



FLOURISHING

Center for
healthyminds
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2023

healthyminds
innovations®



Your support truly makes what we do possible and will help us get ever closer to realizing our vision of a kinder, wiser, more compassionate world.

— RICHARD J. DAVIDSON

FLOURISHING

In last year’s report we spoke of the range of emotions from joy to trepidation that we experienced as we emerged from the pandemic into changed shared environments, both in person and online.

During our 2023 fiscal year (July 2022-June 2023), we felt a literal and aspirational shift toward flourishing, as we launched lots of new innovative research, participated in live speaking and media engagements around the globe and grew engagement in classes and workshops.

We are so excited to share all of the ways your partnership with the Center for Healthy Minds (CHM) and Healthy Minds Innovations (HMI) have supported flourishing for our organizations and for the world, through vital research, programs and innovations, especially as we celebrate 15 years of CHM and 10 years of HMI in 2023/2024. Your support truly makes what we do possible and will help us get ever closer to realizing our vision of a kinder, wiser, more compassionate world. Thank you!

With gratitude,

RICHARD J. DAVIDSON
FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR,
CENTER FOR HEALTHY MINDS, UW-MADISON
FOUNDER, HEALTHY MINDS INNOVATIONS

YOUR IMPACT

Here are some key Healthy Minds highlights from FY2023, made possible through your support.

INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

- High rates of depression, anxiety, loneliness and lack of purpose are taking a toll on mental and physical health. Healthy Minds researchers are exploring a solution that leverages artificial intelligence to deliver personalized well-being content through a person’s mobile device when they need it most. Supported by a \$3 million-plus grant from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the two-year project aims to discover and develop technologies that may inform the delivery of algorithm-based micro-supports — short well-being practices — through a version of the Healthy Minds Program.
- A multi-disciplinary team of University of Wisconsin–Madison researchers, led by CHM and the Wisconsin Institute for Sleep and Consciousness, is set to begin a highly novel, multi-phase study, aiming to identify hybrid interventions based on neuroscience and clinical science to increase well-being, with an ultimate goal of suicide prevention. Supported by a new 30-month contract worth up to \$14 million from DARPA, the team will soon launch phase one of the research, to explore strategies to optimize the brain networks essential for emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility. The study is supported by HMI, through development and use of the Healthy Minds Research Platform. This will allow HMI to deploy algorithmic micro-supports, and collect data multiple times per day via Ecological Momentary Assessments (EMA).
- Depression becomes much more common during adolescence. While effective treatments exist, many youth cannot access them. But what if a free smartphone-based meditation app could help reduce or even prevent adolescent depression? With support from the National Institute of Mental Health, CHM researchers will launch a four-year study to examine whether a modified eight-week version of the Healthy Minds Program app for teens reduces adolescent depressive symptoms. This will be the first study focusing on the impact of a version of the Healthy Minds Program for adolescents. The collaboration between CHM and HMI will allow for quick changes to the content and user interface based on feedback from the early phases of this study.

- In October 2022, Healthy Minds Innovations completed a multi-year, \$5 million grant to create and validate six novel gamified measures focusing on teen well-being. These measures accurately and effectively measure the four pillars of well-being in three different ways; self-report, behavioral tasks, and experience sampling method. These measures have already been implemented in several studies and contexts such as the Healthy Minds App, the CHM study with Louisville educators, and a study with the World Bank on Mexican educators.

