

# Mental Health IS Health – The Role of School Nurses in Mental Health Promotion

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Linsey Shupe

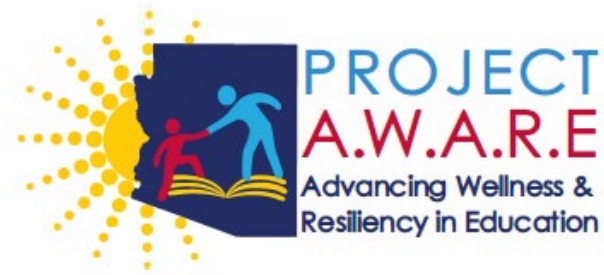
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# SAMHSA

## Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education



### 3 Goals of the AWARE Grant



**GOAL#1:** Build and expand capacity at the state and local levels to improve access to mental health services and supports.



**GOAL#2:** Conduct outreach and training to increase mental health literacy and reduce stigma.



**GOAL#3:** Connect youth, families, and school staff to mental health services.

# Mental Health in Schools

## MENTAL HEALTH and YOUTH

**13%**

OF CHILDREN  
ages 8-15 experience a  
mental health  
condition

**13-20%**

OF CHILDREN  
living in the U.S.

**17%**

OF HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENTS  
seriously consider  
suicide

**50%**

OF CHILDREN  
ages 8-15 experiencing a  
mental health condition  
don't receive treatment



(1 out of 5 children)  
experience a mental  
health condition in  
a given year

**1/2**

OF ALL LIFETIME CASES  
of mental illness begin  
by age

**14**

Despite effective treatments there are long delays—sometimes decades—between onset of symptoms and treatment

Source: National Institute of Mental Health and  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention





# Defining Mental Health

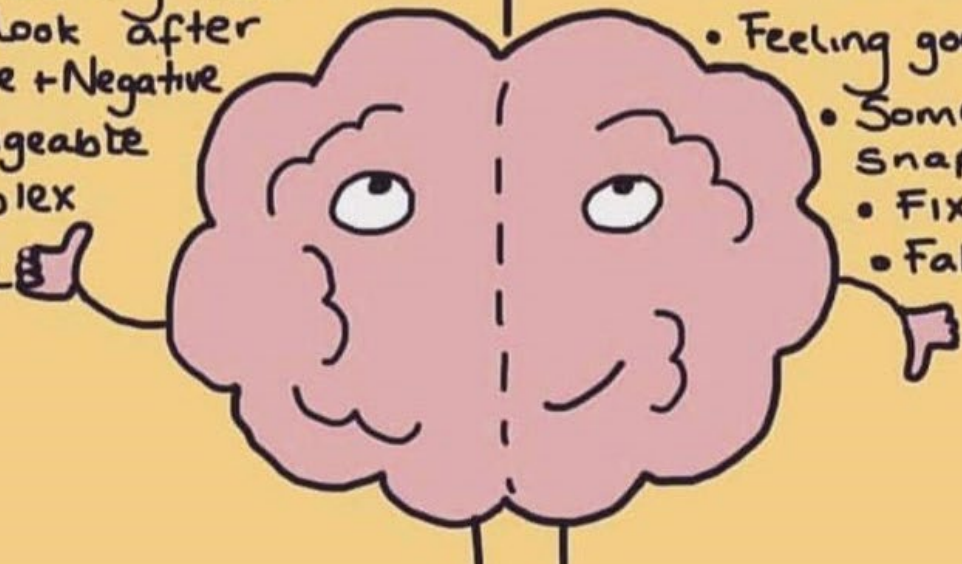
# MENTAL HEALTH

## IS...

- Important
- Something everyone has
- Intrinsically linked to (+ probably inseparable from) physical health
- On a continuum
- Worth making time for
- Part of being human
- Something we need to look after
- Positive + Negative
- Changeable
- Complex
- Real

## ISN'T...

- A sign of weakness
- Shameful
- All in your mind
- Always something negative
- Something you decide to have
- Something to think about only when it feels broken
- An interchangeable term with mental illness
- Feeling good all the time
- Something you can snap out of
- Fixed
- Fake news



## SELF CARE & SOCIAL SUPPORT

## PROFESSIONAL CARE

### HEALTHY

Normal Functioning

Normal mood fluctuations.  
Takes things in stride.  
Consistent performance.  
Normal sleep patterns.  
Physically and socially active. Usual self-confidence  
Comfortable with others.

