MT. DIABLO
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mental Health: Accessing School and Community Supports

September 30, 2026

LCAP Goals: LCAP 2026-27

1. All students will receive a high quality education in a safe and welcoming environment with high expectations and rigorous instruction in the California State Standards that prepare them for college and career. All students will demonstrate growth meeting standards in English, English language development, and mathematics.

2. Highly qualified, culturally proficient, and responsive staff will create a safe and engaging learning environment respectful of all students' backgrounds ensuring they are college and career ready when they graduate. There will be an increase in the percentage of classrooms where standards-based instruction is being observed.

3. Families and community members will be informed, and empowered as partners with Mt. Diablo Unified to support student learning and improve student outcomes.
There will be an increase in the percentage of families reporting that they feel they are an active partner with the school in educating their child.

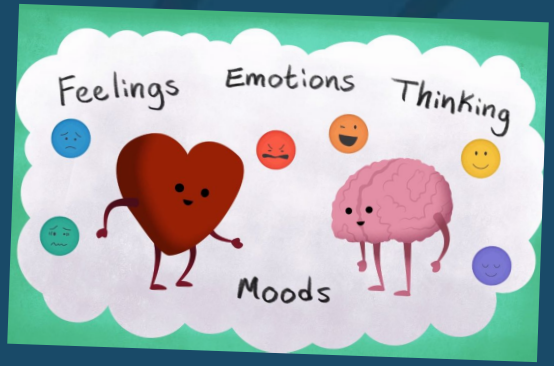
4. Focal scholars, specifically African American students, Foster Youth, students experiencing homelessness, students with IEPs and multilingual students, will experience culturally responsive practices and be provided rigorous instruction within an educational environment that builds trust and inclusive partnerships between the students, families and staff. All student groups will demonstrate growth meeting standards in English, English language development, and mathematics.

5. **All students at Crossroads High School and Olympic High School will demonstrate a 3% increase in attendance rate and a 3% increase in on-pace graduation rate by June 2027, leading to an increase of 3% in graduation rates. All students at Glenbrook Academy will demonstrate a 3% increase in attendance rate and a 3% increase in on-pace graduation rate by June 2027. All students at Sunrise will demonstrate a 3% increase in attendance rate and a 5% reduction in suspension rate by June 2027.**

What is Mental Health?

"Your emotional, psychological, and social well-being, which affects how you think, feel, and act."

— The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



Emotional
Affects how you feel

Psychological
Affects how you think

Social
Affects how you act

Understanding our Feelings

Everyday Feelings

These feelings **come and go** and are a normal reaction to what is happening in our lives.

They are always changing and don't usually hang around for too long.

Overwhelming Feelings

These feelings **hang around for a long time** and change the way we feel and behave.

Often referred to as a mental health problem, mental illness, or mental disorder.

Influences On Our Mental Health

- Culture
- Beliefs
- Identities
- Values
- Experiences
- Language
- Genetics
- Family History
- Brain Chemistry

Influences on our Students' Mental Health

- Grades
- Activities
- Peers & Social Acceptance
- Basic Needs / Household stability
- Social Media
- Physical Changes
- The Future
- Safety & Security
- Identities
- Family & other adults
- Physical, cognitive and emotional development
- Romantic relationships

Why Mental Health Matters

Handle Stress & Conflict
Impacts our ability to handle stress and conflict

Decision-Making Skills
Enhances decision-making and problem-solving skills

Physical & Emotional Safety
Influences physical and emotional safety

Independent Living
Provides access to independent living activities

Healthy Relationships
Increases healthy relationships

Academic & Career Growth
Helps us succeed academically and professionally

Promotes Self-Esteem
Builds confidence and personal value

MT. DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mental Health In Our Community

In California

In California, mental health care is a leading cause of hospitalization for youth under 18.

