

How to Engage Families Around Student Mental Health

Families play an important role in supporting student mental health and well-being. Open, respectful communication between schools and families can help students feel supported both at school and at home.

Why Family Engagement Matters

When schools and families work together, students are more likely to:

- Feel supported and connected
- Build healthy coping skills
- Receive help earlier when concerns arise
- Experience improved emotional and academic outcomes

Family engagement helps create a stronger support system for students.

Tips for Communicating with Families

Conversations about mental health can feel sensitive. Approach families with empathy and respect.

Helpful strategies include:

- Start conversations early, not only during crises
- Focus on the student's strengths as well as concerns
- Use clear and supportive language
- Listen to family perspectives and experiences
- Respect cultural differences and family values
- Avoid blame or judgment
- Share resources and available supports

Wyandot Behavioral Health Network

Website: <https://www.wyandotbhn.org/> | Phone: 913-328-4600

In Crisis? Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) or call 913-788-4200

Creating a Supportive Partnership

Families are more likely to engage when they feel welcomed and respected.

Schools can help by:

- Providing mental health education and resources
- Offering family workshops or information sessions
- Sharing community support services
- Encouraging questions and ongoing communication
- Making information accessible and easy to understand

Addressing Mental Health Stigma

Some families may feel uncomfortable discussing mental health because of stigma, fear, or past experiences.

Helpful approaches include:

- Normalize mental health as part of overall health
- Use nonjudgmental language
- Emphasize support and well-being
- Focus on helping students succeed and feel safe

When Additional Support May Be Needed

Encourage families to seek additional help if a student is:

- Struggling emotionally for an extended period of time
- Showing major changes in behavior or mood
- Having difficulty functioning at school or home
- Talking about self-harm or hopelessness

School counselors, mental health providers, and community resources can help support students and families.

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Remember

Strong partnerships between schools and families help create supportive environments where students can learn, grow, and thrive.