

# MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES

A safe space to be heard, supported, and guided.

## WHO ARE MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATES?

Mental Health Advocates (MHAs) promote academic success and resilience by providing intensive social and emotional support to students needing interventions. They collaborate with administrators, school staff, parents/guardians, and with community partners to implement appropriate interventions that foster regular attendance and prosocial behavior.

Participation in MHA services is voluntary and intended for students needing additional support. MHAs provide both emotional support and concrete assistance, maintaining regular communication with school staff and families to offer consultation and resources tailored to individual needs

## APPROPRIATE DUTIES INCLUDE:

- MHAs are mental health professionals who provide short-term, school-based support but DO NOT offer therapy within the school setting.
- For students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), mandated services must be delivered by school psychologists or social workers as appropriate. MHAs adhere to all FERPA regulations.
- MHA's complete risk assessments in accordance with district policies and train staff on completion of risk assessments and trauma informed practices.
- Refer families to community resources and organizations as appropriate and collaborate with community partners to provide supports for students, families, and staff.
- Train and assist staff in the implementation of policies and procedures dealing with a variety of issues.



Alice Ajango is the Mental Health Advocate at New Vista, currently in her fourth year serving the school community. She holds a master's degree in Social Work from the University of Denver with a focus on Health Equity and Wellness, and brings experience working with youth through community programs, restorative justice initiatives and outdoor leadership. Alice is passionate about supporting each student's unique well-being and serves as a trusted, non-biased adult who can help talk through challenges and connect families with helpful resources. Outside of school, Alice enjoys spending time with her partner and dog Hattie, as they take on travel and step out of their comfort zones.



Emma Olsen is in her second year at New Vista working in The Nest (the school wellness room), supporting students and families as a mental health advocate. She holds a degree in Psychology and Neuroscience with a minor in Women and Gender studies from Regis University and is currently pursuing her Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Emma brings experience as a behavior interventionist and youth treatment counselor, including prior work supporting youth across psychiatric units. She is passionate about helping her community thrive through wellness and is here to listen, support, and help families connect with resources. In her free time you may find her cozied up at a coffee shop reading with her dogs at her feet or out on a trail enjoying a long walk and some fresh air.

For more Information check out our school Counseling Page:  
<https://nvh.bvsd.org/counseling-support/counselor-information>

