Supporting Student Mental Health

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information, support, and education

Supporting Student Mental Health

Empowering Students and Supporting Success: Prioritizing Mental Health at Home and School.

ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Hope for Families, Shaped by Lived Experience

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The Association for Children's Mental Health (ACMH)

Purpose:

- ACMH exists to bring help and hope to families of Michigan children and youth with emotional, behavioral and mental health disorders.

Mission:

- All Michigan children & youth with emotional, behavioral, or mental health challenges and their families live in a safe, welcoming community with access to needed services and supports.

What We Do:

- ACMH provides information, support, resources, training, referral and advocacy for families of children and youth with mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders and the communities who support them.

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What You'll Learn Today

- Understand the connection between mental health and school success.

- Recognize signs of social, emotional, and behavioral challenges.

- Identify key indicators of effective student support.

- Learn strategies to access resources and accommodations.

Think & Share

- What does supporting mental health in schools mean to you?

- Feel free to share your thoughts!

Think & Share in Chat

What is Mental Health?

Well-being: A balance of emotional, social, and psychological health that shapes how we feel, think, and act.

Key for Development: Critical to shaping children's emotional, social, and cognitive growth, and their success in school and life.

A State of Balance (WHO):
The ability to:
- Realize personal strengths.
- Cope with life's stresses.
- Work productively and contribute to the community.

Youth Mental Health: Key Statistics

1 in 5 children have a diagnosable mental health disorder.

1 in 10 face challenges that significantly impact daily life.

During the pandemic, youth anxiety and depression doubled.75-80% of youth needing services don't receive them.

Suicide: 2nd leading cause of death (ages 10–14). 3rd leading cause (ages 15–24).

Mental health is the #1 concern for youth (ages 15–19), yet 80% feel uncomfortable asking for help.

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Why Mental Health Matters at School

- Mental health challenges are common: 50% develop by age 14; 75% by age 24.

- Early detection and intervention work: Build resilience and boost school success.

- Schools play a critical role: Natural setting for prevention and support.

- Unmet needs impact learning and daily life: Many kids are struggling across our state.

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The Link Between Mental Health and School Performance

- Students with mental health challenges often face:
  - Lower academic performance
  - Difficulty forming peer relationships
  - Increased rates of absenteeism
- Schools are uniquely positioned to provide support and resources.

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Mental Health and School Performance

- How Mental Health and School Performance Impact Each Other:
  - Mental health challenges can:
    - Affect focus, attendance, and grades.
    - Increase the risk of school avoidance or disengagement.
    - Influence relationships with peers and teachers.
  - Positive mental health supports:
    - Boost engagement and academic success.
    - Build confidence and resilience in students.

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How Mental Health Challenges Impact Students

- Core Skills Affected:
  - Learning
  - Focus
  - Engagement
- Additional Classroom Impacts:
  - Social interaction
  - Behavior critical to success
- Varied Effects:
  Every student is impacted differently, regardless of diagnosis.

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Obstacles, Challenges, and Barriers

Confidence & Engagement: Mental health challenges affect confidence and participation in classroom activities.

Classroom Expectations: Struggles with sitting still, staying focused, and being attentive.

Behavior & Emotions: Difficulty regulating behavior and emotions impacts learning and relationships, leading to isolation.

Mental Health Symptoms: Excessive fears, sadness, or hopelessness reduce focus, confidence, and willingness to engage.

Executive Functioning: Challenges with organization, self-motivation, and persistence hinder school success.

Disruptions to Learning: Behavioral challenges often lead to classroom removals, limiting learning opportunities.

