
Experiencing An Emotional or Mental Health Crisis at School:

An Internal View of Supporting Children




Texas Education Agency:

Texas School Mental Health and Behavioral Health

Approximately one in six school-aged youth experiences impairments in life functioning, including impacts on academic achievement, due to mental illness. The number of students experiencing mental illness increases as young people grow older.

Outside of the student's home, schools are the most likely place where mental health concerns will be detected. The earlier mental health concerns are detected and addressed, the more likely a student is to avoid the onset and/or progression of mental illness. Many times, signs of deteriorating mental health are noticeable well before a mental illness emerges. (TEA)



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Educator. Advocate. Life Long Learner.

Teacher

School Counselor

Associate Principal

Certified Mediator

Certified Restorative Practices Practitioner

Licensed Professional Counselor -

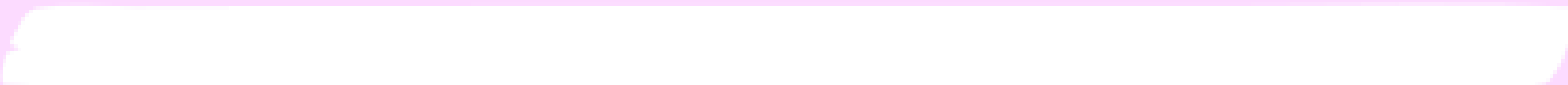
Supervisor

School Counseling Coordinator

Mental Health Crisis is ...

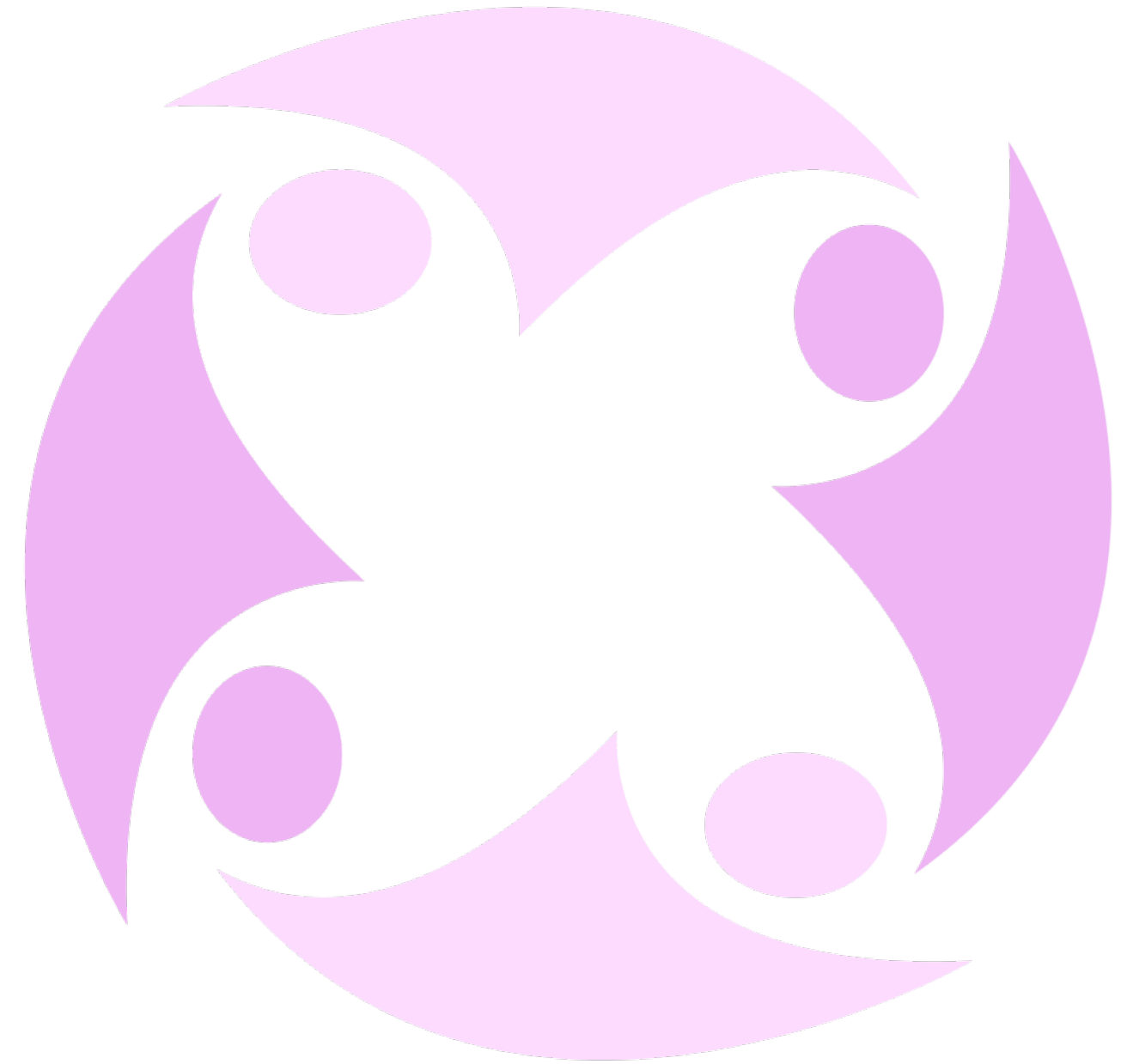
A mental health crisis is any situation in which a person's behavior puts them at risk of hurting themselves or others and/or prevents them from being able to care for themselves or function effectively in the community (NAMI)

