



Students Supporting Students: A School-Based Peer Support Program

ADVISOR GUIDE

About CHDI

The Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI) provides a bridge to better and more equitable behavioral health and well-being for children, youth, and families in Connecticut and beyond.

Our goal is to empower policymakers, champion providers, and spark partnerships that advance solutions and improve care for children and their families.

CHDI works in close partnership with the state's leading research institutions, provider agencies, policymakers, state agencies, child-serving organizations, and advocates to achieve our goals. We provide research, implementation, evaluation, training and technical assistance, and support for demonstration projects that inform system change across our areas of expertise.

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OVERVIEW

The Students Supporting Students peer support program aims to **train middle and high school students to become part of the peer support team** with the help of trusted adults in the school setting. As a peer team member, students will receive training **to recognize mental health warning signs and symptoms among their peers, reduce the stigma around asking for help, and encourage seeking help from a trusted adult.**

Peers play a critical role in adolescents' development. We know that adolescents seek out friends and classmates for support and guidance, with conversations about their mental health **already happening** among students in schools. This peer support program aims to provide students, with the help of trusted adults, accurate information and tools for how to have those conversations more effectively and reduce the stigma around asking for help via **the following strategies:**

- Students and school staff (including adult advisors) will receive the Ending the Silence training, provided by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (**NAMI**) of Connecticut. Ending the Silence teaches people how to recognize the symptoms and warning signs of mental health conditions and how to seek help for yourself or someone else.
- Students serving on the peer team will develop and implement student-led behavioral health* messaging campaigns and activities throughout the school year to spread awareness, reduce stigma, and provide support to their classmates.
- The peer team and adult advisors will meet regularly to discuss program activities, troubleshoot concerns, and provide support to one another.
- Surveys will be collected from students and staff to assess changes in knowledge around behavioral health and satisfaction with the program.



IMPORTANT NOTE!

*The term behavioral health refers to a broad spectrum of concerns related to emotional and behavioral needs of students, including well-being, resilience, mental health, and substance use prevention. Behavioral health does not refer to a student's control, or lack thereof, over their actions. The term mental health refers to mental, emotional, or psychological well-being and experiences. Throughout this guide, behavioral health will be used when describing topics more broadly, whereas mental health will be used when discussing specific mental health trainings or conditions.



PROGRAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



All school staff will:

- Receive the NAMI Ending the Silence training (or other similar training on mental health if Ending the Silence is not accessible).
- Nominate students to serve on the peer team.
- Nominate/self-nominate adult advisors to collaborate with and advise the peer team.

Adult advisors will:

- Receive professional development on the logistics of being an adult advisor.
- Co-lead the program with the peer team which will include:
 - Help schedule and facilitate regular peer team meetings.
 - Organize and co-facilitate a Kickoff Event at the beginning of the school year.
 - Help the peer team implement student-developed activities and messaging campaigns throughout the school year.
 - Administer surveys to evaluate and improve the program.
 - Know the resources in the school and in the community where students can get help if they are struggling emotionally.
 - Hold an end-of-year celebration to recognize the work of the peer team and plan for the following school year.
- Communicate to school staff, administrators, and families about the program, upcoming activities, and progress made.

Peer team members will:

- Receive the NAMI Ending the Silence training and receive additional training on the logistics of being on the peer team.
- Co-lead the program with adult advisors and their team which will include:
 - Help reduce stigma and create an environment in their school where peers feel comfortable talking about how they are feeling and understand that it is OK to ask for help if they need it.
 - Be someone whom other students feel comfortable talking with by demonstrating active listening and connecting peers with an adult in the school who can help.
 - Commit to participating in regularly scheduled team meetings throughout the school year.
 - Create a school-wide public awareness campaign to share knowledge and information with their peers throughout the school year.
 - Participate in the Kickoff Event to introduce the peer team to the school and a celebration at the end of the year to recognize the efforts of the peer team.
 - Know the resources in their school and in their community where students can get help if they are struggling emotionally.

Peer team members will not:

- Provide mental health counseling for their peers or try to solve a situation on their own.



TIMELINE AND TASKS

**Note: This is a suggested timeline for tasks. Your school's timeline may slightly differ.*

SPRING PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Send staff recruitment letters and identify 1-2 staff to serve as the adult advisors ([pages 34-37](#))
- Send pre-training survey to school staff ([page 31](#))
- All staff mental health training – NAMI Ending the Silence ([page 15](#))
- Identify existing school and local community behavioral health resources ([page 11](#))

August–September

- Complete advisor logistics training ([page 16](#))
- Send student and parent recruitment letters at the beginning of the school year ([page 38](#))
- Review peer team nominations, select and notify students to be on the peer team ([page 13](#))
- Send pre-training survey to the peer team members PRIOR to the peer team training ([page 31](#))
- Adult advisor coordinates collecting pre-training survey from non-peer team students ([page 31](#))
- Begin regular (e.g., bi-weekly) peer team meetings ([page 20](#))
- Schedule the peer team Student Navigator and logistics trainings ([page 16](#))

October

- Peer team creates their campaign proposal for messaging and activities ([page 24](#))
- Adult advisor reviews and accepts the campaign proposal ([page 28](#))
- Schedule and hold the Kickoff Event ([page 22](#))

November–April

- Peer team develops and implements campaign activities ([page 24](#))
- Peer team documents information regularly for conversations to support classmates ([page 31](#))
- Adult advisor continues to meet regularly (e.g., bi-weekly) with peer team to check in about progress, roadblocks, and provide any needed support

May–June

- Send post-implementation survey to staff, peer team, and non-peer team students ([page 31](#))
- Peer team meets to reflect on their campaign and create a brief summary on what they did, how it went, and what they learned, to present at the end of year celebration ([page 29](#))
- Begin recruitment process with new students and staff ([pages 10-14](#))
- Adult advisor reviews and summarizes survey results and shares findings ([pages 50-55](#))
- Adult advisor and peer team plan and hold an end of year celebration ([page 29](#))
- Invite school administrators, staff, students, families, and local youth-serving community organizations to attend ([see pages 69-71 for template letters](#))
- Peer team shares a summary of their activities and experiences from the year
- Adult advisor shares the summary of survey results
- Hold a final meeting with peer team to plan for the upcoming school year with returning students



Recruitment



RECRUIT AND PREPARE STAFF

The first step in beginning the peer support program is to recruit staff and provide information about what the program will entail. A template for the staff introduction letter is on [pages 34-37](#) at the end of this guide. This letter provides an overview of the program goals, the roles and responsibilities of staff, advisors, and students, and information about how to nominate colleagues or themselves to serve as advisors for the program. Send this letter to all school staff early in the spring semester prior to the start of the program (or as soon as possible).



IMPORTANT NOTE:

If your school has not yet identified at least 1-2 staff who will serve as the adult advisor(s) to the peer team, this will be the first task to complete.

IDENTIFY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RESOURCES

An important part of this program is to link students to appropriate resources. Please become familiar with the resources available in your school, your community, and the state to refer students when necessary. A list of local and national resources is on [page 72](#).

If you are a mental health professional, remind school staff and peer team members about the services you can provide and the best way to reach you if they want to refer a student. Also, provide a list of outside resources to each staff member.

If you are not a mental health professional, learn as much as you can about the support services available in your school and community in collaboration with your school's mental health staff.

Reach out to your school's counselor, psychologist, or similar roles and see if you can answer the following questions:

1. Who are the go-to behavioral health support individuals in the school? What is their contact information including a phone number, office location, and schedule of availability?
2. What is the student behavioral health referral process?
3. What is the school protocol if a student expresses thoughts of suicide, self-harm, or harm to others?
4. What is the best way to contact a school counselor? Social worker? Administrator?
5. What community organizations (e.g., Youth Service Bureau, School-based health clinic, youth support programs/activities) is the school already connected with?

All advisors or staff involved in the program should stay up-to-date on mandated reporter trainings and school protocols for handling crisis situations. Once you find answers to these questions, **provide this information and a list of outside resources (page 72) to school staff**. Peer team members should also know about the available resources in the school and the community for students who are struggling.



REMEMBER:

Peer team members are not meant to give mental health advice or counseling, but rather act as friendly supports to connect struggling peers with an adult who can help!

RECRUIT PEER TEAM MEMBERS

After informing staff of the program and identifying adult advisors, send the overview letters to parents informing them of the goals of the program and what it will involve (see pages 38-40). Parents will have the opportunity to opt-out from having their child participate as part of the peer team. Then, send a recruitment letter to all students informing them about the program and asking for nominations for peer team members. A template letter to students is on pages 41-44.

FORM YOUR PEER SUPPORT TEAM

Forming your peer support team will be an *annual process*.

It is important to select a peer team that, as much as possible, equitably represents the range of identities, backgrounds, experiences, and grade levels of the student body. The peer team is not just for students who already tend to fill leadership positions, but also for students who may need additional support themselves, are connected to typically under-supported or harder to reach groups, or represent various social or demographic groups.




