



Rising Risk: K-6 Mental Health

K-6 Mental Health, Suicide Response and SEL

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May 2022



**SUPPORT
AFTER
VIOLENCE**

AP AP News

19 children, 2 adults killed in
Texas school rampage



**University of Maryland, National Center for School Mental Health—
Support After Violence Resources:**

<https://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/media/SOM/Microsites/NCSMH/Documents/Resources/Supporting-After-Violence.pdf>

Learning for Justice—

Letter to Teachers Following a School Shooting:

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/a-love-letter-to-teachers-after-yet-another-school-shooting>

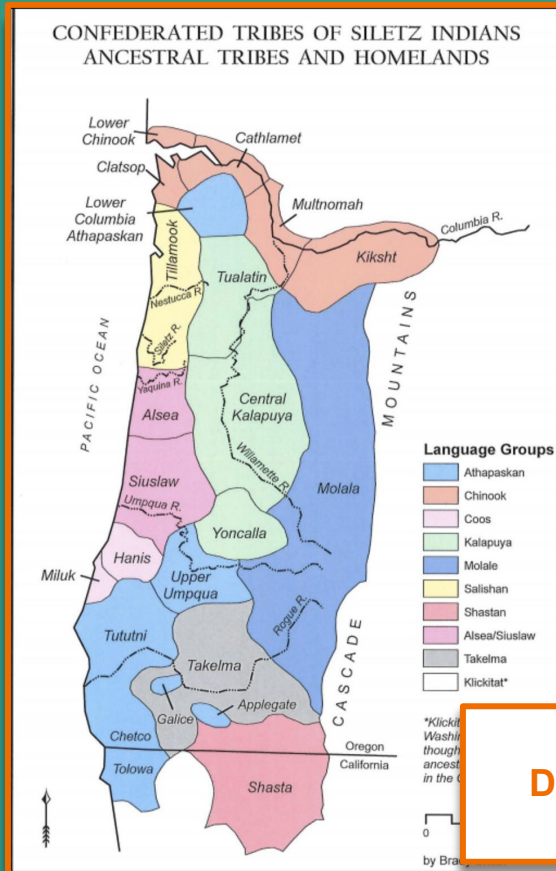
National Center for Traumatic Stress Network Resources:

<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/terrorism-and-violence/school-shooting-resources>

Land Acknowledgment

Oregon State University - Cascades

occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Northern Paiute, the Wasco, and the Warm Springs tribes, which now comprise The Confederated Tribes Siletz peoples.



Dr. Lucy Purgason



Western Washington University

Centralia School District

occupy the the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Coast Salish Peoples specifically the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Tribe, the Nisqually Tribe and the Sammamish peoples.



Dr. Diana Gruman
Regina Brown

Learning Objectives:

After viewing this webinar you will be able to:

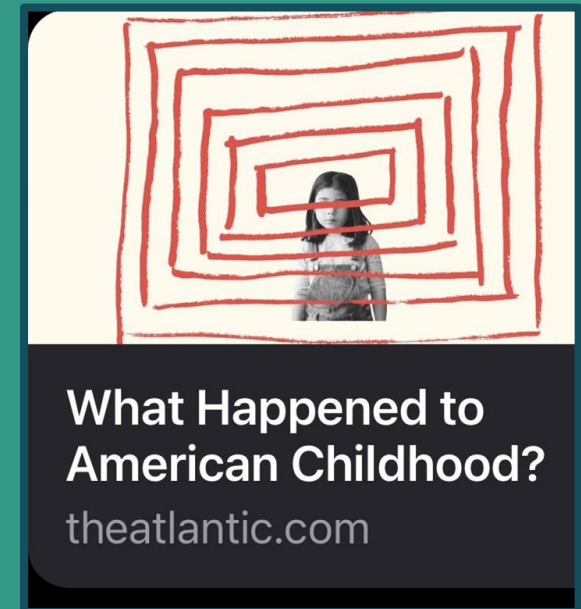


1. Discuss national research on elementary age mental health and state-wide survey findings on K-6 suicidal ideation, K-6 Gender & LGBTQIA+ experiences
1. Share evidence-based, developmentally appropriate suicide reduction resources
1. Access and implement tools and strategies for capturing student voice and creating whole child interventions to meet student needs
2. Align elementary programs with the ASCA Student Standards



Objective 1: Discuss national research on elementary age mental health and state-wide survey findings on K-6 suicidal ideation, K-6 Gender & LGBTQIA+ experiences

