

# Depression and Anxiety: The Mental Health Challenges Facing Youth Today

Hilary M. Bowers, MD, FAAP  
Director, Behavioral and Mental Health Services  
Children's Primary Care Medical Group

# COVID-19 Impacts Youth Mental and Behavioral Health

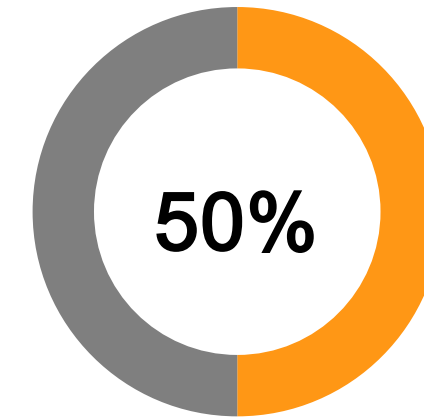


**1 in 3**

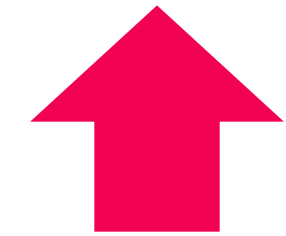
High school students feel sad and hopeless



Increase in severe depression, suicidal thoughts, and attempts to overdose



50% of 18-24 year olds feel very lonely



**24%**

Children in the ED for mental health has increased by 24%

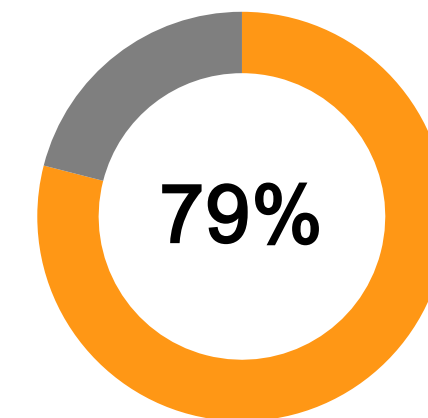


**1 in 4**

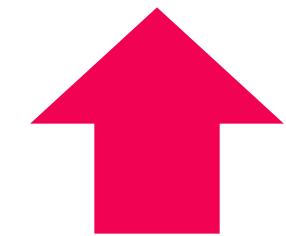
Young girls are depressed at least 4 days per week