GROWING COMMUNITY

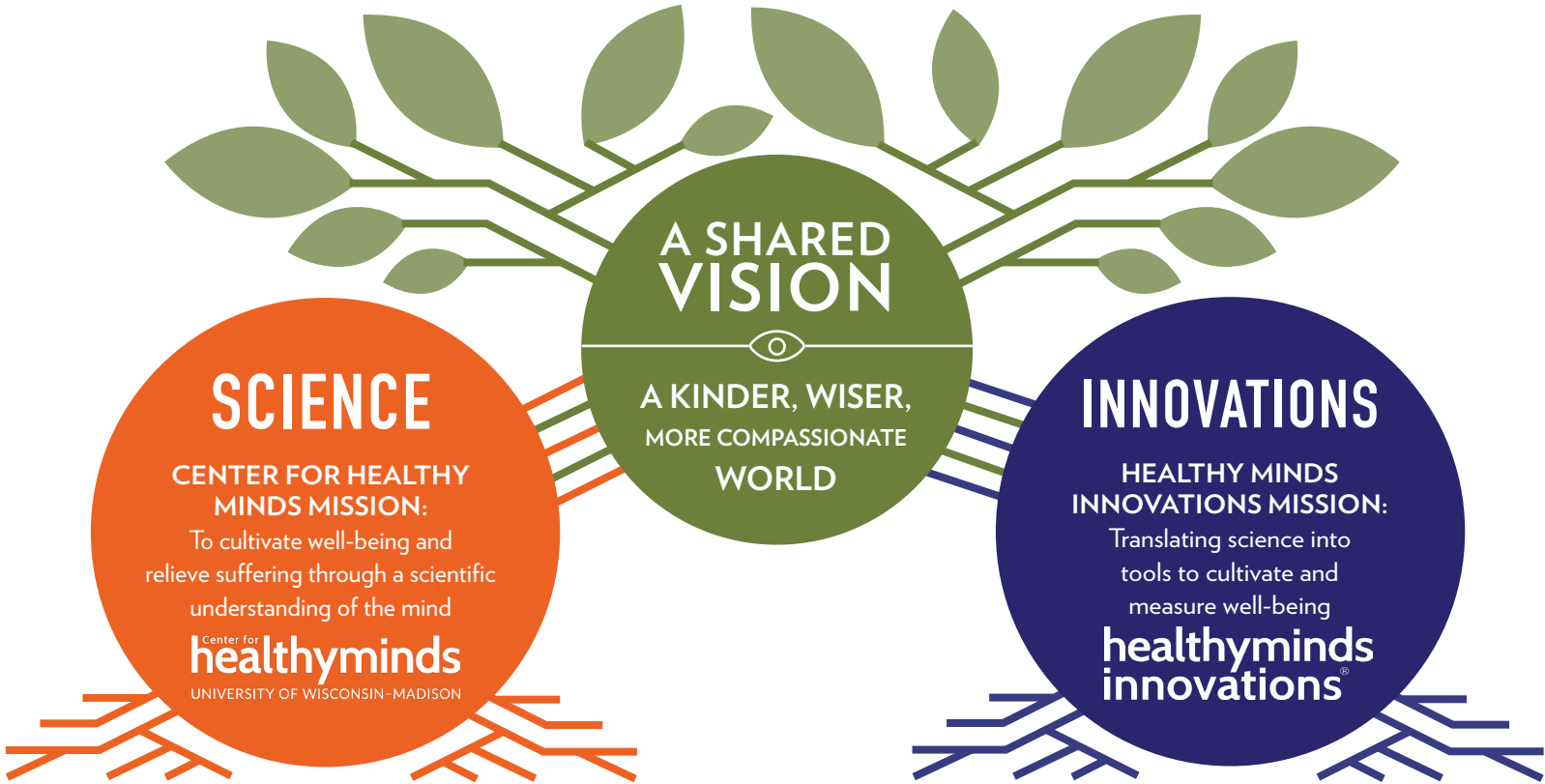
- In October 2022, 15 young leaders from around the world were joined by Dr. Richard J. Davidson for the [Compassionate Leadership Summit](#) at the residence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in India. During this two-day secular event supported by Healthy Minds Innovations, next generation leaders shared their aspirations and hopes for the future, while both challenging and inspiring meaningful dialogue with His Holiness and their mentors.
- The annual Healthy Minds event [The World We Make](#) returned in-person in November 2022, following two years of virtual events. Healthy Minds scientists, program directors and lead innovators shared the latest research and innovations concerning the science and practice of human flourishing with an intimate audience of donors and staff.

GLOBAL REACH

- Each year, stories about CHM and HMI science, people, programs and innovations reach millions of people around the world. From interviews and events to scientific publications and social media, our community continues to grow with each new connection. Digital technology serves to amplify these stories, creating a greater sense of shared humanity in our increasingly interconnected digital landscape.



Dr. Richard J. Davidson (left) and Dr. Raquel Tatar (right), attend the MGIEP meeting at UNESCO in Paris with Dr. Brooke Stafford-Brizard (middle) formerly with the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.