- Children who are bullied experience higher rates of depression, anxiety, and substance use (Earnshaw et al., 2017; Moore et al. 2017)
- Rate of suicide for people ages 10 to 24 increased nearly 60% between 2007- 2018 (CDC; Curtin, 2020).
 - From 2019 to 2020, deaths by suicide increased more than 40% for Hispanic girls and women, 30% for Black girls and women, 23% for Black boys and men, and 20% for Hispanic boys and men (Curtin et al., 2021)
- 45% of LGBTQ youth (13-24) in 2022 seriously considered attempting suicide and rates of attempts were generally higher for LGBTQ youth of color (Trevor Project, 2022)
- 60% of LGBTQ youth who wanted mental health care in the past year were unable to get it (Trevor Project, 2022)





Unique Challenges in Addressing Elementary Student MH Needs

- Youth surveys on health/safety are often designed for or distributed to kids sixth grade and above
- National prevalence data often aggregates ages 5-18
- Elementary students have less agency to voice their concerns and access support services
- Young students face societal barriers to mental health support (adult disbelief, denial, lack of knowledge)
- Mental health access outside of the school setting is limited **and....**
- Elementary school counselors face numerous professional barriers to providing services (caseloads, non-counselor duties)

"Are you willing to use the power you have
in the service of what you say you believe?"

- AUDRE LORDE

WA STATE SURVEY RESULTS

K-6 School Counselor Survey | Preliminary Findings

- **329** K-6 SCHOOL COUNSELORS
- **REPRESENTING 148,901 STUDENTS**
- **25.03% OF TOTAL K-6 STUDENTS IN WA STATE**
- **SURVEY RESPONDENTS' | STUDENT RATIO**
1 school counselor / per 445.41 students

<https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X221086730>

LINK

Check for updates

Special Issue: Evidence-Based School Counseling Conference (2021) Proceedings April 2022

Ecosystemic Advocacy for Elementary Mental Health

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SAGE

Regina N. Brown¹, Diana H. Gruman², and Lucy L. Purgason³

Abstract

Systemic inequity in education compels school counselors to widen their scope of advocacy beyond their local school environment. Fortunately, the tools of evidence-based, data-driven school counseling can be scaled up to influence change in larger systems. We present an advocacy project undertaken by an elementary school counselor who was alarmed by a significant increase in children's mental health concerns. She initiated a state-wide survey of school counselors that revealed a dire need for mental health support at the elementary level. Using an ecological framework, we report on the data-driven advocacy actions she pursued to raise awareness of the serious concerns of young students across her state.

Keywords

advocacy, evidence-based counseling, mental health, elementary school, suicide

The school counselor's role in addressing student mental health concerns gained emphasis in the past decade due in part to a national rise in mental health rates for children and youth in the United States (Bitsko et al., 2018; Carlson & Kees, 2013; Curtin, 2020; DeKruyf et al., 2013; Mann et al., 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic and the intersecting influence of institutional and systemic racism have further raised the level of concern regarding mental health and well-being (Araújo et al., 2021; Marques de Miranda et al., 2020; O'Sullivan et al., 2021; Savitz-Romer et al., 2021). In a review of published articles on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth, for example, researchers reported increases in anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic symptoms in children across all developmental phases, resulting in an increased need for mental health services and highlighting the role of schools in service provision (Araújo et al., 2021).

School counselors are trained in their graduate programs to recognize and address social/emotional and mental health concerns in their student populations. Through evidence-based school counseling, they gather student needs data in their school environment, investigate contextual factors, and identify and apply research-supported interventions at the appropriate prevention or intervention level (Dimmitt et al., 2007; Goodman-Scott et al., 2019; Zyromski et al., 2021). Through a cycle of continuous evaluation, school counselors can determine the impact of mental health interventions and further refine their approaches to meet the evolving and unique needs in their school ecologies (Dimmitt et al., 2007; McMahon et al., 2014).

In the latest iteration of evidence-based school counseling, school counseling scholars advise that mental health and social/emotional needs require the same data-driven processes that

school counselors have in place to meet students' academic needs (Zyromski et al., 2021). As with other student challenges, when addressing student mental health, school counselors are encouraged to recognize the identities of students who are disproportionately affected and explore the conditions that foster inequity in access to school mental health services (Dimmitt & Zyromski, 2020; Zyromski et al., 2021). When encountering such inequities, school counselors can then apply data-driven approaches to advocate for underrepresented students (Dimmitt, 2018; Zyromski & Mariani, 2016). In this way, data becomes an engine for social justice advocacy and systemic change, allowing a school counselor to give voice to the needs of students whose concerns are overlooked and discounted (Abebe & Biswas, 2021; Ratts & Greenleaf, 2018).

