Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention in High Schools

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Agenda

- The Jed Foundation - Who We Are

- Discuss the link between mental health and student achievement and resilience

- Describe the opportunity for schools to intervene on student mental health

- Share JED’s Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

- Review the overarching strategies that JED uses to promote emotional well-being and prevent suicide in high schools
JED’s Mission

● JED is a nonprofit that protects emotional health and prevents suicide for our nation’s teens and young adults.

● We partner with high schools and colleges to strengthen their mental health, substance misuse, and suicide prevention programs and systems.

● We encourage community awareness, understanding and action for young adult mental health.
Mental Health in Young People

- 1 out of every 5 young people has a mental health condition right now, yet
- 46% are not getting treatment.

Source: NAMI, SAMHSA
Current Educational Landscape

- Remote learning and increased isolation
- Increase in bias and hate incidents
- Challenges to institutional leadership
- Student protests and demands
- Racial trauma from negative media exposure to violence
- Increased xenophobia as a result of messaging about COVID-19
Students of color, LGBTQ+ youth, international students, first-generation students, and other potentially marginalized populations, face additional mental health stressors that can place them at incremental risk for adverse outcomes.

Anxiety and depression spike for black and Asian Americans after the police killing of George Floyd
Percent screening positive for anxiety and/or depression

Anxiety and depression symptoms have more than tripled since 2019, with black Americans shouldering the heaviest burden.

Percent screening positive for anxiety or depression

Anxiety

- Black: 34%
- Latino: 32%
- All U.S.: 31%
- White: 29%
- Asian: 28%

- White: 9%
- All U.S.: 8%
- Latino: 8%
- Black: 8%
- Asian: 4%

Depression

- Black: 30%
- Latino: 26%
- All U.S.: 25%
- White: 24%
- Asian: 22%

- Black: 8%
- White: 7%
- Latino: 7%
- All U.S.: 7%
- Asian: 3%
As of 2018, suicide became the second leading cause of death in Black children aged 10-14, and the third leading cause of death in Black adolescents aged 15-19.
48% of LGBTQ youth reported engaging in self-harm in the past twelve months, including over 60% of transgender and nonbinary youth.

40% of LGBTQ respondents seriously considered attempting suicide in the past twelve months, with more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth having seriously considered suicide.
Increased suicide risk among Latinx LGBTQ youth is due to race stress-related experiences of stigma, discrimination, and victimization as opposed to being LGBTQ in and of itself.
Mental Health Treatments by Identity

Mental Health Treatment Rates by Identity Group

- White
- Black
- Latinx
- Asian
- Mixed/Multiracial
- LGB

Source: 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health - SAMHSA
The Goal

- Belonging
- Resilience
- Support

We are at a critical moment.

We can’t focus on education unless we intervene on mental health.
Understanding and Addressing the Mental Health of High School Students: JED and Fluent Research

Key findings include:

- Mental health was viewed by high school administrators as a key issue for high school students.
- The risk for student suicide was a strong concern for school administrators and students.
- Students from lower-income households were particularly vulnerable with regard to mental health issues.
- High school students who identified as female were more at-risk for mental health issues than those who identified as male.
- Administrators, caregivers, and students agree: it is time to address student mental health.
- Students need more mental health resources and strategies.
Finding 1:
Mental health was viewed by school administrators as a key issue for high school students.

**School Administrators’ Identification of Student Mental Health Issues**

- Anxiety: 60%
- Unhealthy Social Media Use: 60%
- Lack of Family Stability or Support at Home: 61%
- Difficulty Coping with Stress in a Healthy Way: 61%
- Difficulty Managing Emotions: 61%
- Vaping/E-cigarette Use: 61%
- Depression: 61%
- Families Not Having Enough Money for Basic Needs: 61%
- Substance Use Issues: 61%
- Feeling Unprepared for the Transition Out of H.S.: 58%

**Students’ Identification of Student Mental Health Issues**

- Vaping/E-cigarette Use: 47%
- Stress Related to the College Admissions Process: 44%
- Anxiety: 44%
- Unhealthy Social Media Use: 39%
- Difficulty Managing Emotions: 37%
- Substance Use Issues: 36%
- Harassment or Bullying: 36%
- Feeling Unprepared for the Transition Out of H.S.: 36%
- Difficulty Coping with Stress in a Healthy Way: 36%
- Depression: 34%
Finding 5:

Administrators, Caregivers, and Students Agree: It is time to address student mental health

School Administrators’ Ratings for School Roles/Priorities in Supporting Student Mental Health

- It is important for a school to educate students on how to reach out for help if they are in need of mental health services: 62%
- It is important for a school to educate students on how to help a friend who may be in need of mental health services: 58%
- Schools should make efforts to prevent suicide among students: 58%
- Schools should make efforts to educate high school students on mental health and emotional well-being: 58%
- Schools should make efforts to provide or connect counseling to high school students in need of mental health services: 57%
- Schools should make efforts to identify high school students in need of mental health services: 52%

Caregivers’ Ratings for School Roles/Priorities in Supporting Student Mental Health

- It is important for a school to educate students on how to reach out for help if they are in need of mental health services: 67%
- It is important for a school to educate students on how to help a friend who may be in need of mental health services: 56%
- Schools should make efforts to prevent suicide among students: 62%
- Schools should make efforts to educate high school students on mental health and emotional well-being: 59%
- Schools should make efforts to provide or connect counseling to high school students in need of mental health services: 58%
- Schools should make efforts to identify high school students in need of mental health services: 56%
How JED is helping schools
The **Comprehensive Approach** provides high schools and districts with a framework to support and improve student mental health and reduce risk for suicide.