Capacity of inpatient services overwhelmed by demand for care



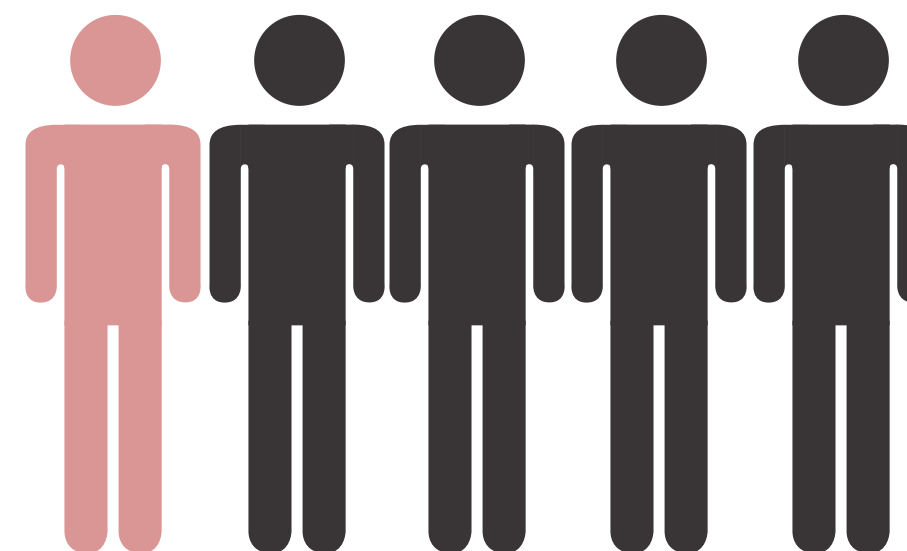
79% of young girls feel isolated



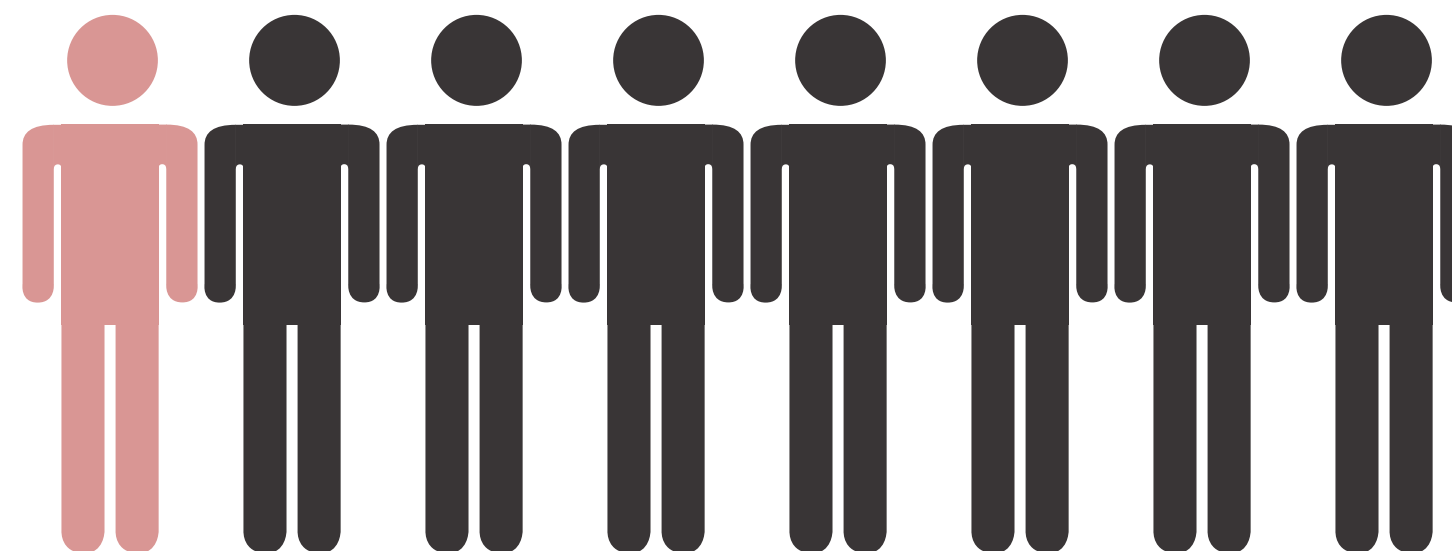
**10,000**

911 mental health calls have increased by 10,000+ per week

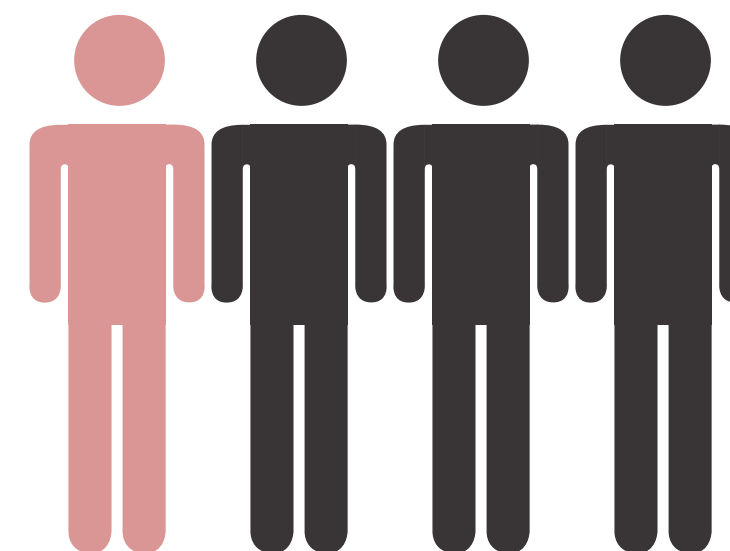
1 in 5 youth diagnosed with mental health disorder

