



*Mental Wellbeing  
Engaging Our Youth:  
A Toolbox for  
Parents & Caregivers*

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SELPA Parent Workshop  
March 7, 2024

*Margaret A. Sedor, PhD*



## *Primary goal*

To foster the psychological safety, mental health, and wellbeing of students, staff, and community members within a trauma informed system.



# *Agreements*



Acknowledge one another as equals

Honor privacy

Listen and speak from the heart

Take care of you

Be present and curious



## *Grounding Activity*

One thing  
that brings you  
JOY



# *Student Voice on Mental Health*





Conversations around mental health need to grow  
Student need a safe place when feeling overwhelmed  
Social media campaign for mental health



An illustration at the top of the page shows a large, light blue silhouette of a human head in profile, facing left. Inside the head, there is a white circle containing a dark blue, tangled knot. A person with dark hair, wearing a blue shirt and orange pants, stands on the right side of the page. They are holding a dark blue rope that extends from the knot inside the head, passing over the top of the head, and then down to the ground. The background is a light blue gradient with faint, stylized clouds on the left and a plant with white flowers on the right.

# MENTAL HEALTH

## IS...

- A part of everyone
- Something to look after
- Real and complex
- Really important
- Something you can change

## ISN'T...

- A sign of weakness
- All in your head
- Something you can just snap out of
- Always a negative thing
- Something to be ashamed of

# *Positive Mental Health*



High levels of Wellbeing

Sense of belonging, social and emotional skills, happiness, etc..

**AND**

Low levels of Distress

Anxiety

Depression

Negative emotions & thoughts after a loss or trauma, etc..



## *Myths about Mental Health*



**Myth:** Children can't experience mental health challenges.



**Fact:** Half of mental health challenges show their first signs before age 14.



**Myth:** People with mental health challenges are weak and not working hard enough to change.



**Fact:** Many factors can cause mental health challenges, including genetics, brain chemistry, life events, and family history.



**Myth:** Nothing can be done to help someone with mental health challenges.



**Fact:** People with mental health challenges can get better and even recover completely. Therapy, medication, and a strong support system can all help.



**Myth:** If a child needs to see a counselor/mental health professional, it reflects poorly on their family.



**Fact:** Many children benefit from mental health supports. The need for assistance is NOT because of parenting style or skills.

# *Mental Wellbeing of Youth*



2019, more than 30% of adolescents had feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Less than 10% diagnosed with depression or anxiety

2022, 16% adolescents seriously considered suicide

2023, 73% of youth report loneliness-most of the time or all of the time.



The most important thing is to create a family culture of safety for young people and their caregivers to talk and share openly about their mental health experiences- both in what to celebrate and what might need more support

**Have a family conversation!**



# *Engaging Youth*



On a scale of 1 to 5

How comfortable do you feel  
talking about mental wellbeing and suicide  
with your youth?



## *Communicating with Your Teen*



1. Listen
2. Validate their feelings
3. Show trust
4. Don't be a dictator
5. Give Praise
6. Control your emotions
7. Do things together
8. Share a regular meal
9. Be observant

## *Begin the Conversation*

How was school today?

Versus

**You look like you've had a long day.**

Did your test go ok?

Versus

**I was thinking about you today during your test**

Did you get along with others today

versus

**I remember last night you were worried about  
getting along with others**

How was your day? Are you ok?

versus

**I've missed you so much today, it's so lovely to see  
your big beautiful smile**

# *Family wellbeing practices*



**1**

**Model Self-Care**

**2**

**Communicate About Feelings,  
Strengths, and Needs**

**3**

**Create Family Routines**

**4**

**Develop Mental  
Wellness Skills**

**5**

**Support Mental Health Through  
Physical Health**

# *Model Self-Care*



- Plan quiet time each day
- Make time for things you enjoy
- Talk about the things you both appreciate and value
- Exhibit grace, ok to make mistakes
- Manage stress by taking breaks
- Name emotions to help communicate feelings
- Share when something is scary and you were courageous
- Seek professional help if struggling

# *Communicate About Feelings, Strengths, Needs*



- Create grace and space for listening without judgement
- Let you youth know they can safely share or ask you anything
- Be patient, validate
- Check back over time
- May not want to talk now, can come you when ready
- Ask about hopes and dreams
- Acknowledge and name feelings
- Encourage growth mindset

# *Create Family Routines*



- Identify: most important daily activities and time
- Explain: know what to do and when, charts|reminders
- Follow: ensure all family members follow the routine, provide reminders
- Praise: when family members follow through
- Regular sleep schedule
- Family activities, take turns, share “a rose and a thorn”
- Take walks outside

# *Develop Mental Wellness Skills*



- Mindfulness practices
  - Ask them to notice how your body feels before doing homework or upset)
  - Engage senses (One thing you smell, hear, see, taste, feel)
- Gratitude practices
  - Gratitude jar
  - Share gratitude with family members
  - Gratitude journal
- Relaxation and breathing practices
  - Breathe in for 4, hold for 7, exhale 8

This is a simple breathing exercise that can be done anywhere, anytime to aid in stress reduction, grounding and even sleep.