### REACTING

Common & Reversible Distress

Irritable/Impatient.  
Nervousness, sadness, increased worrying.  
Procrastination, forgetfulness. Trouble sleeping (more often in falling asleep) Lowered energy. Difficulty in relaxing. Intrusive thoughts.  
Decreased social activity.

### INJURED

Significant Functional Impairment

Anger, anxiety. Lingering sadness, tearfulness, hopelessness, worthlessness.  
Preoccupation. Decreased performance in academics or at work. Significantly disturbed sleep (falling asleep and staying asleep).  
Avoidance of social situations, withdrawal.

### ILL

Clinical Disorder. Severe & Persistent Functional Impairment.

Significant difficulty with emotions, thinking High level of anxiety, Panic attacks. Depressed mood, feeling overwhelmed Constant fatigue. Disturbed contact with reality Significant disturbances in thinking Suicidal thoughts/intent/behaviour.





# WHERE ARE YOU ON THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM?

## HEALTHY

- Normal mood fluctuations
- Calm & takes things in stride
- Good sense of humour
- Performing well
- In control mentally
- Normal sleep patterns
- Few sleep difficulties
- Physically well
- Good energy level
- Physically and socially active
- Not using substances to cope
- None or limited gambling

## RESPONDING/ REACTING

- Irritable/impatient
- Nervous
- Sadness/overwhelmed
- Procrastination
- Forgetfulness
- Trouble sleeping
- Intrusive thoughts
- Nightmares
- Muscle tension/headaches
- Low energy
- Decreased activity/socializing
- Regular but controlled substance use/gambling

## INJURED

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Pervasively sad/hopeless
- Negative attitude
- Poor performance/workaholic
- Poor concentration/decisions
- Restless disturbed sleep
- Recurrent images/nightmares
- Increased aches and pains
- Increased fatigue
- Avoidance
- Withdrawal
- Increased substance use/  
gambling is hard to control

## ILL

- Angry outbursts/aggression
- Excessive anxiety/panic attacks
- Thoughts of suicide
- Can't perform duties, control behaviour or concentrate
- Can't fall asleep or stay asleep
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Physical illness
- Constant fatigue
- Not going out/answering phone
- Substance or gambling addiction
- Other addictions



**EXCELLING**

**THRIVING**

**SURVIVING**

**STRUGGLING**

**IN CRISIS**



**IN CRISIS**



**STRUGGLING**



**SURVIVING**



**THRIVING**



**EXCELLING**

Very anxious  
Very low mood  
Absenteeism  
Exhausted  
Very poor sleep  
Weight loss

Anxious  
Depressed  
Tired  
Poor performance  
Poor sleep  
Poor appetite

Worried  
Nervous  
Irritable  
Sad  
Trouble sleeping  
Distracted  
Withdrawn

Positive  
Calm  
Performing  
Sleeping well  
Eating normally  
Normal social activity

Cheerful  
Joyful  
Energetic  
High performance  
Flow  
Fully realizing potential