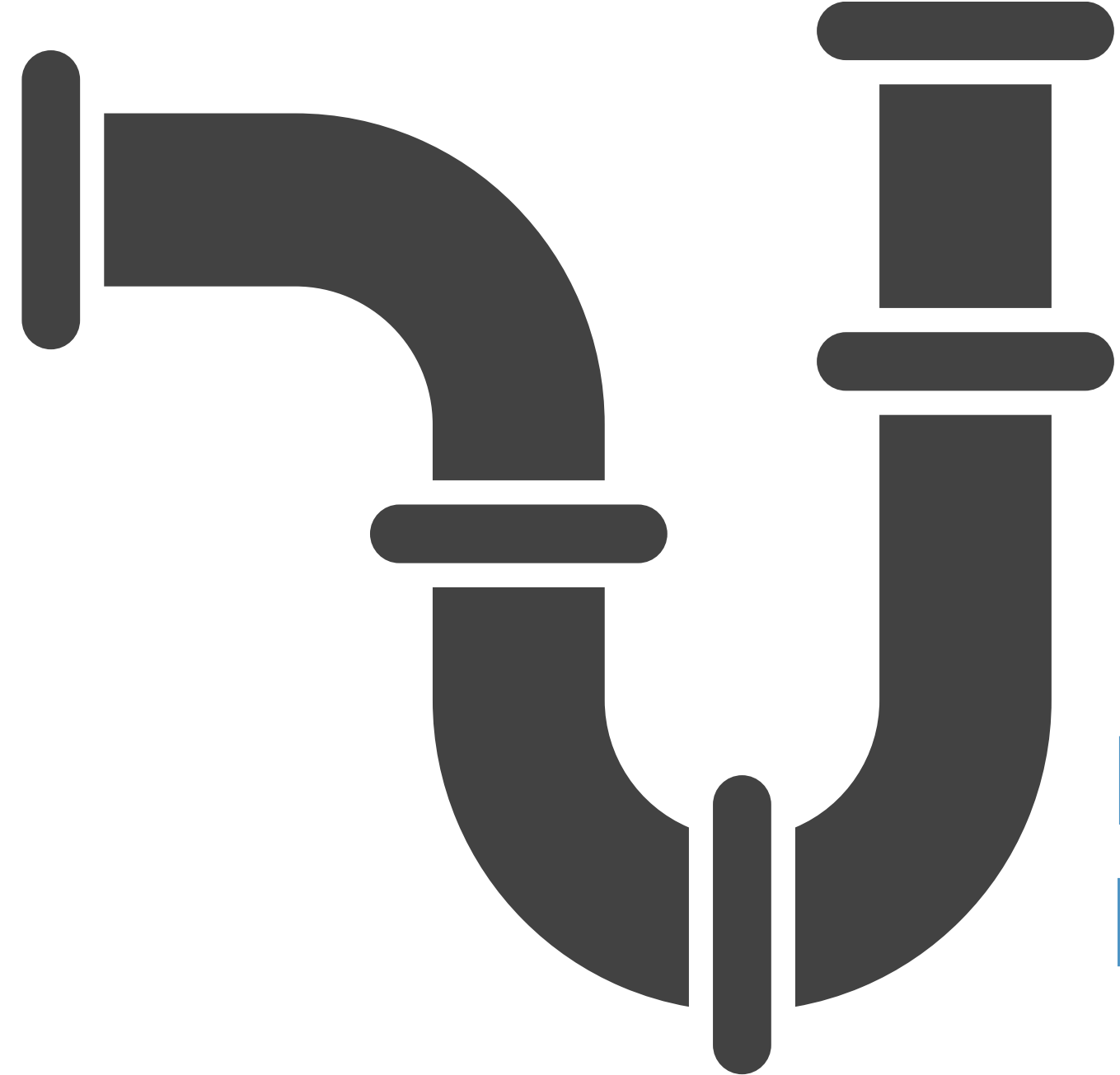


1 in 8 women diagnosed with breast cancer



1 out of 4 deaths related to heart disease





# SB 224

## INTRODUCED TO BRING MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION TO SCHOOLS

Requires all school districts that offer health classes to include mental health