An individual crisis is the perception or experiencing of the event by the person as an intolerable difficulty that exceeds the individual's resources and coping abilities.
(APA)



Texas Education Code

The Role & Responsibilities of School Counselors



Texas Education Code 33.006(b)

Sec. 33.006. SCHOOL COUNSELORS; GENERAL DUTIES. (a) The primary responsibility of a school counselor is to counsel students to fully develop each student's academic, career, personal, and social abilities.

(b) In addition to a school counselor's responsibility under Subsection (a), **the school counselor shall:**

- (1) **participate in planning, implementing, and evaluating** a comprehensive developmental guidance program **to serve all students** and to **address the special needs of students:**
 - (A) **who are at risk** of dropping out of school, becoming substance abusers, participating in gang activity, or committing suicide;
 - (B) who are in need of modified instructional strategies; or
 - (C) who are gifted and talented, with emphasis on identifying and serving gifted and talented students who are educationally disadvantaged;
- (2) **consult with a student's parent or guardian and make referrals as appropriate in consultation with the student's parent or guardian;**
- (3) consult with school staff, parents, and other community members to help them increase the effectiveness of student education and promote student success;
- (4) **coordinate people and resources in the school, home, and community;**
- (5) with the assistance of school staff, interpret standardized test results and other assessment data that help a student make educational and career plans;
- (6) deliver classroom guidance activities or serve as a consultant to teachers conducting lessons based on the school's guidance curriculum; and
- (7) serve as an impartial, nonreporting resource for interpersonal conflicts and discord involving two or more students, including accusations of bullying under Section 37.0832.

(c) Nothing in Subsection (b) (7) exempts a school counselor from any **mandatory reporting** requirements imposed by other provisions of law.

Texas Education Code 38.016

Sec. 38.016. PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS AND PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATIONS OR EXAMINATIONS. (a) In this section:

- (1) "Nonphysician mental health professional" has the meaning assigned by Section 38.0101.
- (2) "Parent" includes a guardian or other person standing in parental relation.
- (3) "Psychotropic drug" means a substance that is:
 - (A) used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication; and
 - (B) intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior.

(b) A school district employee may not:

- (1) recommend that a student use a psychotropic drug; or
- (2) suggest any particular diagnosis; or
- (3) use the refusal by a parent to consent to administration of a psychotropic drug to a student or to a psychiatric evaluation or examination of a student as grounds, by itself, for prohibiting the child from attending a class or participating in a school-related activity.

(c) Subsection (b) does not:

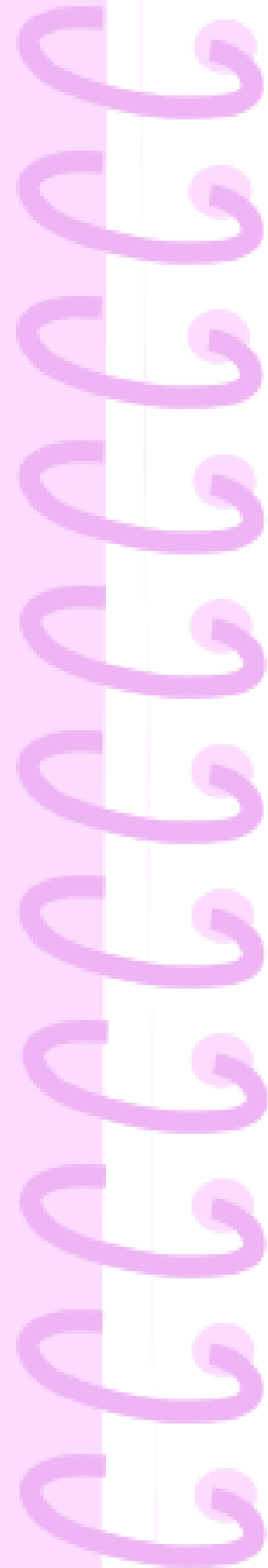
- (1) prevent an appropriate referral under the child find system required under 20 U.S.C. Section 1412, as amended;
- (2) prohibit a school district employee, or an employee of an entity with which the district contracts, who is a registered nurse, advanced nurse practitioner, physician, or nonphysician mental health professional licensed or certified to practice in this state from recommending that a child be evaluated by a physician or nonphysician mental health professional; or
- (3) prohibit a school employee from discussing any aspect of a child's behavior or academic progress with the child's parent or another school district employee.