Take a deep breath and...

5. Name **Five** things you see around you. 
4. Name **Four** things you can touch around you. 
3. Name **Three** things you hear. 
2. Name **Two** things you can smell. 
1. Name **one** thing you can taste. 

# *Support Mental Health Through Physical Health*



- Encourage exploration of interests, strengths, wellbeing strategies.
- Healthy sleep habits
  - 8-10 hours of sleep, consistent bedtime
  - Limit screen time one hour before bedtime
  - Keep personal electronics outside the bedroom
- Encourage exercise
- Help with healthy eating habits
- Discourage use of harmful substances.

# *Teens*



- Connect when they are ready
- Listening without judgement
- Support new interests and skills
- Allow for independence and privacy with structure and boundaries
- Support and stay active in their academics
- Lead with trust, provide opportunity to make decisions
- Be open to changes in their identity
- Educate yourself on safe use of technology|social media

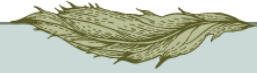


## *When to Seek Support*

- 
- Long periods of negativity or sadness
  - Reoccurring worries about routine daily life
  - New or unusual fears
  - Trouble concentrating
  - Drop in grades or attendance
  - Withdrawal from family or social activities
  - Avoidance of difficult or new situations
  - Sleep problems
  - Can't get out of bed
  - Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness
  - Substance use
  - Restlessness or hyperactivity

