### WYMAN

#### Youth Mental Wellness: Everyone Has a Role to Play

2024WARD: Building Brighter Futures for Today's Youth Leaders June 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2024

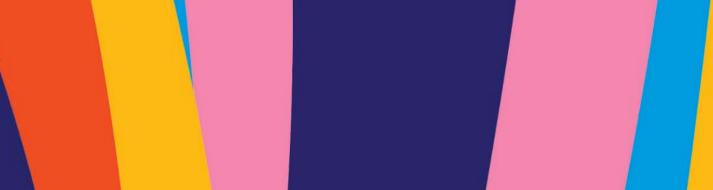
Antonio Crane

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program Grantee Conference The views expressed in written training materials, publications, or presentations by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government



#### 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)
- <u>National Alliance on Mental Illness</u> (NAMI)
- > <u>We Think Twice</u>
- <u>Protecting Youth Mental Health:</u> <u>U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory</u>
- › Youth Mental Health Project
- Active Minds
- <u>Mental Health First Aid & National</u> <u>Council for Mental Wellbeing</u>

### Contact Wyman! antonio.crane@wymancenter.org

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