(d) The board of trustees of each school district shall adopt a policy to ensure implementation and enforcement of this section.

(e) An act in violation of Subsection (b) does not override the immunity from personal liability granted in Section 22.0511 or other law or the district's sovereign and governmental immunity.

District Collaborative Structure

- ❑ ~10,000 students
 - ❑ 7 Elementary Schools / 2 Middle Schools
1 Ninth Grade Center / 1 High School (10th - 12th) / 1 School of Choice / 1 DAEP
- ❑ Student Support Services
 - ❑ 24 Certified School Counselors
 - ❑ 8 Elementary Schools / 6 Middle Schools
3 Ninth Grade Center / 6 High School (10th - 12th) / 1 School of Choice/DAEP
 - ❑ 6 Licensed Mental Health Professionals (Student Services Team - average caseload of 40-70 students)
 - ❑ 3 [Impact Counseling](#) LMHP for Secondary Campuses / 1 [Impact Counseling](#) LMHP for District Staff
 - ❑ [Parent & Family Engagement Specialists](#) (3 members)
 - ❑ [Health Services](#) (14 school nurses)
 - ❑ [Hutto ISD Police Department](#) (8 members and growing)
 - ❑ [Safety Services](#) (4 members)

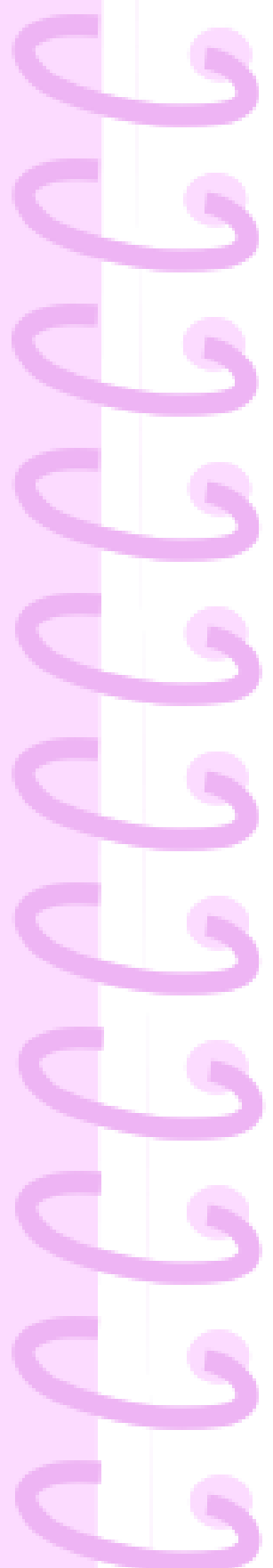


District Student Services Team

Licensed Mental Health Professionals

What?	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A free service provided by Hutto ISD. ✓ On campus case management for students with an identified need. ✓ Care coordination for assistance with referrals to community resources and/or community behavioral health services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Child meets one, or more, of the identified needs. ✓ Please see Student Services Team Referral Process for additional information.

When?	Where?	How?
During school hours	At the child's Hutto ISD campus	School Counselor referral and parent consent received by provider