TIPS FOR PEER TEAM RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

RECRUITMENT:

1. **Recruit by multiple means:**
 - a. Nominations from school staff
 - b. Nominations from students
 - c. Nominations from current peer team members (if applicable)
 - d. Share recruitment letters, make announcements to the school
2. **Clarify the purpose of the peer team** (i.e., to learn more about behavioral health, be leaders in normalizing conversations around behavioral health, and help students access appropriate supports)
 - a. Explain how students could learn leadership skills as a result of their participation.
 - b. This is not a mental health support group or forum.
3. **At the end of each school year, ask peer team members if they want to continue next year, if applicable.**
4. **For high school teams: If you know that a student participated on the peer team or any other similar positions in middle school, consider them for the high school team.**

SELECTION:

1. **Include students who represent the student body by having a team with a diversity of:**
 - a. Grade levels
 - b. Gender identities and sexual orientations
 - c. Racial and ethnic groups
 - d. Social groups
 - e. Interests/extracurricular activities (e.g., athletics, music, arts, STEM)
 - f. Skill sets (e.g., writing, graphic design, public speaking)
2. **Select a combination of doers and influencers.**
 - a. Doers are willing to roll up their sleeves and do the work needed to see that the campaign is planned and implemented properly.
 - b. Influencers are those who can enlist other people to participate or will help provide the resources to facilitate campaign initiatives.
3. **Make sure the team is large enough to accomplish the work, but small enough to be able to make decisions and reach consensus.**
 - a. Your peer team should include approximately 10 students per grade or 10-15% of your student population depending on the size of your school.
 - i. If you have a larger team, it can be helpful to have multiple adult advisors involved to help supervise.
 - b. Possible subcommittees (dependent on campaign initiatives and size of the peer team group):
 - ii. Classroom presentations
 - iii. Marketing design
 - iv. Staff/student communication
 - v. Social media
 - vi. Guest speaker coordination
4. **If you choose not to select a student, let them know why you did not select them and encourage them to apply next year, if applicable.**
 - a. A template letter is available on [page 48](#).

 **TIP:** Keep a list of any students who applied but you did not select in case there is a time you can involve them in the campaign implementation or outreach.

At the end of the first year, meet with students and gather feedback on what they like and don't like about being a peer team member to inform potential changes for next year. Also, ask students if they would like to continue with the program next year or know of someone who might be a good fit for the program. At the start of the next year, use existing peer team members to help recruit new students to participate. **Be sure to recruit from the incoming grade of students to your school.**

Professional Development



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL STAFF

Before beginning the peer support program, your staff will need strong foundational knowledge on behavioral health and student development.



IMPORTANT NOTE:

Students could reach out to any staff they feel comfortable talking to about their behavioral health symptoms, so all staff should have the confidence and knowledge of what to do and what supports are available!

IDENTIFY THE WARNING SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND HOW TO HELP

All school staff will participate in the NAMI Ending the Silence training. This program will provide school staff with:

- Foundational knowledge of mental health conditions;
- Warning signs of students who may be struggling;
- How to approach a student who may need help; and
- How to communicate and work with students' families to support their child's mental health.

NAMI has state organizations and affiliates in all states across the country. In Connecticut, NAMI provides this training at **no cost to your district and lasts approximately 50 minutes.**

For groups outside of Connecticut, check with your NAMI state chapter to see if it includes this training. If not, review the optional trainings below or identify another similar training available to you.

Adult advisors should work with your school/district leaders to determine how to schedule the Ending the Silence training for school staff. For information on scheduling the training, please visit: ets.nami.org/



TIP: NAMI also offers parent Ending the Silence trainings. If any parents in your school are interested in participating in this training, contact NAMI for more information.



ADULT ADVISOR TRAINING

In addition to participating in the NAMI Ending the Silence training, adult advisors will also participate in a program-specific training, provided by CHDI. This training includes important information about:

- Overview of peer support program
- Timeline and tasks
- Best practices for setting up the peer team
- Tips and strategies for campaign creation
 - *Four key messages*
 - *Examples*
- The importance of gathering relevant information
 - *Best practices for gathering information*
- Action steps

This training should be approximately 30 minutes. Training materials include a PowerPoint presentation, which CHDI will provide. [Please contact CHDI to get access to the training materials.](#)

PEER TEAM/STUDENT TRAINING

Members of the peer team will participate in the NAMI Ending the Silence training. This training will provide students with:

- Foundational knowledge of mental health conditions;
- Warning signs of students who may be struggling; and
- How to approach a student who may need help.

NAMI also provides information on additional topics that can include alcohol/substance use, social media and mental health, or other topics that are relevant to your school and students. The Connecticut NAMI chapter provides the training at no cost to your district and takes approximately 50 minutes.



TIP: Schools also have the option to provide all students with the NAMI Ending the Silence training during the Kickoff Event ([see page 22](#)). Although not a requirement of the program, providing this foundational knowledge to all students will help reduce the stigma around behavioral health.

STUDENT NAVIGATOR TRAINING

In addition to participating in the NAMI Ending the Silence training, the peer team will also participate in The Student Navigator training provided by NAMI. The goal of this training is for peer team members to feel knowledgeable and equipped with necessary skills to offer support and resources to classmates who may be struggling, raise awareness about mental health, and create a welcoming environment for everyone to feel empowered to access available supports.

The Student Navigator training covers:

- General overview of mental health and warning signs someone may be struggling
- Coping skills and emotion regulation strategies that may help
- How to reach out to a classmate who may be struggling (*Note: Peer team members should ALWAYS share conversations about thoughts of suicide, self-harm, or harm to others with the advisor or another trusted adult*)
- Role play scenarios to practice reaching out to classmates
- How to spread awareness about mental health and knowledge of available resources
- How to maintain healthy boundaries

Adult advisors should work with your school/district leaders to determine how to schedule the Ending the Silence and Student Navigator training for peer team members. For information on scheduling the training, please visit:

namict.org/support-and-education/presentations/student-navigator-training/

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC TRAINING

The peer team will also attend a program-specific training provided by CHDI where they learn more about:

- The program goals and their role on the peer team
- Campaign creation, including examples and tips
- How to navigate problems or conflict that may arise during the process
- Confidentiality of information

The peer team will also receive a Peer Team Guide that has all the information covered in these trainings.

OPTIONAL TRAININGS

If your school is interested in additional professional development that complements *Ending the Silence*, please see the list below to learn more. Please note, there is a cost associated with some of these trainings.

Educate-SMART (School Mental Health Awareness and Response Training) is a self-paced, trauma-informed behavioral health training portal designed for Connecticut school staff members, caregivers, and students to better understand and support the behavioral health needs of students and peers. Educate-SMART also includes downloadable resources that complement the lessons in the portal. This training includes 20 lessons across 11 modules focused on a variety of general behavioral health topics (e.g., Mobile Crisis, suicidality, staff wellness).

For more information, please visit www.educate-smart.org

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an evidence-based program that teaches people to understand, identify, and reach out to someone who may be struggling with a mental illness or substance use disorder. MHFA offers a variety of trainings, using in-person and blended formats, geared toward specific groups including:

- Adult MHFA (length: 7.5 hours)
- Youth MHFA for parents, school staff, or other adults who regularly interact with adolescents (length: 6.5 hours)
- Teen MHFA for adolescents (length: 4.5 hours)

For more information about pricing and how to schedule a training, please visit www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

Mental Health Literacy is an evidence-based training program that aims to increase knowledge about mental health, available resources for support, and promoting positive mental health. Mental Health Literacy offers various trainings geared toward:

- School staff (length: 6 hours)
- Parents (length: 1 hour)
- Athletic coaches (length: 1 hour)
- Middle and high school students (length: 12 hours)

For more information about pricing and how to schedule a training, please visit www.mentalhealthcollaborative.org

Emotional CPR (eCPR) is an evidence-based public health education program designed to teach people to assist others through an emotional crisis by three simple steps: C = Connecting, P = emPowering, and R = Revitalizing. eCPR offers to tailor trainings for school staff, students, or community members. These trainings range in length from 2–12 hours depending on your desired delivery format and content covered.

For more information about pricing and how to schedule a training, please visit emotional-cpr.org

Program Components



⚡ TIP: Have your peer team create a name that aligns with your school, town, or city. This could be something catchy based on your school’s name, mascot, or colors (e.g., “Huskies Help;” “Blue Crew”) or any other school or community topics that are relevant for this work. You could also choose another more general name that feels more fitting (e.g., “support squad;” “peer pals”).

PEER SUPPORT TEAM MEETINGS

Once you have formed your peer support team, you will need to establish regular meeting times. You should meet with your team at least twice a month in person, if possible, however, you can utilize virtual meetings if that is more convenient for your peer team.

The first meeting should occur before the Kickoff Event and should focus on reviewing the program and peer team member roles & responsibilities (see [page 6](#)). Subsequent meetings should focus on team building, campaign creation, campaign implementation, and debriefing about any conversations had with classmates. Sample meeting agendas are on [page 57](#).

Overall tasks and goals of peer team meetings include:

- Kickoff Event planning
- Campaign proposal planning
- Campaign implementation with assigned tasks to each peer team member
- Planning and executing an end of year celebration to highlight the work throughout the year and summarize results from pre-training and post-implementation survey responses
- Ongoing discussion, support, and troubleshooting issues with the peer team
- Review relevant information (e.g., pre-training survey responses, informal discussions with classmates)



REMEMBER: the peer support program should be for students by students. The adult advisors serve as guides and supports but you should empower the peer team to lead the creation of the campaign ideas!



IMPORTANT NOTE: If a peer team member misses multiple meetings or seems to be less engaged, reach out to talk with them about why and ask if there is anything you can do to help. Remind students that their participation is important, however, it is also voluntary; if they feel the role has become too much for them, they may stop participating at any time.