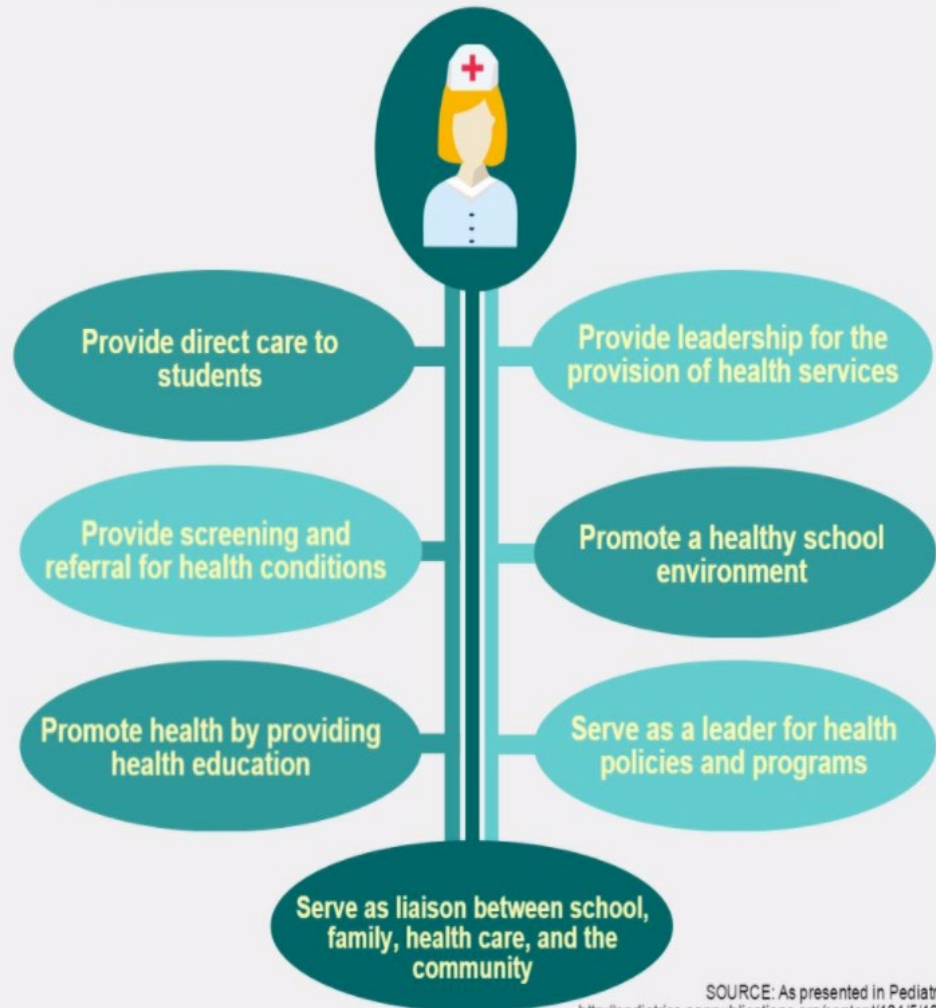
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What are some of the roles school nurses play in addressing mental health?





## CORE ROLES OF SCHOOL NURSES



## Critical to the School Mental Health Team

### Uniquely Qualified

- Address & reduce stigma
- Prevention
- Assessment
- Early identification/intervention
- Treatment



**Mental Health Is Health**

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A hand-drawn diagram illustrating the Social Nervous System. It features a bell-shaped curve with three distinct regions. The top region is labeled 'FREEZE' and is unshaded. The middle region is labeled 'FIGHT/FLIGHT' and is filled with diagonal hatching. The bottom region is labeled 'SOCIAL NERVOUS SYSTEM' and is unshaded. Two horizontal lines separate these three regions. The entire diagram is enclosed in a rectangular border.