Advocacy is a vital component of comprehensive school counseling programs and a key theme identified in the first and subsequent editions of the ASCA National Model (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2003, 2019). Historically, school counselor advocacy efforts were directed at the school-level sphere of influence, answering the call to promote change within their buildings to ensure greater equity for students (Trusty & Brown, 2005). Over the past 2 decades, the

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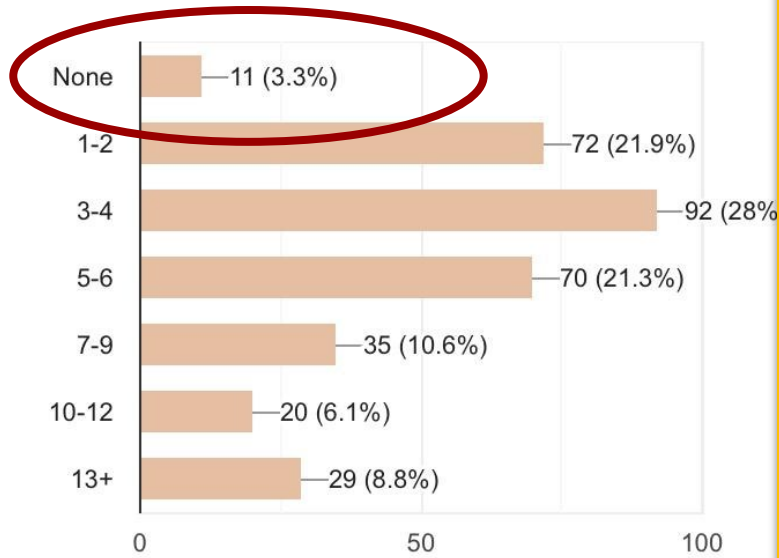
Corresponding Author:

Diana H. Gruman, Department of Psychology, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, USA.
Email: grumand@wwu.edu

Results: Suicidal Ideation

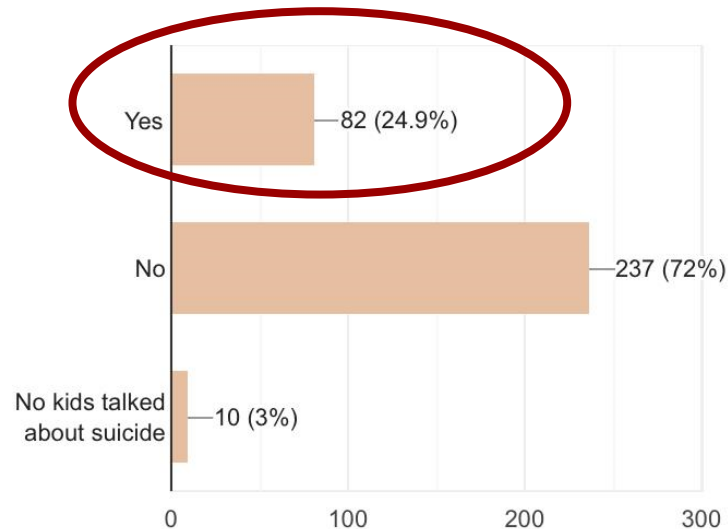
1. This school year, how many students have talked with you about suicide or “not wanting to be here anymore”?

329 responses



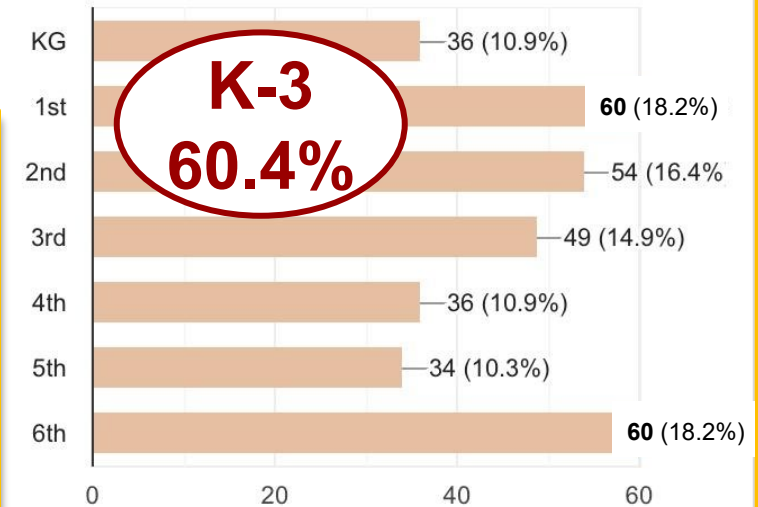
2. Of the elementary students talking about suicide, did any of them admit to attempting suicide at any time in their young life?

329 responses



3. Of the elementary students talking about suicide, what is the YOUNGEST grade of student experiencing suicidal thoughts this year?