SUPPORT FOR PEER TEAM MEMBERS

It is important for peer team members to get support just like other students in the school. Not only can peer team members experience their own mental health struggles, but their role on the peer team means they will have regular discussions around mental health and provide support to other students who are struggling. While reducing the stigma around mental health and helping other students connect to a trusted adult can be rewarding, it can also be difficult to hear about or witness someone else experience distress. Sometimes, as a result of talking about mental health or helping others, people can experience their own distress (sometimes called *secondary trauma* or *vicarious trauma*).

Here are some ways to ensure that peer team members receive the supports they may need:

- Advisors should build in regular check-ins during scheduled meetings with all peer team members to recap any discussions/referrals peer team members had or made to collectively work through difficult situations that may have come up
- Remind peer team members to utilize the coping skills and emotion regulation strategies they learned during their training whenever they feel distressed
- Encourage peer team members to follow up with their advisor after each time they have a conversation with a classmate, especially if they feel any discomfort or distress afterwards. **Use the contact sheet recommendation below as a way for students to connect with you**
- Encourage students to use mental health/wellness days (if applicable)
- Provide peer team members a list of behavioral health resources and supports they can access in case they need help

Contact Information

Advisors should create a contact sheet that informs the peer team members who to contact if they need support and when they are available. This resource should include:

- A phone number, office location, and hours of availability for the advisor(s)
- Who to contact if the advisor is unavailable or cannot be reached (e.g., another school staff member) and their contact information
- The numbers to the national suicide prevention line (988), the Connecticut Mobile Crisis line (211), and any other resources that peer team members may need with instructions on when to call these resources (e.g., during a crisis situation that needs immediate attention)
- See [page 11](#) for additional information to consider including on this contact sheet.

KICKOFF EVENT

The Kickoff Event is an opportunity to introduce the members of the peer team and the work they will be doing to the student body. This event can take place in an assembly format where information is presented to students. **The way you present this information or how you structure the assembly is up to you and your peer team!**



TOPICS TO COVER:

- 1** Include an overview of the four core messages that must be included. To remember these core messages, think about “keeping it M.I.N.T.”

Mental health is real.

Inform about effective supports.

Notice and recognize the signs.

Tell an adult right away if someone mentions suicide.

**Review the guidelines for talking about suicide on [pages 67–68](#).*

OPTIONAL: You can also schedule the NAMI Ending the Silence training for all students to participate in during this event. See [page 16](#) for this information.

- 2** Provide an overview of the purpose and goals of the peer support program, including an introduction to the peer team members.

- Purpose:** To train middle and high school students as part of a peer support team to recognize the mental health signs and symptoms in their peers, reduce the stigma around asking for help, and encourage seeking help from a trusted adult.
- Overall Goal:** To promote awareness of behavioral health, reduce stigma by creating space to talk about it and normalize that it can be a common experience, and to increase help-seeking behaviors to access resources and supports when needed.

- 3** The primary tasks to achieve these goals will be through the peer team creating a school-wide campaign with supportive messages and informative activities.

- If the peer team has already created ideas for the campaign, you can share them during the event!
- Share with students that in addition to the campaign, peer team members will also be available to provide individual, informal support to classmates who may be struggling. *This is NOT meant to be therapy or mental health treatment, but rather friendly support to help someone reach out to an adult who can help get them connected to formal supports or services.

- 4** **IMPORTANT:** Highlight that all conversations with peer team members will be confidential (not shared with anyone else other than the advisor).

- Make sure to note that during these conversations, peer team members will encourage students to talk with the advisor or another trusted adult in the school but if there is disclosure of self-harm, harm to others, or abuse/neglect, the peer team member must report it to the advisor right away with no exceptions.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES AND PLANNING

The campaign activities are the primary components of this peer support program. This section contains some resources to help guide the planning process, but your peer team can be creative about what they think will work best to educate their peers on behavioral health awareness.

A strong campaign should include a combination of *content* and *promotional* activities to share information and expand your reach to as many students as you can. **Content** refers to activities that educate, create awareness, and share resources. **Promotion** refers to ways to share about the program, messaging, and upcoming events. Each school's campaign will look different from one another, and it is important that the peer team is responsible for creating and implementing the majority of campaign ideas and planning.



There are four key points that need to be in all campaigns. To remember these required messages, we recommend remembering to *keep it M.I.N.T.*:



Mental health is real.

Depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions are real and occur on a spectrum. Many people may experience some signs or symptoms, while others may have a diagnosable mental health condition. No matter where you fall on this spectrum, it is important to know that it is not a character flaw, you cannot willpower it away, and help is available.



Inform about effective supports.

If you or someone you know is concerned about their mental health or well-being, there is professional help and support available that is effective at improving these conditions. You do not have to do it on your own. Reaching out is not a sign of weakness.



Notice and recognize the signs.

Mental health concerns can take many forms and look different in each person. Any change you notice in someone that is different from how they usually act could be a sign they may need support. However, there are some serious signs and symptoms to watch out for, especially if they continue for several weeks or interfere with daily functioning:

Feeling sad or empty

Less interest in activities

Neglecting personal care

Withdrawing from others

Other Signs:

- Changes in sleeping patterns (more or less)
- Feeling tired or less energetic
- Regular unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling irritable or restless
- Changes in weight (loss or gain)
- Feeling hopeless or guilty
- Overeating OR a loss of appetite
- Difficulty remembering things, concentrating, or making decisions
- Less interest in friends, family, hobbies, or other activities that you normally find enjoyable
- Thoughts of suicide



Tell an adult right away if someone mentions suicide, self-harm, or harm to others.

DO NOT keep it a secret. Tell a trusted adult immediately.

**Review the guidelines for talking about suicide on [pages 67–68](#).*

CAMPAIGN SLOGAN

One way to spread the core messages of your campaign is to create a slogan. A campaign slogan should be easy to remember and can help spread messaging quickly.

⚡ TIP: Remember to be cautious about the slogan wording and how others may perceive it. It should not make people feel guilty or shameful about their experiences or encourage positive-only mindsets (e.g., “Just focus on the positives” or “Think positively!”).

The slogan should be catchy, if possible, and should highlight that it is normal to experience mental health struggles, and there is support available to help you through it.

Slogan Examples

- Stigma hurts, awareness helps.
- When in doubt, talk it out.
- Keep Calm and Connect.
- It’s okay to not be okay, reach out!
- No one should be left in the dark.
- Help helps! You are not alone.
- Depression is Real, Hope is Real 2.
- Depression is real, share how you feel.
- Don’t hide what you’re feeling – ask for help!
- Trust to discuss. You are not alone.
- Depression doesn’t define you.
- With commUNITY comes peace.
- Speak up when you’re feeling down.
- Sometimes it’s more than just a “bad day.”



CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

Your peer team can create campaign activities they think will engage their classmates and spread the message effectively. These can include creating social media posts, making posters with information or campaign slogans, holding information sessions, giving presentations, or other creative outlets to spread awareness about behavioral health and well-being.

A Few Examples

- Social media posts
- Posters put around the school
- “Lunch And Learn” Presentations where a speaker presents a behavioral health topic or shares their personal story with mental health
- Create t-shirts, bracelets, or other items for the peer team to wear or give away to students
- Skits/Performances
- Classroom speakers/presentations
- Message board where people can write encouraging notes to one another.
- Daily announcements

After deciding on campaign activities, please have the peer team fill out the campaign proposal form on [pages 60–61](#). There is also a library of educational video suggestions, an example proposal, and suicide messaging guidelines located in [Appendix C](#).



TIP: If you would like examples of what schools have done in the past, please see this website: www.members.depressioncenter.org/apps/p2p. This resource website has summary lists of what peer teams did in past years as well as examples that you can view and download.

Considerations

- See “[Tips for Starting your Campaign](#)” in Appendix C for a resource to share with your peer team.
- Be sure to document all campaign activities (e.g., take photos of events, keep a record of announcements) to share at the end of the year.
- Consider splitting up tasks among peer team members.
- Be realistic about what can be accomplished within your timeframe.
- Provide resources with every campaign activity so that if students do decide to ask for support, they know where to go!

PEER CAMPAIGN MATERIAL GUIDELINES

Peer teams must submit all materials including, but not limited to, posters, videos, social media posts, and PowerPoint presentations to the adult advisor(s) for review at least two weeks prior to scheduled start of program activities. The goal is not to limit team creativity and individuality, but rather to ensure the use of accurate, safe, and effective messaging. You will review and then approve or request changes to materials.

Examples of what you should be looking for include:

1. Is the message accurate?
2. Is the message hopeful and/or does it provide helpful information that students can use?
3. Is resource and referral information included to encourage help-seeking?
4. When applicable, does the message follow Suicide Prevention Resource Center guidelines (see pages 67-68) to safe and effective messaging related to suicide?

If asking students about experiences with mental health:

If peer teams wish to ask their peers about their experiences with mental health as part of their project (i.e., for videos or other materials), it is very important that these additional guidelines are followed:

1. Your principal must approve all activities and must fall within your school and district guidelines.
2. For safety reasons, the process for asking about such experiences should NOT be anonymous. You should protect student privacy while also ensuring that all students have access to support resources. Specifically, peer team members need to protect the privacy of their peers, but if they hear a student talking about, or read something they have written, that indicates severe distress or suicidal thoughts they need to connect the student with the school counselor or another qualified adult.
3. All participating students, as well as students who hear/view/read about the experiences, should receive information, either verbally, or preferably, by handing out a list, about school resources available to help them with any mental health-related concerns.
4. It is the school's responsibility to follow the use of their own risk management protocols to intervene as needed with any student who appears to be at high risk due to mental health concerns.