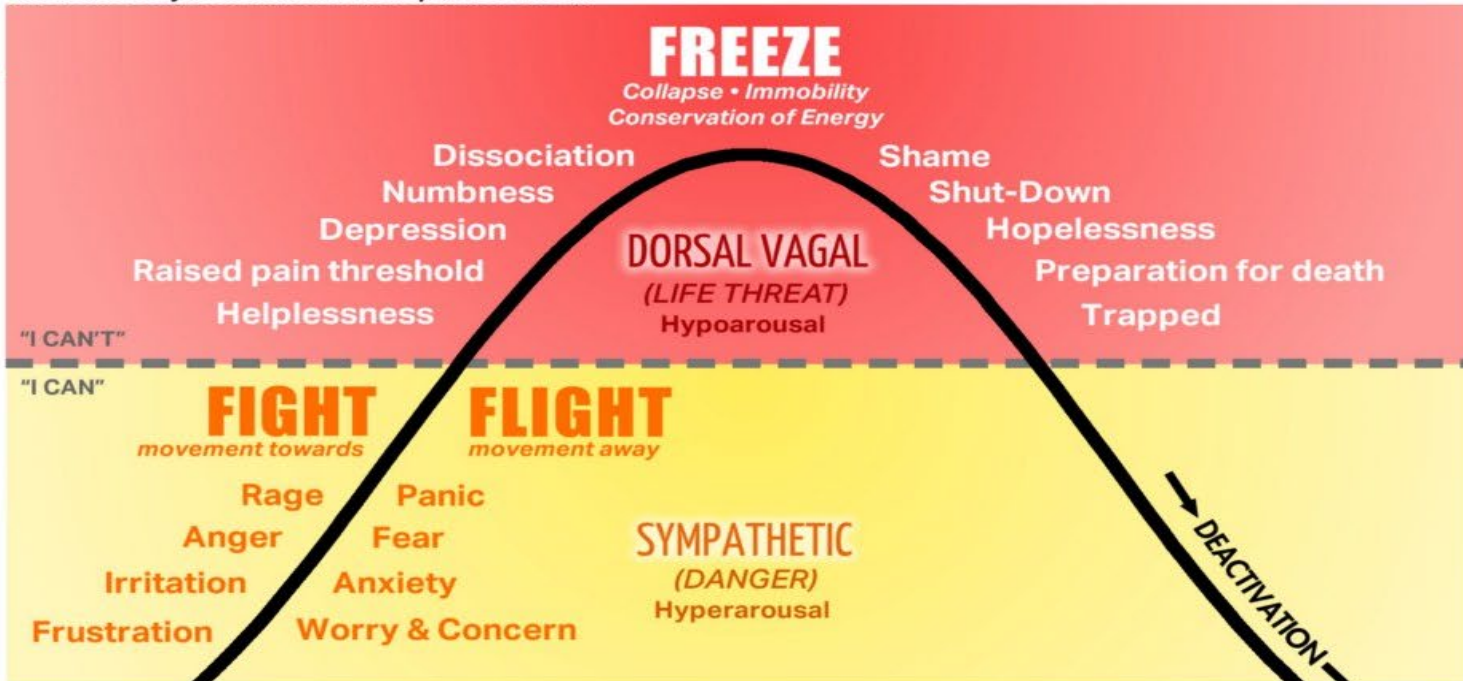
FREEZE

FIGHT/FLIGHT

SOCIAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

# POLYVAGAL CHART

The nervous system with a neuroception of threat:



## PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

DORSAL VAGAL COMPLEX

### Increases

Fuel storage & insulin activity • Immobilization behavior (with fear)  
Endorphins that help numb and raise the pain threshold  
Conservation of metabolic resources

### Decreases

Heart Rate • Blood Pressure • Temperature • Muscle Tone  
Facial Expressions & Eye Contact • Depth of Breath • Social Behavior  
Attunement to Human Voice • Sexual Responses • Immune Response

## SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

### Increases

Blood Pressure • Heart Rate • Fuel Availability • Adrenaline  
Oxygen Circulation to Vital Organs • Blood Clotting • Pupil Size  
Dilation of Bronchi • Defensive Responses

### Decreases

Fuel Storage • Insulin Activity • Digestion • Salivation  
Relational Ability • Immune Response

The nervous system with a neuroception of safety:



## PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

VENTRAL VAGAL COMPLEX

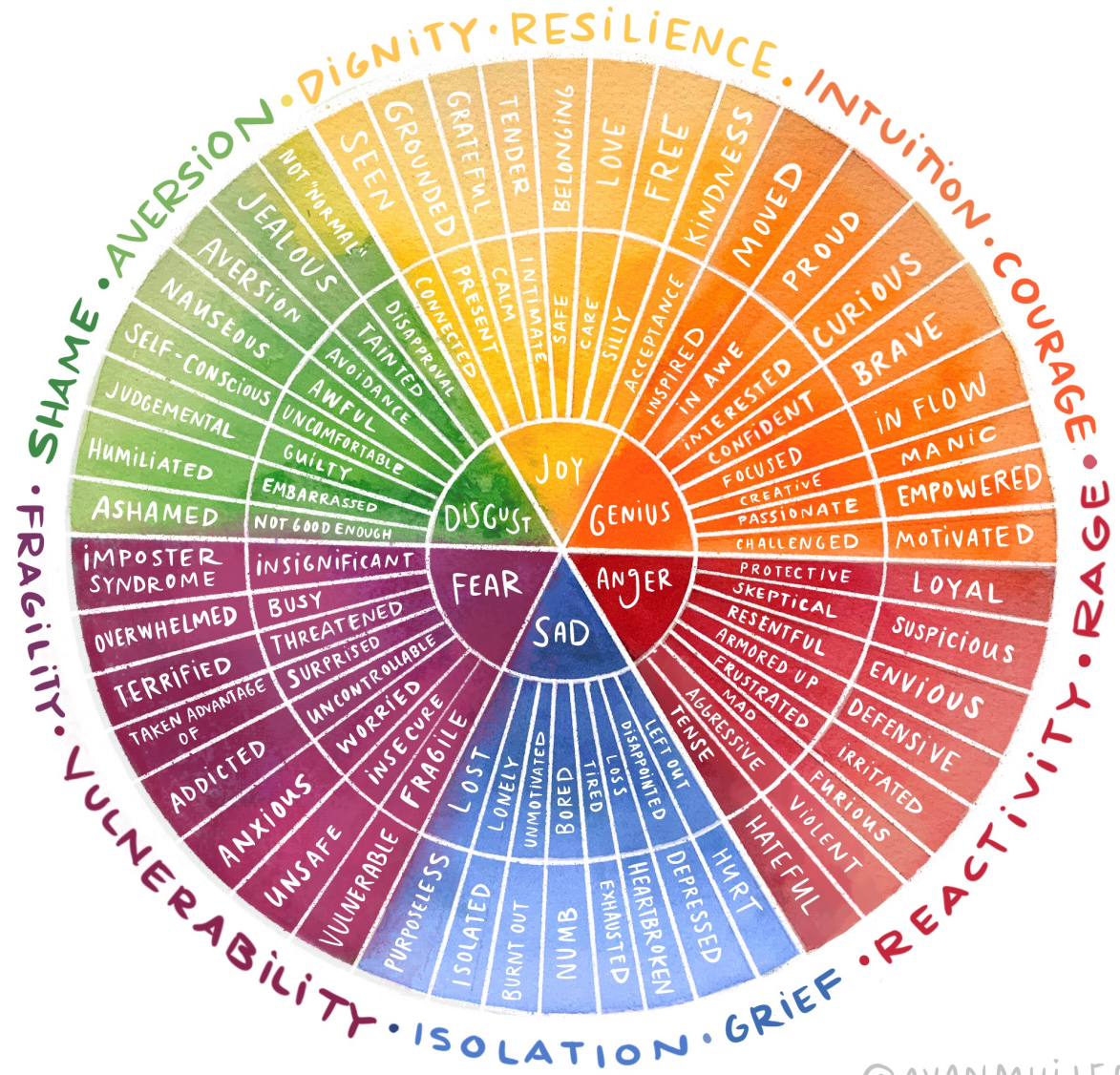
### Increases

Digestion • Intestinal Motility • Resistance to Infection  
Immune Response • Rest and Recuperation • Health & Vitality  
Circulation to non-vital organs (skin, extremities)  
Oxytocin (neuromodulator involved in social bonds that allows immobility without fear) • Ability to Relate and Connect  
Movement in eyes and head turning • Prosody in voice • Breath