School mental health professional, community therapist, family doctor

# *You are not alone*

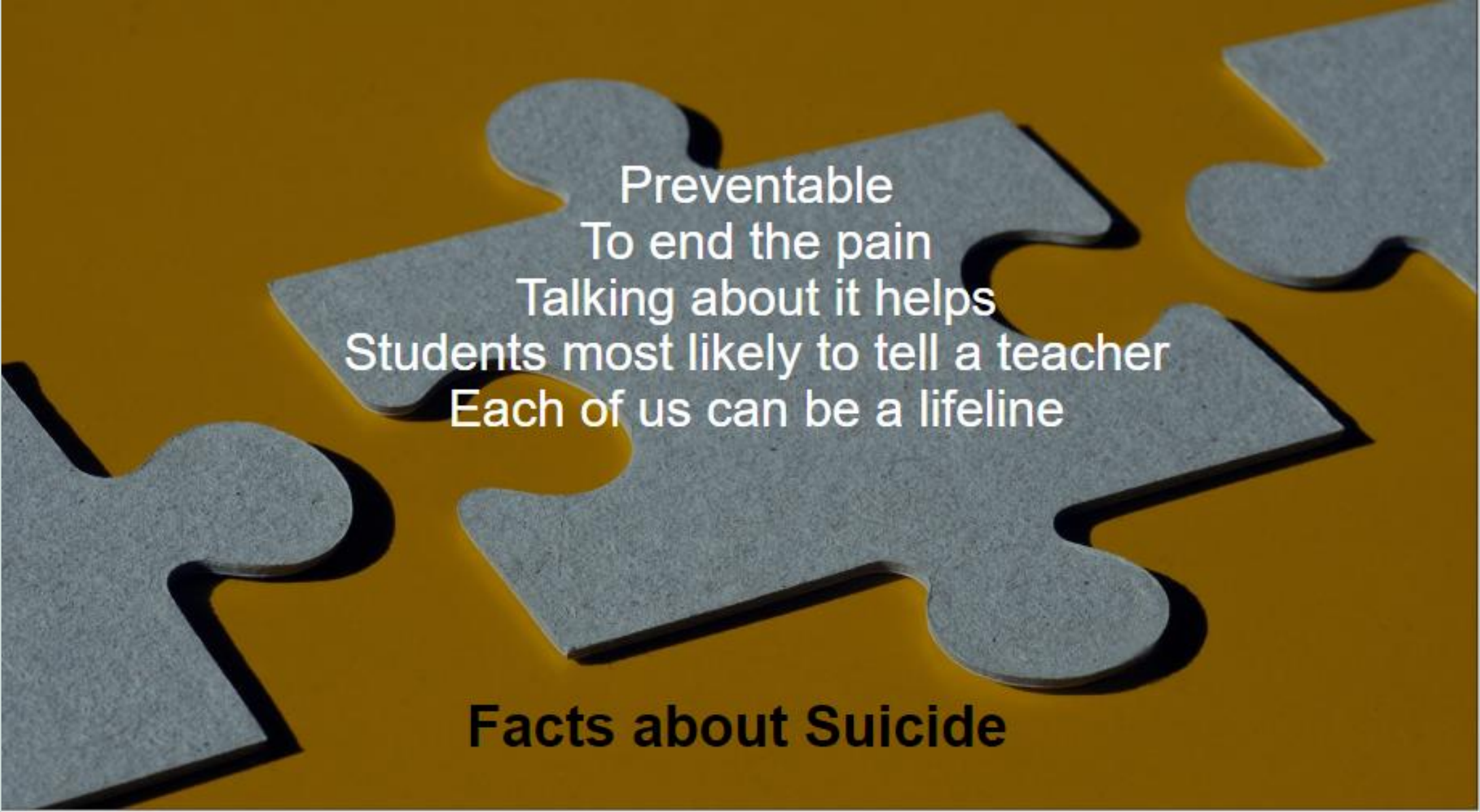


## Parents|Caregivers

- Talk to a friend you trust
- Ask school for community resources
- Call 988 or 211
- Call Cal-HOPE 833-317-4673

## If worried about student harming themselves

- Do let them know you are concerned
- Remain calm (for both of you)
- Call or text 988
- Supervise, do not leave alone
- Do ask about suicide
  - I'm worried about you, sometimes when people feel this way they are thinking about suicide, is this something you are thinking about?

A blue puzzle piece is centered on a yellow background. The puzzle piece has a human silhouette cutout in the center. The text is white and centered on the puzzle piece.

Preventable  
To end the pain  
Talking about it helps  
Students most likely to tell a teacher  
Each of us can be a lifeline

**Facts about Suicide**

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**KNOW**  
THE SIGNS

**FIND**  
THE WORDS

**REACH**  
OUT

---

**Prevention Process**

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Protective Factors  
Risk Factors  
Warning Signs

# Protective Factors

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- Feeling connected
- At least one trusted adult
- Having social supports
- Feeling HOPEFUL
- Having coping strategies
- Being cognitively flexible
- Willing to obtain treatment
- Strong spiritual or religious ties



# Risk Factors



ALCOHOL &  
SUBSTANCE  
ABUSE



ACCESS TO  
FIREARMS



INDIVIDUAL  
VULNERABILITY



PREVIOUS  
ATTEMPTS



HISTORY OF  
TRAUMA, ACEs



HOPELESSNESS



HISTORY OF  
NON-SUICIDAL SELF-INJURY



IMPULSIVITY

# Warning Signs



Prior Suicidal Behaviors



Significant Changes



Suicide Threats



Making Final Arrangements



Suicide Notes/ Plans

Start the conversation  
Mention signs  
Ask directly about suicide  
Listen, express concern, reassure

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Stay calm  
Maintain supervision  
Connect with resource

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***SB 972  
SB316  
ID Cards***



This provides 24/7 free and confidential support for anyone in distress and for those offering help to others. There is help and there is hope.

Call or text the numbers below:

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 or  
1-800-273-8255**

**Crisis Text Line: Text "Home" to 741741**

**National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-  
799-7233**

Anonymous report school threats/criminal activity with **P3Tips** app installed on student devices or call 1-888-580-8477. May lead to reward.

Please wear while conducting business on behalf of the Sweetwater Union High School District.

# *AB 2246 & AB 1767 Suicide Prevention Education*



## Directing Change



## Signs of Suicide



## LivingWorks



**Life-saving skills for California students and school staff**

Today, many young people in California are struggling with anxiety, isolation, and even thoughts of suicide. Together, we can keep them safe.

LivingWorks Start, a 90-minute online training program, teaches life-saving skills to recognize and support those in need. Funded by Assembly Bill 1808, this interactive training is available at no cost to California middle and high school students (13 years and older) and staff.

