

**NTACT**  
THE COLLABORATIVE

# Transition Services and Contemporary Mental Health Related Issues and Approaches

An NTACT:C Webinar

# Disclaimer

The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant (H326E200003) from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

# Who Are Today's Presenters?

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# Starting out points

- A variety of topics today
- Not intended to be policy revision information
- Nor a training/certification regarding mental health counseling or psychotherapy
- We have pulled together some basic resources that we hope will be helpful to you in your work with transition aged students.

# This is Part 3 of a 3 Part Series

## Part One Topics:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)
- Vaping
- Dating and Health Boundaries
- Disordered Eating and Body Image
- Bullying and Discrimination

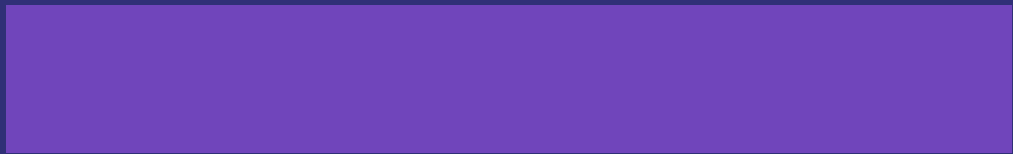
## Part Two Topics:

- Anxiety
- Suicidal Ideation
- Depression
- Self Harm
- School Violence
- Social Media and Technology

# Today's Topics

- Partnering with Families
- Supporting a Friend
- Substance Use Considerations
- Self Care

# Partnering with Families



# Partnering with Families (1)

## Best Practices / How To Respond

- ❑ Don't wait for a problem to start a relationship.
  - ❑ If the first time you introduce yourself to a student's parents is when you meet to discuss a mental health concern, your challenge, and the resistance you may meet, are that much greater.
- ❑ Don't go it alone.
  - ❑ In partnership with other providers, you can determine the best strategy for sharing your concerns with the parents, identifying resources and next steps.
- ❑ Don't assume the worst.
  - ❑ Discussing a concern with a student's parents doesn't always set up an adversarial relationship.
- ❑ Express empathy.
  - ❑ Use open-ended questions and reflective listening to help show that you understand. Express understanding related to their frustration or worries.
- ❑ Avoid arguing.
  - ❑ You're not seeking to prove a point or to be right. Instead, you are trying help the parent/guardian understand your concern and see the pros and cons of change.
- ❑ Roll with resistance rather than meeting it head on.
  - ❑ It's common and understandable for parents to resist acknowledging a mental health problem, or to feel that somehow they are being "blamed" for the situation. They do not necessarily have to agree with you.
- ❑ Acknowledge the positive attempts they and the student have made so far.
  - ❑ Your optimism can reduce the discomfort that parents may feel.
- ❑ Communicate respect.
  - ❑ Act as a compassionate and knowledgeable consultant, while respecting the family's freedom of choice and self-direction.
- ❑ Respect cultural differences.
  - ❑ Remember that different cultures have different norms regarding personal space, touching, eye contact, etc.



# Trauma Informed Care

- Don't forget about the impact of trauma on students and families
- [NCTSM: Trauma-Informed Guiding Principles for Working with Transition Age Youth: Provider Fact Sheet](#)

# Trauma Informed Considerations

- Enhance Physical and Psychological Safety
- Strengthen Relationships Between Providers and TAY
- Enhance TAY Internal Assets and Strengths
- Develop TAY External Resources and Supports
- Discuss Mutual Respect
- Build Trust

# American Psychiatric Association

→ [When Your Child Becomes a Transitional-Aged Youth: Advice for Families](#)

# APA Recommendations

- Encourage increased independence
- Remain engaged with youth's treatment team
- Get assistance (case management?)
- Encourage education or vocational pursuits
- Get support and remember you are not alone

# Partnering with Families (2)

## Additional Resources / Takeaways

- [Classroom Mental Health: Working with Families - Tips for Family Members](#)

# Supporting a Friend



# Supporting a Friend (1)

## Brief Background

- ❑ Forming and maintaining good friendships is a part of the human experience.
- ❑ So many of the resources provided today speak to the need for social support and a network of care.
- ❑ Friendships increase overall happiness, mental health and sense of belonging; they help self-confidence and self-worth and can also reduce stress.
- ❑ While it's great to form a diverse network of friends, it's important to remember that quality counts more than quantity.
- ❑ In adolescence, friendships are also crucial for developing students' problem-solving and social skills.
- ❑ Teachers and counselors can play an important role in guiding students towards positive friendships and social connections.

