

# Professional Learning Activity:

## Promoting Mental Health Awareness and Support in Schools




**Duration:** 1 Hour

### Learning Objectives:




To equip educational leaders, teachers, and students with strategies to promote mental health awareness and support for both students and teachers. This activity includes key mental health concepts, explores strategies for creating a supportive environment, and introduces two practical resources for use in schools. It also provides educational leaders with practical tools and strategies to support mental health in schools, fostering a healthier and more supportive environment for everyone.

### Activity Agenda:

#### 1. Introduction and Objectives (10 minutes)

- **Facilitator:** Begin with a brief introduction on the importance of mental health in schools and supporting students, teachers, and leaders. Consider one of the following videos for a multimedia introduction:
  -  Teens at Norton High School destigmatizing mental health through ...
  -  How Portland's elementary school students are dealing with mental ...
  -  A discussion on early childhood mental health awareness
- Share the objectives of the session:
  - to understand key mental health concepts,
  - explore strategies for creating a supportive environment,
  - and introduce two practical resources for use in schools.

## 2. Understanding Mental Health in Schools (20 minutes)

- **Facilitator:** Initiate a discussion about the current mental health challenges faced by students, teachers, and leaders. Cover each topic below with an optional video and discussion prompt.
  - The signs of mental health issues in students, teachers, and leaders.
    - Share the following video:  
 10 Common Warning Signs Of A Mental Health Condition
    - Discussion Prompt: What signs and symptoms of mental health issues are you seeing in your students? In colleagues?
  - The impact of mental health on health and learning.
    - Share the following video:  
 How Early Childhood Experiences Affect Lifelong Health and ...
    - Discussion Prompt: What are the most common mental health issues in our school?
  - The importance of creating a supportive school culture.
    - Share the following video:  
 Mental Health Matters PSA students to student message (60 ...
    - Discussion Prompt: How can we better support mental well-being in our daily routines?

## 3. Introduction to the Resources (10 minutes)

- **Student-Facing Resource:**
  - **Facilitator:** Introduce teachers to the student-facing ["My Mental Health Check-In" Template](#) for weekly use to encourage learners to reflect on their mental health. This template includes prompts to help students assess their feelings, reflect on what's on their mind, identify someone they can talk to, and a space to write or draw their feelings. The objective is to encourage regular self-assessment and seeking help when needed.
- **Teacher-Facing Resource:**
  - **Facilitator:** Introduce the [Teacher and Leader Mental Wellness Plan Template](#) as an optional method teachers and leaders can use to prioritize and maintain their mental wellness.

#### 4. Collaborative Planning (10 minutes)

- **Group Activity:** Break into small groups (if possible) and discuss how to implement these resources in your school.
  - Discussion Prompts:
    - "How can we introduce the ['My Mental Health Check-In' template](#) to students?"
    - "What is the best way to encourage teachers and leaders to use the ['Teacher and Leader Mental Wellness Plan'](#)?"
    - "How can we ensure these practices are sustained over time?"
  - Groups should develop a plan to introduce and integrate these resources into daily routines, such as incorporating homeroom activities for students and scheduling weekly check-ins or staff meetings for teachers.
  - Have each small group share one strategy for implementing the resources.

#### 5. Wrap-Up and Next Steps (10 minutes)

- **Facilitator:** Recap the importance of supporting mental health in schools. Encourage participants to share the resources with colleagues and students and implement the strategies discussed.
  - Action Items: Distribute the student and teacher templates electronically or in print.
  - Schedule a follow-up meeting to assess the impact of these resources and share feedback.
- **Facilitator:** Conclude the activity by emphasizing the ongoing nature of mental health support and the need for continuous improvement in creating a supportive environment for students, teachers, and leaders.