

Mental Health Resources for K-12 Schools

We can make schools safer by improving school connectedness and access to mental health services.

Students often come to school with complex physical and [mental health](#) concerns or social service needs. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, rates of psychological distress among young people, including symptoms of anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders, have increased.

[According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data](#), a sense of being cared for, supported, and belonging at school — called “school connectedness” — had an important effect on students during a time of severe disruption. Youth who felt connected to adults and peers at school were significantly less likely than those who did not to report persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

Schools are critical partners in supporting the mental health and well-being of students. In addition to education, they provide opportunities for academic, social, mental health, and physical health services that can help protect against negative outcomes. By supporting students who are experiencing mental health challenges, schools can help foster a sense of safety and support, prevent worsening of mental health conditions, and create better outcomes.



Facts and Figures



1 out of 5 children living in the United States experience a mental disorder in a given year. ¹



Fewer than half (47%) of youth reported feeling close to people at school during the pandemic. ²



More than a third (37%) of high school students reported they experienced poor mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. ²

Sources: ¹ [National Research Council and Institute of Medicine](#) | ² [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

Resources

SchoolSafety.gov offers a variety of resources, programs, and tools school communities can reference on mental health, including:

- [Classroom WISE](#): This training package assists K-12 educators in supporting the mental health of students in the classroom and offers evidence-based strategies and skills to engage and support students experiencing adversity and distress.
- [Guidance to States and School Systems on Addressing Mental Health and Substance Use Issues in Schools](#): This bulletin provides states, schools, and school systems with information about addressing mental health and substance use issues in schools, including examples of approaches and best practice models to implement related services for students.



- [Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool: Mental and Emotional Health Curriculum](#): This assessment tool module helps school systems conduct a clear, complete, and consistent analysis of curricula that are intended to promote mental and emotional health.
- [Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Disasters and Other Traumatic Events: What Parents, Rescue Workers, and the Community Can Do](#): This guide provides parents, educators, and other professionals with information and resources to help children cope with traumatic events, such as psychological trauma after mass violence, terror, or natural disasters.
- [National School Mental Health Best Practices: Implementation Guidance Modules](#): These resources – which include modules containing trainer and participant manuals, slide decks, and recorded virtual learning sessions – are designed to help states, districts, and schools advance comprehensive school mental health, as well as engage in a planning process around implementation of services.
- [Protecting Youth Mental Health](#): This U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory offers recommendations for supporting the mental health of children, adolescents, and young adults, including essential recommendations for the institutions that surround young people and shape their day-to-day lives such as schools.
- [Psychological First Aid: Addressing Mental Health Distress During Disasters](#): Psychological First Aid (PFA) can help responders promote an environment of safety, calm, connectedness, self-efficacy, empowerment, and hope. This webinar provides a brief overview of PFA and connects viewers with both online and in-person training resources.
- [Ready, Set, Go, Review: Screening for Behavioral Health Risk in Schools](#): This toolkit is designed to help schools through the process of developing comprehensive screening procedures, as well as provide readily available resources to facilitate the implementation of effective behavioral health screening in schools.
- [Responding to COVID-19: Anxiety and Return to Work/School](#): This webpage offers a compilation of resources for individuals experiencing stress and anxiety during the return to in-person school after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Responding to COVID-19: School Mental Health](#): This webpage provides products, resources, and training to address the pandemic’s impact on the mental health of students, teachers, and school personnel.
- [School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth](#): This webpage contains fact sheets and training materials on strategies for increasing school connectedness for school administrators, teachers, and families.
- [School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation \(SHAPE\) System](#): This web-based platform offers schools, districts, states, and territories a workspace and targeted resources to support school mental health quality improvement.
- [Trauma-informed Care for Schools Before, During, and After Possible Emergency Events](#): This webinar recording provides an overview of trauma and retraumatization, discusses manifestations of trauma in students, explores a trauma-informed approach, and reviews considerations for preparedness planning and how schools can address trauma in their emergency operations plans.

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