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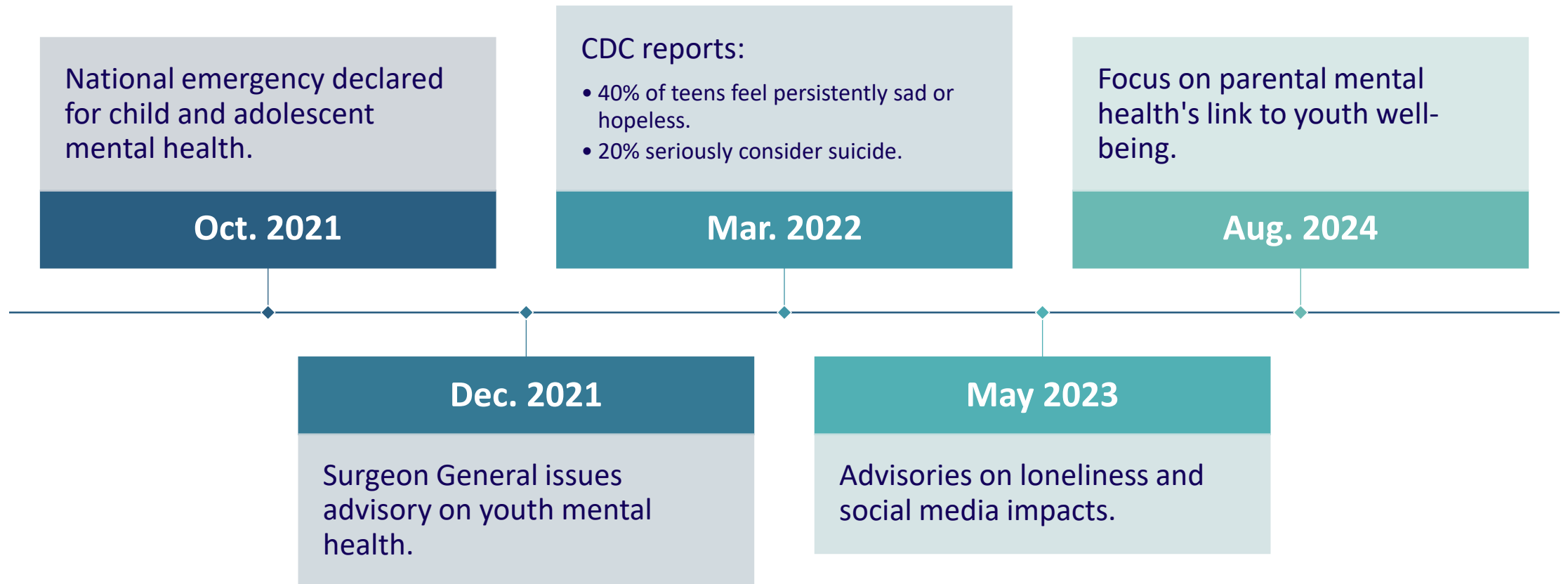
Barriers to Mental Health Access

- Lack of Information

- Distrust in the System

- Resource Shortages

- Stigma and Bias

- Invisible Disability Challenges

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Youth Mental Health Crisis: Silver Linings

- Growing awareness and focus on youth mental health challenges.

- More funding and commitment to implement solutions.

- Widespread dissemination of effective tools and strategies.

- Evidence confirms schools' critical impact on mental health outcomes.

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Key Youth Mental Health Milestones

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National emergency declared for child and adolescent mental health.

Oct. 2021

CDC reports:

- 40% of teens feel persistently sad or hopeless.
- 20% seriously consider suicide.

Mar. 2022

Focus on parental mental health's link to youth well-being.

Aug. 2024

Dec. 2021

Surgeon General issues advisory on youth mental health.

May 2023

Advisories on loneliness and social media impacts.

Recognizing and Understanding Challenges

Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Signs, Trauma and, Trauma Informed Practices

Recognizing Early Warning Signs

- *Key Takeaway:* Understand subtle signs of mental health struggles, like withdrawal, behavior changes, or academic decline.

- *Why It Matters:* Early recognition enables timely intervention and prevents issues from escalating.

Signs of Mental Health Challenges

Recognizing Challenges at School

- Social Signs:
  - Withdrawal or isolation
  - Difficulty making or maintaining friendships
- Emotional Signs:
  - Low self-esteem
  - Anxiety or frequent mood swings
- Behavioral Signs:
  - Acting out or disengaging from school activities

