

Engaging Students in Building Emotional Self-Awareness Webinar Summary and Resources March 28, 2023

Presented by: National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, Mental Health America and Child Trends

Moderator: Denise Hildreth, Mental Health Collaborative

Panelists:

- Dr. Art McCoy, Saint Louis University Superintendent-in-Residence
- Dai'ra Deshields, Teacher in Baltimore County Public Schools (Maryland)
- Josie McDonnell, Social-Emotional Learning Supervisor in Omaha Public Schools (Nebraska)
- Kristina Floyd, National Center for School Mental Health

Key Takeaways

- **Before students can focus on learning, they need to believe that they are safe and loved.** Mental health literacy and social-emotional skills give them tools to recognize and communicate those needs and feelings.
- **All adults in a school community - not just mental health professionals - are crucial in promoting a culture of support for students.** Youth are more likely to seek out and open up to staff they personally trust, not necessarily the ones they're "expected" to talk with. This goes beyond classroom teachers, too; students often connect with staff like bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, and front office staff.
- **Most school staff are already implementing the foundation for wellness among their students simply by showing up and caring about them.** It's important to recognize and name the specific ways staff are doing this so they know what strategies work and are able to do more of those strategies.
- **When it comes to prioritizing student mental health, school and district decision-makers have to work together.** Including community mental health in your code of conduct, training teachers, and prioritizing self-care and self-development are all ways to create a stronger support system for youth.
- **To take care of student mental health, we also have to take care of teacher and staff mental health.** Wellness needs a community of care; schools and districts need to be committed to everyone feeling well.
- **Social-emotional learning strategies and skills aren't behavior intervention.** Rather, they are upfront, proactive tools to help students engage with their world in a healthy way.

Resources Shared During the Webinar

Dr. McCoy's Presentations:

<https://severingthegap.com/publications>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IPfrAleKbVRwJd2q61D2PKE1KPPFDpug/view>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Xrz6lo3OIN8z85ATQbHIUXeNYP20RaBK/view?usp=share_link

SES & Brain Development

<https://profiles.wustl.edu/en/publications/early-childhood-socioeconomic-status-and-cognitive-and-adaptive-o>

CASEL's 3 Signature Practices

<https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/sites/2/2020/10/Summary-The-SEL-3-Signature-Practices.pdf>

TeacherWISE

<https://www.teacherwise.org/>

National Association of Chronic Disease Directors

<https://chronicdisease.org/page/schoolhealth/>

Mental Health America

<https://mhanational.org/>

Child Trends

<https://www.childtrends.org/>