END OF YEAR CELEBRATION

The end of year celebration provides an opportunity to share the hard work your peer team has put into their campaign activities throughout the school year. It is important to recognize this work! Advisors should consider inviting school administrators, staff, local youth-serving community organizations and families to attend this event and celebrate the hard work of the peer team throughout the year.

In preparation for this event, advisors should compile all relevant information (see [page 30](#)). Then advisors should work with the peer team to co-develop a presentation on the changes that occurred during the year.

During this event, the peer team should present their short summary of what they created for their campaign and what they learned through the process. They can also present on the outcomes, in collaboration with the advisor.

Template letters for inviting participants to attend this event are on [pages 69-71](#).




GATHERING INFORMATION

Why should you gather and review information?

Having a process to gather and review information can provide several benefits to your school, its initiatives, and student outcomes. By collecting this information, you are creating evidence that the program that you, your staff, and your students are spending time and resources on is working. It will also allow you to track progress for both student outcomes as well as school-level information.

Gathering this information, or data, can help to identify gaps and to celebrate successes and progress. **This information should not contain identifiable information, such as students' names.** There are some important pieces of information that we strongly recommend, but this list is not the only information you can include.

Recommended information to collect:	How it will be collected:
Staff knowledge and awareness about behavioral health and resources	Pre-training survey Post-implementation survey
Student knowledge and awareness about behavioral health and resources (including students from the peer team and not part of the peer team)	Pre-training survey Post-implementation survey
Number of students who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reached out to the peer team for support • Were reached out to by peer team members • Were referred to needed services and their outcomes 	Interaction dashboard (see page 31)

 **TIP:** Consider reviewing this information in combination with other aggregate student or school data (e.g., academics, attendance, discipline) that you think will help to identify specific benefits to student outcomes.

After collecting this information, it will be important to review it regularly (e.g., monthly). You should use this information to:

- a. Determine whether the program is reaching and supporting students as intended;
- b. Identify where things are going well and where there is room for improvement;
- c. Inform equity, to ensure all students are accessing, participating in, and benefiting from the program at equal rates; and
- d. Share progress and outcomes with staff, students, and families to keep everyone informed and celebrate successes (see pages 50–55 for a template for sharing this information).

Advisor’s Role

Your role will be to facilitate collecting and reviewing this information. Ideally, all staff and students, including the peer team members, would complete the pre-training surveys and post-implementation surveys. **Peer team members** and **school staff** need to take the pre-training survey **prior** to completing the training. **For non-peer team students**, identify classrooms that remain constant during the year (e.g., homeroom or advisory classes) to distribute the surveys.

GATHERING INFORMATION PROCESS

Each adult advisor will receive instructions and a link to a survey that they will distribute to their school staff and students to assess knowledge and attitudes about mental and behavioral health at the start and end of the school year. These survey responses will help to determine any changes in knowledge as a result of the peer support program and schools should share these aggregate findings with students, staff, families, and community mental health organizations.

Pre-training Survey

The pre-training survey will serve as a baseline (e.g., before taking any training) to understand school staff and students' knowledge and attitudes about mental health. Be sure to administer this survey before the start of the peer program, as the goal is to assess knowledge and attitudes before any training or campaign activities occur.

Post-implementation Survey

At the end of the year, you will administer a post-implementation survey. This will allow you to compare responses to the pre-training survey results and determine if there were any changes or improvements in knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about mental health.

Interaction Dashboard

A final piece of information to collect will be to document interactions that peer team members have for informally providing supports to their classmates. This will give you an opportunity to understand how many students have reached out or been reached out to and what the outcomes were from those conversations.

You can create this dashboard in whatever platform works best for you but should be easily accessible by the peer team to input this information as soon as possible after each conversation. It will likely work best in a spreadsheet, such as Google Sheets and should include these variables:

- The date of the conversation
- General notes about the topic of conversation
- What the outcome was (e.g., suggested they talk to a trusted adult)
- Whether there was a follow-up with the student and what date this was



IMPORTANT NOTE: Peer team members should not keep any identifiable information (such as, students' names) in this dashboard to maintain confidentiality. The only purpose of this dashboard is to determine how many students had conversations for support with peer team members. As a reminder: any mention of self-harm or harm to others **MUST** be reported to the advisor immediately.

Useful Tools and Templates



APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

1. Staff Recruitment Letter
2. Parent Letter
3. Student Recruitment Letter
4. Acceptance Letters
 - a. Advisor Acceptance Letter
 - b. Advisor Onboarding Agenda
 - c. Peer Team Acceptance Letter
 - d. Peer Team Non-Acceptance Letter

APPENDIX B: SHARING RESULTS

Template for Sharing Results

APPENDIX C: PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Sample Meeting Agendas
Tips for Creating a Campaign
Proposal Form
Proposal Form Example
Library of Educational Videos
Guidelines for How to Talk About Suicide
Template Invitation Letters to Participate in the End of Year Celebration

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

TEMPLATE LETTER FOR SCHOOL STAFF

The Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI) has adapted the Students Supporting Students peer support program for implementation in Connecticut middle and high schools. **The goal of this program is to train middle and high school students to become part of a peer support team** with the help of trusted adults in the school setting. As a peer team member, students will receive training to recognize mental health warning signs and symptoms in their peers, reduce the stigma around asking for help, and encourage seeking help from a trusted adult.

*Please note: The peer support team will **not** provide therapy or mental health advice for other students.*

WE KNOW THAT:

- Peers play a critical role in adolescents' development.
- Adolescents seek out friends and classmates for support and guidance.
- Conversations about mental health ***are already happening*** among students in schools.

This **peer support program** aims to provide students, with the help of trusted adults, accurate information and tools for how to have those conversations more effectively and reduce the stigma around asking for help via the **following goals**:

- Students and school staff will **build knowledge** through a mental health training.
- The peer team will **develop and implement student-led behavioral health messaging campaigns and activities** throughout the school year.
- The peer team and adult advisors will **meet regularly**.
- Staff and students will complete confidential surveys to show **increases in knowledge**.

Please see the detailed list attached to this letter for the roles and responsibilities for school staff, adult advisors, and students.

We are excited to bring the Students Supporting Students peer support program to **[insert school]**. This is a unique opportunity for **[school's]** students to learn leadership skills and learn more about behavioral health. **If you have a student who you think could benefit from participating on the peer team, please fill out the attached nomination form.**

If you are interested in participating as an adult advisor to the peer support team or know a colleague who may be a great fit for the role, please fill out the form attached to this letter!

The Child Health and Development Institute is a non-profit organization working with research-based best practices to promote behavioral health across Connecticut and beyond. This program is modeled after the University of Michigan Eisenberg Family Depression Center's (EFDC) Peer-to-Peer Depression Awareness Program.

The EFDC is not responsible or liable for content adaptations and program facilitation without their oversight.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All School Staff will:

- Participate in the NAMI Ending the Silence Training.
- Nominate students to serve on the peer team that represent various diverse identities and experiences of the larger student population.
- Identify, through colleague or self-nomination, adult advisors to help the peer team.

Adult Advisors will:

- Participate in a training on the logistics of being an adult advisor.
- Co-lead the program with peer team.
- Meet regularly with the peer team to provide support and discuss program activities, troubleshoot concerns, and provide support to one another.
- Help the peer team implement student-developed activities and messaging campaigns throughout the school year.
- Facilitate sending surveys, review responses, and sharing results to identify increases in knowledge around behavioral health and track the impacts of the peer team.

Peer Team Members will:

- Participate in the NAMI Ending the Silence training and the logistics of being on the peer team.
- Work with adult advisors and their team to create a school-wide awareness campaign to share knowledge and information with their peers to spread awareness, reduce stigma, and provide support to their classmates.
- Help reduce stigma and create an environment in their school where peers feel comfortable talking about how they are feeling and normalize that it's okay to ask for help.
- Be someone whom other students feel comfortable talking with, because they will listen and connect peers with an adult in the school who can help.
- NOT provide mental health counseling for their peers or give mental health advice.

PEER TEAM NOMINATION FORM

Please use this form to identify potential students who may be a good fit to join the peer team. All students should have the opportunity to become peer team members and should represent a range of student backgrounds, experiences, and social groups.

1

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Email: _____

2

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Email: _____

3

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Email: _____

4

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Email: _____

5

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Email: _____

Return by: _____ to *[staff name]*.If you have any questions, please see *[staff name]*.

ADULT ADVISOR NOMINATION

If you are interested in serving as an adult advisor, or think a colleague may be a good fit, please fill out the information below and return to *[staff]*.

1

Name: _____

Email: _____

2

Name: _____

Email: _____

3

Name: _____

Email: _____

TEMPLATE LETTER FOR PARENTS

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

[insert school/district name] is implementing the Students Supporting Students peer support program, developed by the Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI). The goal of this program is to train middle and high school students to become part of a peer support team with the help of trusted adults in the school setting. As a peer team member, students will receive training to recognize mental health warning signs and symptoms in their peers, reduce the stigma around asking for help, and encourage seeking help from a trusted adult.