What you see…
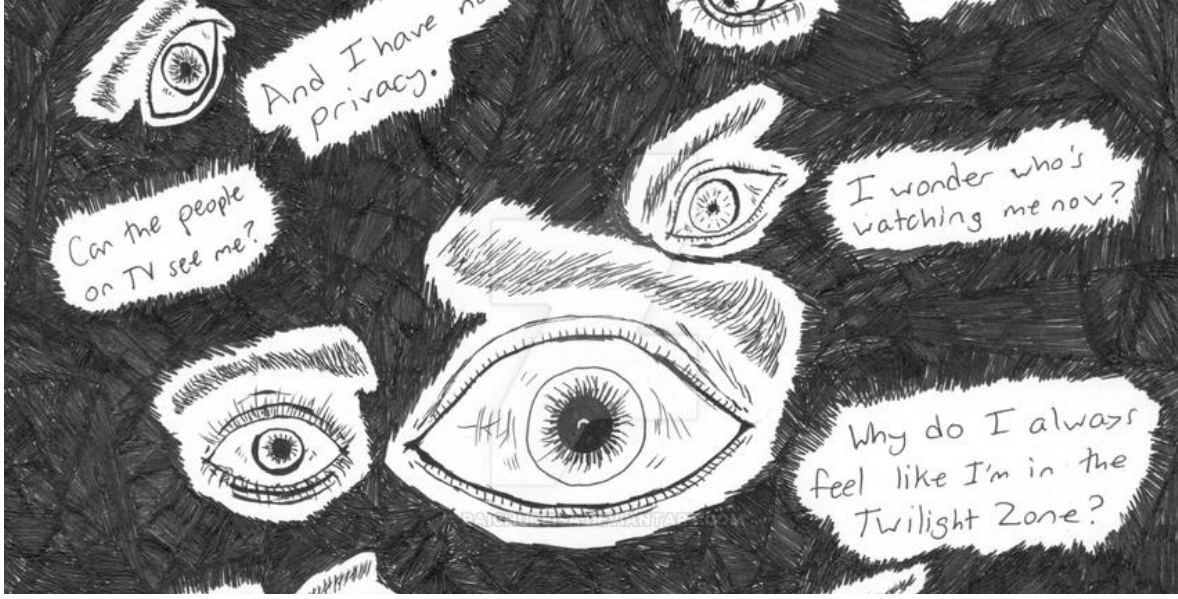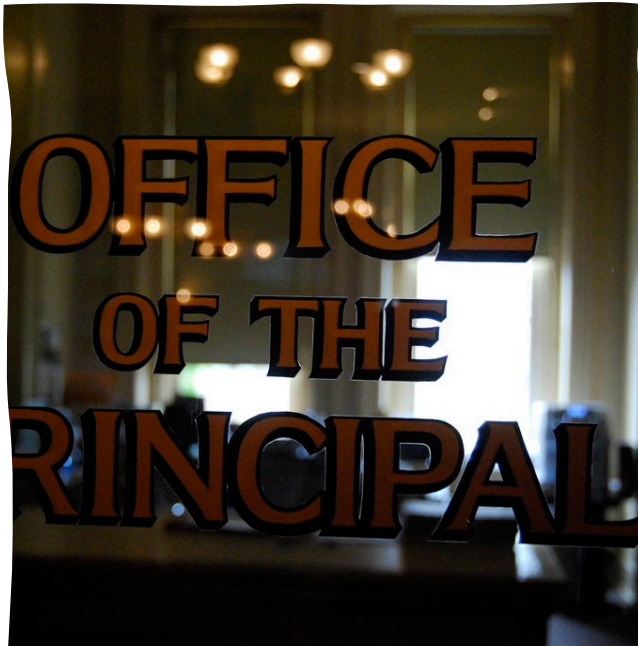
What we often don't see…

Or Hear….

And sometimes all people see is…

…The 'B' Word

- BEHAVIOR is Communication
- What we see is not always what we assume.
- Misunderstood or mishandled behavioral issues are common and often create additional challenges for kids.

Trauma and Its Impact

- Understanding Trauma:

  - Examples: Abuse, neglect, loss, community violence.

- Effects of Trauma:

  - Impacts brain development, emotional regulation, and learning.

  - Signs in students: Withdrawal, difficulty concentrating, disruptive behaviors.

- Trauma-Informed Approaches:

  - Create predictable environments.

  - Build trust and provide safety.

  - Offer opportunities for self-expression.