329 responses

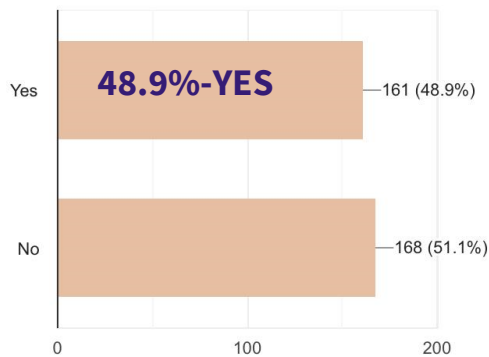


K-6 CHILDREN ARE HAVING LGBTQIA+ & GENDER EXPERIENCES

K-6 LGBTQIA+ EXPERIENCES

6. This school year, have you had a student/students 'come out' to you or a teacher defining their sexual orientation as 'gay', 'bi', 'lesbian', or questioning this year?

329 responses

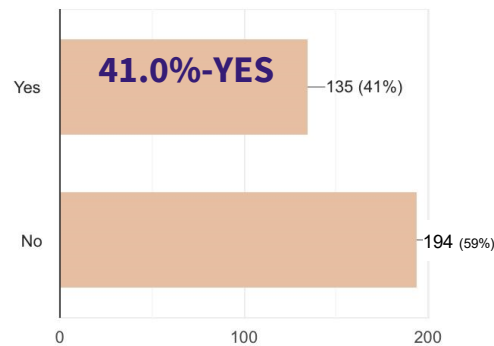


48.9%-YES
"I've had students 'come out' to me as defining their sexual orientation as 'gay', 'bi', 'lesbian' or questioning this year"

K-6 GENDER EXPERIENCES

7. This school year, have you had a student/students share with you that they are questioning their GENDER IDENTITY? (the student 'feels different' than the 'sex' assigned them at birth)

329 responses

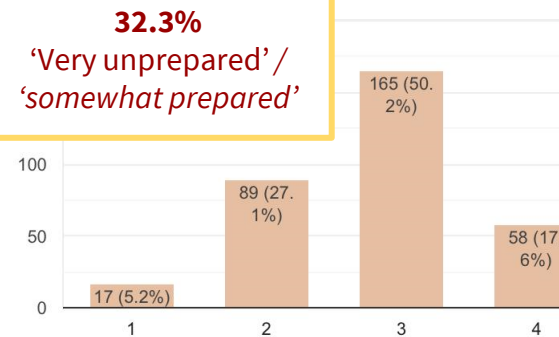


41%-YES
"I've had students share that they are questioning their GENDER IDENTITY"

School Counselor's Readiness?

8. In general, how prepared do you feel about supporting an elementary-age student who has come to you about LGBTQ+ concerns or questions? 1- very unprepared - 2- somewhat prepared - 3- moderately prepared - 4- extremely prepared

