

Recognizing Mental Health Challenges in the Classroom

Students may experience mental health challenges that affect their learning, behavior, relationships, and overall well-being. Educators and school staff are often in a position to notice early warning signs and help connect students to support.

Common Signs to Watch For

Mental health challenges can look different for every student. Some signs may include:

- Sudden changes in mood or behavior
- Difficulty concentrating or completing work
- Frequent absences or tardiness
- Withdrawal from friends or classroom activities
- Increased irritability, anger, or emotional outbursts
- Excessive worry or anxiety
- Changes in sleep or energy levels
- Declining academic performance
- Talking negatively about themselves
- Physical complaints such as headaches or stomachaches
- Signs of hopelessness or distress

These signs do not always mean a student has a mental health condition, but they may indicate a need for additional support.

How Educators Can Help

Supportive relationships can make a meaningful difference for students.

Helpful strategies include:

- Create a safe and welcoming classroom environment
- Check in with students privately and respectfully

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

- Listen without judgment
- Encourage healthy coping skills
- Maintain consistent routines and expectations
- Offer flexibility when appropriate
- Connect students with school counselors or support staff
- Communicate concerns through proper school channels

Small moments of support and understanding can help students feel seen and valued.

Supporting Students Without Stigma

The way adults talk about mental health matters.

Helpful approaches include:

- Use respectful and supportive language
- Avoid labeling or shaming students
- Normalize asking for help
- Recognize that mental health is part of overall health
- Focus on support rather than punishment when possible

When Immediate Help May Be Needed

Seek immediate support if a student:

- Talks about self-harm or suicide
- Appears unable to stay safe
- Shows signs of severe emotional distress
- Threatens harm to themselves or others

Follow school safety procedures and contact emergency support services if needed.

Remember

Educators are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions. Recognizing concerns early and connecting students to support can help improve student well-being and success.

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