# Supporting a Friend (2)

## Best Practices / How To Respond: For Students

- ❑ Show your support. Express your concern and sympathy, talk openly and make sure that your friend knows that they are not alone.
- ❑ Keep your friend's trust. Don't gossip or share their personal information with others. The exception is any talk about suicide. When suicide is mentioned, it's time to tell a professional and get help!
- ❑ Ask what you can do to help.
- ❑ Reassure your friend that you still care about them. It's common for people with mental health disorders to withdraw and isolate from family and friends. Continue to invite your friend to get together to study, talk or just hang out. Even if they don't always feel like spending time together, it can be a comfort just to know that you are available, and that you care.
- ❑ Educate yourself. Learn about your friend's diagnosis.



# Supporting a Friend (3)

## Best Practices / How To Respond: For Educators

- ❑ Nurture empathy, listening and cooperation in the classroom
  - ❑ Teachers can provide opportunities for students to build and demonstrate these important social skills by facilitating classroom activities that encourage them.
- ❑ Teach students how to have difficult conversations
  - ❑ Adolescent friendships can be turbulent and a source of anxiety for students, especially those who haven't yet developed conflict resolution skills. A disagreement between students can quickly turn a good friendship bad if neither of them knows how to have a difficult conversation.
  - ❑ Teachers can play an important role in educating students about how to confidently manage issues within their friendships to ensure that their relationships grow in healthy ways.
  - ❑ Students can benefit from learning how to:
    - ❑ Discuss issues that arise with their friends, instead of avoiding or ignoring them
    - ❑ Deal with conflict confidently and effectively to minimise stressful situations and preserve connections
    - ❑ Identify toxic friendship behaviors to reduce the likelihood of mistreatment
    - ❑ Accept responsibility for problems, instead of blaming others
    - ❑ Listen to others with the intention of understanding their perspectives, instead of intending to win arguments and to always be right.

# Substance Use



# Post Legalization

- ❑ NIH and other sources - no increase in teen usage post legalization
  - [NIH: Has cannabis use among youth increased after changes in its legal status? A commentary on use of Monitoring the Future for analyses of changes in state cannabis laws](#)
- ❑ Anecdotal stats... clinic and practice work
- ❑ [ADAI: Effects of Marijuana on Mental Health - Anxiety Disorders](#)
  - ❑ “THC appears to decrease anxiety at lower doses and increase anxiety at higher doses”
  - ❑ Using marijuana to cope with anxiety may offer some short-term benefit, but well-controlled studies indicate that use of marijuana is associated with increased likelihood of substance use disorders.

# Substance Use (2)

## Brief Background

- ❑ Today's drug landscape is not the same as it used to be.
- ❑ Drug and alcohol abuse does not discriminate.
- ❑ Youth who experience a major depressive episode were twice as likely to begin using alcohol or an illicit drug, compared to youth who had not experienced a major depressive episode.
- ❑ Estimated rates of co-occurring mental illness among adolescents with substance use disorders range from 60 to 75 percent.

## Risk Assessment / What To Be Aware Of

- ❑ Experts say that a substance use problem is more likely if you notice several of these signs at the same time, if they occur suddenly, or if some of them are extreme in nature.
- ❑ Mood changes (e.g., flare-ups of temper, irritability, defensiveness)
- ❑ Poor class attendance, low grades, and/ or behavior problems
- ❑ Disregard for school rules
- ❑ Memory lapses, poor concentration, bloodshot eyes, lack of coordination, or slurred speech
- ❑ Switching friends and a reluctance to allow parents to meet new friends

# Substance Use (3)

## Best Practices / How To Respond

There are several things a teacher or school staff member can do if they suspect a student is using alcohol or other drugs, but the first step is always to talk to the student.

- ❑ Be a Good Source of Information
- ❑ Show Them You Care
- ❑ Use Personal Stories
- ❑ Help Them Build an Exit Plan
- ❑ Focus on health and brain science, not morality.
- ❑ It's never too early to talk about prevention.

## Prevention Measures

In 2017, more than one in four students aged 12 to 17 who were enrolled in school in the past year reported not having seen or heard drug or alcohol use prevention messages at school. Educators have the power to change this. Make sure your students are getting prevention messages on a consistent basis

- ❑ Pass Out Materials at Parent-Teacher Conferences or Orientation Nights— Print out materials such as the 5 Conversation Goals handout, Talk. They Hear You.® Campaign postcards, and marijuana/opioid parent brochures to hand out to parents during conferences or orientation nights.
- ❑ Present at Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Meetings
- ❑ Conduct Train-the-Trainer Programs
  - ❑ Train school counselors, community leaders, and/or parents and caregivers to help educate your community about the risks associated with underage drinking and drug use.