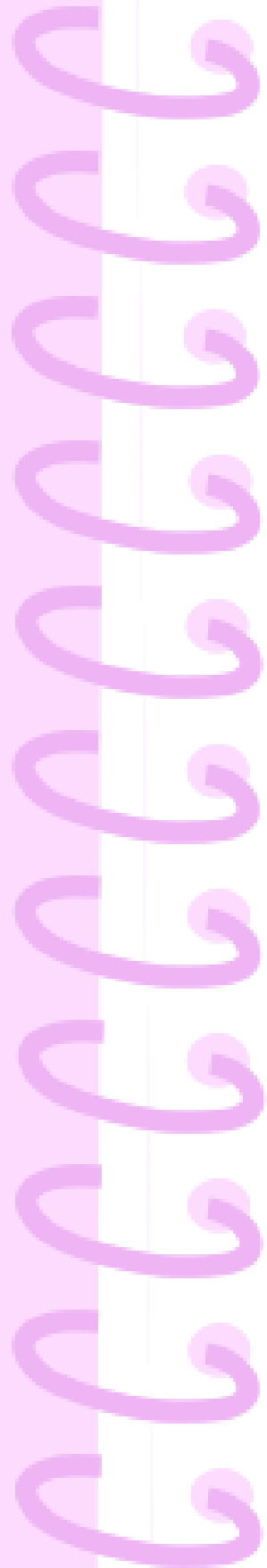


District Mental Health Partnerships

Impact Counseling

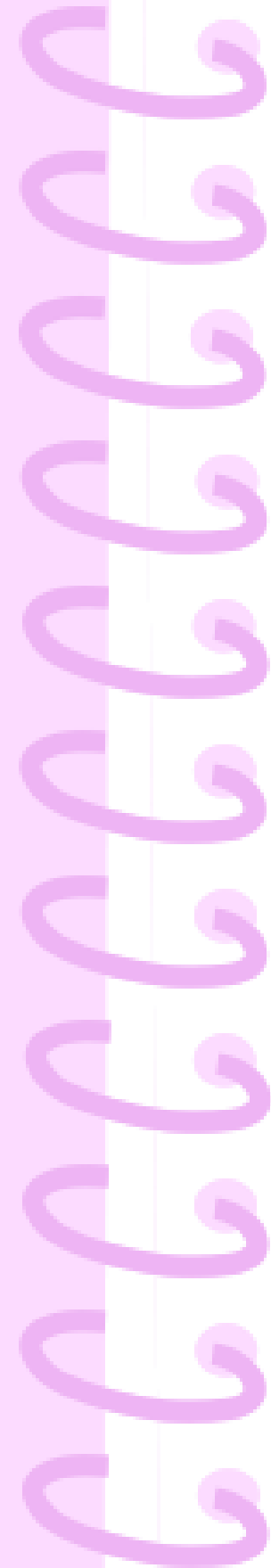
What?	Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A free service provided by Hutto ISD. ✓ Access to therapy with a licensed mental health clinician, on-campus, during the school day. ✓ IC offers additional services, for a fee, to children and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Child is in need of therapy with a licensed mental health provider. ✓ Children/Families with financial limitations, transportation concerns, or other barriers to quality behavioral health services should be considered first for this service.

When?	Where?	How?
During school hours	Hutto High School, 9GC, Farley & Hutto Middle Schools	School Counselor referral and parent consent received by provider