as part of the curriculum. The California Department of Education has until Jan. 1, 2023 to incorporate mental health into the [state standards](#), and districts have until Jan. 1, 2024 to begin teaching the new material.

# We are all feeling it!



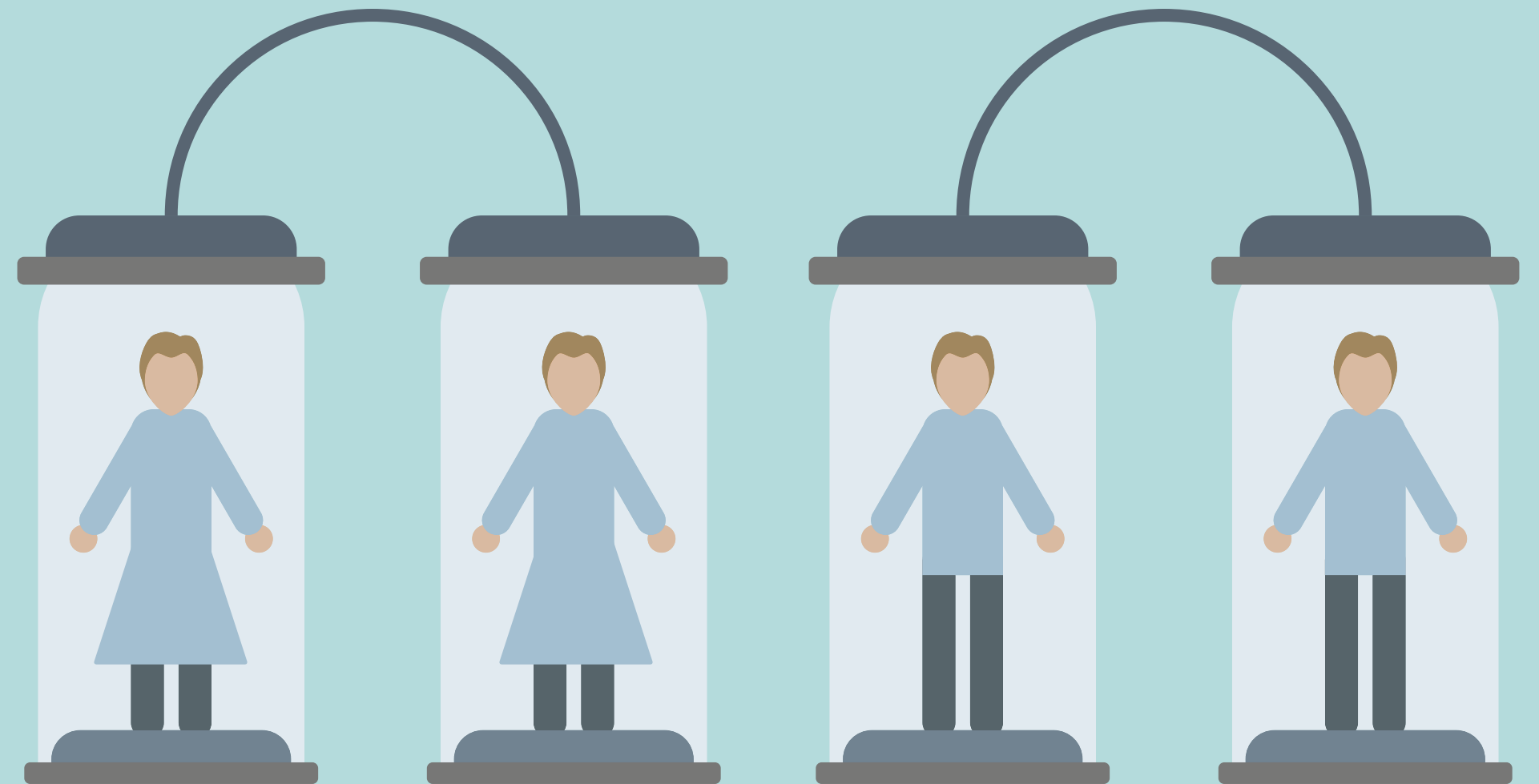
As of 2019 in California:

- 1 counselor for every 626 students
- 1 psychologist for every 1,041 students
- 1 social worker for every 7,308 students

California's student-to-counselor ratio is the **fifth-highest** in the United States

How can we help when support is limited?

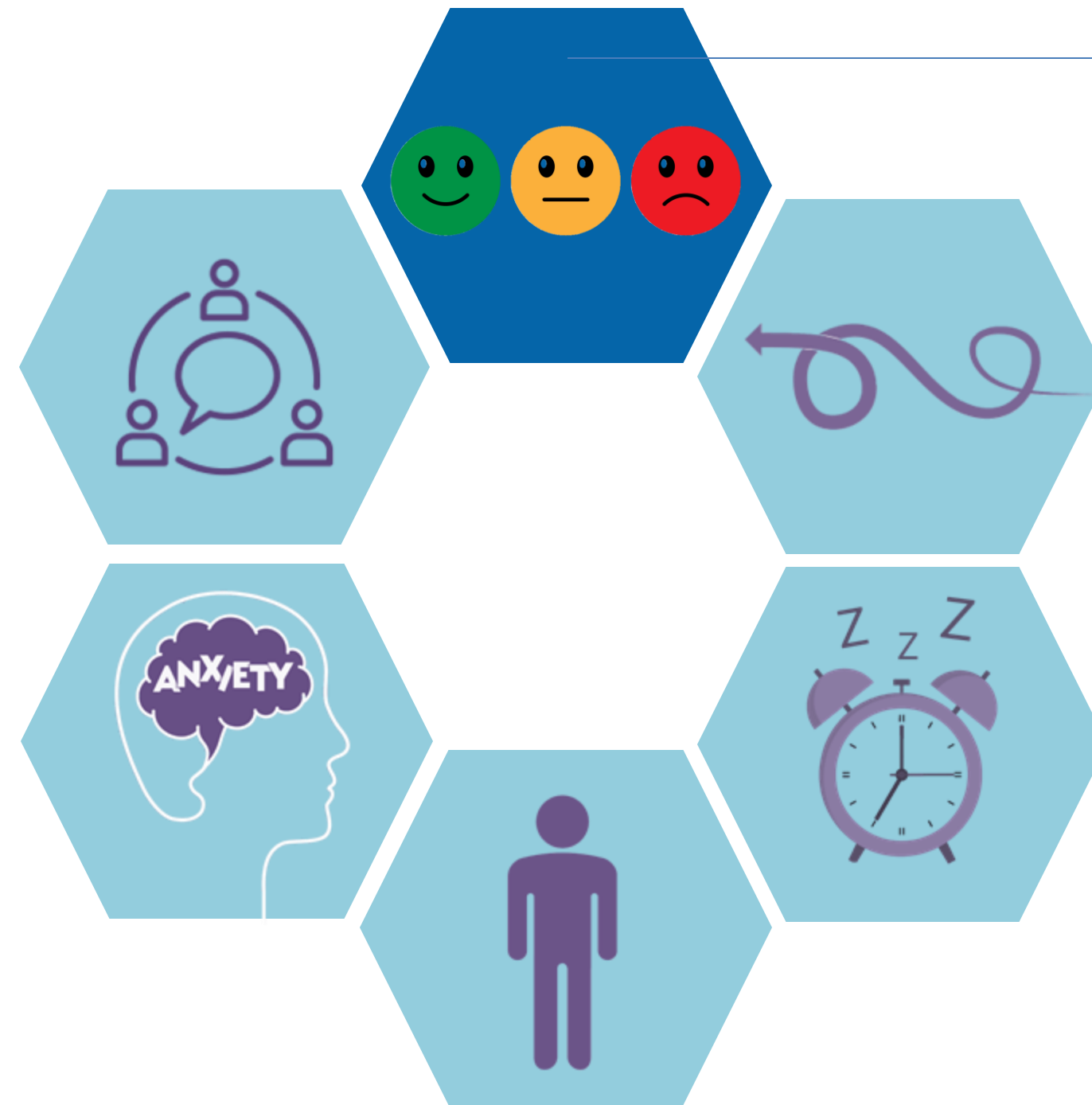
Unfortunately,  
cloning isn't  
possible