# Substance Use (4)

## Additional Resources / Takeaways

- ❑ [SAMHSA: What Educators Can Do to Help Prevent Underage Drinking and Other Drug Use](#)
- ❑ [Health.mil: Substance Misuse as a Coping Mechanism](#)
- ❑ [We Are Teachers: 7 Things Every Teacher Needs to Know About Teens and Drug and Alcohol Use](#)
- ❑ [Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation: Conversation Starters - How to Talk about Addiction with Students of All Ages](#)
- ❑ [Classroom Mental Health: About Substance Use Disorders](#)

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# Self-Care



# Self-Care (1)

## Brief Background

- ❑ What is self-care and why does it matter? Self-care includes all the things you do to take care of your well-being in four key dimensions – your emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual health.
- ❑ Because of the work you do, self-care and care of others becomes an important balancing act to consider.
- ❑ Self-care is essential for managing stress, preventing burnout, and mitigating compassion fatigue – all common occupational hazards for caring individuals. Self-care is also important for a sense of overall integrity, as it ensures we are “walking our talk.”
- ❑ It is also ethically mandated in many fields.
  - ❑ Section E – Intro: Professional Responsibility: ‘CRCs/CCRCs engage in self-care activities to maintain and promote their own emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being to best meet their professional responsibilities.’



# Operationally Defined & 'De-Mystified'

- Definition – Both Codes (ACA and CRC) note self-care as: **“activities to maintain and promote counselors’ own emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being to best meet their professional responsibilities”**
- *It is merely taking the time to take care of our own needs, not at the exclusion of others, but to enhance our ability to work with others.*
- Self-care is a broad term referring to any actions or experiences that enhance or maintain counselors’ well-being (Eckstein, 2001).



# Applicability

- **You the professional?**
- **Your students?**
- **Family members?**

# Posluns and Gall (2019)

Posluns, K., & Gall, T. L. (2019). **Dear mental health practitioners, take care of yourselves: A literature review on self-care.** *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 1-20.

- Most relevant and extensive lit review on self-care (in my opinion).
- **Broken down into these categories:**
  - Awareness
  - Balance
  - Flexibility
  - Physical Health
  - Social Support
  - Spirituality



# Spheres of Self-Care

## → Self-Care Assessments:

- **Therapist Aid:**  
[Self-Care Assessment \(pdf\)](#)
- **University at Buffalo School of Social Work:**  
[Self-Care Assessment \(pdf\)](#)
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):**  
[Self-Care Inventory \(pdf\)](#)



# Self-Care Plan: Many Different Formats

- **Umatter – Princeton University initiative:**  
[Princeton U\\_Matter Wellness Self-Assessment](#)
- **Reach Out.com**  
[Developing a self-care plan](#)



# Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996) Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention.

- **Csikszentmihalyi (1996) used the term “flow” to describe the experience of being fully engaged in the creative moment (p. 110).**
  - During flow, the creator is so completely involved in the creative process that concerns and fears fade from direct awareness.
- **This function of the creative experience may be helpful for professional counselors who find themselves taking ownership of their clients’ issues.**
  - Externalization can also take the form of containment or compartmentalization.

# Self-Care (2)

## Best Practices / How To Respond

- ❑ Set aside time to unwind
- ❑ Plan ahead
- ❑ Set boundaries
- ❑ Adjust your expectations
- ❑ Acquire new skills and appreciate the ones you already have
- ❑ Be kind to yourself
- ❑ Stay socially connected
- ❑ Get your body moving
- ❑ Seek mental health support if needed

## Components of Self Care

- . *Physical self-care*
- . *Emotional self-care*
- . *Psychological self-care*
- . *Spiritual self-care*

# Self-Care (3)

## Additional Resources / Takeaways

- [Webinar: Now, More Than Ever: The Ethical Practice of Rehabilitation Professional Self Care](#)
  - ❑ [Classroom Mental Health: Student Self-Care Toolkit](#)
  - ❑ [Classroom Mental Health: A Self-Care Portfolio for Adults](#)
  - ❑ [Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute \(CTRI\): 4 Key Dimensions of Self-Care](#)
  - ❑ [Unicef: Ten mental health and well-being tips for teachers](#)
  - ❑ [Classroom Mental Health: Stress Reduction Techniques](#)



# Bringing It All Together

- We provided a lot of information today; not intended to replace your structures pertaining to emergency procedures or policies.
- It was intended to generate thoughts about what you can do, and when to reach out to identified emergency related professionals and resources.
- Additionally, our intention was to connect you and your students with the concept of hope.
- Being a support for a student managing mental health issues and concerns can be one of the most important functions you play, no matter your role within the educational and rehabilitation community.

# Thoughts? Questions?

In conclusion...



# For Questions or Additional Information

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