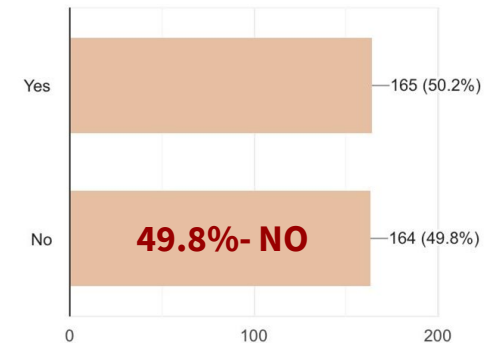
329 responses



PREPAREDNESS

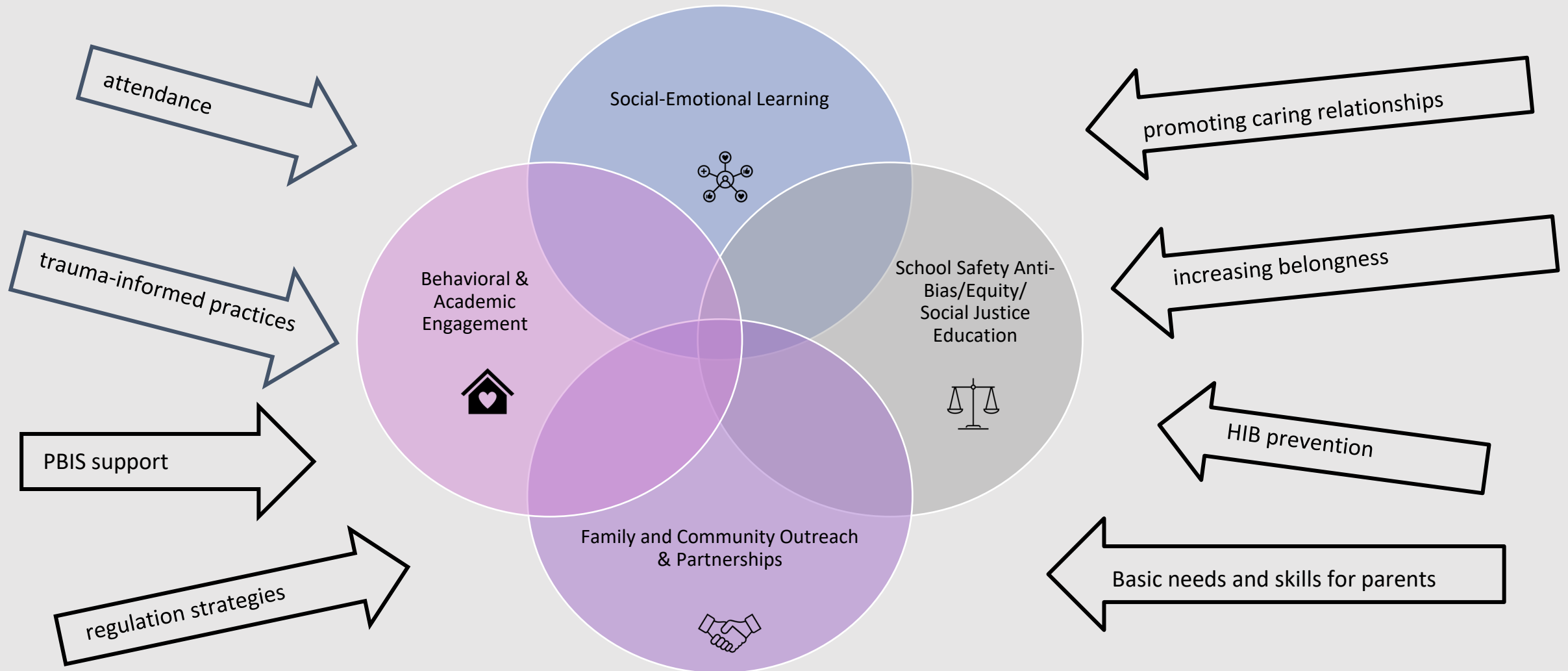
9. Have you had formal training and/or experience that would help to guide your response with a student who is grappling with LGBTQ+ and/or Gender Identity questions?

329 responses



FORMAL TRAINING

RESEARCH tells us... Tier One Interventions ARE Mental Health Promotion Activities...



Character Strong

Purpose
FULL
People

K-6 TIER ONE SEL
TEACHER TAUGHT
PurposeFULL People | [LINK](#)

TIER ONE SEL

**Progressive
Muscle
Relaxation**
💪🧘🌻

Hello! I'm...
MRS B. Your school counselor

I am excited to share with
you a **NEW TOOL**.
📚✂️

What is:
'progressive
muscle
relaxation' ?

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)
is type of meditation that teaches you
how to relax your muscles using a two-step process.
First, you tense particular muscle groups in your
body. Then, you release.