The Role of Trauma-Informed Practices

- *Key Takeaway:*
  Trauma impacts learning and behavior; adopting trauma-informed practices helps create safe and supportive environments.
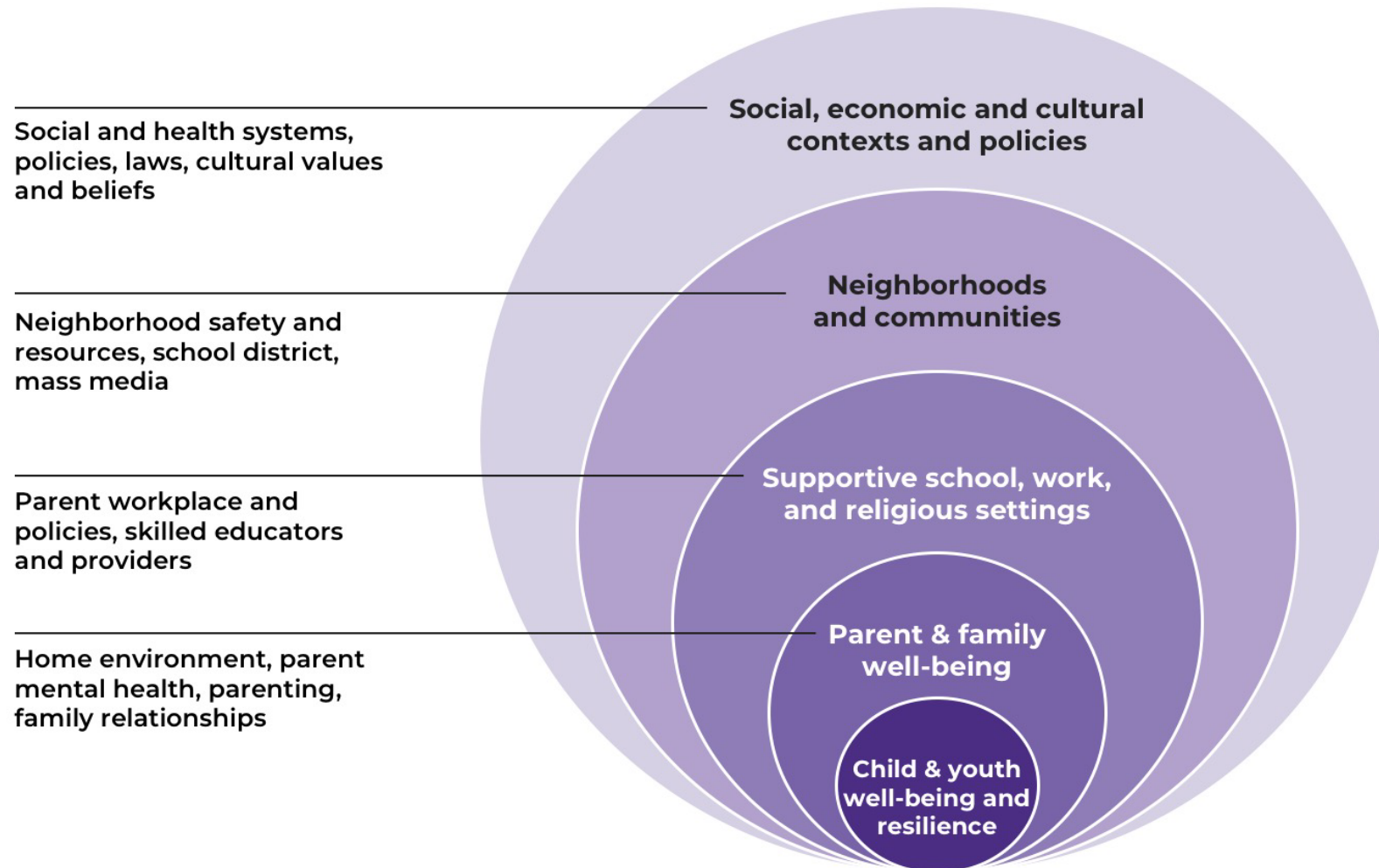
- *Why It Matters:*
  Understanding trauma fosters empathy and equips caregivers and educators with effective strategies.

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Creating a Supportive Environment

School-Based Mental Health Initiatives, Family Approaches, and The Circle of Support

The Circle of Support (Bioecological Model)

Social and health systems, policies, laws, cultural values and beliefs — Social, economic and cultural contexts and policies

Neighborhood safety and resources, school district, mass media — Neighborhoods and communities

Parent workplace and policies, skilled educators and providers — Supportive school, work, and religious settings

Home environment, parent mental health, parenting, family relationships — Parent & family well-being

Child & youth well-being and resilience

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Collaborative Ecosystem of Support

- *A "Circle of Support" brings together family, school, peers, and community resources to holistically support the child.*

