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Mental Health Resources for Educators

August 10, 2016

The 2016-17 enacted State budget included amendments to Education Law section 2801-a, including a requirement that staff annually receive training in the school emergency response plan and specifically requires training in mental health.

Educators play a critical role in the success of students, not just academically, but socially and emotionally as well. Knowing how to recognize the signs of crisis, emotional trauma and other related mental health issues is critical. The links below include useful resources for individuals and/or organizations with an interest in learning the signs of mental illness and how a school can help.

At the end of this document, you will find a one page summary from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, titled “What Educators Should Know.” Information about warning signs and behavioral changes that may be an indicator of a problem, and ways that educators can help support their students and lead their classrooms to support student and family mental health are included.

General Mental Health Resources for Schools

- [New York State Office of Mental Health](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health](#)
- An excellent source for *packaged* mental health training programs is through the [National Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland](#).
- [A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools](#), Developed by the American School Counselor Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, the School Social Work Association of America, the National Association of School Resource Officers, the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Mental Health Resources for Schools by Topic

Suicide Prevention Center of New York (SPCNY)

- Brochure [SPCNY's What Every Teacher Needs to Know- Recognizing Suicide Risk in Students](#)
- Suicide Prevention [Training Programs](#)
- Postvention
 - [Guidance on memorials after a suicide](#)
 - [Postvention Standards Manual: A Guide for a School's Response in the Aftermath of a Sudden Death](#)
 - Additional Resources:
 - <http://www.preventsuicideny.org/#!/resources/ccjp>
 - Garra Lloyd-Lester, Assistant Director is a terrific resource for discussion about suicide prevention, suicide postvention protocols and training. His contact information is: 518- 402- 1156 Phone garra.lloyd-lester@omh.ny.gov

Local Resources for Schools

- [***The Early Recognition, Coordination and Screening Initiative***](#) – A New York State Office of Mental Health funded initiative to cultivate cooperative relationships with local primary care practices, schools and other community-based programs, to promote early identification through social emotional developmental screening and linkages to services. Many of the 37 programs are working with their local schools and provide education and training as well as screening and are a good resource for schools to provide training. Some Early Recognition programs are also involved with suicide prevention coalitions in their communities and some are trained to provide [Mental Health First Aid](#) training. This initiative is funded through December 31, 2016.
- [***Mental Health Association of NYS \(MHANYS\)***](#) offers training in [Mental Health First Aid for Youth](#)
- [***Community Mental Health Promotion \(CMHP\)***](#) –[local Mental Health Associations that often work with schools to provide education and training](#)
- [***New York State Suicide Prevention County Coalitions***](#) – [the local coalitions that work with the NYS Suicide Prevention Center](#)
- [***National Alliance for the Mentally Ill / NYS – Parents & Teachers as Allies***](#), a 2-hour in-service program to help school professionals identify the early warning signs of early-onset mental illnesses in children and adolescents in schools.

Violence Prevention

- The Centers for Disease Control Guide to Community Preventive Service
 - [School-Based Programs to Reduce Violence](#)
 - [Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere \(STRYVE\)](#) – includes training, resources, links and information on funding sources

Trauma Informed Care

- [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACES\) 101](#)
- [Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators](#)
- [Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators \(Spanish version\)](#)
- [Monroe County Research to Practice Council White Paper on Creating a Trauma Informed System of Care](#)
- [Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative's](#) guidance on [Helping Traumatized Children Learn](#)

National Center for Child Traumatic Stress

- [A Checklist for School Personnel to Evaluate and Implement the Mental Health Component of Your School Crisis and Emergency Plan](#)
- [Resources for School Personnel](#)
- [School Resource List](#)

What Educators Should Know

(from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website:
<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/educators/index.html>.)

You should know:

- The [warning signs](#) for mental health problems.
- Whom to turn to, such as the principal, school nurse, school psychiatrist or psychologist, or school social worker, if you have questions or concerns about a student's behavior.
- How to access [crisis support and other mental health services](#).

What Educators Should Look For in Student Behavior

Consult with a school counselor, nurse, or administrator and the student's parents if you observe one or more of the following behaviors:

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Seriously trying to harm oneself, or making plans to do so
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart or fast breathing
- Involvement in many fights or desire to badly hurt others
- Severe out-of-control behavior that can hurt oneself or others
- Not eating, throwing up, or using laxatives to make oneself lose weight
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
- Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still that puts the student in physical danger or causes problems in the classroom
- Repeated use of drugs or alcohol
- Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Drastic changes in the student's behavior or personality

What Educators Can Do in Classrooms and Schools

You can support the mental health of all students in your classroom and school, not just individual students who may exhibit behavioral issues. Consider the following actions:

- Educate staff, parents, and students on [symptoms](#) of and [help](#) for mental health problems
- Promote social and emotional competency and build resilience
- Help ensure a positive, safe school environment
- Teach and reinforce positive behaviors and decision-making
- Encourage helping others
- Encourage good physical health
- Help ensure access to school-based mental health supports

Developing Effective School Mental Health Programs

Efforts to care for the emotional wellbeing of children and youth can extend beyond the classroom and into the entire school. School-based mental health programs can focus on promoting mental wellness, preventing mental health problems, and providing treatment.

Effective programs:

- Promote the healthy social and emotional development of all children and youth
- Recognize when young people are at risk for or are experiencing mental health problems
- Identify how to intervene early and appropriately when there are problems

Learn More about Ways to Support Your Students and Their Families

- Find how to assess mental health needs in your school and [develop and implement a school-based mental health program](#)
- Find [tips for talking to children and youth after a disaster or traumatic event](#) (PDF – 796 KB).
- Registered [National Association of School Nurses](#) can learn about their role in providing [behavioral health services in schools](#) through an online continuing education program