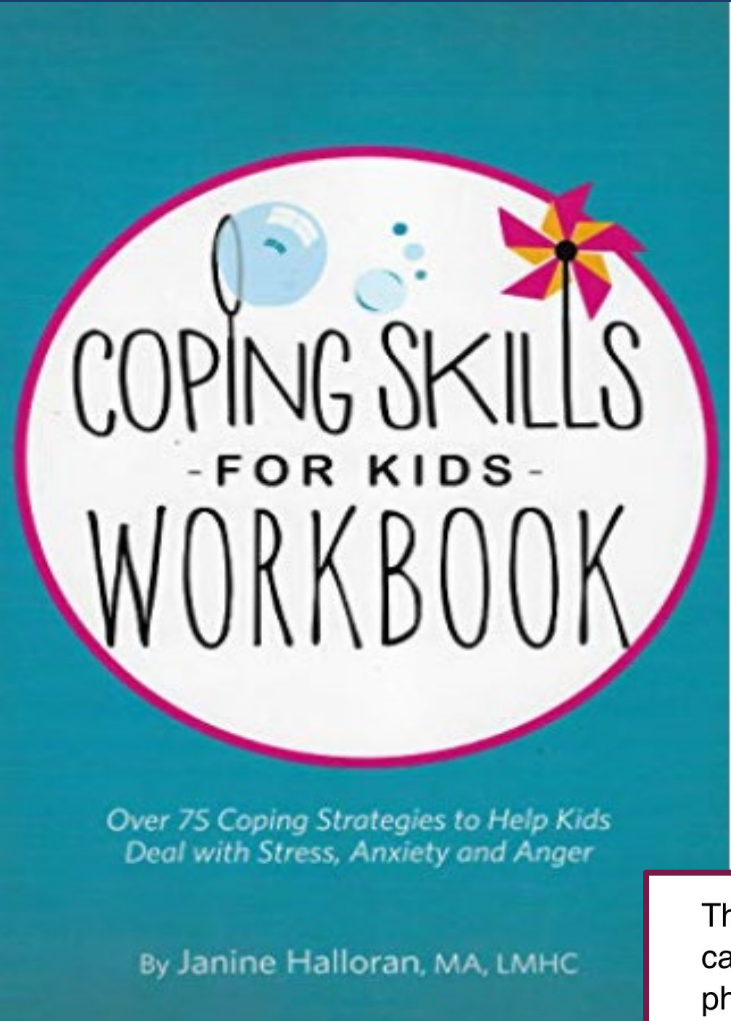


**TIER ONE:
PROGRESSIVE
MUSCLE
RELAXATION**

**PARTNER:
PE TEACHER**

Progress Monitoring: PAPER | QUICK

Progress Monitoring: GOOGLE FORMS Hand enter for reports



Name: _____ Date: _____

1. How school is going for me:
Not Great 1 2 3 4 5 Great

2. How things are going at home:
Not Great 1 2 3 4 5 Great

3. How I feel about friends:
Not Great 1 2 3 4 5 Great


4. I feel stressed, anxious, or angry:
A Lot 1 2 3 4 5 Not at All

5. I know what a coping skill is:
No Kind of Yes

6. I have coping skills to help me when I feel stressed, anxious, or angry: (circle one)
0 coping skills 1-2 coping skills 3 or more coping skills

The book is divided into four sections based on categories of coping skills: calming, distracting, physical, and processing coping strategies. So I am running a 6 week, 30 minute long group:

- Week 1 – Intro, norms, define what a coping skill is
- Week 2 – Calming coping skills
- Week 3 – Distracting coping skills
- Week 4 – Physical coping skills
- Week 5 – Processing coping skills
- Week 6 – Wrap up/celebration



Objective 2: Share evidence-based, developmentally appropriate suicide reduction resources

- [Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention](#)
 - Research based; language and concepts are applicable across K-12 but centers on middle and high school application
 - Developed in collaboration with ASCA, NASP, and The Trevor Project
- [Signs Matter: Early Detection](#)
 - Online suicide prevention training program for K-12 educators on signs of risk, typical behaviors presented in a school setting, and necessary steps if signs detected
- [Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale](#)
 - Screens for a range of risk factors and includes the most evidence supported questions; ages 7 and up; use for clinical and school settings
 - The scale and training on use are FREE
- [Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health](#)
 - Endorsed by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention



Gizmos List | 9 Changes

We all feel SAD, MAD, or WORRIED sometimes. How do we know that we are feeling this way? You may see changes in how you usually feel, think or act.

SAD | MAD | WORRIED - 9 Changes

Gizmo listed 9 changes a person might experience if they feel sad, mad or worried:

- Eat less or more
- Hard to get to sleep or stay asleep
- Argue more
- Cry easily
- Feel bored with things I like
- Want to be alone a lot
- ACT before thinking
- Have less energy
- Feel nervous/stressed

Of the 9 changes Gizmo listed, choose which changes you may have experienced before: *

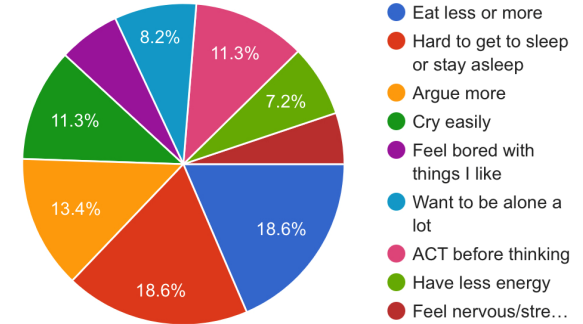
- Eat less or more
- Hard to get to sleep or stay asleep
- Argue more
- Cry easily
- Feel bored with things I like
- Want to be alone a lot
- ACT before thinking
- Have less energy
- Feel nervous/stressed

Submit

Clear form

Of the 9 changes Gizmo listed, choose which changes you may have experienced before:

97 responses



EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION ON MENTAL HEALTH

5th Grade

MY MENTAL HEALTH PLAN

Things I can do to take care of my mental health: feelings, thoughts, and actions

- Breathe slowly
- Listen to music
- Play an instrument
- Draw or paint
- Take a nap
- Blow bubbles
- Play with a pinwheel
- Play dress-up
- Write a story
- Play with pets
- Ride a bike
- Play outside
- Read
- Play with toys
- Do a puzzle
- Sew or knit
- Smile or laugh
- Take a walk

Things I can do with Others to Help Me Feel Better

- Play a game
- Tell jokes
- Go for a bike ride
- Go for a hike
- Go to the store
- Go to the library
- Watch a movie
- Play a sport
- Have lunch with a friend
- Play outside
- Give and get hugs
- Dance and sing

How to know if I feel mad, sad, or worried

- Eat less or more
- Hard to get to sleep or stay asleep
- Argue more
- Cry easily
- Feel bored with things you like
- Want to be alone a lot
- Act before thinking
- Have less energy
- Feeling very nervous/stressed

My trusted adults

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Uncles/Aunts
- Older Brothers/Sisters
- Teachers
- Coaches
- Religious Leaders
- Scout Leaders
- School Counselors
- School Social Workers
- School Nurses
- Doctor
- Camp Counselors
- Any Others?

