

W Y M A N

Youth Mental Wellness: Everyone Has a Role to Play

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Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program Grantee Conference

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Forum Objectives:

- participants will be able to identify and describe the limitations of support that can be provided by program generalists.
- participants will be able to discuss at least three strategies for creating a culture of emotional safety for youth in program experiences.
- participants will be able to identify and apply at least two strategies for reducing the stigma around mental wellness.

Framing the Conversation

Framing

- › Mental Wellness is an important component of overall health
- › Our discussion is focused on general mental wellness, not crisis response or diagnosing conditions
- › Throughout the pandemic, youth have reported feeling isolated from school, community & caring individuals
- › Opportunities to connect with others & practice skill development have been limited
- › We need to develop internal assets, like confidence, critical thinking, emotion management, etc.
- › We need to develop SEL Skills, like communication and decision making.

Developing a Culture of Wellness

What's Needed?

- › Intentional planning for structure, language, supports & activities
- › Creating an atmosphere where youth feel safe, included and are engaged in learning about themselves & others

Developing a Culture of Mental Wellness

- › Structure
- › Physical & Emotional Safety
- › Relational Approach
- › Building Emotional Vocabularies
- › Reduce Stigma
- › Understanding our Role & Empowering Youth

Strategies to Support Structure in the Physical Space

- › “Right amount” of physical space
- › Privacy
- › Seating
- › Teen-friendly
- › Appropriate number of teens in group
- › Adult to teen ratio

Strategies to Support Structure for Emotional Safety

- › Group Agreements
- › Positive, inclusive group culture
- › Respond to individual AND group needs
- › Facilitators set the tone: Model empathy, listening, patience, etc.
- › Use consistent routines

Using a Relational Approach

- › Learn & Use Names
- › Show an interest in youth interests and experiences
- › Ask questions- relate content to youth's responses
- › Be aware of your verbal and non-verbal communication- remain responsive, approachable & non-judgemental
- › Listen, validate teen experiences, use empathy
- › Be human; have fun!

When Healthy Relationships exist...

- › Modeling has more meaning
- › Feedback has more impact
- › What you say is better understood

Building an Emotional Vocabulary

- › Use Emotion Words in conversation
- › Ask questions about emotions (ex. “how did it feel when...” “how would you feel if...” “how do you think they felt...”)
- › Model comfort in speaking about emotions
- › Interrupt stereotypes that may limit emotional expression
- › Be intentional with your words

Reducing Stigma

- › Speak Positively of Asking for Help, Mental Services, etc.
- › Interrupt jokes about mental health, conditions, counseling, therapy, etc.
- › It's okay to be something other than "FINE"
- › Promote Awareness & Understanding
- › Normalize conversations about mental health
- › Have resources open & available in program space
- › Be Kind

Our Role as Caring Adults

- › Promote spaces that support mental wellness & reduce stigma
- › Recognize & Reduce Stress
- › Build Social Supports for youth
- › Respond in the Moment
- › Refer youth to Community Resources & Collaborators
- › Get More Training!
- › Care for Yourself

Resource Review



Resources to Share!

- › Mental Health America (MHA)
- › National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
- › We Think Twice
- › Protecting Youth Mental Health: U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory
- › Youth Mental Health Project
- › Active Minds



Optimism for the Future

Session Evaluation

Please complete a brief evaluation form for all workshop, forum and networking sessions by scanning the following QR code or visiting the following link:

<https://bit.ly/2024Evaluations>



References & Resources for Supporting Youth Mental Wellness

- › [Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#)
- › [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
- › [We Think Twice](#)
- › [Protecting Youth Mental Health: U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory](#)
- › [Youth Mental Health Project](#)
- › [Active Minds](#)
- › [Mental Health First Aid & National Council for Mental Wellbeing](#)

Contact Wyman!
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