*Please note: The peer support team will **not** provide therapy or mental health advice for other students.*

WE KNOW THAT:

- Peers play a critical role in adolescents' development.
- Adolescents seek out friends and classmates for support and guidance.
- Conversations about mental health ***are already happening*** among students in schools.

This **peer support program** aims to provide students, with the help of trusted adults, accurate information and tools for how to have those conversations more effectively and reduce the stigma around asking for help via the **following goals**:

- Students and school staff will **build knowledge*** through a mental health training.
- The peer team will **develop and implement student-led behavioral health messaging campaigns and activities** throughout the school year.
- The peer team and adult advisors will **meet regularly**.
- Staff and students will complete confidential surveys to show **increases in knowledge**.

Please see the detailed list attached to this letter for the roles and responsibilities for school staff, adult advisors, and students.

We are excited to bring the Students Supporting Students peer support program to *[insert school]*. This is a unique opportunity for your child to learn leadership skills and learn more about behavioral health. All students will have the opportunity to become peer team members via self-selection or peer/teacher nomination. All students who are not a part of the peer team will be able to receive support if they need it and participate in program activities throughout the year.

If you prefer to not have your child join the peer team, please fill out the opt-out form below. If you have any questions about the peer support program, please reach out to *[staff name]*.

***Any parents that are interested in participating in a mental health educational training about adolescent mental health and how to support your child's wellbeing should contact *[advisor name]*.** This optional parent session will only be scheduled if there is enough interest from parents!

OPT-OUT FORM

Peer Support Program, Peer Team

INSTRUCTIONS: Please write your name and your child's name, sign and date this form. Please return this form by ***[date]*** to ***[staff name]***.

I, _____ ,
(Parent Name)

do not want my child, _____ ,
(Child Name)

to participate on the Peer Support team.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All School Staff will:

- Participate in the NAMI Ending the Silence Training.
- Nominate students to serve on the peer team that represent various diverse identities and experiences of the larger student population.
- Identify, through colleague or self-nomination, adult advisors to help the peer team.

Adult Advisors will:

- Participate in a training on the logistics of being an adult advisor.
- Co-lead the program with peer team.
- Meet regularly with the peer team to provide support and discuss program activities, troubleshoot concerns, and provide support to one another.
- Help the peer team implement student-developed activities and messaging campaigns throughout the school year.
- Facilitate sending surveys, review responses, and sharing results to identify increases in knowledge around behavioral health and track the impacts of the peer team.

Peer Team Members will:

- Participate in the NAMI Ending the Silence training and the logistics of being on the peer team.
- Work with adult advisors and their team to create a school-wide awareness campaign to share knowledge and information with their peers to spread awareness, reduce stigma, and provide support to their classmates.
- Help reduce stigma and create an environment in their school where peers feel comfortable talking about how they are feeling and normalize that it's okay to ask for help.
- Be someone whom other students feel comfortable talking with, because they will listen and connect peers with an adult in the school who can help.
- **NOT** provide mental health counseling for their peers or give mental health advice.

TEMPLATE LETTER FOR STUDENTS

[insert school/district name] is implementing the Students Supporting Students peer support program, developed by The Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI).

The goal of this program is to train middle and high school students to become part of a peer support team with the help of trusted adults in the school setting. As a peer team member, you will receive training to recognize mental health warning signs and symptoms in your peers, reduce the stigma around asking for help, and encourage seeking help from a trusted adult.

*Please note: The peer support team will **not** provide therapy or mental health advice for other students.*

AS A PEER TEAM MEMBER, YOU WILL:

Learn information about mental health and skills to check in with classmates.

Create activities and messaging to spread awareness.

Be someone who your classmates will feel comfortable asking for support.

Please see the detailed list attached to this letter for the roles and responsibilities for school staff, adult advisors, and students.

This is a great opportunity to build leadership skills, learn more about mental health, and help make a difference in your school community!

PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING YOUR PEER SUPPORT TEAM!

Participation on the peer team is voluntary and you are free to stop participating at any time. If a classmate or staff member nominates you, you are free to decline the invitation to be on the peer team.

If you would like to participate in the peer team, please fill out the self-nomination form on the next page and return to *[staff]* by *[date]*.

If you know students who you think would be great for the peer team, please fill out the nomination form attached to this letter and return it to *[staff]* by *[date]*.

The Child Health and Development Institute is a non-profit organization working with research-based best practices to promote behavioral health across Connecticut and beyond. This program is modeled after the University of Michigan Eisenberg Family Depression Center's (EFDC) Peer-to-Peer Depression Awareness Program.

The EFDC is not responsible or liable for content adaptations and program facilitation without their oversight.



PEER TEAM SELF-NOMINATION

If you are interested in applying to be part of the peer team, please fill out the questions on this form and return it to *[staff]*.

***PLEASE NOTE:** Expressing interest does not guarantee you will be selected to participate as a member of the peer team.



Name: _____ Grade: _____

Email: _____

Why do you want to be a member of the peer team?

Please list any preferred days and times to hold required meetings/events:

What is your comfort level in reaching out to other students to educate, inform, or assist? Do you prefer one-on-one interactions? Small groups? Are you able to present to large groups given an outline, PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.?

If you have previously attended a presentation by the peer team, please give us some feedback! How would you change/improve the presentations? Which aspects did you find most informative/useful?

Return by: _____ [DATE] _____ to *[adult advisor]*.

If you have any questions, please see *[adult advisor]*.

PEER TEAM NOMINATION FORM

Please provide the names of classmates you talk to or would talk to when you are looking for support who you think would be a good fit for the peer team.

1

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Email: _____

2

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Email: _____

3

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Email: _____

4

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Email: _____

5

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Email: _____

Return by: _____ to *[staff name]*.

If you have any questions, please see *[staff name]*.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All School Staff will:

- Participate in the NAMI Ending the Silence Training.
- Nominate students to serve on the peer team that represent various diverse identities and experiences of the larger student population.
- Identify, through colleague or self-nomination, adult advisors to help the peer team.

Adult Advisors will:

- Participate in a training on the logistics of being an adult advisor.
- Co-lead the program with peer team.
- Meet regularly with the peer team to provide support and discuss program activities, troubleshoot concerns, and provide support to one another.
- Help the peer team implement student-developed activities and messaging campaigns throughout the school year.
- Facilitate sending surveys, review responses, and sharing results to identify increases in knowledge around behavioral health and track the impacts of the peer team.

Peer Team Members will:

- Participate in the NAMI Ending the Silence training and the logistics of being on the peer team.
- Work with adult advisors and their team to create a school-wide awareness campaign to share knowledge and information with their peers to spread awareness, reduce stigma, and provide support to their classmates.
- Help reduce stigma and create an environment in their school where peers feel comfortable talking about how they are feeling and normalize that it's okay to ask for help.
- Be someone whom other students feel comfortable talking with, because they will listen and connect peers with an adult in the school who can help.
- **NOT** provide mental health counseling for their peers or give mental health advice.

ADVISOR ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Dear ***[staff name]***,

Congratulations, you have been nominated to be a Students Supporting Students adult advisor for the 20xx–20xx school year! We are happy to have you join our mission of raising awareness, ending stigma and promoting help-seeking at ***[school]***! In this role, you will help students to gain leadership skills, develop and implement activities and messaging campaigns throughout the school year, and promote positive behavioral health at ***[school]***.

We will plan to meet with you to discuss the role further and help you get started. Please provide your availability in the next two weeks for a brief (15–30 minutes) meeting.

Please confirm that you accept the invitation to be an advisor by replying to this email no later than ***[date]***.

Thank you again! We look forward to connecting with you soon,

[Signed by CHDI and district admin]

ADVISOR ONBOARDING MEETING AGENDA

Agenda (30 minutes)

- 1. General overview of the program, goals, and tasks**
- 2. Provide advisor(s) the implementation guide and access to all necessary materials**
- 3. Discuss scheduling trainings**
 - a. All staff mental health training - NAMI Ending the Silence**
 - i. Advisor logistics training with CHDI*
 - b. Peer team mental health training - NAMI Ending the Silence and Student Navigator**
 - i. Peer team logistics training with CHDI*
 - c. Optional all student mental health training - NAMI Ending the Silence**

PEER TEAM ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Dear ***[student]***,

Congratulations, you have been nominated to be a peer team member for the 20xx–20xx school year! We would be happy to have you join our mission of raising awareness, ending stigma and promoting help-seeking at ***[school]***! In this role, you will work to develop and implement activities and messaging campaigns throughout the school year to promote positive behavioral health.

We will plan to meet with you to discuss the role further and help you get started. This will be a short introduction meeting (approximately 15 minutes). We are looking forward to meeting with you as we jump into planning for this important initiative.

Please confirm that you accept the invitation to be a peer team member by replying to this ***[email, google classroom]*** no later than ***[date]***.

Thank you again! We look forward to connecting with you soon,

[Signed by adult advisors]

NON-ACCEPTED PEER LETTER

Dear *[student]*,

Thank you so much for applying to be a peer team member for this school year. We were thoroughly impressed by the thoughtfulness, compassion and effort put into your responses in your application. Unfortunately, we received a lot of interest in the peer program this year and cannot offer you a spot on the team at this time. We encourage you to actively participate in campaign activities and participate in any trainings offered around mental health. Remember, everyone has a role to play in normalizing conversations around mental health!