- Our founder, scientists and faculty travel the world to elevate awareness of Healthy Minds science and programs. This fiscal year, just a few of the destinations were:

Paris

Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development meeting at UNESCO headquarters, Dr. Richard J. Davidson, Dr. Raquel Tatar, Dr. Matt Hirschberg

Tel Aviv, Israel

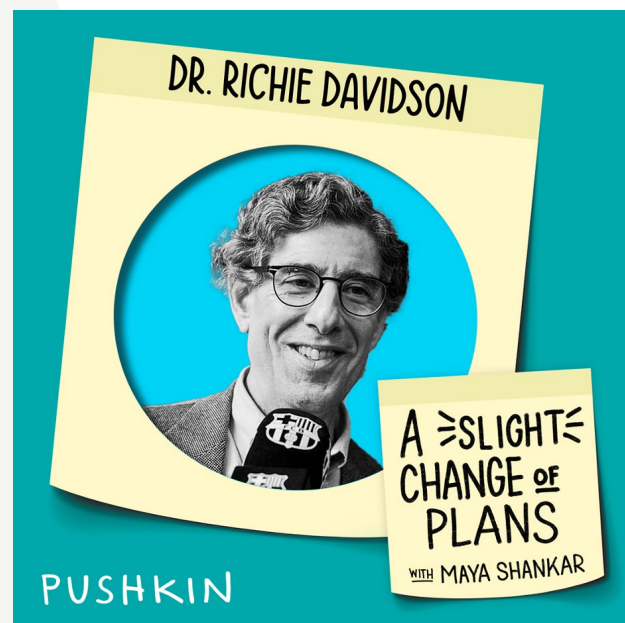
Compassion in Action Conference, Dr. Richard J. Davidson

Cambridge, Massachusetts

William Beldon Noble Lecture Series, Harvard, Dekila Chungyalpa



- Podcasts have emerged as a key platform to promote Healthy Minds research and programs to a national audience. This year, Dr. Richard J. Davidson was featured in [Hidden Brain](#) hosted by journalist, writer, and science correspondent Shankar Vedantam and [A Slight Change of Plans](#), hosted by Dr. Maya Shankar, a cognitive scientist who served as a Senior Advisor in the Obama White House. Loka Initiative Director Dekila Chungyalpa was interviewed on [Getting Curious](#) with Jonathan Van Ness, an activist and queer-culture icon who is passionate about issues that impact intersectional communities.



SUPPORTING WELL-BEING

- Navigating transitional stress when starting college has been shown to affect young adults' mental health, impacting achievement into adulthood. In a study published by [Mindfulness](#), researchers from CHM and collaborators at Pennsylvania State University and University of Virginia found that students of [The Art & Science of Human Flourishing \(ASHF\)](#) course reported significantly improved mental health upon course completion, pointing to a potentially scalable curricular approach to promote flourishing in college students. The course melds intellectual rigor for what constitutes a "life of flourishing" (inc. resilience, accomplishment and purpose), with experiential learning in awareness, connection, and other meditation techniques that support flourishing directly.
- The Student Flourishing Teaching Workshop for faculty, instructional staff and graduate students from UW-Madison and other universities was again held in June. Those interested in teaching ASHF or incorporating elements of it into their curriculum received training and resources at the workshop.
- Healthy Minds Innovations' latest self-paced, online course, The Science of Flourishing, was designed to help individuals understand the skills of well-being, the science behind them, and how to apply those skills in daily life beyond the Healthy Minds Program app. The course currently has over 930 participants and counting from around the world.



Center for healthy minds

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

FY REVIEW

The Center for Healthy Minds (CHM) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is a global leader in conducting rigorous scientific research as well as higher education programs dedicated to student flourishing and faith-led environmental leadership capacity building. Since 2008, CHM has worked to cultivate well-being and relieve suffering through a scientific understanding of the mind, with a vision of a kinder, wiser, more compassionate world. To learn more, visit centerhealthyminds.org.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



