Youth Mental Health
Lessons from MHA Screening (www.mhascreening.org)

Theresa Nguyen
Chief Program Officer
The Center for Safe Schools strives to:

provide a national forum and platform by which school district leaders/employees, students, parents, and communities can **educate, engage and be empowered** to ensure that schools are a safe place to learn and grow.

promote and develop collaborative relationships with and between state school boards associations, communities, educators, law enforcement, emergency responders, and other entities concerned with school safety.

[https://www.nsba4safeschools.org/home](https://www.nsba4safeschools.org/home)
NSBA has already created several resources aligned to the issues of school safety that the Center for Safe Schools will continue to build upon.
Mental Health America

A Century of Advocacy

“I must fight in the open.”

- To move mental health care from poor houses and prisons to health care facilities;
- To screen children for mental health conditions;
- To move dollars from custodial institutions to community-based programs;
- To make mental health a part of overall health.

-- 1913 Policy Agenda, National Committee for Mental Hygiene


B4Stage4 Mental Health America
What is Mental Health?
Your Brain as a Table

• What is piled on?
• How much is piled on?
• What are your legs – the things in life that hold you up?
Past Experiences

Biology

Environment
Functions of the Brain

- To Regulate - Sleep
- To Perceive - Senses
- To Feel – Threats (fear), Rewards (pleasure)
- To Think – Cognition
- To Relate – Social Processes

Twin Study of Schizophrenia
Trauma and Mental Illness

- Trauma is a Stress that is a Risk Factor
  - Stress Diathesis Model
- Resiliency and Stress Tolerance is a spectrum.
- Long term sustained stress is toxic.
- Attachment problems have lifelong effects.
  - Emotional regulation
  - Perceptions and Belief Systems
- Trauma, Toxic Stress, and Intergenerational Stress/Trauma are correlated with Mental Illness

A cup analogy demonstrating under the same amount of stressors, person 2 is more vulnerable than person 1, because of his/her predisposition.
Mental Illnesses Start Early

50 PERCENT of Americans will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health condition sometime in their life, and half of those people will develop conditions by the age of 14.
We’re Trapped in Stage 4 Thinking

Mental Health America (MHA) promotes mental health as a critical part of overall wellness, including prevention services for all; early identification and intervention for those at risk; integrated care, services, and supports for those who need them; with recovery as the goal.
What happens when students first start wondering about their mental health problems?
They Google....

Am I stressed or depressed

depression test

I want to die
MHA Screening (www.mhascreening.org): Nearly 5 Million Completed Screens

- Depression (PHQ-9)
- Anxiety (GAD-7)
- Bipolar (MDQ)
- PTSD (PC-PTSD)
- Youth Screen (PSC-YR)
- Parent Screen (PSC)
- Alcohol and Substance Use Screen (CAGE-AID)
- Psychosis Screen (Ultra-High Risk) (PQ-B)
- Eating Disorders
Mental Health Landscape: MHA Screening Uncovers Opportunities in Early Identification and Intervention

• **5.2 million** screeners since 2014;
  - 74% are female;
  - 84% under the age of 35, 12% are 35-54, and 100,000+ are 55+;

• Screeners screen more often for depression (45%) than any other condition; psychosis is 10% at over 125k annually

• 36% identify as a racial/ethnic minority;

• 73% of screeners screen positive, but 65% of those have never been diagnosed before;

• MHA results are consistent with the 2020 US Census Bureau Pulse Survey.
Trauma and Youth Screen

**Feel That You Are Bad**
- NEVER: 20.66% No Trauma, 9.09% Trauma
- SOMETIMES: 34.20% No Trauma, 25.49% Trauma
- OFTEN: 65.42% No Trauma, 45.14% Trauma

**I Feel Hopeless**
- NEVER: 15.75% No Trauma, 6.77% Trauma
- SOMETIMES: 35.43% No Trauma, 28.88% Trauma
- OFTEN: 64.35% No Trauma, 48.82% Trauma

**School Grades Dropping**
- NEVER: 38.95% No Trauma, 38.19% Trauma
- SOMETIMES: 41.64% No Trauma, 36.12% Trauma
- OFTEN: 22.24% No Trauma, 22.86% Trauma

**Absent from School**
- NEVER: 55.56% No Trauma, 37.37% Trauma
- SOMETIMES: 37.37% No Trauma, 30.79% Trauma
- OFTEN: 25.27% No Trauma, 13.65% Trauma
Young People Are Disproportionately Experiencing Depression and Anxiety

Percent Moderate to Severe By Age Group
Youth Suicide and Self Harm

Age and Self Harm

48.77% of screeners age 11-17 report significant thoughts of suicide or self-harm
Who wants immediate support through phone?

- 23% of respondents
- 15%
- 13%
- 13%
- 12%
- 11%
- 10%

[Bar chart showing percentage of different demographic groups who want immediate support through phone]
Who is most and least likely to have past/current support?

Asian or Pacific Islander: 84%
Black or African American (non-Hispanic): 75%
Hispanic or Latino: 72%
More than one of the above: 66%
Native American or American Indian: 59%
Other: 72%
White (non-Hispanic): 59%
Blank: 62%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%

Yes No

Mental Health America
B4Stage4
Youth Anxiety Screeners: The Main Things Contributing to Mental Health Problems Right Now? Loneliness/Isolation #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness/Isolation</td>
<td>6936</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Trauma</td>
<td>4307</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Probs.</td>
<td>3545</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events</td>
<td>3058</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief</td>
<td>2339</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>2125</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Probs.</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=9157 scoring moderate to severe, June 2020, “Choose up to 3”
Psychosis Screening: Screeners at Risk and Severity Up in May-June 2020
GET MENTAL HEALTH DEPRESSED SOMEONE KNOW WANT NEED EMAIL TALK SEE TELL DIAGNOSIS HELP DEPRESSION
### Screening to Supports Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I'm ashamed of the way I am</th>
<th>I want to die</th>
<th>I have nothing to be depressed about</th>
<th>I don't feel like I belong anywhere</th>
<th>How do I ask my friends and family for help?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where can I find people like me?</td>
<td>I can't get out of bed</td>
<td>I feel guilty about being depressed?</td>
<td>Is this condition forever? Will I always feel this way?</td>
<td>Nothing is helping my depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am I just sad or depressed?</td>
<td>What is depression? (The Scientific Definition)</td>
<td>Who can I talk to about my depression?</td>
<td>I'm really angry at the world</td>
<td>I'm afraid to tell anyone I feel depressed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top Pages

- Am I just sad or depressed?
- I see ghosts or shadows
- I want to die
- I can’t stop thinking about bad things that could happen
- Do I need to go to the hospital?
- I’m afraid I’m going to kill myself
- What’s the difference between bipolar and being moody
- My depression won’t go away
Policy Considerations

• Make a commitment to equality. What does that look like?
• Representation and Communication
• In school considerations
• Mental health in schools means more counselors and mental health professionals that are hired by schools (more school funding)
• Integration and maintaining students in mainstream classrooms so they don’t fall behind
• School absenteeism due to hospitalization
• No restraints in schools
• School to Prison Pipeline and use of punishment
For More Resources

• Parent and Child Resources
  https://www.mhanational.org/back-school

• Free mental health screens
  https://screening.mhanational.org

• Mental Health Education
  https://www.mhanational.org/mental-health-month
Contact Us

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