Please do not be discouraged! Spots in this program were limited and we would be thrilled if you would please consider applying again next year. We appreciate your interest in our mission of raising awareness, ending stigma and promoting help-seeking.

Please reach out with any questions you might have.

[Signed by adult advisors]

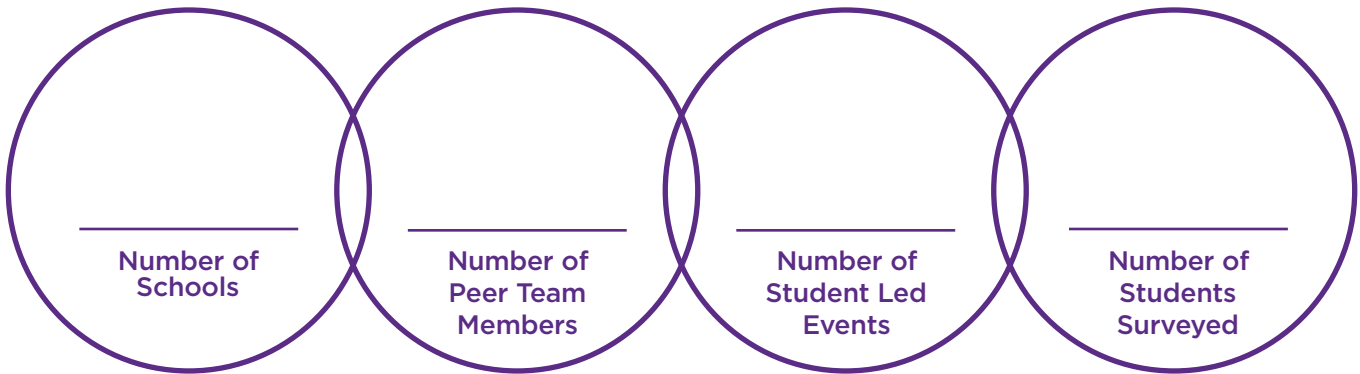
APPENDIX B: SHARING RESULTS

SHARING RESULTS TEMPLATE

Students Supporting Students Program Results: School District Name

The goal of the Students Supporting Students program is to train middle and high school students to become part of a peer support team with the help of trusted adults in the school setting. As a peer team member, students receive training to recognize the mental health signs and symptoms in their peers, reduce the stigma around asking for help, and encourage seeking help from a trusted adult.

In the 20##-20## academic year, peer team members as well as a sample of staff and students completed surveys before receiving training and again at the end of the year after implementing the peer team’s uniquely designed awareness campaign. Survey questions looked at knowledge, school environment, stigma, and help-seeking intentions. Below is a detailed summary of the work that has taken place during this school year!



Reach of Program Students:

- _____ % of students who were aware of the peer team.
- _____ % of students who were aware of the campaign materials.
- _____ % of students attended peer team events.

Reach of Program Staff:

- _____ % staff participated in the Ending the Silence training
- _____ % staff reported knowledge increase
- _____ % staff were aware of peer team activities throughout the year

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT



Knowledge

- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome



School Environment and Stigma

- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome



Help-Seeking

- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome
- List Outcome

Student Survey Participants		
Demographics	Number	Percentage
GENDER		
Male		
Female		
Non-binary		
Prefer not to answer		
RACE AND ETHNICITY		
White		
Black or African American		
American Indian or Alaskan Native		
Asian		
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander		
Middle Eastern / North African		
Latinx, Hispanic, or Spanish		
Other		
Prefer not to answer		
GRADE		
6 th		
7 th		
8 th		
9 th		
10 th		
11 th		
12 th		

School Staff Survey Participants		
Demographics	Number	Percentage
GENDER		
Male		
Female		
Non-binary		
Prefer not to answer		
RACE AND ETHNICITY		
White		
Black or African American		
American Indian or Alaskan Native		
Asian		
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander		
Middle Eastern / North African		
Latinx, Hispanic, or Spanish		
Other		
Prefer not to answer		
PROFESSION		
Administrator		
Teacher		
Psychologist		
Social Worker		
Paraprofessional		
Guidance/Counselor		
Security/SRO		
Other		

STUDENT Average Survey Responses <i>(1=Strongly Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree)</i>	Pre-training Survey	Post-implementation Survey
Helping Others		
Helping Yourself		
Knowledge about Mental Health		
School Environment and Stigma		
Help-seeking Behaviors		

SCHOOL STAFF Average Survey Responses <i>(1=Strongly Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree)</i>	Pre-training Survey	Post-implementation Survey
Helping Others		
Helping Yourself		
Knowledge about Mental Health		
School Environment and Stigma		
Help-seeking Behaviors		

WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

“Example text for a quote from the survey”

“Example text for a quote from the survey”

“Example text for a quote from the survey”

“Example text for a quote from the survey”

“Example text for a quote from the survey”

“Example text for a quote from the survey”

APPENDIX C: PROGRAM MATERIALS

SAMPLE AGENDA 1

Peer Team Meeting

11:30 – 12:00

1. General check-in on well-being**2. Updates:****Brynn** – giveaways

(share the three choices/order)

Lia – daily announcements

(share/amend/send)

Group – review and run through classroom presentations, proposal**3. New business:****Group** – brainstorm lunch time behavioral health activities**4. Remind:****a.** Pre-training Survey distribution times**5. Due next meeting:****a.** Pins ordered**b.** Daily announcements sent to Nick**c.** Classroom presentations rehearsed and ready

SAMPLE AGENDA 2

End of Year Celebration Preparation*Meet at 11:00
in Counseling Office***YOUR PRESENTATION:****Brynn, Viv and Sam:****Overview (Slides 1-4)**

- Weekly meetings
- Decisions by early January
- Activities

Mei and Rutger:**Posters (Slides 5-10)**

- Use of Canva website
- Social Media

Brynn and Carter:**Buttons (Slides 14-15)**

- Design process

Fiona and Emma:**Messages of Hope Board (Slides 17-18)**

- Putting it together
- How it turned out

Brandon:**Surveys, Lessons Learned (Slides 19-20)**

- Survey process
- Things that went well
- Things we would re-think

Get slides together by**NEXT WEDNESDAY 5/3!***We will go over them during lunch.*

TIPS TO START YOUR CAMPAIGN

While each campaign will be different and should reflect what will work best in your school, there are four core messages you have to include. As you create your ideas, remember to keep it M.I.N.T. with all messaging you include in your campaign.



Mental health is real.

Depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions are real and occur on a spectrum. Many people may experience some signs or symptoms, while others may have a diagnosable mental health condition. No matter where you fall on this spectrum, it is important to know that it is not a character flaw, you cannot willpower it away, and help is available.



Inform about about effective supports.

If you or someone you know is concerned about their mental health or well-being, there is professional help and support available and is effective at improving these conditions. You do not have to do it on your own. Reaching out is not a sign of weakness.



Notice and recognize the signs.

Mental health concerns can take many forms and look different in each person. Any change you notice in someone that is different from how they usually act could be a sign they may need support. However, there are some serious signs and symptoms to watch out for, especially if they continue for several weeks or interfere with daily functioning:

Feeling sad or empty

Less interest in activities

Neglecting personal care

Withdrawing from others

Other Signs:

- Changes in sleeping patterns (more or less)
- Feeling tired or less energetic
- Regular unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling irritable or restless
- Changes in weight (loss or gain)
- Feeling hopeless or guilty
- Overeating OR a loss of appetite
- Difficulty remembering things, concentrating, or making decisions
- Less interest in friends, family, hobbies, or other activities that you normally find enjoyable
- Thoughts of suicide



Tell an adult right away if someone mentions suicide.

DO NOT keep it a secret. Tell a trusted adult immediately.

RESOURCE WEBSITE

If you would like examples of what schools have done in the past, please see this website: www.members.depressioncenter.org/apps/p2p. This resource website has summary lists of what has been done in past years as well as examples that you can view and download.

CONTENT + SLOGAN + PROMOTION = CAMPAIGN

The campaigns that have reached the most students have used a combination of both content and promotional activities. **Content** refers to activities that educate, create awareness, and share resources. **Promotion** refers to ways to spread information about the program, messaging, and upcoming events. Along with a **slogan**, your campaign should include at least one activity for content and at least one for promotion. Feel free to use some of these ideas or come up with your own.

Content

- Social media posts
- Assembly/speakers event
- Classroom visits with lesson plans and/or speakers
- Daily announcements
- Videos ([see Video Library in Appendix C](#))
- Art gallery
- Information tables
- “Lunch and Learn” presentations
- Skit/theater presentation
- Parent night / staff presentation
- Mental Health Awareness week

Promotion

- Posters
- Wristbands
- T-shirts
- Bulletin board
- Messages of hope board
- Pencils with messages of hope
- Keychains
- Lanyards
- Temporary tattoos
- Resource cards
- Stress balls
- Bookmarks

Campaign Slogan Examples

- No stigma, know science.
- Stigma hurts, awareness helps.
- It’s okay to not be okay.
- Depression is real, hope is real too.
- Depression is real, share how you feel.
- Speak out, don’t grind it out.
- No one should be left in the dark.
- When in doubt, talk it out.
- Not all illnesses are visible.
- Trust to discuss.
- Depression doesn’t define you.
- Sometimes it’s more than just a “bad day.”
- You can’t just “snap out” of it.