This approach encompasses a series of recommendations grouped under **seven broader domains**.

Our work with schools is a **technical assistance model** that helps schools evaluate their systems and policies related to student mental health.
**Assessment**

- School builds an interdisciplinary team to steer efforts across school community
- School administers Healthy Minds Study student survey
- Team completes the JED High School self-assessment

**Implementation**

- JED High School Advisor provides ongoing technical assistance to support implementation of the strategic plan
- JED High School Playbook serves as an easy reference guide for team
- JED High School tracks and communicates team progress against the strategic plan

**Evaluation**

- School administers second Healthy Minds Study
- The team completes the JED High School post-assessment
- JED provides a summary analysis report on school progress

**Strategic Planning**

- JED reviews assessment responses and provides feedback
- JED consultant hosts virtual visits with school to discuss feedback with team and strategies for consideration
- Team and JED collaborate to develop a strategic plan

**Learning Community Participation**

- Webinars provide deeper insight into best practice
- JED High School Newsletters inform team about emerging stories, resources and events to strengthen the work being done

**Sustainability**

- JED offers guidance on continuing the work of the team
- The team sets goals for future growth and improvement
- School joins JED High School Alumni
Domains: Overview
Equitable Implementation

Equality

Equity

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Develop Life Skills

- Reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Reduces substance misuse
- Reduces suicide risk
- Promotes learning readiness, school engagement, and academic achievement
- Culturally responsive SEL improves student health and well-being and buffers stress
Promote Social Connectedness & A Positive School Climate

- Loneliness and isolation are significant risk factors for mental health problems and/or suicidal behavior
- The scientific link between social connectedness and mental health promoting behaviors is powerful and longstanding
- Schools are a powerful place for teens to experience social connectedness
- School climate is independently predictive of social connectedness for teenagers and protective when youth are experiencing distress.
Encourage Help-Seeking Behaviors

• Low for teens, even lower in underserved and minoritized groups
• Teens identify specific barriers to help-seeking
• Facilitators to help-seeking include past or peer experience, peer encouragement, knowledge of helpers
• Teens (particularly males) use digital sources to seek help
Improve Recognition and Response to Signs of Distress & Risk

- Developmental considerations make recognition and response a critical component of risk prevention and mental health promotion
- Screening is complex
- BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and students whose histories of trauma is larger than the general population are at increased risk and more likely to be ‘missed’ in the recognition cycle
- Community and family are key stakeholders in an effective recognition and response cycle
Ensure Access to Effective Mental Health Treatment

- Promising treatments exist and most of these involve some combination of cognitive behavioral treatment (CBT), psychoeducation, mindfulness and/or self-regulation training, and problem-solving coaching.
- For youth with trauma symptoms, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (TF-CBT) is a well-supported approach.
- Transitions into and out of care are challenging and risky.
- Referral counseling is a powerful approach.
Establish & Follow Crisis Response and Procedures

• Despite the low base rates of school shootings, crisis response protocols are often focused on them

• Low level, day to day experiences of violence are more common impediments to climate and to learning/teaching

• Postvention and healing are a key part of any crisis response protocol
Promote Means Safety

- The most powerful suicide prevention method we have
- Encompasses making the physical plant safe and educating the caregiving community
- Should focus on safety, not on values
Practical Applications

How can you incorporate these strategies into your practice?
QUESTIONS?
JED’s COVID-19 Resource Guide

Across the nation, people are dealing with sudden changes to their regular schedules and feelings of uncertainty and anxiety, and even loss and grief, as a result of COVID-19. It’s completely expected and appropriate to experience fear during situations like these. It’s also important to know how to manage overwhelming anxiety and keep perspective as the situation unfolds. Here are some resources and tips that may be helpful to you during this time.

- STUDENTS, TEENS, & YOUNG ADULTS
- PARENTS & GUARDIANS
- HIGH SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS
- HIGHER ED PROFESSIONALS
FEATURED ACTIONS:

Get Creative with Virtual Dates & Hangouts
If you’re single and meeting new people or in the early stages of a relationship, physical distancing and staying safe doesn’t mean you can’t continue to connect and get to know each other.

Attend Virtual Concerts
Just because concerts have been postponed doesn’t mean we can’t still enjoy the power of music together...even while physical distancing. Check out virtual concerts happening soon.

Deal with Disappointment
We’re all feeling a lot of things right now. It’s important that we name, express and share them. Join a Storytelling Community and become part of a project that rises above the distance between us.

Being Kind to Our Bodies
Our jobs are not to change the world, change our lives or change our bodies during these weeks. Our jobs are to stay safe and stay well. Here are some tips to help.

find actions to: #stayin #staysafe #staycalm #staykind #stayactive #stayconnected
Find a way to reach out to a friend about their mental health.

Learn more at seizetheawkward.org
The Tools and Information You Need

There are skills that will help you thrive as you get ready to leave high school. Here you'll find information, tools and guidance to help you feel Set to Go - whether you go to college or straight to a career.
Thank you.

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