- *Collaboration ensures children receive academic, social, and emotional support tailored to their unique needs.*
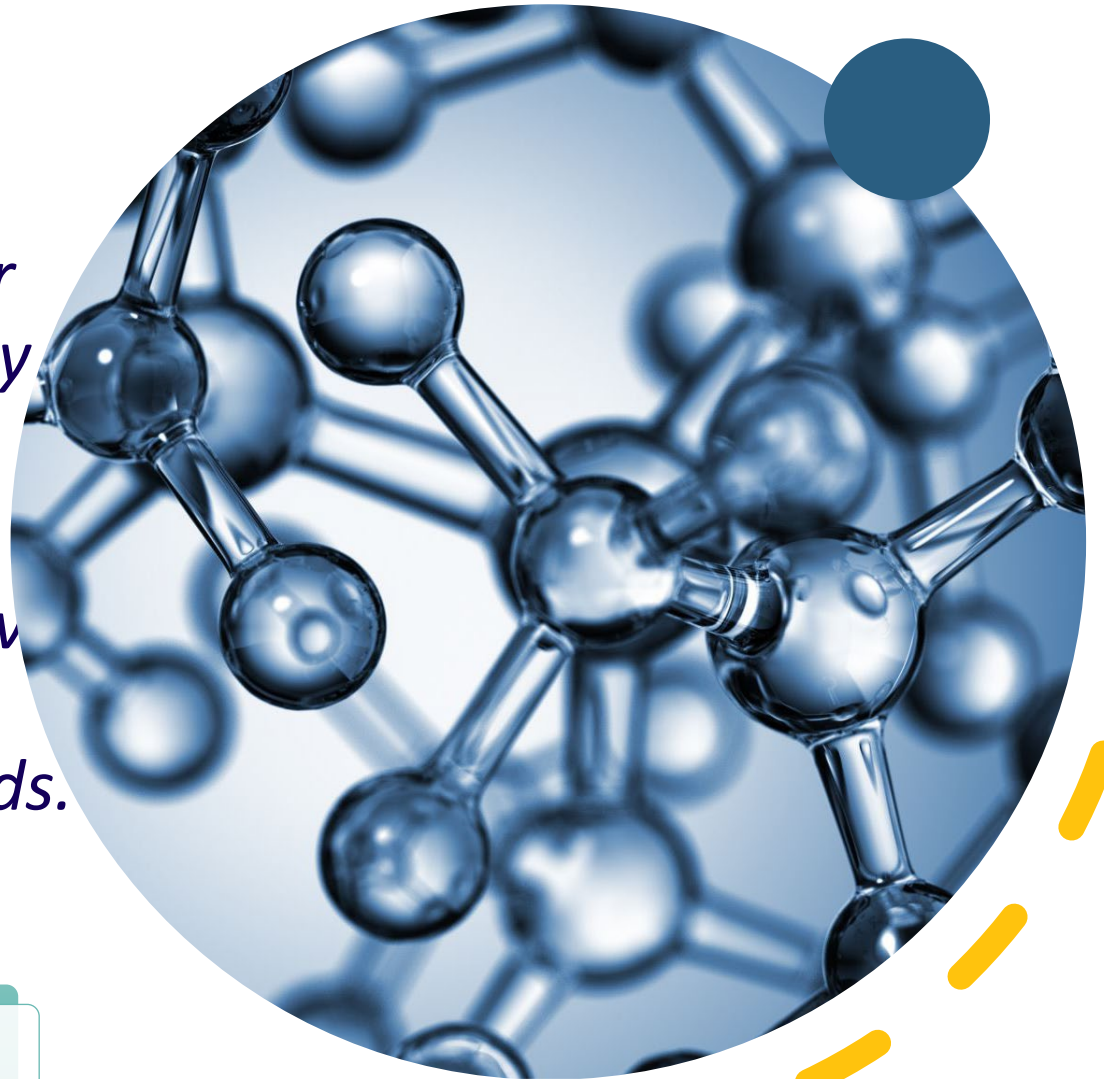
| Family | School | Peers | Community Resources | Child |

What Success Looks Like

What Happens When Students Are Supported?

Success Indicators:

- Improved academic performance

- Positive relationships with peers and teachers

- Stronger emotional regulation skills

Characteristics of Well-Supported Youth

What Does It Look Like When Youth Are Well-Supported?

- Increased confidence in asking for help and expressing emotions.

- Stronger connections with peers and adults.

- Consistent engagement in academics and extracurricular activities.

- Resilience and the ability to navigate challenges effectively.

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Normalizing Mental Health Conversations

- Key Takeaway:
  - Talking about mental health should be as natural as discussing physical health.
- Why It Matters:
  - Reduces stigma, encouraging youth to seek help without fear of judgment.
  - Creates a supportive environment at school and home.

Keys to Success When Addressing Behavior

- Behavior is Communication:
  Identify what the behavior is trying to convey.

- Positive Interventions Work:
  - Proven effective in supporting and redirecting behavior.

- Disciplinary Approaches Fall Short:
  - Do not eliminate negative behavior.
  - Leave students feeling isolated or labeled.
  - Fail to teach strategies for appropriate interactions.
  - Remove students from learning, increasing negative outcomes like poor performance and higher dropout rates.

Unlocking Success and Accessing Support

How to Unlock Success and Build Connections

- Get Support:
  - Collaborate with teachers, counselors, and mental health professionals.
  - Explore school-based and community mental health resources.
- Access Accommodations:
  - Develop IEPs or 504 Plans tailored to individual needs.
  - Advocate for personalized strategies to help students succeed.
- Make Connections:
  - Foster open communication between schools and families.
  - Build a robust support network for your child.

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What Helps

- Tailored supports for each student's unique needs.

- Blend formal and informal strategies to meet individual goals.

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Formal Supports

Individualized Education Program

Special Education

ACCOMMODATION

Mental Health Treatments

Accommodations and Modifications

- Academic Strategies

- Environmental Adjustments

- Organizational Tools

- Social-Emotional Supports

- Positive Behavior Interventions

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Social-Emotional Accommodations/Supports

Help students identify triggers and develop coping strategies.

Create and practice safety or crisis plans.

Challenge negative thoughts and highlight successes.

Be consistent, approachable, and flexible.

Teach and reinforce social skills through hands-on tools.

Prepare students for transitions and unexpected changes.

Build problem-solving skills with realistic expectations.

Model and encourage positive behaviors and statements.