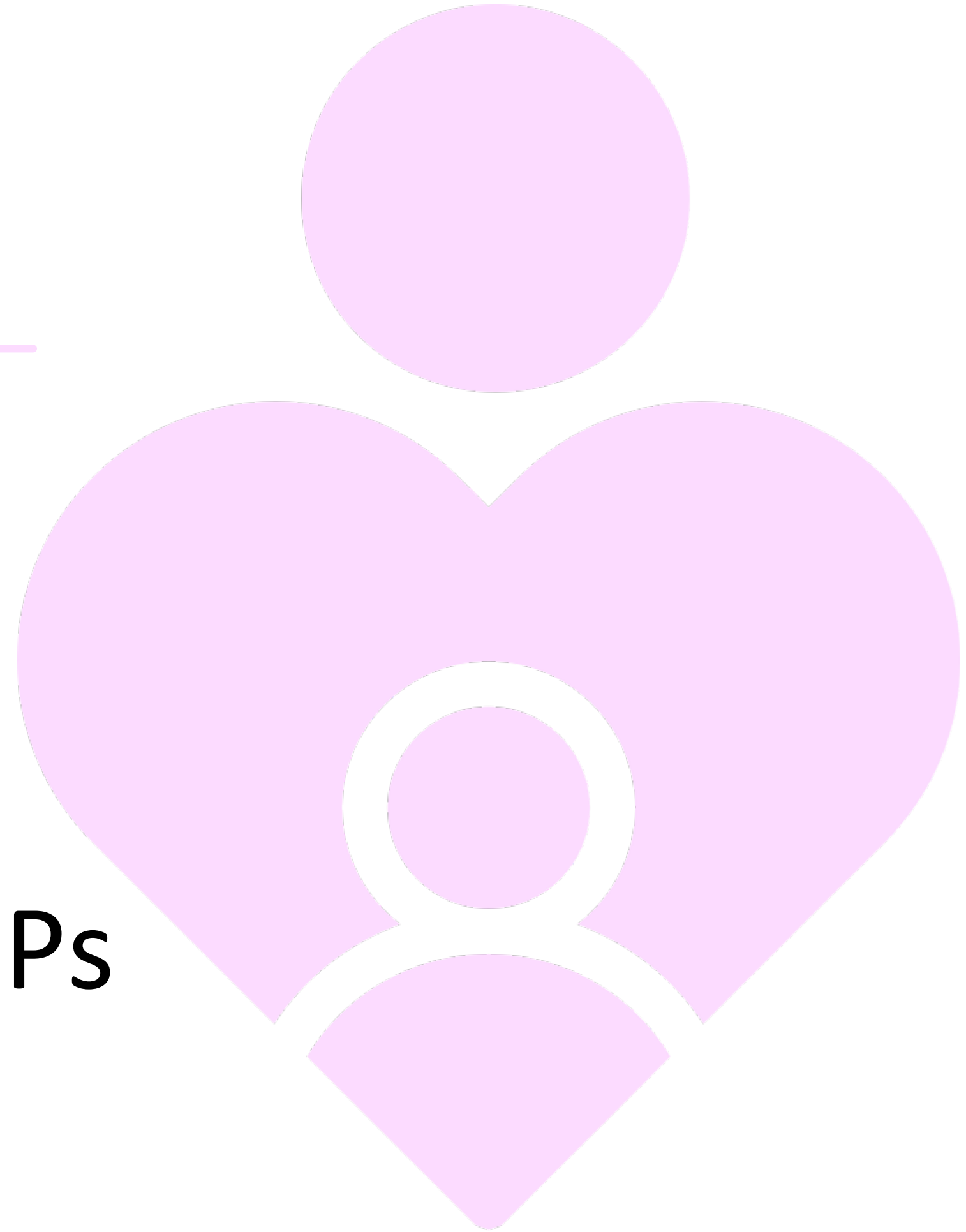


Other Mental Health Partnerships

- TCHAT partnership with Dell Medical School and The University of Texas allowing telemental health services for students in need of a psychological assessment, medication management, brief therapy, and/or care coordination to community behavioral health resources.
- Cenikor Substance Abuse Services for students at DAEP for drug/alcohol related offense.
- Bluebonnet Trails Community Services Case Management for students in the BTCS System whose parents have agreed to collaboration between BTCS and campus staff.
- Bluebonnet Trails Community Services Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT) for students experiencing a behavioral health crisis that requires an immediate assessment and access to community resources.



Mental Health Crisis Protocol: School Counselors & LMHPs

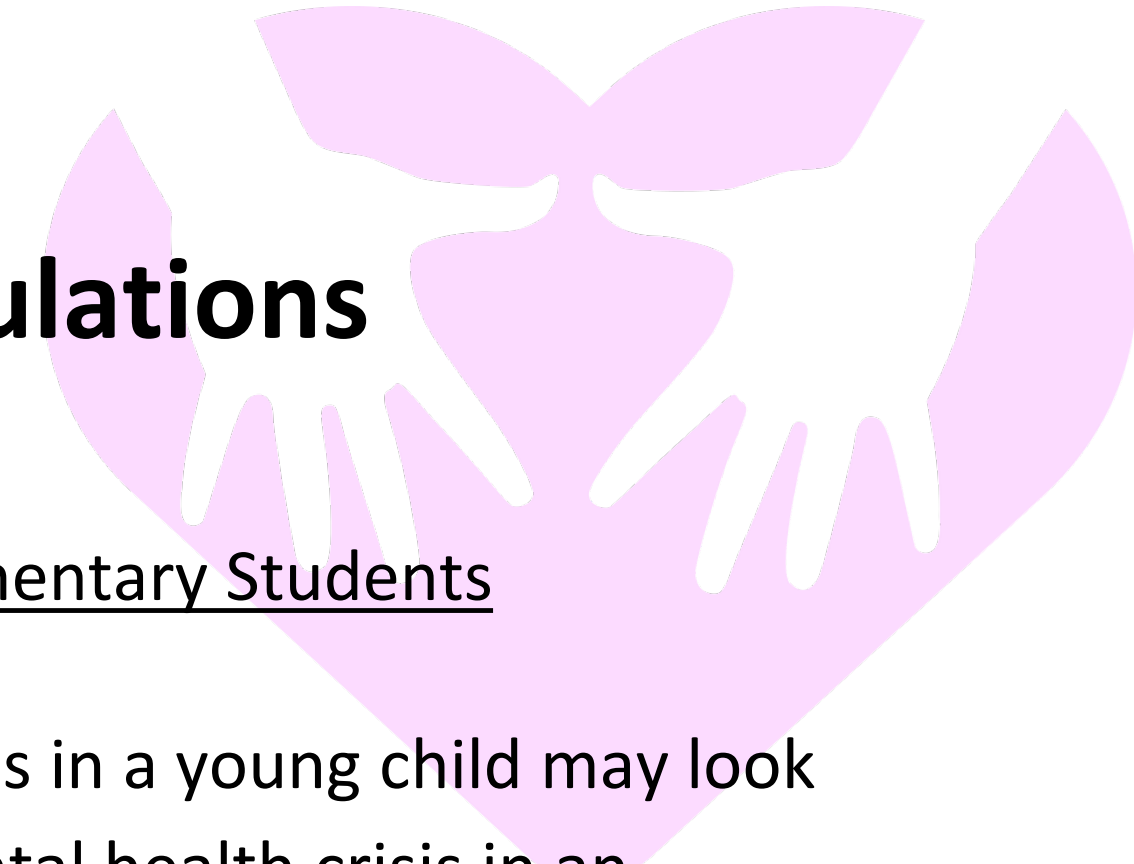


Mental Health Crisis Protocol and Paperwork

1. [Suicide Screening and Intervention Plan](#)
2. [Columbia Screener](#)
3. [Self Care Agreement for younger students](#)
4. [Self Care Agreement for older students](#)
5. [Notification of Emergency Conference](#) (for parents / guardians)
6. [Communication of Need for Urgent Assessment/Intervention](#) (for outside provider)
7. [Suicide Intervention Documentation](#)
8. [Procedure for Returning to School after a Mental Health Related Emergency](#)
9. [Transition Intervention Meeting and Safety Plan](#)
10. [Request of Information](#)
11. Wilco Behavioral Health Resources ([English](#) / [Spanish](#))
12. [Limits of Confidentiality](#)
13. [Possible Accommodations for Students with Mental Health Concerns](#)
14. [MCOT Dispatch Information](#)



Supporting a Mental Health Crisis in Different Populations



Emotionally Disturbed / Special Education Students

A mental health crisis may look different for a student served through the Special Education department. Outcries may happen more frequently or be used as a coping mechanism for the child.