People and places that can help me think of other things

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Aunt or Uncle
- Brother, Sister, Cousin
- My friends
- Friends house
- Family member's house
- Faith Community
- Community center or youth center
- Park
- Library

PAWS UP for mental health



EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION ON MENTAL HEALTH

1st Grade

Breathe slowly



Paint or Draw



Pinwheel Breath


Listen to music



Take a nap


Play Dress-Up



Play an Instrument


Blow bubbles


Write a story


Ride a bike



Play with toys



Take a walk



Play Outside


Play with pets


Smile or laugh


Read


Sew or knit


Do a puzzle



NAME: _____

Things I can do to take care of MY MENTAL HEALTH

Favorite thing to do by myself

MY MENTAL HEALTH:
my feelings 🐱🐱🐱
my thoughts 🧠
and my actions 🚶

People I can do things with



Parents Aunt or Uncle Cousin

Grandparents Brother or Sister Friends

Other person

MY NAME _____

Things I can do With Others to take care of MY MENTAL HEALTH: My feelings, thoughts, and actions

Play a game Tell Joke Go for a bike ride Give and get hugs

Go for a hike Go to the store Play a sport Dance and sing

Watch a movie Play outside Have lunch together

Favorite thing to do with others

NAME: _____

Objective 3: Access and implement tools and strategies for capturing student voice and creating whole child interventions to meet student needs

What does it mean to use student voice in your school counseling program?

What are the benefits?

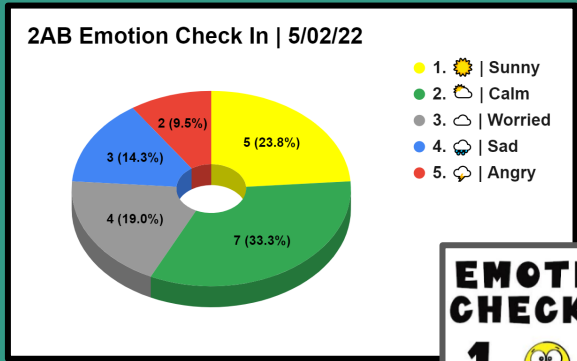
- 1) Empowering students to take responsibility/ownership of other students' experiences (rates of bullying)
- 2) Lessons are based on immediate student needs (uses real time knowledge and skills to customize content)
- 3) Offers an immediate check-in on experience (mood meters)
- 4) Allows a SC to plan future lessons
- 5) Can be used for data collection regarding program impact
- 6) It empowers students when they see how their feedback is used and they have choice

G1-G3 |Classmate Skills | Self-Assessment

Classmate Skills Self-Assessment

Fall 2021 | G1-G3 | Studen...

Fall 2021 | G4-G6 | Studen...



Forced-Choice Reinforcement Menu

Forced Choice Reinforcement Survey

2021 | Forced-Choice ...

EMOTION CHECK IN ✓

1 ☺️ ☀️

2 😌 ☁️

3 😟 ☁️

4 😞 ☁️

5 😡 ⚡️

HOW ARE YOU?
Check One

SIMPLE CHECK IN

PRAISE PREFERENCE ASSESSMENT

Praise Preference Assessment

Student's preferred method of praise from adults

WA | PRAISE PREFERENCE ...

Praise Preference
Student's preferred method of praise from adults

IN YOUR SHOES

Empathy Self-Assessment

In Your Shoes

IN YOUR SHOES | ...

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENTS & SURVEYS

'student voice'

What I know about ANGER | Lo que sé sobre la ira

What I know about Anger Self-Assessment:

What I know about ANGE...