- Chronic inflammatory diseases can compromise brain health and increase dementia risk, but why and how that happens is a lingering scientific puzzle. New funds awarded by the National Institutes of Health will allow CHM researchers to launch [a five-year investigation](#) into this question. The team aims to identify links between systemic inflammation and neuroinflammation by measuring changes in brain immune cells associated with airway inflammation, thereby establishing how, for whom and under what circumstances chronic systemic inflammation may contribute to or accelerate Alzheimer's Disease and related dementia. This work provides a key understanding of how our emotions, stress and other psychological states can induce inflammation in the body and affect our health. This work also provides the foundation for how interventions that target the mind - such as meditation - can impact systemic and neuroinflammation.
- As the climate crisis accelerates ecological disasters around the world, scientists' investigations into solutions have become more urgent. A [new CHM study](#) published in the Journal of Environmental Psychology marks the first randomized controlled trial to test whether a direct relationship exists between meditation and eco-friendly attitudes and behaviors. Surprisingly, participants who completed Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) training did not show measurable changes. Long-term meditators showed greater eco-friendly attitudes but not behaviors. The results suggest that a more comprehensive variety of health and well-being training may be needed to increase environmentally friendly behavior.
- The nation is in the midst of a mental health crisis and the situation in academia is even more grim. Within the high-stress and often socially isolated world of advanced education, graduate students experience depression and anxiety at six times the rate of the general population. Normalizing contemplative practices may be the answer, [according to a three-year study](#) funded by the National Science Foundation and conducted by UW-Madison and CHM researchers. Results published in the journal PLOS ONE, showed that regular, sustained mindfulness activities can play an important role in improving engineering graduate student emotional well-being.
- Globally in the past year, as many as 1 billion children experienced violence or neglect. [A new collaborative study](#) involving CHM scientists provides evidence that contemplative-based group therapy involving mindfulness, creative expression and reprocessing of traumatic experiences can help these victims begin to heal. In the first randomized controlled study of its kind, highly traumatized, abused teens in Bucaramanga, Columbia, who participated in an intensive 1-week group therapy program, in which mindfulness was a key ingredient, showed a substantial reduction in trauma-related mental health issues and improved attention and awareness. Findings from this work have now been published in the journal Scientific Reports. This latest research shows that the intervention program triggered epigenetic changes involved in pathophysiology of childhood trauma, such as vulnerability to stress, neurotransmission, inflammatory responses and behavior.
- Around one-third of Americans experience pain-related problems, but common treatments like medications and invasive procedures don't work for everyone, contributing to an epidemic of addiction. CHM researchers have isolated the changes in pain-related brain activity that follow meditation training, pointing a way toward more targeted and precise pain treatment. Published in The American Journal of Psychiatry, [the research](#) identified pathways in the brain specific to pain regulation in which activity is altered by an eight-week MBSR course. The study is the first to demonstrate pain-related brain changes from a standardized mindfulness course that is widely offered in clinical settings.

PROGRAM UPDATES

THE LOKA INITIATIVE

The Loka Initiative at CHM is a capacity-building and outreach platform for faith leaders and religious institutions, centered on the belief that inner, community and planetary well-being are interdependent and cannot be achieved without each other.

In November 2022, the Loka Initiative convened 18 Christian pastors with scientists, experts and scholars in Madison for a four-day bridge-building conversation around creation care and climate action, including a public event called “Creation Care, Climate Change, and Healthy Discourse in Christian Communities.”

Loka launched a film project this year, guided by elders who participated in the Sacred Wisdom Sacred Earth convening in 2021. In partnership with Bravebird, a local, Indigenous, female-owned film company and a team of Native and Indigenous leaders at and around UW-Madison, the film focuses on Indigenous wisdom and traditional ecological knowledge in Wisconsin.

Teaser Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kS0hT4zeldo>



Loka’s Resilience in the Anthropocene research project, launched in 2023 and led by [Dr. Christy Wilson Mendenhall](#) at CHM, is focused on better understanding eco-anxiety and climate distress and fostering contemplative methods that can help build resilience. As part of the project, Loka will launch a certificate program on EdX in the Spring of 2024, entitled Psychology of Resilience: Addressing Ecoanxiety and Climate Distress for Individual, Social, Ecological Well-being.

PROGRAMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

STUDENT FLOURISHING

- Your support has helped CHM respond to growing student demand for resources to cultivate lifelong flourishing skills and achieve greater well-being through [the Art & Science of Human Flourishing \(ASHF\)](#) course. An innovative three credit, semester-long academic course that integrates the Healthy Minds mobile app to support college students in their mental health and overall well-being, ASHF participants [have reported](#) increases in attention regulation, meaning in life and happiness, as well as decreases in anxiety and a buffering effect against depression.
- [Healthy Minds on Campus \(HMoC\)](#) is a new student organization launched in 2022 by CHM staff and students from the ASHF course. Its mission is to provide a space for all students to discuss and learn about evidence-based practices related to CHM and HMI’s four pillars of well-being: awareness, connection, insight, and purpose. Together, students will foster skills that correspond with improved mental health and flourishing. Your support helped raise over \$13K for HMoC and the Higher Education Fund during the 2023 Day of the Badger Campaign including a generous matching gift by Terry Hanks-Smith & Bob Smith. In addition, UW-Madison’s 2023 Senior Class chose to support HMoC with their Senior Class Gift, with the goal of institutionalizing the practice of well-being at UW-Madison.



Registered to capacity, 259 students took the ASHF course in Fall 2022 and demand allowed enrollment to open up to 319 in Fall 2023.



EQUITY, INCLUSION & INNOVATION

CHM strives to embody an awareness of, commitment to, and experience in applying the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion across all spectrums.

- 2022 marked the beginning of a new partnership between the [Center for Black Excellence & Culture](#) and CHM. Breaking ground in 2024, the Center for Black Excellence & Culture will answer the decades-long absence of cultural space to celebrate and advance Wisconsin’s Black community.
- In November 2022, the two organizations hosted the Madison book launch of *Let Your Light Shine: How Mindfulness Can Empower Children and Rebuild Communities* by Ali Smith, Atman Smith and Andrés González, founders of The Holistic Life Foundation in Baltimore, MD. The event was

held at Fountain of Life Church in Madison, WI, and included a moderated discussion surrounding the book’s exploration of the transformative power of well-being practices, the empowerment of underserved communities and the “unshakeable truth that love can heal any heart.”

- The NIH-funded Plasticity of Well-Being Network hosted a 5-day immersive workshop at CHM in June 2023, inviting emerging national scholars to engage in discussion to advance research on emotional well-being. Thirty-nine scholars were fully funded to attend the conference, representing 25 academic institutions across the country. Systemic issues in academia widely affect underrepresented communities, preventing accessibility and engagement. Due to the rigorously inclusive structure of the workshop format, participants reported feeling supported, connected, and able to learn and grow as a researcher. The scholars sustain community through Zoom and Discord and many will return to Madison in early 2024 for a writing retreat to develop a commentary calling for similar structures to be used for future academic workshops to support academic culture change.

Let Your Light Shine
Join us!
BOOK SIGNING AND DISCUSSION
NOVEMBER 7, 2022

ATMAN SMITH, ALI SMITH, & ANDRÉS GONZÁLEZ
REV. DR. ALEXANDER GEE
DR. RICHARD L. DAVIDSON

THE CENTER FOR BLACK EXCELLENCE & CULTURE
healthy minds UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



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healthyminds innovations®

FY REVIEW

Founded in 2014, Healthy Minds Innovations, Inc (HMI), is a nonprofit affiliated with CHM, driven by a mission to translate science into tools to cultivate and measure well-being. HMI takes the discoveries and insights gleaned from the Center's research – as well as that of its own scientific team – and translates them into tools that help people around the world build the skills of well-being. To learn more, visit hminnovations.org.

INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTS

NYT WIRECUTTER TOP MEDITATION APP:

The New York Times Wirecutter has named the Healthy Minds Program app one of the best meditation apps for the third year in a row, citing its free availability, scientific credibility, and goal-driven content.

NEW EXPLORE TAB + COLLECTION OF SLEEP MEDITATIONS:

Users can now discover new practices and browse by category in the new explore tab in the app! The explore tab also includes the newest collection of meditations, created to help app users get deep, restful sleep while learning the science behind our internal clocks. With seven new practices ranging from 5-30 minutes, users can choose between topics of waking up, falling asleep, body scanning and calming the mind.

HEALTHY MINDS LEARNING LABS:

This year HMI delivered five new Healthy Minds Learning Labs, bringing over 1,000 people together to explore science and foster meaningful connections through interactive learning. Covering topics such as workplace anxiety, belonging, sleep, habit formation and burnout, learning labs serve as a tool for finding balance and resilience.