### Decreases

Defensive Responses





@AVANMUIJEN



# HOW AM I DOING TODAY...?

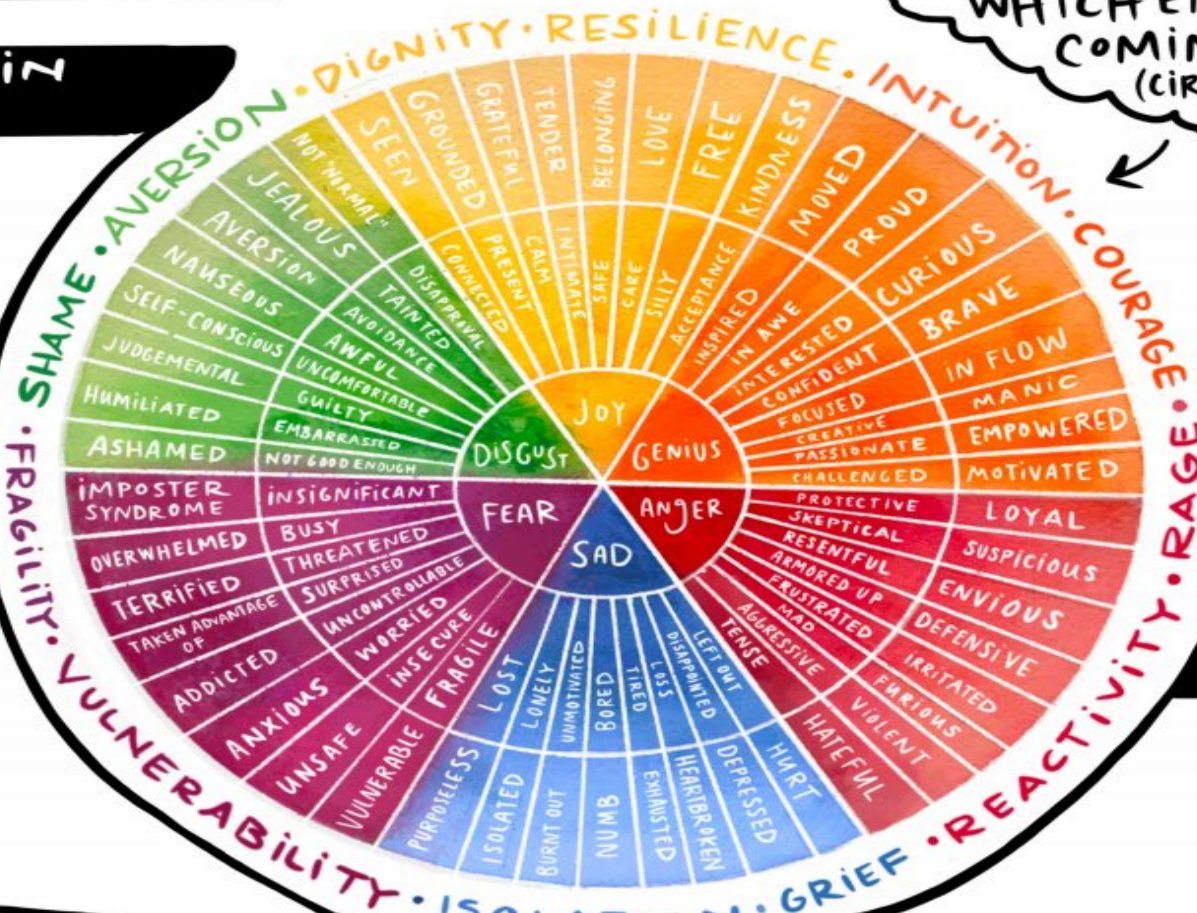
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WHAT'S GOING ON IN MY WORLD?

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE WORLD?

