

Teaching Resilient Students and Raising Healthy Teens

Mental health, substance use and suicide prevention resources for educators and parents

This newsletter provides a list of curated resources and activities to support social emotional development and healthy coping, as well as crisis support for educators, students and parents.

FOR EDUCATORS

FEATURED RESOURCE

Coping in hard times: Fact Sheet for School Staff, Teachers, Counselors, Administration and Support Staff

Economic difficulties and prolonged stress can affect an individual's sense of safety, ability to be calm, self-efficacy, connectedness and hope. This fact sheet, published by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, provides specific ways to help staff, students and their families. [Download fact sheet here.](#)

From the fact sheet:

Students may have strong feelings about the uncertainty in their lives. Let students know that when they start to feel anxious, angry, or sad, they can distract themselves by doing something relaxing or fun, focus on something that motivates them, or take some action that might help them or someone else.

Example of helping a student:

When Jessica's parents both lost their jobs, she feared that her family would lose their house. She thought about this constantly, had trouble sleeping, and was often upset. She couldn't focus on her schoolwork and was arguing more with her friends.

When Jessica's teacher saw a change in her behavior and schoolwork, she asked to talk with Jessica privately. When Jessica shared what was happening at home, her teacher encouraged Jessica to tell her when she was feeling irritable at school or having trouble focusing. The teacher also suggested that Jessica meet with the school social worker for additional support. Two weeks later, when her teacher checked in with Jessica again, she was feeling better as the social worker taught her some ways to cope and also connected her family to some community resources to get their needs met. Although Jessica was still concerned about her family's situation, she was sleeping better, focusing more on her schoolwork and feeling safer.

*"I felt safe when I was helped and supported and when I was given counseling."
"I felt safe when my teacher and my friends heard me and understood me."*

Coping in Hard Times: Fact Sheet for School Staff Teachers, Counselors, Administration, Support Staff
The National Child Traumatic Stress Network www.NCTSN.org

MINI LESSON PLAN OF THE MONTH: MENTAL HEALTH

In classroom • Distance learning • Grades 6-12
URL: www.DirectingChangeCA.org/schools/

This month's featured lesson plan is "Mental Health." Students will learn about mental health and how it affects our daily lives, and discuss healthy and unhealthy coping mechanisms. The lesson plan includes slides and videos to introduce the topic, discussion questions and three activities to choose from. All lesson plans can be downloaded for free and include short educational videos.

FEATURED STUDENT-PRODUCED FILM AND MINI DISCUSSION

- The Beauty of Mental Health (60-second film): <https://vimeo.com/394006785>
- Instinct (60-second film): <https://vimeo.com/209948795>

ASK: Research shows that half of all mental illnesses start by age 14 and three-quarters start by age 24. But, an average of 6 to 8 years go by after the symptoms of mental illness begin before young people get help. Why do you think that is?

BUILDING A NETWORK OF SAFETY FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES WEBINAR SERIES



April 27, 2021 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Social and Emotional Learning – A Valuable Tool in Suicide Prevention

Julia Agostinelli, California Department of Education and
Jana Sczersputowski, Directing Change Program

Learn to improve your school's suicide prevention practices, programs and resources to help school staff recognize and support students who may be contemplating suicide.

[Register](#)

FOR STUDENTS

MONTHLY STUDENT CONTEST:

In classroom • Distance learning • Grades 6-12 (ages 12-24)
URL: www.DirectingChangeCA.org

Students in grades 6-12 can submit art, narrative and film projects that explore mental health, hope, resilience and change and creatively incorporate a lime green ribbon, as lime green is the color that represents mental health. **The deadline to submit to "Hope for Change" is April 30, 2021.**

Hope for Change prompts:

- Look back on who you were a year ago and the person you are today. How do these two versions of yourself compare?
- As a result of adversity or difficult times you experienced over the past year, how have you changed?
- Imagine giving advice to your past self about a challenging situation you went through. What would you say to yourself?
- Share a positive change you have made in your life and how you worked toward that goal.
- Explore the healthy ways that you have used to cope with change during the past year.



#HopeforChange

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

April 22nd 2021 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

End the Silence – Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Summit

Free and virtual event open to high school youth, caring adults and community leaders exploring shifting the conversation around youth mental health and suicide.

[Register](#)

May 4-6, 2021 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Mind Out Loud

Teens from all over California are invited to gather virtually to discuss mental health, hear from engaging and inspiring guest speakers, learn about suicide prevention, and increase their mental health awareness while reducing the stigma around mental health.

[Register](#)

TO SHARE WITH PARENTS

RAISING HEALTHY TEENS-PARENT RESOURCE GUIDE

Raising teens can be a challenge. **This Parent Resource Guide** offers facts, tips and conversation starters for parents to have conversations about substance use with their teens. Additional resources can be found on the website www.RaisingHealthyTeens.org, including family agreements, tip sheets and activities to engage young people.

WHAT TEENS NEED TO SUCCEED

Researchers from the Search Institute have identified a series of developmental assets that positively influence the healthy development of young people. These include learning life skills, planning family adventures, empowering youth with planning and decision-making, and engaging teens in school and community activities. More information and practical tips to incorporate these into your life and family can be found on the website www.RaisingHealthyTeens.org.



The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-8255 (24/7)

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll-free, confidential suicide prevention hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

Teen Line:

1-800-852-8336 (6-10 p.m.)

Text "TEEN" to 839263 (6-9 p.m.)

A confidential hotline for teenagers, staffed by trained teens.

Directing Change launched in 2012 and is a suicide prevention and mental health promotion program that draws on developmental and educational theory in its approach. By following the program's submission guidelines to create short (30- and 60-second) films or art projects, students learn about suicide prevention, mental health and other social justice and critical health topics; discuss and apply that knowledge in peer groups; and communicate positive, youth-focused, action-oriented messages to peers and adults in their communities. The program is free to schools and supported by the California Department of Education.

Directing Change is part of statewide efforts to prevent suicide, reduce stigma and discrimination related to mental illness, and to promote the mental health and wellness of students. These initiatives are funded by counties through the Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63) and administered by the California Mental Health Services Authority (CaMHSA), an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. For more information visit: www.DirectingChangeCA.org