



Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

School Mental Health Resource and Training Center Helps Teachers and Students Navigate Return to Classrooms

MHANYS updates website to promote mental health and wellness as children return to in-person learning across New York State during the continuing Covid-19 pandemic

ALBANY, N.Y.; SEPT. 2, 2021 — The Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc. (MHANYS), has updated its School Mental Health Resource and Training Center to provide all New York State public and private schools with resources promoting mental health and wellness for students, educators, and families. The Center’s website is available at mentalhealthednys.org.

Students are returning to the classroom under Covid-19 protocols, many uncertainties due to the pandemic, and ubiquitous school challenges facing families and instructors. Through the School Mental Health Resource and Training Center, MHANYS offers unique resources to help students experiencing change and other situations that could affect their mental health. The Center has made available for download a series of K-12 lesson plans to help school districts develop their curriculum for mental health education. Lesson plans focus on multiple dimensions of mental health, including identification and expression of emotions, developing coping strategies, and promoting help-seeking behaviors.

“We are keenly aware of the stresses both student, teachers and families face every day, within and outside the classroom, especially when it comes to dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic,” said Glenn Liebman, CEO of MHANYS. “We have recently updated our School Mental Health Resource and Training Center to make it easier for teachers, administrators, and parents to access effective resources to teach mental health lessons and have conversations about mental wellness in their schools and at home. We are continuing to work side-by-side with school districts to help them fully share the importance of positive mental health in the lives of students and to help them shape their existing curriculum to meet student needs best in this time of increased stress and uncertainty.”

Over the past year, the School Mental Health Resource and Training Center has worked closely with school districts across New York State to offer guidance through their robust online platform and phone- and web-based technical assistance provided by a team of experts in education and mental health. The revamped online portal makes it easier for educators to access materials focused on identifying students struggling with anxiety and depression, how to engage students about mental health, and general information to promote healthy ways to ensure wellness.

MHANYS has identified four key tools to help teachers, school staff and families maintain healthy lifestyles when it comes to heading back to school:

- Conversation starters about mental health
- A-to-Z explainers on mental health topics
- Trauma-informed resources for schools and families
- ‘Healthy Young Minds’ quarterly newsletter

HEALTHY MINDS FOR A HEALTHY NEW YORK

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More information on these topics can be viewed here: <https://www.mentalhealthdnys.org/back-to-school/>

“We have found that there is a direct connection between mental health and academic performance as well as social interaction,” added Liebman. “Returning to school is naturally a stressful time, and the pandemic is not making things easier. Our goal is to help teachers, counselors, and administrators help students make the most of their education. Students struggling with stressful situations frequently are less motivated and have a more difficult time concentrating, staying on task, and taking tests. But by incorporating our mental health resources, we can assist educators in helping students reach their academic potential.”

Through various tools, including webinars, trainings, and downloadable resources, the Center provides professional development to empower educators with the expertise they need to foster the mental wellness of their school communities.

The School Mental Health Training and Resource Center is funded by grant funding from the New York State government, foundations and private donors.

School districts and educators can contact the Center to ask questions or request assistance by email at schools@mhanys.org.

About Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.

The Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc. (MHANYS) is a nonprofit organization that works to end the stigma against mental illness and promotes mental health wellness in New York State. MHANYS achieves this through training, education, advocacy and policy, community-based partnership programming, and by connecting individuals and families to help. Following its successful efforts to secure approval of a law requiring mental health instruction in schools, MHANYS has now established the [School Mental Health Resource & Training Center](#) to facilitate effective implementation of the new law. Across the state, MHANYS has 26 regional MHA affiliates that are active in 50 counties. For more information, visit <https://mhanys.org/>.

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