PEER TEAM CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL

Name of School:

Name of Advisor:

Overall Campaign Goal

(Write out 1-3 goals you hope to accomplish with your campaign activities):

Slogan *(if applicable):*

Program Activities

(How are you going to achieve your overall program goal?) Remember to be as specific as possible, while keeping your goals/activities achievable, realistic, and timely. Your message can be reinforced by doing several activities over a period of time (not all have to be big projects!).

As a reminder, you must include the four core messages (M.I.N.T.) in your campaign.

Mental health is real. Inform about effective supports. Notice and recognize the signs. Tell an adult right away if someone mentions suicide.

A. Description of activity, how will you include core messages, who is responsible, when will it be complete, how much will it cost?

B. Description of activity, how will you include core messages, who is responsible, when will it be complete, how much will it cost?

C. Description of activity, how will you include core messages, who is responsible, when will it be complete, how much will it cost?

TIMELINE

October-December (Planning for campaign)
January
February
March
April
May

Overall Budget/Resources Needed:

PEER TEAM CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL – EXAMPLE

Name of School:

Name of Advisor:

Peer Team Members: *Monica, Sawyer, Asia, Theo, Naomi, Briana, Alexa, Lucy*

Overall Campaign Goal

(write out 1-3 goals you hope to accomplish with your campaign activities):

Raise awareness that depression is a real illness and not something you can just “snap out of”, decrease stigma, increase help-seeking

Slogan (if applicable):

Program Activities

(How are you going to achieve your overall program goal?) Remember to be as specific as possible, while keeping your goals/activities achievable, realistic, and timely. Your message can be reinforced by doing several activities over a period of time (not all have to be big projects!).

As a reminder, you must include the four core messages (M.I.N.T.) in your campaign.

Mental health is real. Inform about effective supports. Notice and recognize the signs. Tell an adult right away if someone mentions suicide.

A. Description of activity, how will you include core messages, who is responsible, when will it be complete, how much will it cost?

- Classroom presentations on depression and anxiety that will include core messages in slides*
- Monica, Sawyer, and Asia will create presentation*
- Rest of the team will alternate doing presentations*
- Presentation draft done by February 14th then submit to advisor for review, team starts presentations during advisory on March 1st*
- Cost: \$0*

B. Description of activity, how will you include core messages, who is responsible, when will it be complete, how much will it cost?

- Posters: We will create 6 posters with our slogan and core messages that show the symptoms of depression and anxiety, faces of people with depression and anxiety, and where to go for help*
- Theo, Naomi, and Briana will each design 2 posters on Canva.com*
- Posters will be displayed March 1st – March 14th.*
- Cost: \$0*

C. Description of activity, how will you include core messages, who is responsible, when will it be complete, how much will it cost?

- Stickers: We will create a sticker design with our slogan and resources on them and order 650 of them*
- Alexa and Lucy will design the stickers*
- Stickers will be displayed March 1st – March 14th.*
- Cost: \$350*

TIMELINE - EXAMPLE

October-December (Planning for campaign)
January
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Plan classroom presentation outline – Design stickers
February
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Submit classroom presentation to advisor for approval – Design and submit posters
March
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Start classroom presentations – Display posters – Create social media posts
April
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Post/share social media posts
May
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reflect on campaign activities – Fill out post-implementation survey – Plan End of Year presentation

Overall Budget/Resources Needed: \$350

VIDEO LIBRARY

For Middle School

4-7-8 Breathing Exercise (3 m. 39 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxbdX-SeOOo&t=41s>

Fear vs. Anxiety - What's the difference? (1 m. 39 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0v5E6syVppl>

Anxiety: Why Humans Experience Anxiety (3 m. 10 sec.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7W_rlrwH-BE

How it feels to have depression (1 m. 55 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQbvzSxNDtY>

General Mental Health

Seize the Awkward — The Signs | Friendship & Mental Health (0m. 31 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-IWdg-PfeM>

Coping Skills

TinyShifts - Tiny Shifts; Not Easy Fixes (1 m. 59 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-ke08jjl5g>

7 Ways to Maximize Misery (7 m. 16 sec.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=49&v=LO1mTELoj6o

Managing Stress (2 m. 23 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnpQrMqDoqE>

Identifying and Reframing Negative Thoughts (1 m. 49 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmxAlrr1LZc>

Talking About Mental Health

TinyShifts - Change the Conversation (1 m. 44 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3DR5qf76tU>

Seize the Awkward | Friendship & Mental Health (1 m. 5 sec.)

<https://youtu.be/r47l4eUU1bc?si=zsr1sfFdL2OGxI9M>

Seize the Awkward - Just Listen | Friendship & Mental Health (0 m. 41 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmrCrC-KHmk>

Seize the Awkward - Just Ask | Friendship & Mental Health (0 m. 36 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBwwosvCF0c>

Seize the Awkward - The Awkward Silence | Friendship & Mental Health (1 m. 6 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gKtVoSgNNM>

Personal Stories

Athletes Connected | Will Heininger (6 m. 33 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQ7OXOrliGY>

Athletes Connected | Stacey Ervin: “You don’t have to be sick to get better” (4 m. 55 sec.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oupH28FME8

Child Mind Institute - My Younger Self (Time ranges)

<https://childmind.org/myyoungerself/>

Campus Mind Works | Anxiety & Identity: Maddi’s Story (5 m. 11 sec.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwKGnVMluwA&feature=emb_title

Ted Talk | Nikki Webber Allen - Don’t suffer from your Depression in silence (6 m. 27 sec.)

https://www.ted.com/talks/nikki_webber_allen_don_t_suffer_from_your_depression_in_silence?referrer=playlist-4_ted_talks_on_overcoming_depr

Depression

Depression Isn’t Always Obvious (1 m. 20 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Yq6W7YAHM4>

What is depression? Helen M. Farrell (4 m. 28 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-IR48Mb3WO>

Buzzfeed – What It’s Like Living with Depression (2 m. 14 sec.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=Ps8RcOdfHT4

The Mighty – Parts of Depression That Often Get Missed (2 m. 2 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVqx99DQN4Q>

The Science of Depression (2 m. 48 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SfOOSPwwsA>

I had a black dog, his name was depression. (4 m. 18 sec.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiCrniLQGYc>

Bipolar Disorder

Ted Talk | What is Bipolar Disorder? (5 m. 53 sec.)

https://www.ted.com/talks/helen_m_farrell_what_is_bipolar_disorder

Anxiety

The Science of Anxiety (2 m. 38 sec.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_jkNmj5S0s

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Ted Talk | Debunking the Myths of OCD (3 m. 43 sec.)

https://www.ted.com/talks/dr_natascha_m_santos_debunking_the_myths_of OCD/up-next

Trauma

What is PTSD? Post-traumatic stress disorder (3 m. 5 sec.)

<https://youtu.be/SWRmCYhIiA>

Mental Health Myth Busters: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (5 m. 37 sec.)

<https://youtu.be/p7WBXJm8Iq0>

Substance Use

Common questions teens have about drugs and alcohol (1 m. 22 sec.)

<https://youtu.be/O0gIXGuLIXE>

What is Addiction? (1 m. 34 sec.)

<https://youtu.be/FIdq9VveQMM>

SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER



SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER

Safe and Effective Messaging for Suicide Prevention

This document offers evidence-based recommendations for creating safe and effective messages to raise public awareness that suicide is a serious and preventable public health problem. The following list of “Do’s” and “Don’ts” should be used to assess the appropriateness and safety of message content in suicide awareness campaigns. Recommendations are based upon the best available knowledge about messaging.^{1,2,3} They apply not only to awareness campaigns, such as those conducted through Public Service Announcements (PSAs), but to most types of educational and training efforts intended for the general public.

These recommendations address message content, but not the equally important aspects of planning, developing, testing, and disseminating messages. While engaged in these processes, one should seek to tailor messages to address the specific needs and help-seeking patterns of the target audience. For example, since youth are likely to seek help for emotional problems from the Internet, a public awareness campaign for youth might include Internet-based resources.⁴

The Do’s—Practices that may be helpful in public awareness campaigns:

- **Do emphasize help-seeking and provide information on finding help.** When recommending mental health treatment, provide concrete steps for finding help. Inform people that help is available through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988) and through established local service providers and crisis centers.
- **Do emphasize prevention.** Reinforce the fact that there are preventative actions individuals can take if they are having thoughts of suicide or know others who are or might be. Emphasize that suicides are preventable and should be prevented to the extent possible.⁵
- **Do list the warning signs, as well as risk and protective factors of suicide.** Teach people how to tell if they or someone they know may be thinking of harming themselves. Include lists of warning signs, such as those developed through a consensus process led by the [American Association of Suicidology \(AAS\)](#).⁶ Messages should also identify protective factors that reduce the likelihood of suicide and risk factors that heighten risk of suicide. Risk and protective factors are listed on pages 35-36 of the [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#).
- **Do highlight effective treatments for underlying mental health problems.** Over 90 percent of those who die by suicide suffer from a significant psychiatric illness, substance abuse disorder or both at the time of their death.⁷⁻⁸ The impact of mental illness and substance abuse as risk factors for suicide can be reduced by access to effective treatments and strengthened social support in an understanding community.⁹

The Don’ts—Practices that may be problematic in public awareness campaigns:

- **Don’t glorify or romanticize suicide or people who have died by suicide.** Vulnerable people, especially young people, may identify with the attention and sympathy garnered by someone who has died by suicide.¹⁰ They should not be held up as role models.
- **Don’t normalize suicide by presenting it as a common event.** Although significant numbers of people attempt suicide, it is important not to present the data in a way that makes suicide seem common, normal or acceptable. Most people do not seriously consider suicide an option; therefore, suicidal ideation is not normal. Most individuals, and most youth, who seriously

Continued >>

Safe and Effective Messaging for Suicide Prevention

- consider suicide do not overtly act on those thoughts, but find more constructive ways to resolve hem. Presenting suicide as common may unintentionally remove a protective bias against suicide in a community.¹¹
- **Don't present suicide as an inexplicable act or explain it as a result of stress only.** Presenting suicide as the inexplicable act of an otherwise healthy or high-achieving person may encourage identification with the victim.¹² Additionally, it misses the opportunity to inform audiences of both the complexity and preventability of suicide. The same applies to any explanation of suicide as the understandable response to an individual's stressful situation or to an individual's membership in a group encountering discrimination. Oversimplification of suicide in any of these ways can mislead people to believe that it is a normal response to fairly common life circumstances.¹³
- **Don't focus on personal details of people who have died by suicide.** Vulnerable individuals may identify with the personal details of someone who died by suicide, leading them to consider ending their lives in the same way.¹⁴
- **Don't present overly detailed descriptions of suicide victims or methods of suicide.** Research shows that pictures or detailed descriptions of how or where a person died by suicide can be a factor in vulnerable individuals imitating the act. Clinicians believe the danger is even greater if there is a detailed description of the method.¹⁵

Acknowledgment

SPRC thanks Madelyn Gould, PhD, MPH [Professor at Columbia University in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (College of Physicians & Surgeons) and Department of Epidemiology (School of Public Health), and a Research Scientist at the New York State Psychiatric Institute] for her extensive contributions and guidance in drafting and editing this document.

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³ Chambers, D. A., Pearson, J. L., Lubell, K., Brandon, S., O'Brien, K., & Zinn, J. (2005). The science of public messages for suicide prevention: A workshop summary. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 35(2), 134-145.

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⁹ Baldessarini, R., Tondo, L., & Hennen, J. (1999). Effects of lithium treatment and its discontinuation on suicidal behavior in bipolar manic-depressive disorders. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 60 (Suppl. 2), 77-84.

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**Suicide Prevention Resource Center ♦ www.sprc.org ♦ 877-GET-SPRC (877-438-7772)
Education Development Center, Inc. ♦ 55 Chapel Street, Newton, MA 02458-1060**

END OF YEAR CELEBRATION COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION INVITATION TEMPLATE

[Date]

Dear ***[Community Organizations or Contact Names]***,

This year, a group of our students at ***[School Name]*** participated in the “Students Supporting Students” peer support program, as part of a collaboration with the Child Health and Development Institute.

The goal of this program was to train middle and high school students to become part of a peer support team with the help of trusted adults in the school setting. As a peer team member, students received training to recognize mental health signs and symptoms in their peers, reduce the stigma around asking for help, and encourage seeking help from a trusted adult.

As a youth-serving organization in our community, we wanted to share the great work our peer team has developed and implemented over the past school year. Please see the attached brief summary of the activities the peer team did this year and the outcomes of their campaign.

Participating students and the staff advisors will be holding an end of year celebration to recognize all the hard work these students have done this school year as part of the peer team. During the celebration, the peer team will take about 15 minutes to present their campaign activities and what they have learned over the past year.

We would love for you to join us in this celebration on ***[Date]*** at ***[Time and Location]***.

If you have any questions please contact me at ***[Phone]*** or e-mail me at ***[Email Address]***

Sincerely,
[Name]

END OF YEAR CELEBRATION SCHOOL STAFF INVITATION TEMPLATE

[Date]

Dear ***[School Name]***,

As you know, a group of our students participated in the “Students Supporting Students” peer support program, as part of a collaboration with the Child Health and Development Institute.

The goal of this program was to train middle and high school students to become part of a peer support team with the help of trusted adults in the school setting. As a peer team member, students received training to recognize mental health signs and symptoms in their peers, reduce the stigma around asking for help, and encourage seeking help from a trusted adult.

Please see the attached brief summary of the work the peer team did this year and the outcomes of their campaign.

Participating students and the staff advisors will be holding an end of year celebration to recognize all the hard work these students have done this school year as part of the peer team. During the celebration, the peer team will take about 15 minutes to present their campaign activities and what they have learned over the past year.

We would love for you to join us in this celebration on ***[Date]*** at ***[Time and Location]***.

If you have noticed specific outcomes of this work, such as a positive change in a student or students, I would love to hear your story! Please share it with me via email ***[Email Address]*** by ***[Date]***.

If you have any questions please contact me at ***[Phone]*** or e-mail me at ***[Email Address]***.

Sincerely,
[Name]

END OF YEAR CELEBRATION FAMILY INVITATION TEMPLATE

[Date]

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This year, a group of our students at ***[school name]*** participated in the “Students Supporting Students” peer support program, as part of a collaboration with the Child Health and Development Institute.

The goal of this program was to train middle and high school students to become part of a peer support team with the help of trusted adults in the school setting. As a peer team member, students received training to recognize mental health signs and symptoms in their peers, reduce the stigma around asking for help, and encourage seeking help from a trusted adult. Please see the attached brief summary of the work the peer team did this year and the outcomes of their campaign.

Participating students and the staff advisors will be holding an end of year celebration to recognize all the hard work your child has done this school year as part of the peer team. During the celebration, the peer team will take about 15 minutes to present their campaign activities and what they have learned over the past year.

We would love for you to join us in this celebration on ***[Date]*** at ***[Time and Location]***.

If you have noticed specific outcomes of this work, such as a positive change in your child as a result of participating in program activities, I would love to hear your story! Please share it with me via email ***[Email Address]*** by ***[Date]***.

If you have any questions please contact me at ***[Phone]*** or e-mail me at ***[Email Address]***

Sincerely,
[Name]

RESOURCES

NATIONAL RESOURCES

24-Hour Help Lines

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call or text 988 or visit [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

Trevor Lifeline (for LGBTQ youth): 1-866-488-7386

JED Foundation

www.jedfoundation.org

JED works with high schools across the country to strengthen their mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention programs and systems. They provide the suicide prevention lifeline and crisis text line. JED also has signature programs such as Half of Us, Set to Go, and Love is Louder. Each of these programs has free mental health resources on their website to help high school and college students.

The Steve Fund

www.stevelfund.org

The Steve Fund is focused on supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of young people of color. The Steve Fund works with colleges, universities, non-profits, researchers, and practitioners to stimulate dialogue and promote effective programming and strategies for students of color as they enter, matriculate in, and transition out of higher education.

The Trevor Project

www.trevorproject.org

The Trevor Project provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) young people ages 13-24. They aim to create safe, accepting, and inclusive environments through trainings, online resources, and community spaces.

CONNECTICUT RESOURCES

If a child is experiencing a mental health crisis, dial 2-1-1

For more information, visit: mobilecrisisempct.org

For a list of Connecticut resources and services visit:

Resources, Plan 4 Children: www.plan4children.org/resources

Supports & Services, Wrap CT: www.connectingtocarect.org/support-services

Assisted Intervention Matching Tool (AIM) for Contracted In-Home Programs & Services, WrapCT: www.connectingtocarect.org/aim-tool

CT Suicide Advisory Board: www.preventsuicidect.org

Kids Mental Health Info: kidsmentalhealthinfo.com

For information about contacting the Community Collaborative Organizations in your region of the state, please use the following links:

Region 6, Central (Meriden, New Britain)

www.connectingtocarect.org/region/central

Region 3, Eastern (Middletown, Norwich, Willimantic)

www.connectingtocarect.org/region/eastern

Region 4, North Central (Hartford, Manchester)

www.connectingtocarect.org/region/north-central

Region 2, South Central (Milford, New Haven)

www.connectingtocarect.org/region/south-central

Region 1, Southwestern (Bridgeport, Norwalk)

www.connectingtocarect.org/region/southwest

Region 5, Western (Danbury, Torrington, Waterbury)

www.connectingtocarect.org/region/western

For additional information on mental health resources, visit: kidsmentalhealthinfo.com

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ANXIETY: A mental health condition in which stress, worry, and fear do not go away, could worsen over time, and impacts daily functioning.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH*: A broad spectrum of concerns related to emotional and behavioral needs, including well-being, resilience, mental health, and substance use prevention.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Information is kept private and not shared with anyone unless in cases of emergency.

DEPRESSION: A mental health condition that often includes consistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or a low mood that impacts daily functioning.

HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIORS: Actions taken to seek support or treatment.

MENTAL HEALTH: The emotional, psychological, and social well-being that affects how we think, feel and act.

STIGMA: A negative attitude or feelings of shame, disgrace, or dishonor in relation to a circumstance, characteristic, or person (e.g., someone who has experienced or is experiencing a mental health condition).



IMPORTANT NOTE:

*The term behavioral health refers to a broad spectrum of concerns related to emotional and behavioral needs of students, including well-being, resilience, mental health, and substance use prevention. Behavioral health does not refer to a student's control, or lack thereof, over their actions. The term mental health refers to mental, emotional, or psychological well-being and experiences. Throughout this guide, behavioral health will be used when describing topics more broadly, whereas mental health will be used when discussing specific mental health trainings or conditions