Source: Ca Dept of Health

In Contra Costa County

The 2019–21 California Healthy Kids Survey reported students experienced chronic sadness or hopeless during the previous 12 months:

31%

7th Graders

37%

9th Graders

46%

11th Graders

Tough Conversations Made Simple

What to Notice

Small changes can be important signals

- Changes in mood, sleep, appetite and energy
- Pulling away from family, friends and activities
- Increased irritability, worry, sadness and frustration
- Frequent physical complaints such as headaches and stomach aches
- Comments that suggest hopelessness, worthlessness or feeling overwhelmed

Remember one sign does not necessarily mean a mental health concern, look for patterns, changes and persistence.

Duration matters: Watch for patterns lasting 2 weeks or longer

What to Do

Connect before you correct
Be a safe and steady, not a perfect parent/guardian

- Make time for calm, one on one conversations
- Listen without immediately trying to solve the problem
- Ask open ended questions, “How have things been feeling lately”
- Help maintain basics, sleep, meals, movement, connection, and routines
- Partner with your child’s school
- Seek support from your pediatrician or mental health professional when concerns interfere with daily life
- If your child may be in danger seek emergency crisis support right away

What to Say

Your words can create safety and connection
Notice. Connect. Listen. Support.

“I’ve noticed you seem different lately. I’m here if you want to talk.”
“ You don’t have to figure it out yourself.”
“Thank you for telling me. I’m glad you told me.”
“That sounds difficult, what would feel helpful right now?”
“We can take this one step at time.”
“Getting help is a sign that you are taking care of you, not that something is wrong with you.”
“ Do you want me to listen or do you want advise.”

Avoid: “Just get over it”, “Other kids have it worse” or immediately jumping to solutions.

When they say: Leave me alone!

Goal: Respect their boundary while reassuring them you aren't abandoning them

- **"I hear you. I’m going to step out for a few minutes to give you space, but I’m right in the kitchen/living room when you’re ready."**
- **"Fair enough. You don't have to talk right now. I’m just going to sit here quietly for a bit—no pressure to say anything."**
- **"Got it. I’ll check back in with you in 20 minutes to see if you want to grab a snack or chat."**
- **"I’ll give you space. I just want you to know I care about you, even when things feel hard."**

When They Say: "Don't talk to me!" / "Shut up!

Goal: Address the emotion without getting defensive or starting a power struggle over tone.

- **"I can see you're really upset right now, so I’m going to stop talking. We can try again when things feel a little calmer."**
- **"I hear how mad you are. I’m going to give us both a break, but I love you too much to walk away from this topic completely."**
- **"Okay, I won't talk. I'll just write down what I was going to say and leave it on your desk so you can read it on your own time."**

When They Say: "You don't understand!" / "You don't care!

Goal: Validate their feelings rather than trying to prove them wrong

- **"You're right—I might not fully understand what it feels like for you, but I want to. I'm listening whenever you want to explain it to me."**
- **"It sounds like you feel really isolated in this. I'm sorry it feels that way. I'm here to listen, not to judge."**
- **"I hear that you feel that way. Even if we see things differently, your feelings matter to me.**

Core Principles for Families

- Prioritize Connection: Listen before offering solutions
- Stay consistent: Small check ins builds trust
- Team up early: Partner with school staff

Where Can I Go For Support?

MDUSD Schools

Community Resources & Services

Pediatrician and Mental Health Providers

School-based System of Support

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS): A whole student, data-driven approach to support academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students to promote learning and remove barriers.

TIER 1 — UNIVERSAL

80–90%

All Students

Universal instruction and support

- Teachers, counselors, admin
- Caregiver/teacher meetings & phone calls
- Campus PBIS programs

TIER 2 — TARGETED

10–15%

Some Students

Targeted supplemental interventions

- Wellness Centers
- Small Group
- 1:1 Counseling
- Community Partnerships
- MLL Social Work Specialists
- Focal Scholars

TIER 3 — INTENSIVE

5% or less

Few Students

Intensive individualized support

- Special Education (IEP)
- School-Based Therapy
- Behavior Intervention Support

California Teachers Association

MDUSD Mental Health Supports: A Continuum of CARE



Mental Health Supports at MDUSD

- Educationally Related Mental Health Services: For students with IEP's
- Counseling and Therapeutic Services (CTS): Tier 3 Students
- Mental Health Clinical Specialists: Tier 3 Students
- Master and Bachelor Level Social Work Interns: Tier 1 & 2 Students
- Fred Finch (Medi-Cal Based Support)