"The first mindfulness program I truly enjoy and that works for me. I love the ability to choose the length of sessions and whether to do whilst sitting or active. Makes it very easy to fit into my daily routine. I thought I was someone who just couldn't get/do mindfulness/meditation but turns out I just needed the right app."
-Cavell K

"Best meditation app. Backed by solid science and rooted in long-standing meditative traditions, this is by far the best app for building a strong, insightful, compassionate practice." -KL Msad

"It feels that real people are thinking what's best for real people." -Gila B

HM@WORK REACHES MORE PEOPLE:

Through Healthy Minds @Work, HMI directly supported 39 organizations in their commitments to employee well-being. HMI continued to offer the program to 50,000 childcare workers in Pennsylvania, and reached almost 200 companies as a result of a partnership with Lyra Health. On average, the 30 Day Challenge has resulted in an improvement of 5% in well-being as measured by the Healthy Minds Index, and a reduction in reported stress by 13% and reported burnout of 27%. User retention is 3x higher than the average for a digital intervention.

HEALTHY MINDS PROGRAM RESEARCH:

HMI launched a new and more streamlined research engagement process through which other universities and institutions can reach HMI to deploy the HMP within their studies. These studies have reached a wide range of populations and study designs, such as pre-operative patients, chronic pain sufferers, military cadets and military families, individuals on the autism spectrum, judges and state court staff, and graduate or medical students.

PROGRAM UPDATES

THE DALAI LAMA'S GUIDE TO HAPPINESS:

The Dalai Lama's Guide to Happiness is now available in the explore tab of the [Healthy Minds Program App](#). Featuring His Holiness, Dr. Richard J. Davidson, Dan Harris, and Roshi Joan Halifax, this course explores what the intersections of ancient wisdom and cutting-edge scientific research can teach us about unlocking life's potential. The Guide to Happiness contains 20 new audio lessons + practices carefully curated to spark curiosity and inspire deep reflection on how our lives are part of a much larger, constantly changing whole.

THE SCIENCE OF FLOURISHING COURSE:

The Science of Flourishing is HMI's new, online, self-paced course designed to help participants understand the skills of well-being, the science behind them, and how to apply those skills in daily life. With 6 modules, 29 videos, and 4r+ hours of instruction, this course is designed to support everyone on a path to flourishing by learning how to cultivate a calm mind, a healthy sense of self, and a daily life anchored in meaning and purpose, taught by Dr. Richard J. Davidson and Healthy Minds experts.

HEALTHY MINDS RESEARCH PLATFORM:

This year HMI launched the Healthy Minds Research Platform (HMRP), a mobile-friendly web platform that delivers personalized activities and validated measures tailored to an individual's needs. The platform is designed to intake rich data sets—including facial expression, vocal utterances and geographical location—to deliver the right intervention to the right person at the right time. Funded by the Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative, this project began in 2021 and its current conversational-based interaction model was piloted with a group of non-profit organizations in early 2023, with support from the R.N. Ho Foundation. HMI's next step with the platform is to incorporate AI to deliver micro-supports at scale.

PROJECT NFP:

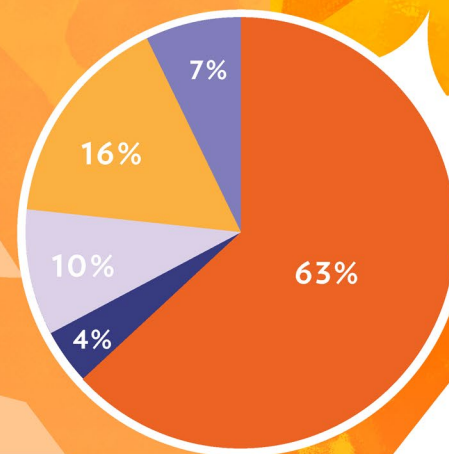
In April 2023, HMI launched a novel adaptation of the HM@Work program, specifically designed for non-profit (NFP) organizations. The effort was funded by the Ho Foundation, allowing HMI the opportunity to conduct extensive user research with a diverse set of organizations and nonprofit leaders to better understand their pain points. Using those insights, HMI developed a web-based, video-first @Work offering, which was deployed to early educators at the Pennsylvania Key Foundation, resulting in a 15% increase at 21 days from program enrollment compared to previous engagements with PA Key. This successful launch inspires hope for the platform's potential.