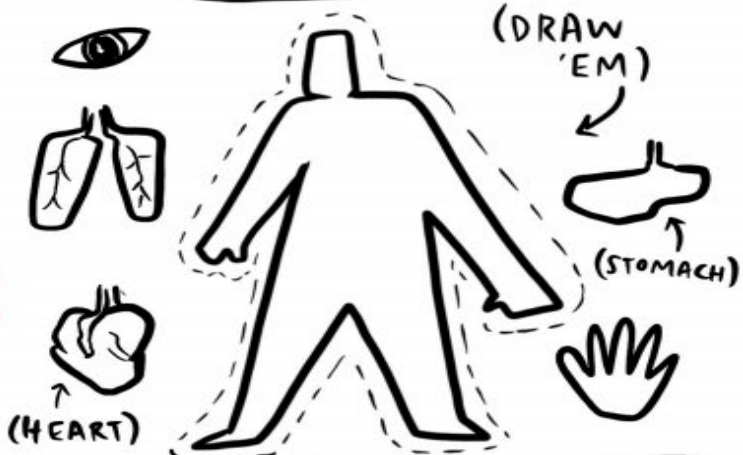


← IS MY CHECK ENGINE LIGHT ON?



WHICH EMOTIONS ARE COMING UP FOR ME? (CIRCLE 'EM)

WHERE DO I NOTICE THEM IN & AROUND MY BODY?



HOW WILL I CARE FOR MYSELF & OTHERS TODAY?