How to Access Supports at School

Contact any of the following for guidance and support:

Teachers

School Counselor

Principal

Vice Principal

Wellness Administrator
(Wellness Center)

CARE Team Referrals

School-Community Collaboration

MDUSD

- Wellness Centers
- School Counselors
- Child Welfare & Attendance Workers
- SOAR
- MLL Social Workers (Newcomers)
- Focal Scholars

Community

- See Something Say Something
- Employment & Human Service Department Navigator
- Contra Costa County Behavioral Health
- County AOD Services
- Cope Family Services
- Anytime, Anywhere, Anyone (A3)

A3 Crisis Response Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere

A Need for Help 24/7

If you or anyone in your family is experiencing a behavioral health crisis you can reach the A3 Miles Hall Crisis Call Center multiple ways (e.g., 911, 988, 211, community health providers, etc.). The direct number is **844-844-5544**. .

Someone to Talk To

Care begins as soon as a call to the call center is answered. Clinical staff provide support, triage crisis situations, and assess if an in-person response is needed. 75% of callers' needs are resolved via phone .

Someone to Respond

A3 staff will determine the response level that is appropriate for each situation. Mobile teams are dispatched to address the crisis and provide care,

How We Partner with A3 to Keep Our Students Safe

1. Identification & Screening

- **Safe Environment:** Schools cultivate safe spaces and safe adults on campus.
- **Incident Reporting:** Reported by student or other pathways (peer, BARK alert, See Something Say Something, tip, text).
- **Assessment:** Columbia Suicide Risk Assessment Screener is administered.
- **Immediate Care:** At-risk rating triggers call to A3; trusted adult remains with student and alerts admin/caregivers.

2. A3 Crisis Response

- **On-Site Assessment:** A3 arrives on campus to evaluate student and determine 5150 hold or safety plan.
- **Emergency Transport:** If hold is placed, A3 contacts ambulance for hospital transport.
- **Confidentiality:** School team guides emergency responders discreetly on campus.
- **Family Coordination:** Team coordinates with family during hospital transition and next steps.

3. Follow-Up & Re-Entry

- **Next-Day Check-in:** School follows up on hold outcomes, discharge date and support needs.
- **Re-Entry Plan:** Re-entry meeting held upon student return to identify safe adults, places, academic and socioemotional needs to support a smooth transition back.
- **Alternative Safety Plan:** If no hold is needed, A3 creates safety plan with next-day follow-up at school or home.
- **Facilitate Referrals**: School and community-based services and support

Partner With Your School for a Smooth Return After Hospitalization

Safety and Support Plan

Identifies trusted campus adults, safe calming spaces, coping strategies, and supportive check-ins.

Academic Support

Sets temporary assignment modifications, extended deadlines, reduced homework, or shortened schedules. .

Support Team

Identifies a team of support that may include administrators, counselors, nurses, teachers and primary contacts to monitor ongoing progress.

Re-entry Meetings

Collaborative planning creates safe, predictable, and supportive return to school after a hospitalization.

Contact your students administrator or school counselor prior to students return to campus to schedule a re-entry meeting.

Free Mental Health Resources



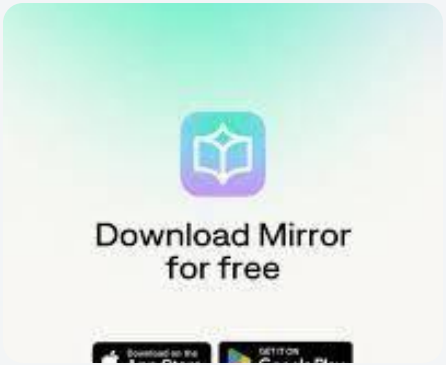
BrightLife & Soluna

Coaching & mental health support for California kids, teens & young adults.



