and proportion of ED visits *increased* for mental health and substance use concerns
 - Adolescent females have experienced the largest overall increase in distress.

Radhakrishnan L, Carey K, Hartnett KP, et al. Pediatric Emergency Department Visits Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, January 2019–January 2022. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. ePub: 18 February 2022. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7108e1external icon>.

Children's Mental Health (cont'd)

- National survey of violence against educators and school personnel (including social workers) during pandemic
- Many respondents described the violence they face as “on-going and pervasive”
- School personnel report violence and aggression from parents, not just students
- Compromises school climate



McMahon, S.D., Anderman, E.M., Astor, R.A., Espelage, D.L., Martinez, A., Reddy, L.A., & Worrell, F. (2022). Violence Against Educators and School Personnel: Crisis During COVID. Technical Report. American Psychological Association.

NASW Advocacy

- NASW continues to advocate for:
 - More social workers in numerous settings, including schools
 - Telehealth flexibility, integrated care and other measures to increase access to mental health and social care services
 - Measures to promote social worker recruitment and retention, including student loan debt relief, safety, and increased reimbursement

A blue graphic with a textured background. On the left, there is a white outline of the US Capitol building. Several white stars are scattered across the background. In the center, a white lightbulb icon is shown with an arrow pointing to the right, indicating an idea or action. The text is in white, bold, sans-serif font.

**LIFT UP YOUR
SOCIAL WORK
VOICE!**

**Join the NASW
Advocacy Listserv**

Receive action alerts about our
priority legislation in Congress and
get involved with policy advocacy.

 **N A S W**
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[SocialWorkers.org/Advocacy/
Legislative-Alerts](https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Legislative-Alerts)

Family Vaccination Decisions

- Minors (children under 18) need parental consent to receive COVID-19 vaccination
- Disagreements between parents/guardians regarding child/youth vaccination
- Custody and visitation disputes around vaccination of minor children, and/or vaccination of custodial parent

Divorce/Custody and Vaccination Decisions

- Resources:

American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers

<https://aaml.org/page/covid19-family-law>

Family Lawyer Magazine

<https://familylawyermagazine.com/to-vaccinate-or-not-to-vaccinate-when-divorced-parents-disagree/>

People with Substance Use Disorders

- At greater risk of severe infection, due to co-existing conditions
- Barriers to vaccination:
 - Inadequate access to transportation and technology, which limits the ability to reach vaccine administration sites
 - Lack of access to technology, which makes it more difficult for vaccination sites to track people and administer additional doses and boosters
 - Unstable housing and food insecurity can be more immediate problems for people with SUD than accessing a COVID-19 vaccine

JAMA. 2021;326(20):2000. doi:10.1001/jama.2021.19977

People Experiencing Homelessness

- At greater risk for severe infection and death, due to comorbidities, congregate settings and lack of access to health care services
- Few studies on hesitancy specifically in this subgroup, but one small study conducted in LA County found high levels of vaccine hesitancy, with hesitancy more likely among those engaging in other protective behaviors (e.g., masking)

Kuhn R, Henwood B, Lawton A, Kleva M, Murali K, King C, et al. (2021) COVID-19 vaccine access and attitudes among people experiencing homelessness from pilot mobile phone survey in Los Angeles, CA. PLoS ONE 16(7): e0255246. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0255246>

People Experiencing Homelessness: Strategies

- Consider using vaccines that require a single versus multiple doses
- Actions people experiencing homelessness and service providers can take to improve second dose follow-up:
 - Record up-to-date contact information, including back-up contact information or an alternate contact (with permission).
 - Ensure vaccine documentation (product, dose, location, date) is available to vaccine providers across sites and geographic areas.
 - Provide multiple, easy-to-access opportunities to get a COVID-19 vaccine.
 - Integrate reminders into routine interactions.
 - Conduct outreach to connect with individuals who might otherwise be lost to follow-up.

People Experiencing Homelessness: Resources

CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/community/homeless-shelters/vaccine-faqs.html>

National Healthcare for the Homeless Council:

<https://nhchc.org/clinical-practice/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/>

National Council to End Homelessness:

<https://endhomelessness.org/covidlearning/>

Pediatric Vaccines: Resources

CDC

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/children-teens.html?s_cid=11370:covid%20vaccine%20approved%20for%20children:sem.ga:p:RG:GM:gen:PTN:FY21

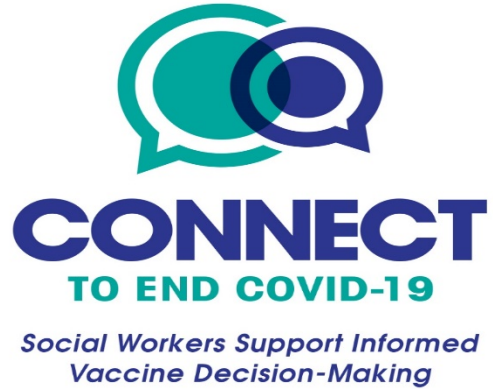
National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants and Migrants

<https://nrcrim.org/vaccines/special-topics/vaccines-children>

Social Work Opportunity/Role

Social workers can play a crucial role in *supporting client decision making* about vaccination. We practice in a broad range of settings, are often trusted messengers in communities and bring a distinctive skill set reflecting:

- Person in the environment framework
- Patient/client-centered care approach
- Trauma-informed care models
- Cultural competence
- Public/population health and prevention expertise
- Disaster response expertise
- Commitment to health equity, access and social justice



<https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Infectious-Diseases/COVID-19-Vaccine-Confidence>

General COVID-19 resources:

<https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Infectious-Diseases/Coronavirus>

NASW Chapter Trainings: Motivational Interviewing/SBIRT

- NASW chapters in 14 states will provide complimentary, 2-day virtual trainings through September 2022
- Trainings are 6 hours (3 hours on 2 consecutive days)
- 6 hours of complimentary CEUs
- Prioritizing low vaccination states
- Customized to address special populations in each state
- Registration will open soon for March trainings:
 - March 17-18: Mississippi
 - March 24-25: Alabama

Additional COVID-19 Resources From NASW Partner Efforts



<https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/covid-19-resources/>



<https://madetosave.org/>