California students and school staff are invited to:

- > Take LivingWorks Start, a 90-minute online training, for FREE!
  - > Earn community service learning credit
- > Learn the skills to support friends, classmates, and family

You can access the FREE suicide prevention training at **start now!** or Text **start** to **888-707-0780**

# *Mental Wellbeing Education*

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Youth Mental Health First Aid



Teen Mental Health  
First Aid



Kevin Love Fund



# AB 748 California Mental Health Posters



## FRIENDSHIPS & MENTAL HEALTH

SHOW YOUR FRIENDS YOU ARE THERE FOR THEM BY ENCOURAGING THESE COPING STRATEGIES.

**Yoga**

- Take a class
- Stream a video
- Download an app

**Physical Activity**

- Take a bike
- Walk
- Stretch

**Breathing Exercises**

- Inhale for 4
- Hold for 7
- Exhale for 8

**Volunteer**

- Animal shelter
- Senior living
- Food pantry

**Find a Hobby**

- Read
- Paint
- Dance

**Hang Out with Friends**

- Go to the park
- Watch a movie
- Have a game night

**Practice Gratitude**

- Write down things you are grateful for

**Spend Time in Nature**

- Take a hike
- Watch the sunset
- Stargaze

**LOOK OUT FOR YOUR FRIENDS IF THEY...**

- Don't want to hang out anymore
- Feel sad or hopeless
- Are distracted during conversations
- Have lost interest in activities
- Have a negative view on life activities

**SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDS BY...**

- Listening to them
- Inviting them to social gatherings
- Sending them a care package
- Encouraging them to get help
- Offering to call 988 together
- Letting them know it's okay to ask for help

Insert QR Code

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES  
School Contact:

Crisis Text Line:  
Text "TALK" to 741741  
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:  
Call/text 988  
or chat at 988lifeline.org/chat

Developed by **EDUCATION**  
"LEARN WITHOUT BOUNDARIES"

## WE ALL HAVE GOOD DAYS AND BAD DAYS, BUT SOMETIMES OUR MENTAL HEALTH GETS THE BEST OF US.

Practical coping strategies for everyday well-being

✓ Spend time in nature

✓ Stay hydrated

✓ Get enough sleep

✓ Exercise

✓ Connect with others

✓ Eat healthy food

✓ Do yoga

✓ Practice gratitude

**Mental health is just as important as physical health. Just because you can't see it doesn't mean it's not there.**

- Do you often feel sad or hopeless?
- Have you lost interest in things that used to bring you joy?
- Do you have thoughts of suicide or harming yourself?
- Do you feel like a failure, a burden or feel bad about yourself?
- Do you drink or smoke to feel better?

If your ability to attend school, carry out daily activities or engage in satisfying relationships is impacted, then your mental health is asking for help.

Insert QR Code

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## Your Mental Health is as Important as Your Physical Health

Practical coping strategies for everyday well-being can help reduce unpleasant thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Find one that works for you.

I am grateful for...

Enjoy a fun activity

Breath, stretch, relax

Inhale for 4, hold for 7, exhale for 8

I can do this!

I'd like to share how I've been feeling...

INSERT QR CODE

**Signs to Watch Out For**

- Are you feeling sad, lonely, anxious, or depressed?
- Do you regularly have negative thoughts?
- Are you unable to control your emotions?
- Do you rely on smoking or drugs to feel better?
- Do you harm yourself?
- Do you just want to be alone?

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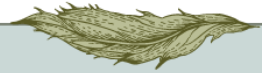
# District Mental Health Youth Leaders



**2023**

Inaugural  
Mental Health Summit

# *Community Recognition*



# *Teen Mental Health First Aid*



**Mental Health FIRST AID®**

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING®

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[Home](#) > teen Mental Health First Aid

## TEEN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) teaches teens in grades 10-12, or ages 15-18, how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among their friends and peers.

Choose Another Course ▾

# Kevin Love Fund



- Basketball player experiences anxiety attack
- Inspire people to live their healthiest lives
- Provide tools for mental and physical health
- Break the stigma around mental health
- Folks suffering have support to thrive

# *Directing Change*

## Directing Change Program and Film Contest



California

[Donate Now.](#)

To Get Started:



**READ**

the contest rules  
and FAQ.



**SELECT**

submission  
category



**REVIEW**

submission toolbox



**SUBMIT**

an Intent to Direct  
(one per team).



**UPLOAD**

Entry forms and  
release forms  
(allow plenty of  
time).



## *Optimistic Closure Activity*

One thing  
I plan to try to  
engage my  
youth



*Thank you*



**Margaret A. Sedor, PhD**

District Suicide Prevention & Wellbeing Coordinator

[Margaret.sedor@sweetwaterschools.org](mailto:Margaret.sedor@sweetwaterschools.org)