Please collaborate with the Special Education Department to decide when create a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

The BIP should establish how to support the student during a mental health crisis, who is supporting the student during a mental health crisis, and the process/procedure for contacting the parent(s).

Younger / Early Elementary Students

A mental health crisis in a young child may look different than a mental health crisis in an adolescent.

Developmental Age (a reference to how closely a person's physical and mental development parallels with normal developmental milestones) plays a large part in what a mental health crisis looks like in a young child.

Some signs include behavior problems at school, trouble sleeping, nightmares, excessive disobedience, or persistent difficulty separating from parents.

Mental Health Crisis Response & Intervention Plan



- Screen for suicidal ideation
 - Yes or No
 - Do you need to call MCOT?
- Contact parent/guardian and stay with the student until parent/guardian arrives.
 - Is the parent going to find assistance ASAP?
 - If you haven't already, do you need to call MCOT?
 - If the parent is unwilling to get immediate mental health care, contact campus and administration to determine next steps and possible mandated reporting.
- Notify campus administration, attendance, SRO / other counselor(s) / nurse (if needed).
 - If you call MCOT notify your principal and district level administrator immediately.

Mental Health Crisis Response & Intervention Plan



- With student and/or parents
 - Complete and discuss Self-Care Agreement
 - Complete and discuss Notification of Emergency Conference
 - Provide a copy of the Community Resource List
- Finishing Up
 - Notify campus administration, attendance, SRO, other counselor(s), nurse, SpEd Case Manager, key designated individuals
 - Complete the Suicide Intervention Documentation
 - Complete the Mental Health Incident Google Form
- Follow Up
 - Prepare for student's return to campus - who needs to know?
 - Referral to Student Services Team
 - Process for Returning to School After a Mental Health Related Emergency

Procedure for Returning to School after a Mental Health Related Emergency

Hosting a Transition Intervention Meeting and Safety Plan

Depending on the circumstances, the school counselor or mental health professional who completed the initial screening should initiate and host a Transition Intervention Meeting and Safety Plan as soon as possible after the student returns to school. We do not always have notice that the student is coming back, so please do your best to have open communication with the family and prepare for the student's return.

Consent to Release of Sensitive Information and Records

(ROI)



Depending on the circumstances, it may be appropriate to request a ROI be completed to share information between the school and outside provider. The ROI process should be initiated by the school counselor or mental health professional who completed the initial screening. The information should be received and reviewed by a Student Services Team Member. The SST Member will determine the most relevant information to share with the school counselor(s) and administrator(s). The SST Member will hold and destroy the information within 30 days of receiving.

Things to remember in schools:

- Assessment vs. Screening - at school we “screen” not “assess”
 - Columbia Suicide-Severity Rating Scale
- Confidentiality
 - Post the Limits of Confidentiality in a visible area in your office
 - Review the Limits of Confidentiality with staff and students when you introduce yourself at the beginning of the year
 - Children’s Rights (aka Student’s Rights)
 - Your Notes = Educational Records
 - Student Information System: Skyward
- Referrals
 - Recommending mental health services outside of the school
 - Calling MCOT

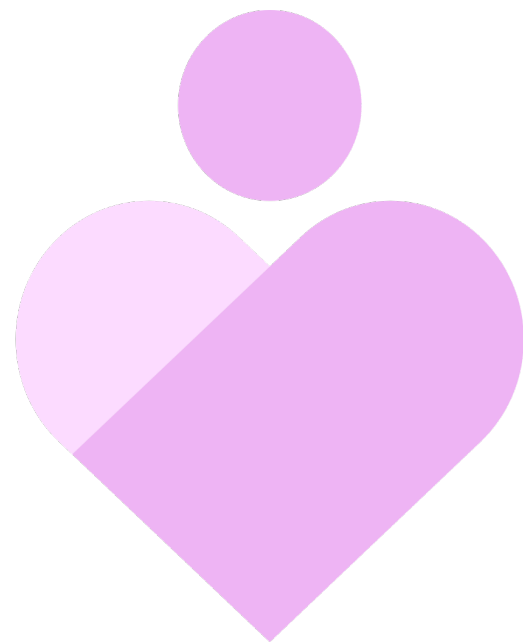


Things to consider...