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Behavior Goals and Planning

- Behavior is communication: Start with a Functional Behavior Assessment and recommendations.
  - Positive behavior support plans should teach and reinforce skills, avoiding punitive approaches.
- Good Behavioral Goals
  - Focus on strengths.
  - Teach and practice new skills.
  - Ensure goals are measurable and updated regularly.
  - Promote success and acceptance among peers.
- Other Tips for Success
  - Address behaviors individually (e.g., non-verbal cues, techniques to cool down, or take a break).
  - Monitor comfort and adjust strategies as needed.
  - Target small, achievable goals to build confidence and momentum.

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Informal Supports

- Building genuine connections and showing care.

- Encouraging open conversations about feelings and challenges.

- Providing a safe space for self-expression and problem-solving.

- Supporting peers in understanding and helping one another.

- Recognizing the unique pieces each individual brings to the community.
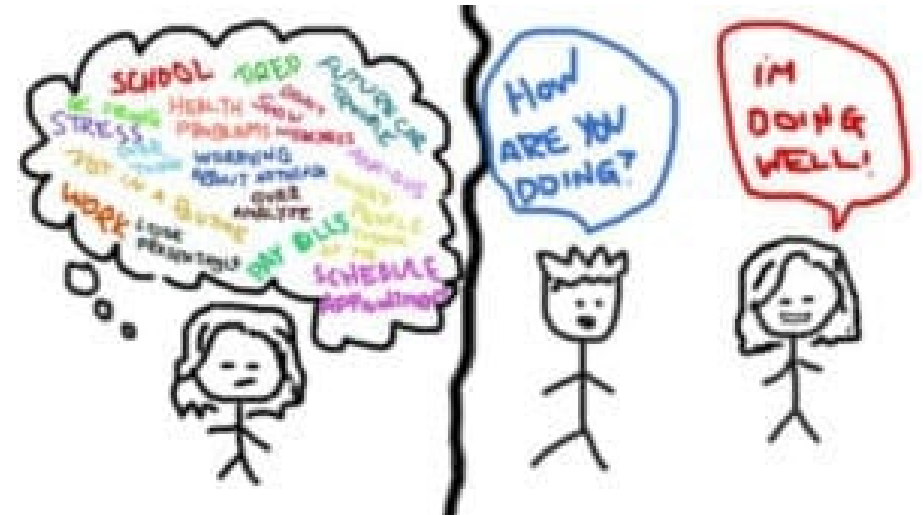
Important Things to Consider for Student Supports

Does the student feel the support will help them?

Do they have the necessary resources, skills, and tools to use it?

Can the support be implemented without making them feel singled out?

Can it be applied in a way that benefits the whole class where appropriate?

Do teachers or staff have the capacity and training needed to implement it well?

Start small! Focus on the most pressing needs before adding more interventions.

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Practical Strategies for Supporting Students

Formal School Supports, Resilience Building, and Protective Factors

Keys to Success

- Feeling connected and cared about

- Engaging youth in the process

- Asking what they need

Youth Voice is the #1 predictor of success for school-based initiatives and support efforts.

Involve youth when planning and implementing IEPs, accommodations, and other supports.

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What Youth Say:
What Helps vs. What Hurts

What Helps:

- Listening without judgment and validating their feelings.

- Showing genuine care, empathy, and being willing to connect.

- Being knowledgeable about mental health and supportive strategies.

- Treating all students fairly, regardless of their challenges.

- Understanding that school is not the "end-all, be-all" for everyone.

What Hurts:

- Ignoring or downplaying students' struggles.

- Publicly calling out or shaming students.

- Making assumptions based on grades or behavior.

- Using misplaced disciplinary actions.

- Failing to involve or communicate with students about matters affecting them.

Share Information, Tips, and Coping Strategies with Youth!

Help youth understand how their mental health may impact their ability to:

Filter out distractions like sounds, sights, or intrusive thoughts.	Adapt to changes or transitions.	Build and maintain relationships.	Focus on tasks, listening, or reading.	Manage time pressures, multitasking, or testing situations.
Navigate social situations and contribute to group activities.	Maintain energy levels for participation in class or extracurriculars.	Approach others, join groups, and build friendships.	Respond to new tasks, feedback, or demands.	Cope with school-related stress, expectations, and peer challenges.

Support them in building strategies to address these challenges and grow from their experiences.

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How Can Parents Help?

- Increase Your Mental Health Awareness:
  Learn about mental health challenges and their effects on youth.
  Consider taking a Youth Mental Health First Aid class to build practical skills for supporting youth.

- Share Knowledge:
  Reduce stigma by discussing mental health openly and sharing insights with others.

- Know Your Resources:
  Familiarize yourself with community services, mental health professionals, and educational accommodations to support youth and their families.

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Supporting Your Child's Mental Health Tips for Families

- Recognize when your child's struggles impact their daily functioning at home, school, or in the community.

- Evaluate the intensity, frequency, and duration of their challenges.

- Trust your instincts—remember, you are the expert on your child.