Positive Parenting

Actionable courses and tools for thriving kids and strong families.



Mirror App

Free interactive mental wellness journal & reflection toolkit.

MT. DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

National Alliance on Mental Health

NAMI Basics

Free course for parents on youth mental health conditions and coping strategies.

Family Support Groups

Peer-led support groups connecting caregivers with shared lived experiences. .

NAMI HelpLine

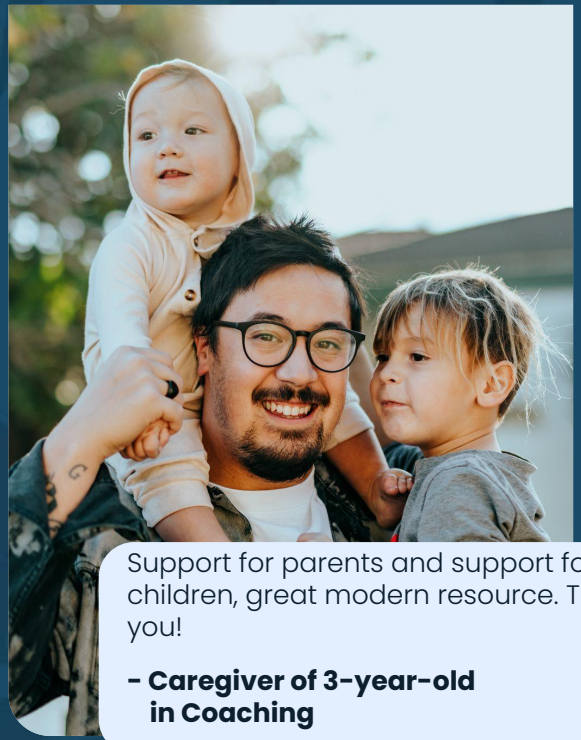
.Call 1-800-950-NAMI or text "Helpline" to 62640 for navigation support.

BrightLife Kids

A CalHOPE program by Brightline

Launched January 1, 2024, BrightLife Kids provides free behavioral health coaching to all California families with kids ages 0–17.
No costs attached. No insurance required. No referrals needed.

- Live, virtual 1:1 coaching sessions and secure chat
- Bilingual (English/Spanish) coaches + live translation services in 17 Medi-Cal languages
- Coach Specialists to manage complex needs and provide referrals to community resources
- On-demand digital tools tailored to age and concerns
- Online peer communities



Support for parents and support for children, great modern resource. Thank you!

- Caregiver of 3-year-old in Coaching

Learn more at brightlife.kids/ca

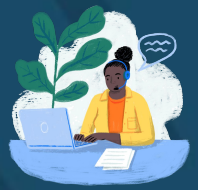
Sign up at https://brightlife.kids/MDUSD

What does BrightLife Kids provide?



Digital Tools

- Library of on-demand digital content
- Read about managing tantrums, making friends, building self-esteem, and how to get your kids to talk about their feelings



Coaching and Chat

- Live 1:1 coaching sessions from coaches with diverse backgrounds
- Send/receive chats with dedicated coach for everyday challenges between sessions
- Coach specialists help identify and navigate complex needs



Care Navigation

- Guide families to the right level of care
- Provide guidance navigating crisis and community resources, and referrals to those resources if needed