Mental Health  
impacts overall  
health. It should not  
exist in a vacuum.



# Signs and Symptoms



## Changes in Mood

- Confrontational
- Increased energy
- Irritability
- Rapidly changing emotions
- Secretive

# Signs and Symptoms



## Changes in Behavior

- Decreased initiative
- Drop in grades
- Decreased participation
- Fidgeting/Repetitive actions
- Flat affect
- Frequent breaks
- Lack of initiative
- Multiple visits to the nurse
- Not turning in assignments
- Picking at skin
- Risk taking

# Signs and Symptoms



---

## Changes in Sleep

- Constantly feeling tired
- Falling asleep in class
- Grogginess
- Zoning out

# Signs and Symptoms



## Physical Changes

- Changes in clothing style
- Cuts/marks on body
- Hygiene
- Nervous behaviors
- Unkempt appearance
- Weight loss/gain

# Signs and Symptoms



## Changes in Thought

- Content changes in assignments
- Loss of interest in activities they previously enjoyed
- Negative self-talk
- Perfectionism

# Signs and Symptoms

## Social Changes

- Aggressive behaviors
- Change in interactions with peers or teachers
- Fighting
- Hiding or sitting alone at lunch
- Negative talk to others
- Speech patterns
- No longer speaking to friends
- Withdrawing socially



# Social Media Impact



A wooden sign made of several horizontal planks, supported by two vertical posts. The sign is set against a solid blue background. The text is centered on the sign in a bold, dark grey font.

**Small Changes Can  
Sometimes Be Big Signs**



# How Students May Present



# NOT ALL ANXIETY LOOKS THE SAME



**Nervous**

**FEELINGS**

**Frustrated**

Overwhelm

**STUCK**

**WORRY**

**Tired**

**Irritable**

**Fear**

*Unsafe*

**INSECURE**

**CONFUSED**

**Panic**

**Helpless**





clothing style



# Drastic Changes

weight loss  
weight gain



# Small Actions Make A Big Difference

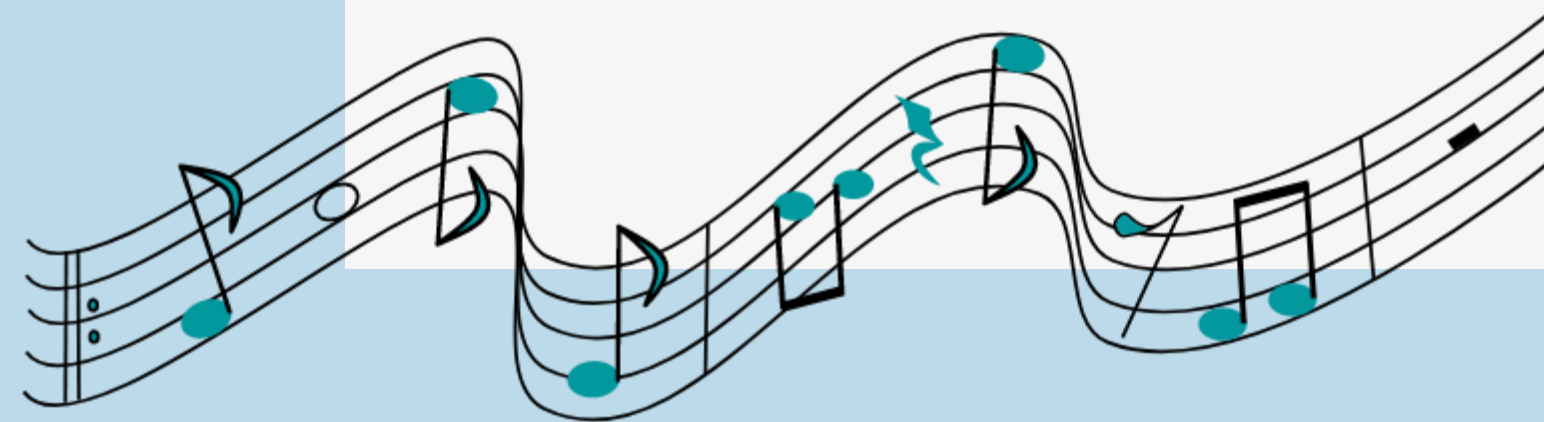
- Recognize unique attributes of each student
- Create a welcoming environment
- Establish opportunities for students to collaborate
- Elevate youth voice