- Reach out for help by:

  - Talking with your pediatrician or family doctor.

  - Consulting with your child's teacher, school social worker, or principal.

  - Contacting ACMH for guidance or visiting www.acmh-mi.org.

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How Can Teachers Help?

- Build awareness of children's mental health and available school/community resources.

- Establish structure and consistency in the classroom.

- Foster an open, inclusive environment for mental health discussions.

- Prepare students for transitions with clear communication.

- Offer support by helping students identify strengths and develop skills.

- Create a plan for students who need additional assistance.

- Collaborate with families, counselors, and community partners to ensure comprehensive support.

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How Can Schools Help?

- Prioritize Mental Health: Recognize that mental health affects all students regardless of background.

- Be Mindful of Pressure: Avoid unrealistic expectations that can overwhelm students.

- Challenge Bias: Ensure fair treatment and equitable support for all.

- Foster Balance: Support academic success while promoting emotional well-being.

Mental illnes doesn't discriminate. Do you?

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What Else Works?

- School-Based Health Centers

  - Natural Setting for Support

  - Access to Care

- Evidence of Effectiveness:

  - Students are 6 times more likely to complete Evidence-Based Treatments in schools than in community settings.

  - Research shows they are more likely to access counseling when available at school.

- Michigan's Progress: Over 100 centers statewide provide physical and mental health services, with plans for 40 more sites to serve 20,000 additional students.

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The Value of School-Based Mental Health Services

- Benefits of Access:
  - Enhances physical and emotional safety, key to student success.
  - Boosts academic performance and focus.
  - Fosters social and emotional skills, building resilience.

- Reduces Risks:
  - Decreases disciplinary actions and school dropout rates.
  - Lowers substance abuse among students.
  - Mitigates involvement in the juvenile justice system.

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Promising School-Based Mental Health Programs in Michigan

- Project AWARE: Building partnerships between schools and mental health agencies to enhance mental health awareness and services.

- TRAILS: Evidence-based mental health training for school professionals, focusing on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and mindfulness.

- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): Programs to improve students' emotional and social competencies, supported by Michigan's Department of Education.

- Behavioral Health Learning Community (BHLC): Collaborative resource-sharing for behavioral health strategies and professional development.

- BH Works for MI Schools: Tools for screening, monitoring, and supporting students' behavioral health needs.

- Additional Efforts: Expansion of school-based health centers and community partnerships to support student mental health.

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Other New Funding Efforts and Opportunities

- Governor's Budget (2023): $361 million for children's mental health, including mental health screenings, school-based professionals, clinics, and the expansion of the TRAILS Program.

- National Governors Association Grant: Incorporating student voice in social-emotional learning (SEL) efforts.

- MI Health Endowment Fund Grant: Funding 19 districts to implement SEL competencies and create a community of practice.

- Loan Assistance and Day Treatment: To attract behavioral health professionals and support children in the child welfare system.

- MSU Extension Grant: $1.55 million for training to support student mental health and reduce school violence.

- Statewide Efforts: New Bureau of Children's Coordinated Health Policy and Supports to enhance access to home, community, and crisis services for children and families.

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Resiliency and How to Build It

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Fostering Resilience in Students

- Resiliency is: The ability to bounce back from challenges.
- Help them to develop Protective factors: Strong relationships, self-regulation skills, and a sense of purpose.

Ways to Build Resilience

- Encourage problem-solving and goal-setting.
- Teach coping strategies.
- Build connections with supportive adults and peers.
- Celebrate small successes.

Building Protective Factors for Resiliency

Practical Steps to Build Protective Factors:

- Positive Relationships:

    - Encourage connections with caring adults, whether through family, mentorship programs, or school staff.

- Sense of Belonging:

    - Promote activities that foster inclusion, such as peer groups, sports, or clubs. Feeling valued as part of a community builds self-esteem.

- Supportive Resources:

    - Ensure access to mental health professionals, educational resources, and extracurricular opportunities. These resources help children cope and grow.

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Parents, Caregivers, and Educator Well-Being

Self-Care and School-Based Initiatives

Importance of Self-Care for Adults

Taking care of our children often starts with taking care of ourselves.

As caregivers and educators, it's easy to pour all of our energy into supporting others, but neglecting our own well-being can limit our ability to help.

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Helping Your Children Begins With Helping Yourself

Care for Yourself to Care for Your Child

- Why It Matters:
  - Reduces caregiver stress.
  - Models healthy behaviors for children.
- Practical Tips for Caregivers:
  - Seek support from other adults or professionals.
  - Practice stress-reducing activities like mindfulness or exercise.
  - Set realistic expectations and celebrate small victories.