ANTI-BIAS WORK | G6

CONFIDENT ME | PRE-ASSESSMENT

Please answer the following questions to help us shape our lesson for you!
We are measuring what forms of appearance discrimination occur most often for students

rbrown@centraliaschools.org

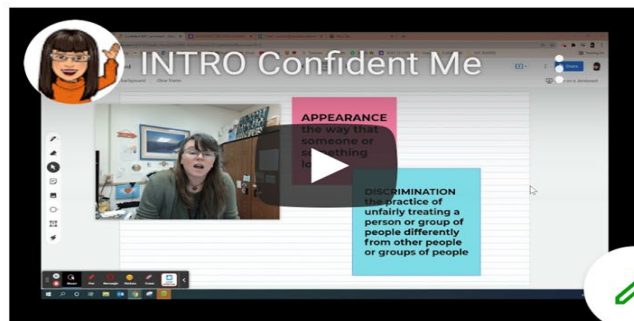


Your email will be recorded when you submit this form

* Required

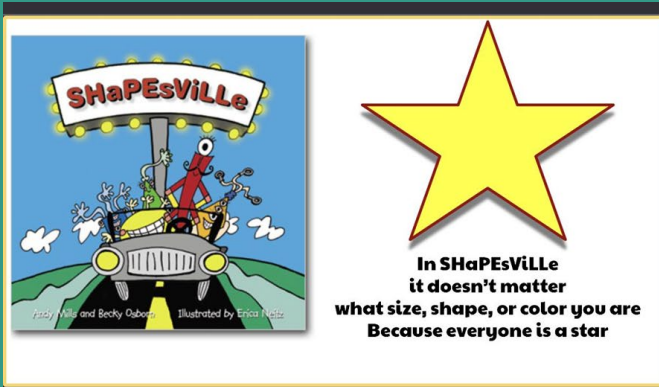
DOVE SELF ESTEEM PROJECT
[LINK](#)

Appearance Discrimination Definitions



Types of Discrimination	
RACISM	Discrimination based on race. (i.e. American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander)
SEXISM	Discrimination based on gender and gender expression.
HAIR DISCRIMINATION	Discrimination based on hair type (i.e. curly, coily, straight, wavy, kinky), typically showing favor for straight hair.
ABLEISM	Discrimination based on a person's disability.
COLORESM/ SHADEISM	Discrimination based on skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group.
SIZEISM	Discrimination based on size, (especially weight)

ANTI BIAS WORK - 1ST GRADE

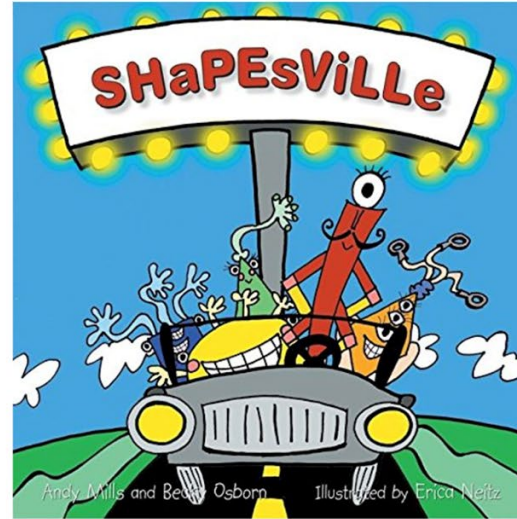


SULMI



MAURICIO

Many Shapes and Sizes



In this lesson, students will hear a story about a small town and five friends who have different shapes, sizes, colors, and talents and will create a shapesville character of their own

This lesson is designed to help children celebrate their differences, sizes, and body types. Children will recognize that people vary in many ways and those differences make all of us individuals.



EVA



MYLES



JANELLE



ABRAHAM



LIAM



KAYANNA



Objective 4: Align elementary programs with the ASCA Student Standards

Intervention	ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors	Standard
Character Strong	Learning Strategies S 2.	Creative approach to learning, tasks and problem solving
	Social Skills SS 9.	Social maturity and behaviors appropriate to the situation and environment
Gizmo's Pawesome Guide	Self Management Skills SMS 10.	Ability to manage transitions and adapt to change
Confident Me	Mindset M 2.	Sense of acceptance, respect, support and inclusion for self and others in the school environment
Shapesville	Social Skills SS 2.	Positive, respectful and supportive relationships with students who are similar to and different from them

[CHARACTER STRONG](#)

[GIZMOS PAWESOME GUIDE](#)

[DOVE'S CONFIDENT ME](#)

[SHAPESVILLE: MANY SHAPES & SIZES](#)

Key Considerations:

- Remember that your Tier One SEL and School Climate initiatives ARE Mental Health prevention efforts
- Find a way to incorporate student voice
- Be intentional with Mental Health Instruction
- Start small to gain confidence
 - Pick a class or a grade level, a willing teacher
- Ensure equity and access:
 - Spanish and other translations
 - UDL (Universally Designed Lessons)
- Partner with other elementary counselors
- Implement staff training on signs of mental health distress

Thank you for participating in the Webinar: **Rising Risk: K-6 Mental Health**

K-6 Mental Health, Suicide Response and SEL

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May 2022

QR CODE



K-6 Mental Health