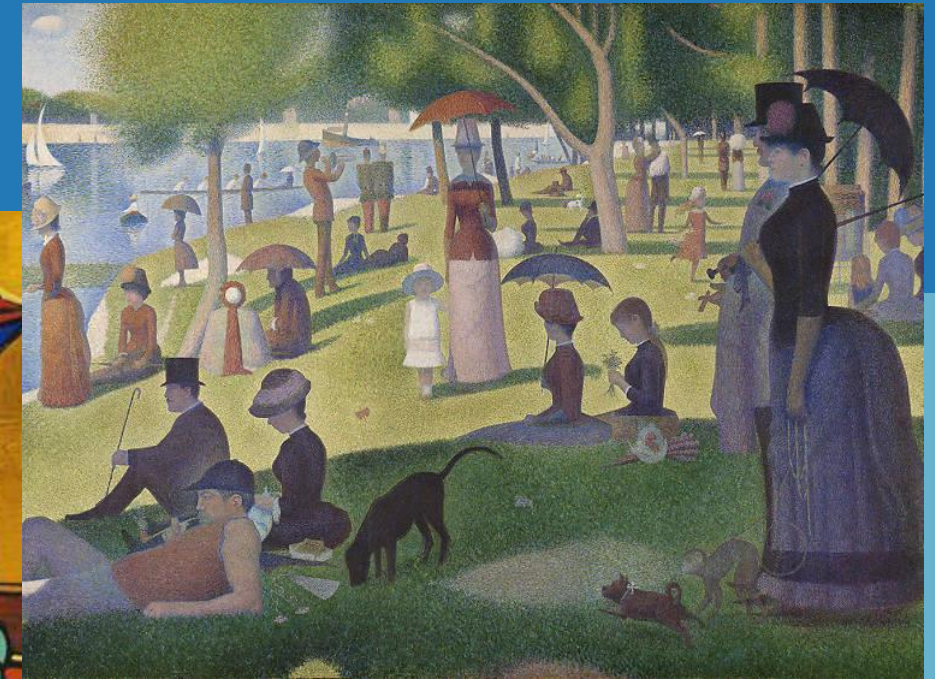
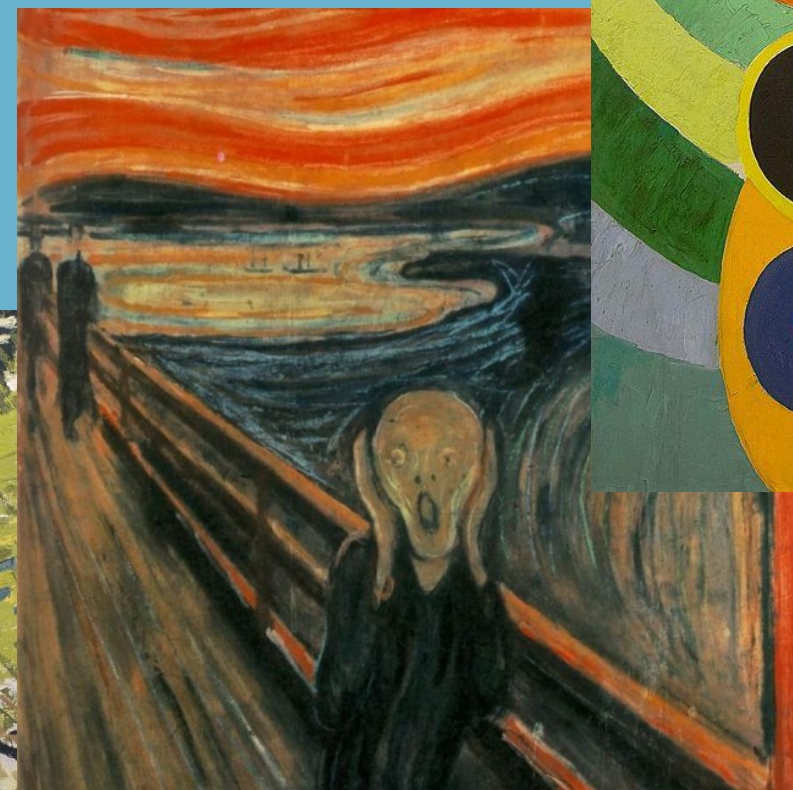
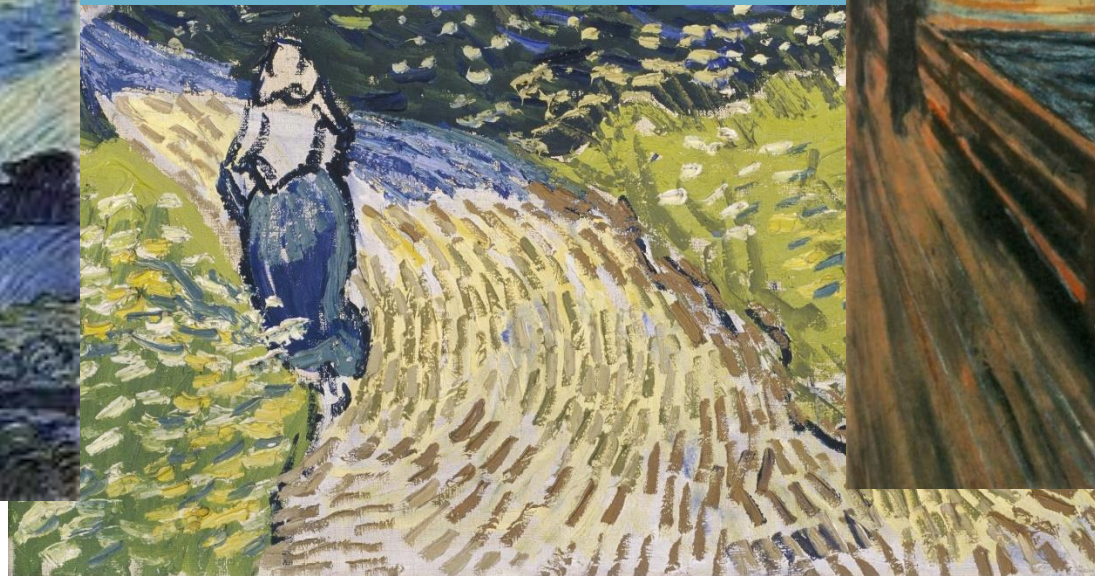
# SET THE TONE WITH MUSIC