- What if you are off-campus when a student makes an outcry?
- What if a student makes an outcry at 3:30 PM on Friday afternoon?
- What if you get a call / email about an outcry after work hours?
- What if you get an Anonymous Alert about an outcry?
- What if you get a Gaggle Alert about an outcry?
- What if you need an SRO?
- What if the parent won't consent / seek help?
- What if the student sees the LSSP for minutes on a regular basis?
- What if the student is ED and makes outcries on a regular basis?



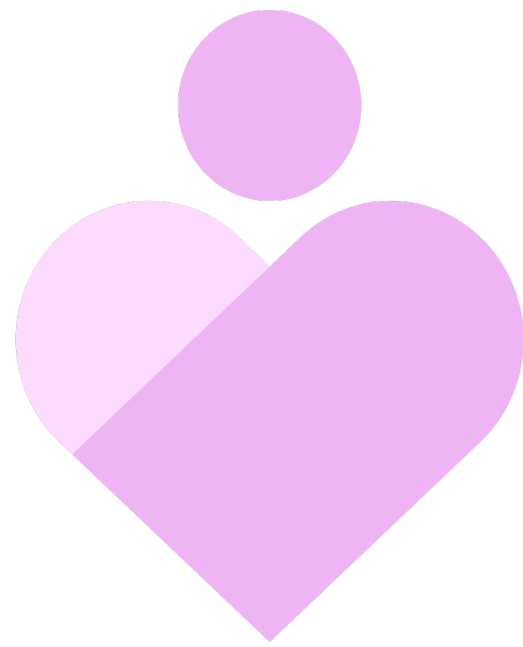
Training for Campus: Staff Focus



School Counselors & LMHPs

- Introduce themselves, referral process, role and responsibilities on campus to campus staff at the beginning of each school year.
 - Review & post a copy of the [Limits of Confidentiality](#) in a highly visible location in their offices, reviewing them with staff early and often.
 - Meet with campus administrators to create a plan for all of the “Things to consider...”
 - Meet with campus administrators and share [When Your Counselor is Off-Campus](#).
 - Have copies of the Mental Health Crisis Paperwork easily accessible - electronically and hard copy.
-

Training for Campus: Staff Focus

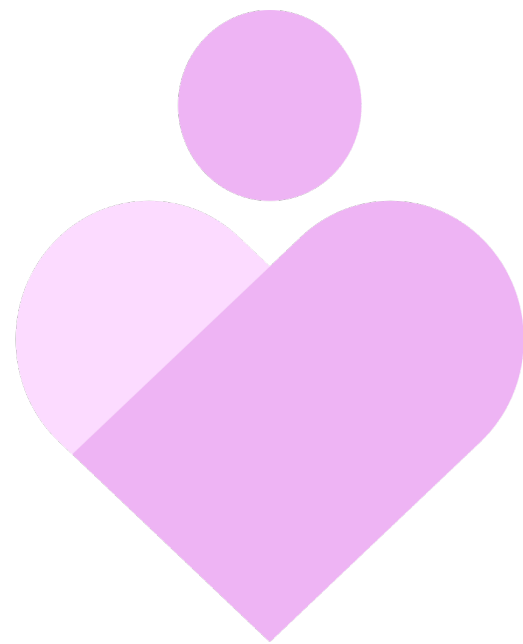


Emotional or Mental Health Crisis Information
for Campus Staff:

If you believe a student is suicidal or is thinking
about suicide and you are on campus:

- Get in touch with the campus counselor immediately.
- Do not leave the student alone or in the care of another student.
- Get another adult to monitor your class while you escort the student to a counselor's office.
- Wait with him/her until you have made contact with a counselor.
- Do not leave the student alone or allow him/her to leave the counseling area without a responsible adult.

Training for Campus: Student Focus



School Counselors & LMHPs

- Review & post a copy of the [Limits of Confidentiality](#) in a highly visible location in their offices, reviewing them with students early and often
- Review procedures for students coming to the School Counselor/LMHP office
- Review procedures for how to get a student in crisis to the School Counselor/LMHP
- Review procedures for how to get a student in crisis help outside of the school day or when a counselor is not available
- Review suicidal ideation, self-harm (NSSI), and other mental health related concerns requiring immediate attention
- Provide everyone a copy of the [Students in Distress Staff Cheat Sheet](#)
- Review mandatory reporting and how to make a CPS report

Webliography

The links provided are mental health websites for reference and provided resources.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Website 1

<https://nami.org/Home>

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is a prominent grassroots organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals affected by mental illness, as well as their families and caregivers. Founded in 1979, NAMI operates at the national, state, and local levels across the United States. NAMI provides education, support, and advocacy to empower individuals living with mental health conditions and their loved ones. Their programs and initiatives aim to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and ensure access to quality mental health care. NAMI offers various resources, including support groups, educational materials, helplines, and community outreach programs.

One of NAMI's key missions is to advocate for policies and legislation that promote mental health parity, expand access to treatment, and improve the overall mental health care system. They work closely with lawmakers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to advance mental health reform efforts.