Center for
healthyminds
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
FINANCIALS FY2023

TOTAL EXPENSES - \$6,046,253

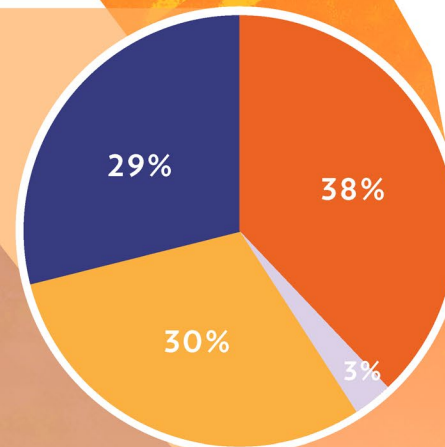
Use of Funds

- RESEARCH
- ADVANCEMENT
- FACULTY
- OPERATIONS
- PROGRAMS



Source of Funds

- GRANTS
- UW-MADISON
- DONORS
- ENDOWMENT

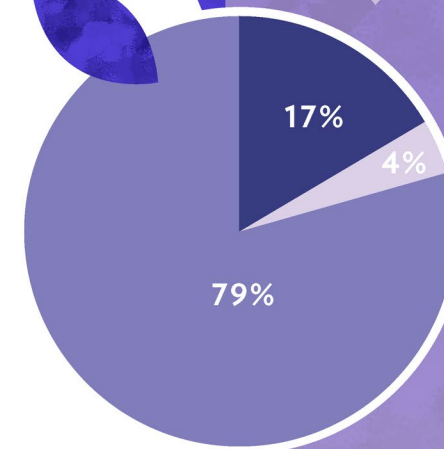


**healthyminds
innovations[®]**
FINANCIALS FY2023

TOTAL EXPENSES - \$5,162,534

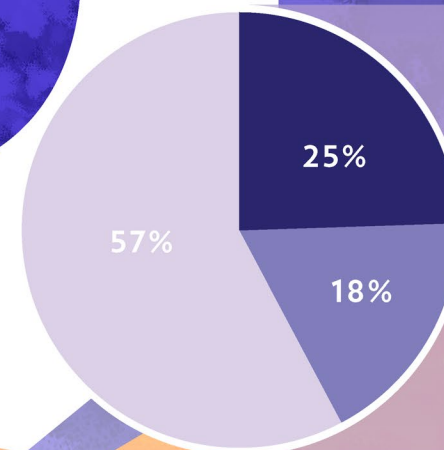
Use of Funds

- GENERAL OPERATIONS
- FUNDRAISING
- PROGRAMS & SERVICES



Source of Funds

- EARNED REVENUE
- RESTRICTED CONTRIBUTIONS
- UNRESTRICTED CONTRIBUTIONS



*FY23 Audited Financial Statements pending

THREE SIMPLE WAYS TO GIVE

Your support is pivotal to Healthy Minds to create a kinder, wiser, more compassionate world.

1 UNLOCK THE CHALLENGE AND ESTABLISH YOUR LEGACY

Only 5 opportunities remain to document your legacy gift to the Center for Healthy Minds and unlock an immediate gift of \$5,000 to CHM from our generous challenge gift donor. Simply complete the form and follow the instructions found in the link below to support the Center during your lifetime and beyond.

centerhealthyminds.org/give/legacy-giving

2 GIVE FROM YOUR IRA

Satisfy your required minimum distribution with a gift to Healthy Minds. If you are age 70 1/2 or older, giving directly from your IRA is a simple way to contribute and can result in tax benefits even if you don't itemize. For more information, visit supportuw.org/how-to-give/give-from-ira

3 WORKPLACE MATCHING GIFTS

Double your impact! Making your gift through a Matching Gift Program with your employer is an easy way to double the impact of your support. Ask your HR representative about your company's matching gift program and the tax benefits of giving via payroll deduction.

Please Support Healthy Minds
With Your Gift Today



SUPPORTUW.ORG/GIVETO/HEALTHYMINDS

For more information on ways to give,
contact Graham Washburn,
Associate Director of Development:



GRAHAM.WASHBURN@SUPPORTUW.ORG



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