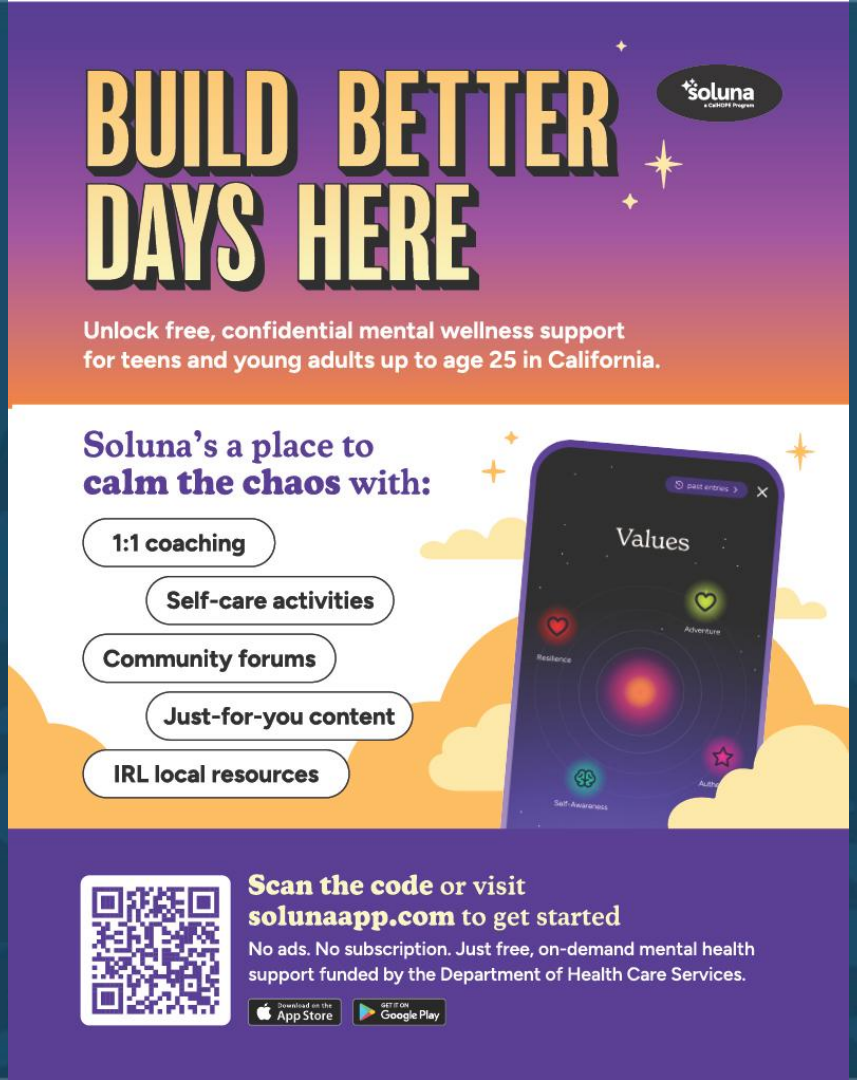
BrightLife Kids Communities

- Digital peer community for caregivers to connect, ask questions, and get coaching tips
- Moderators online 24/7 to ensure a secure, safe space

Available on web, Android, and iPhone

Sign up at https://brightlife.kids/MDUSD

Soluna Free To Teens and Young Adults 13-25



Soluna

Are Soluna Coaches real?

Soluna coaches are real humans. Never bots.

They're trained to support you and come from a range of behavioral health backgrounds. They're also backed by a clinical team behind the scenes, so you're getting consistent, thoughtful, high-quality support.

How much does it cost?

Nothing. If you're 13-25 and living in California, every feature in Soluna is completely free to use — no subscriptions, no surprise charges, no catch thanks to funding from the State of California . .

Is the platform confidential?

.Yes. Your privacy matters, and what you share is kept confidential.
The only time we may need to share information is if there's a serious safety concern (like if someone's at risk of harm), to keep everyone safe.

Available on web, Android, and iPhone

Get the app: https:solunaapp.com

Reflection & Closure

Take a moment to reflect

- What did I notice about my child that I may have overlooked?
- What is one some small thing that I can do differently this week?
- What words can I use to help my child feel seen, heard and supported?
- Who can I turn to when my child - or I - need additional support?

Reflection & Closure

Remember

- Notice the changes
- Make the connection
- Start the conversation
- You don’t have to have all the answers
- Being present, listening and reaching out can make a difference
- Seek help, partner with your school, pediatrician, and access community resources.

Q & A

Thank you!

The Mental Health & Wellness Team:

- Jessica Pozos, Assistant Director, Mental Health
- Norma Lopez, LCSW, Program Administrator: Wellness Centers, CEP & Sun Terrace
- Miriam Rubel, LCSW, Wellness Administrator