Engages the students in  
something they enjoy

Helps with connection



# What does art have to do with anatomy?



# One Trusted Adult

- Influences growth in young person's life
- Greater engagement at school and community activities
- Better overall health
- Helps prevent risky and threatening behaviors
- More resiliency



# How To Gain Trust


- Listen to understand
- Be present
- 1:1 acknowledgements
- Normalize asking questions
- Let students lead conversation





**Patterns are  
important in the  
classroom**

**It helps to create  
consistency**



consistency  
is key

# Tools and Skills

## Model the Behavior – Universalize the Skills

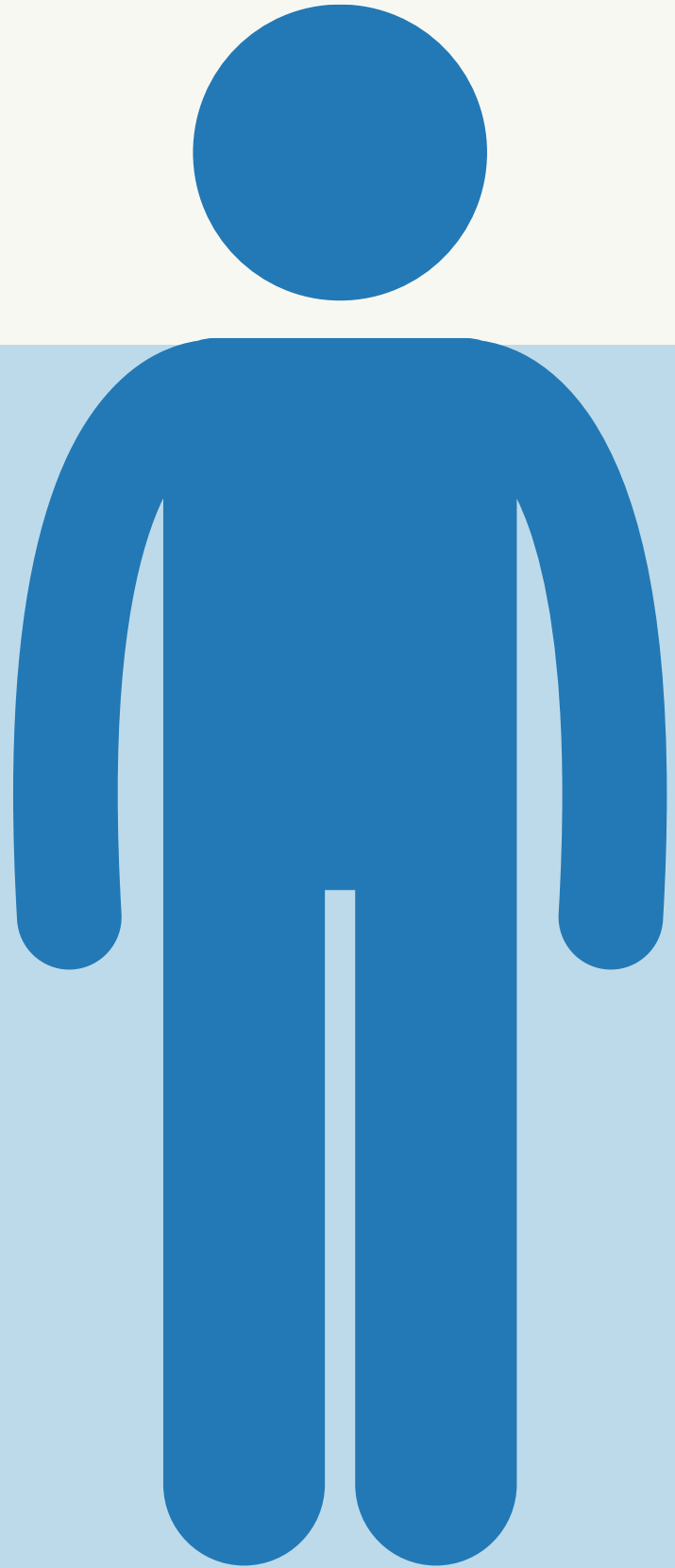
1 Object - 5 Senses

Conscious Breathing

Take a Sip of Water

Visualize a Happy Place

# Whole Body Scan



What and where are you feeling  
Pay attention to each part of your body  
Tighten and release muscle groups

# Breathing as a Coping Skill

## BOX BREATHING

Breathe in 4 counts

Hold breath for 4 count

Slowly exhale for 4 counts

Hold for 4 counts

Repeat

## Finger Breathing

Breathe in tracing outside of pinky

Breathe out tracing inside pinky

Continue with each finger



# WHERE TO GO FOR MORE HELP

Talk to your Pediatrician

Call insurance

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

[www.anxietycoach.com](http://www.anxietycoach.com)

<https://jedfoundation.org/>

Calm: <https://www.calm.com>

Headspace: <https://www.headspace.com/>

Melon Health: <https://www.melonhealth.com/>

First 5 San Diego: <https://first5sandiego.org/>

Therapist Finder on [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com)

SAM App: Self-help methods to learn how to manage anxiety

Finch App: Self-care tracker to hit goals and sustain healthy habits

Mindshift: <https://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-cbt/>

Stop Breathe Think App: Meditation and mindfulness offering daily wellness check-ins

NAMI: [How to Talk to Your Child About Their Mental Health | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)

Youth Mental Health First Aid: <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/population-focused-modules/youth/>

San Diego County Office of Education: <https://www.sdcoe.net/students/health-well-being/mental-health-supports>

# San Diego County Resources

- Rady Children's Hospital Emergency Department
  - 3020 Children's Way, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, San Diego, CA 92123
  - Phone: 858-966-8005
- Rady Children's Behavioral Health Urgent Care
  - 4305 University Avenue, Suite 150, San Diego, CA 92105
  - Phone: 858-966-5484
  - Walk-in Clinic: Monday-Friday: 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
  - By Appointment Only: Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Access and Crisis Line – 888-724-7240
- Crisis text line – 741-741
  - <https://www.crisistextline.org>
  - Text HOME to [741741](https://www.crisistextline.org)
- Smart Care / Behavioral Health Consultative Service
  - Parent Line: 858-956-5901
- 2-1-1 San Diego
  - [www.211sandiego.org](http://www.211sandiego.org)
- San Diego Food Bank
  - <https://sandiegofoodbank.org/>
  - Phone (Local): 1-858-527-1419
  - Phone (Toll Free): 1-866-350-3663
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
  - <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>
  - 800-237-8255 (TALK)
- It's Up to Us
  - <https://up2sd.org>
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
  - <https://www.nami.org/Home>
- Healthy Children.org by American Academy of Pediatrics
  - [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)
- American Psychiatric Association
  - [www.psychiatry.org](http://www.psychiatry.org)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- San Diego County Department of Public Health
  - [www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs.html)
- Riverside County Department of Public Health
  - [www.countyofriverside.org](http://www.countyofriverside.org)
- Children's Primary Care Medical Group [www.cpcmg.net](http://www.cpcmg.net)
- Rady Children's Hospital San Diego [www.rchsd.org](http://www.rchsd.org)
- Children's Physicians Medical Group [www.cpmgsandiego.com](http://www.cpmgsandiego.com)

What will you do  
differently as you move  
forward?

*Thank you!*