@AVANMUIJEN

# Role of the school health professional

Educate

Identify

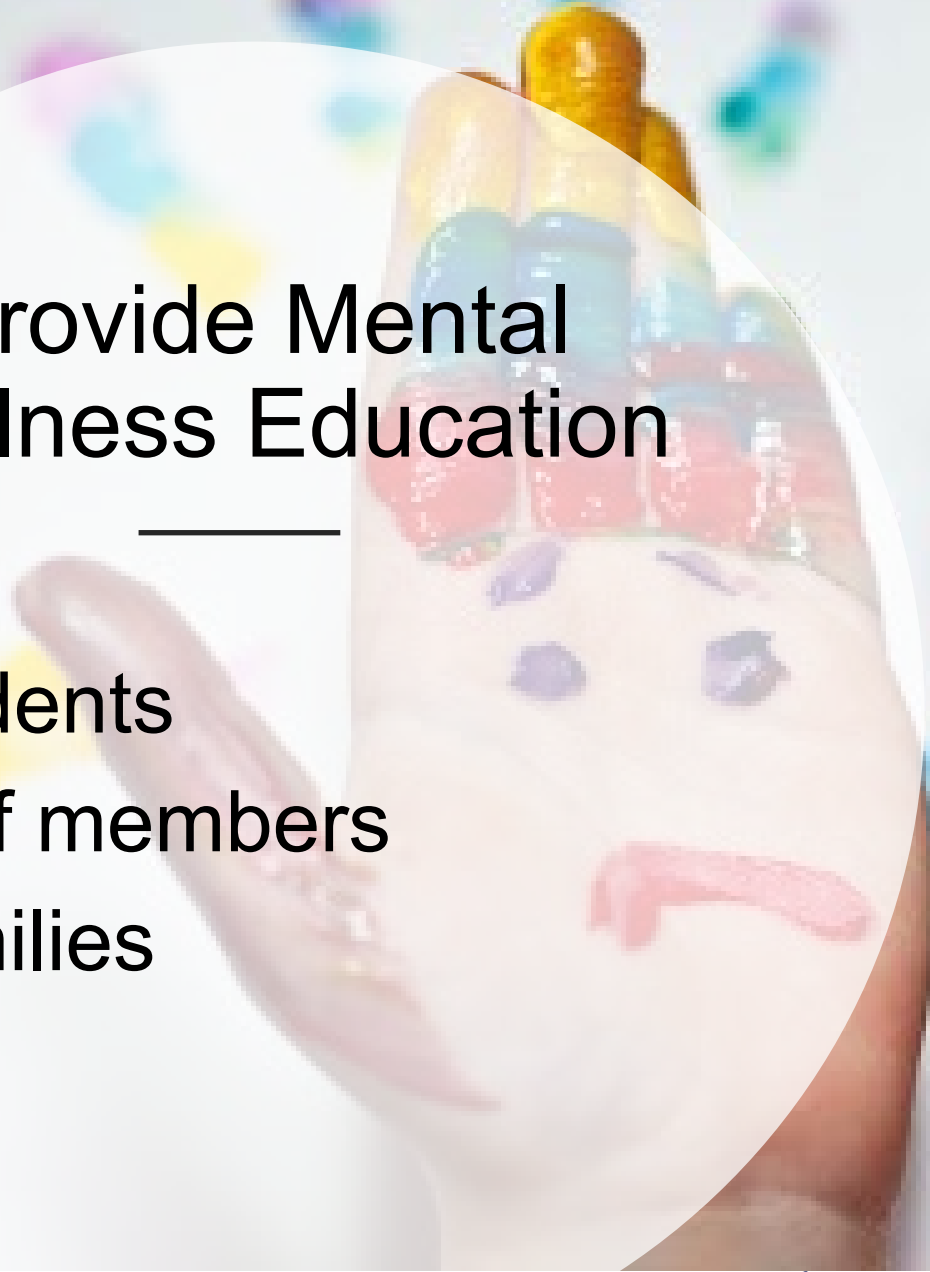
Refer

Follow Up

# Provide Mental Wellness Education

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- Students
- Staff members
- Families





# Identification

How to identify students who are experiencing a mental health challenge?



# Identifying Crisis

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A crisis is a time of extreme mental, emotional or physical distress. It may include:

- Medical emergency
- Non suicidal self-injury SSI
- Suicidal thoughts or behaviors
- Severe effects of substance use

**DO NOT LEAVE PERSON ALONE and GET IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE**

**National Suicide Prevention Hotline**

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

# Signs of Mental Health Challenge

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Changes in mood

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Intense emotions

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Changes in behavior

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Difficulty concentrating, decreased performance in school.

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Unexplained weight loss or changes in appetite.

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Physical symptoms such as frequent headaches or stomach aches.

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Self-injury or self-harm, such as cutting or burning and attempted suicide.

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Substance abuse, using or abusing drugs and alcohol.



# Steps to Identify

- Open ended questions
- Screening tools
- Collaborative conversations
- Identifying patterns
- Non-judgmental listening

# Refer & Resources

Collaborations



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graph TD; A[Collaborations] --> B[Education of parents prior to referral]; B --> C[Tiered services approach];
```

Education of parents prior to referral

Tiered services approach

# RESILIENT *Arizona*

CRISIS COUNSELING PROGRAM

Get Connected with  
a **FREE** Crisis Counselor



**CALL 2-1-1**

100% FREE & CONFIDENTIAL · STATEWIDE

Resilient Arizona  
(Spanish and English)  
[www.resilientarizona.org](http://www.resilientarizona.org)

Designed to provide guidance in:

1. Collaborative partnerships
2. Model referral policy
3. Development of comprehensive school mental health teams

# School & Behavioral Health Partnerships:

A Resource Guide

Developed by:



PUBLISHED 04/23/2021



## What is **SHAPE**?

Interactive tool designed to improve accountability,  
and sustainability in school mental health  
districts, and states/territories.

ore



# SHAPE System

- Free account
- Teaming Guide
- Quality Assessment
- Trauma Responsiveness Assessment
- Resource Library

[www.theshapesystem.com](http://www.theshapesystem.com)



## Welcome to SHAPE

From our school mental health quality assessment and resource library, to custom reports and a library of free and low-cost screening and assessment measures, SHAPE has the tools teams need to improve school mental health programming and sustainability in schools, districts, and states/territories. [Take the tour to learn more](#) ➔

# Follow Up

- Consistent positive engagement
- Closed referral loop
- Reintegration of the student
- Postvention strategies

“EVERY CHILD WHO WINDS UP  
**DOING WELL** HAS HAD AT LEAST  
**ONE** STABLE AND COMMITTED  
RELATIONSHIP WITH A  
**SUPPORTIVE ADULT.”**

Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY



Contact Us

[SchoolSafety.SocialWellness@azed.gov](mailto:SchoolSafety.SocialWellness@azed.gov)

Visit Us

[www.azed.gov/wellness/projectaware](http://www.azed.gov/wellness/projectaware)

# Key Takeaway?

