Back-to-School But Not Back to Normal:
Trauma-Informed Approaches to Student Mental Health During COVID-19

Presented by
PresenceLearning & iOpening Enterprises
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Mental Health During Uncertain Times

- Experiences related to the pandemic have led to increases in anxiety and depression reports among students and a suspected underreporting of child abuse.
- Students in poverty and students of color have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and are at risk of increased academic challenges related to technology and healthcare access.
- Increased investment by schools in social-emotional and trauma-informed programming underscores school leadership’s recognition of student and staff need for mental health support.

Retrieved from:
https://www.edutopia.org/article/covid-19s-impact-students-academic-and-mental-well-being
Finding Your Power with Wellness

Challenge

- Students are disoriented due to transitions to virtual platforms, varying schedules, and directives.
- Students are worried about family members health and uncertainty about whether schools are safe and will stay open.

Opportunities

- With the language to share the impact of current stressors, students can prepare for the ongoing changes that occur.
- Learning coping skills for both in-person and virtual challenges such as potential social isolation or having new routines can support emotional regulation.
Finding Your Power with Wellness

Challenge

- Educators have new protocols to learn while managing their same responsibilities from prior to the pandemic.
- Staff have concerns about family members and others in their life who may become sick due to their work at school, or losses that have impacted their family.

Opportunities

- Integrate new protocols with trauma-informed procedures that support staff and students to manage the stressors related to work.
- Use social-emotional, whole-school strategies to create spaces in which both staff and students can acknowledge the current challenges while promoting ongoing support.
Finding Your Power with Justice

**Challenge**
- The ability to create an inclusive classroom is heightened as a result of a refocus on social and racial justice.
- Understanding how to manage cyberbullying and other forms of bullying related to membership in a group which has historically experienced oppression is difficult.

**Opportunities**
- Opportunities for students to engage in radical healing can begin to heal wounds related to discrimination.
- Discovering language to understand how stress is connected to important parts of students' identity can support strategies for combating bullying.
Finding Your Power with Justice

**Challenge**

- Staff are unsure of how to navigate the various perspectives and life experiences of students from different backgrounds.
- Experiencing or witnessing the stress and trauma of discrimination or injustice can compound the feelings of stress.

**Opportunities**

- Engaging culturally-responsive teaching practices can create more inclusive classrooms and schools.
- Providing opportunities for students to honor and recognize their identity can support increased academic engagement.
Becoming Whole Through Finding Your Power During Uncertain Times

**Challenge**
- Integrate a whole-school approach that can manage multiple challenges for students and staff while reflecting the values of the community.

**Opportunities**
- Employ a holistic approach with targeted interventions for students and sustainable supports for staff to maximize their potential despite challenges.
Next Steps for Your Students

Engage in a student wellness program to support managing stressors related to adjusting to the pandemic and beyond.

- **NEW: Finding Your Power in Uncertain Times**
  - Live, online small group therapy
  - Trauma-informed, cognitive-behavioral, mindfulness-based, and culturally-responsive tools that will help students manage unhealthy responses to current events
  - Techniques to navigate pervasive anxiety, depressed mood, and interpersonal functioning challenges
  - Skills to better self-understanding through bolstering resilience-based strategies and ability to find meaning and growth during difficult life experiences
Next Steps for School Leaders

- Provide professional development for staff to develop the skills to continue managing the adjustments related to the pandemic.
- Support educators’ ability to understand trauma and partner with mental health professionals to support healing.
- Develop culturally-responsive practices to effectively educate the whole child.
Resources to Support Your Students & Staff

- Behavior and Mental Health Groups for Students
- Integrating Teletherapy Into Your Service Delivery Model eBook
- Professional Development for Staff Members
- Webinar on promoting staff wellness and resiliency using a trauma-informed and culturally-responsive approach

**Wednesday October 21 at 11am PT/2pm ET**