PsychCentral

Website 2

<https://psychcentral.com/>

Psych Central is a comprehensive online resource dedicated to mental health information, support, and advocacy. Founded in 1995, it serves as a valuable platform for individuals seeking reliable information on mental health topics, including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and more.

The website offers a wide range of resources, including articles, blogs, quizzes, and self-help tools, all curated by mental health professionals. It also provides access to online support communities where individuals can connect with others facing similar challenges, offering a sense of understanding and solidarity.

Psych Central is committed to destigmatizing mental illness and promoting mental health awareness. Through its informative content and supportive community, it strives to empower individuals to take control of their mental health and seek the help they need.

Verywell Mind

Website 3

<https://www.verywellmind.com/>

Verywell Mind is an online resource dedicated to providing credible and accessible information on mental health, psychology, and well-being. Launched in 2016, it offers a wide range of articles, expert insights, and practical advice to help individuals navigate various mental health topics and improve their overall emotional wellness.

The website covers a diverse array of mental health concerns, including anxiety, depression, stress management, relationships, and mindfulness. Content is written and reviewed by a team of experienced professionals, ensuring accuracy and reliability. Verywell Mind aims to empower individuals to make informed decisions about their mental health and well-being.

HelpGuide - Website 5- <https://www.helpguide.org/>

HelpGuide is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing empowering, evidence-based information on mental health, emotional well-being, and relationships. Founded in 1999, HelpGuide offers a wide range of articles, guides, and resources that cover topics such as stress management, depression, anxiety, addiction, and healthy living. Their content is crafted by mental health professionals and is accessible, practical, and supportive, aiming to empower individuals to make positive changes in their lives. Whether someone is seeking information for themselves or a loved one, HelpGuide serves as a trusted source for reliable and compassionate guidance on improving mental and emotional health.

Child Mind Institute

Website 6

<https://childmind.org/>

The Child Mind Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders. Established in 2009, the institute provides comprehensive clinical care, innovative research, and evidence-based resources aimed at improving the diagnosis and treatment of pediatric mental health conditions. With a focus on early intervention and prevention, the Child Mind Institute offers a range of services, including evaluations, therapy, and support programs, while also leading advocacy efforts to promote greater awareness and understanding of childhood mental health issues.



Kids Mental Health Info

Website 7

<https://kidsmentalhealthinfo.com/>

Kids Mental Health Info is an online platform dedicated to providing reliable and accessible information on children's mental health and well-being. Established with the goal of supporting parents, caregivers, educators, and mental health professionals, the website offers a wealth of resources, including articles, guides, toolkits, and videos. Covering a wide range of topics such as anxiety, depression, ADHD, and behavioral disorders, Kids Mental Health Info equips individuals with the knowledge and tools they need to better understand, support, and advocate for children's mental health needs.

National Institute of Mental Health

Website 9

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/>

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is a leading government agency in the United States dedicated to advancing the understanding, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses. Established in 1949, NIMH conducts groundbreaking research on various mental health disorders, including depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, and autism spectrum disorders. Through its research initiatives, NIMH strives to uncover the underlying causes of mental illness, develop innovative treatments, and improve the overall mental health care system. The institute provides educational resources, funds grants for scientific research, and collaborates with other organizations to promote mental health awareness and reduce stigma surrounding mental illness. NIMH plays a crucial role in shaping mental health policies and practices, ultimately working towards the goal of improving the lives of individuals affected by mental health conditions.

GoodTherapy

Website 4

<https://www.goodtherapy.org/>

GoodTherapy is an online directory and resource hub that connects individuals with licensed therapists and mental health professionals. Founded in 2007, GoodTherapy offers a comprehensive database of therapists, counselors, and treatment centers across the United States, allowing users to search based on location, specialty, and treatment approach. Additionally, the website provides educational articles, blog posts, and videos covering various mental health topics, promoting awareness and understanding. With a commitment to ethical and effective therapy practices, GoodTherapy strives to facilitate meaningful connections between clients and therapists, fostering positive outcomes in mental health treatment.

Texas School Mental Health & Behavioral Health

Website 11 <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/mental-health/mental-health-and-behavioral-health>

This website seeks to assist school personnel with resources for supporting student mental health. In Texas, there are numerous collaborative efforts, statutes, services, programs, and strategies available to support the identification of mental health challenges and to address them.

Texas School Mental Health -Website 10 - <https://schoolmentalhealthtx.org/>

The Texas School Mental Health Initiative is a statewide effort aimed at promoting mental health and well-being among students in Texas schools. Through collaboration between schools, mental health professionals, families, and communities, the initiative seeks to enhance access to mental health services, provide training for educators, and create supportive environments for students' emotional and psychological needs. By integrating mental health resources and practices into the educational system, the Texas School Mental Health Initiative aims to foster resilience, address mental health challenges, and support the overall success and development of students across the state.





Thank You

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