Student Wellness Through the Mental Health Lens: Resources for Educators

INTRODUCTION

Meeting the mental health needs of students requires a dynamic, interconnected approach of passionate educators, engaged parents, dedicated professionals, and forward-thinking administrators working together to identify needs, provide support, and connect young people to the resources and services that can make a difference in their lives. It starts with universal approaches like effective communication and class room management techniques that serves as a connector and catalyst to meet those needs.

RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

Edtomorrow: Edtomorrow supports K–12 educators with practical daily tools, restorative training, and coaching to create classrooms rooted in care, connection, and community where every student and teacher can thrive. Sign-up for the Daily Five to get daily ideas for activities to build stronger, connected classrooms.

Student Mental Health Matters | A Toolkit for Educators: A toolkit to equip educators, school staff, and school mental health professionals with critical knowledge and strategies to support the mental well-being of their students. Video-based cover suicide prevention, stress and anxiety, self-harm, adverse childhood experiences, and social media, and offer:

- Expert perspectives from mental health professionals, school administrators and educators aimed at helping teachers better understand a topic;
- Student perspectives of elementary, middle, and high school students;
- Strategies that provide real-world applications for teachers' practices.

Supporting Mental Wellness | Insights for Educators: A series of videos with Bruce D. Perry, MD, PhD from the Neurosequential Network with insights to support mental wellness.

- Video: Stress, Trauma and the Brain
- Video: Explainer video on ACEs

Supporting Teens With Mental Health Issues | Edutopia: Evidence-based strategies to foster school environments that promote psychological well-being and support students experiencing behavioral, emotional, or social challenges.

How to Address School Avoidance: To help reduce chronic absenteeism, schools can help students learn how to self-regulate and manage feelings of discomfort.

Mental Health Skill Building Training for Educators: Child Mind Institute: School staff learn to implement six modules that help students better understand and regulate their

emotions, evaluate thoughts, make choices about their behavior, interact effectively with others, and use mindfulness practices to navigate stressful situations.

Healthy Minds, Thriving Kids: Healthy Minds, Thriving Kids is a series of video and print resources that educators can use to teach their students critical mental health and coping skills. The videos and support materials are centered around the following five areas:

- Understanding Feelings – Building a foundation for healthy coping
- Relaxation Skills – Skills for stressful situations
- Understanding Thoughts – How thoughts impact feelings and behavior
- Managing Intense Emotions – Skills for coping with intense emotions
- Mindfulness – Improving self-awareness and decision-making

The resources seek to teach skills students can use for the rest of their lives, normalize conversations about mental wellbeing, and reflect the diversity of our communities.

5 Tips to Reduce the Mental Health Load of Students:

- **Build Structure and Predictability:** Establish a stable seating plan and maintain a consistent agenda. This helps students anticipate daily activities and reduces anxiety about the unknown. By telegraphing significant changes ahead of time, students can prepare mentally and emotionally, which eases transitions and keeps them engaged.
- **Leverage Entry and Exit Tickets:** Use mood checks and reflective prompts at the beginning and end of lessons. This not only helps in understanding students' emotional states but also provides insights into their learning experiences. Celebrating positive feedback and addressing struggles can build a positive classroom culture.
- **Employ Positive Narration and Specific Praise:** Focus on students' efforts and learning processes rather than their mistakes. Highlighting different approaches and celebrating small wins can boost confidence and reduce the pressure of achieving perfection.
- **Model and Explain Healthy Mindfulness Strategies: Demonstrate** mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing and taking breaks. By modeling these strategies, students are more likely to adopt them, which can help manage stress and improve focus.
- **Encourage the Use of Planners:** Teach students how to effectively use planners to manage their tasks and schedules. This can help them capture, schedule, and remind themselves of their responsibilities, reducing the cognitive load of remembering everything.