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Empowering Change

Empowering Youth Voice, Advocacy for Systemic Change, and Resources for Advocacy

Taking Action Beyond Awareness

- Key Takeaway:
- Take actionable steps to support mental health, such as:
  - Connecting with a school counselor.
  - Exploring trusted mental health apps for mindfulness and stress management.
  - Creating a personalized self-care plan with daily habits.
- Why It Matters:
- Turning knowledge into action fosters real change and creates environments that actively support mental health and well-being.

Empowering Youth Voice

- *Key Takeaway:* Involve youth in decisions about their support, both at school and home.

- *Why It Matters:* Youth who feel heard and respected are more likely to engage in their own well-being and care.

The Power of Advocacy

- *Key Takeaway:*
  Advocate for systemic changes in schools to prioritize mental health. Examples: Mental health days, more school counselors.

- *Why It Matters:*
  Advocacy ensures long-term improvements in addressing mental health and drives systemic change.

- Sign up: The Bureau of Children's Coordinated Health Policy and Supports (BCCHPS) MI is looking to partner with youth, young adults, and parents/caregivers.

ACMH Youth Advisory Committee

- Join a community of youth advocates working to improve mental health resources and support for young people across Michigan.

- Your voice matters! Together, we can create meaningful change.

- Interested? Contact us to learn how to get involved!

YOU ARE NOT ALONE – JOIN US!

COMMUNITY CONNECTION   SUPPORT & UNDERSTANDING   MAKING A DIFFERENCE

CALLING ALL PARENTS & CAREGIVERS OF YOUTH WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES:

MEETINGS OCCUR EVERY 3RD MONDAY OF THE MONTH AT NOON!

Statewide Parent Advisory Committee Member Interest Form

PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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**INTERESTED?
EMAIL DROBINSON@ACMH-MI.ORG OR SCAN THE QR CODE ABOVE TO COMPLETE THE BRIEF INTAKE QUESTIONAIRRE!**

www.acmh-mi.org | Phone: 1-517-372-4016 | Parent Line: 888-226-4543

Other Youth Mental Health Groups:

- *Check out mental health clubs or peer support groups at your school, such as:*

- Active Minds: A student-led mental health advocacy group.

- Bring Change to Mind (BC2M): High school clubs focused on reducing stigma around mental health.

- *No group at your school? Consider starting one! ACMH is here to help you get started and provide resources to make it a success. Contact us to learn more.*

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Leveraging Resources

School-Based Resources, Community and Online Support

State and National Resources

- Michigan Resources:
  - Michigan Department of Education (MDE): Mental Health Toolkit
  - Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS): State of Michigan | Michigan.gov
- National Resources:
  - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: SAMHSA
  - National Alliance on Mental Illness: NAMI
  - Mental Health America (MHA): Mental Health America

Specific to Families in Michigan

- Michigan Affiliates - Family Voices

- Michigan Family to Family – MPHI

  - Michigan Family to Family – Health Information Center

Why Social Media and Online Communities Matter:

- Access to Peer Support: Online groups offer a safe space where people can share experiences, challenges, and successes with others who truly understand.

- Resource Sharing: Members often share articles, tools, and strategies that have worked for them.

- Convenience: Families can access these communities anytime, providing flexibility for busy schedules.

- Advocacy and Awareness: Social media groups often lead campaigns to reduce stigma and advocate for mental health resources and rights.

Building Connections Through Online Communities

Online Communities to Support Mental Health

- Facebook Groups

- Social Media Resources (Instagram/Twitter/X)
  - @NAMICommunicate (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
  - @childmindinstitute (Child Mind Institute)
  - @traumaresearchfoundation (Trauma-Informed Practices and Research)
  - LinkedIn: Professional Groups for Educators and Administrators

Circle of Support Document Links

- [Microsoft PowerPoint - 4h circle of support state lesson 2006 Dec 1.ppt](#)

- [Circles of Support –](#)

- [The Bioecological Model - The Center for Child and Family Well-Being](#)

Visit ACMH on the web!

- ACMH Website
- Facebook: ACMHMichigan
- Instagram: @acmh_mi
- X (formerly Twitter)
- LinkedIn

Call to Action

- Advocate for mental health initiatives in schools.

- Stay engaged in their child's support system by collaborating with educators and counselors.

- Utilize resources from schools, communities, and organizations like ACMH to ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Thank You for Supporting Student Mental Health

Together, we can create environments where all students thrive.

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Contact Information:

Association for Children's Mental Health

6017 W. St. Joseph Hwy., Suite #200,

Lansing, Michigan 48917

Phone: (517) 372-4016

Fax: (517) 372-4032

Parent Line: (888) ACMH-KID (226-4543)

Supported by funds from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

We are here to support you!

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▶ **/MichiganAlliance**

For more information visit
www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org

Call 800-552-4821
En Español 313-217-1060
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info@michiganallianceforfamilies.org

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Michigan Alliance for Families

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