Libraries
BREAKING Mental Health STIGMA

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Goals of this Presentation:

- Participants will learn about tools and strategies to support the mental health of adolescents.
- Participants will have an opportunity to discuss trends in relation to mental health in libraries.
National Data Trends

- 1 in 5 children and adolescents has a diagnosable mental health condition
- About 75% of mental illnesses first emerge during adolescence
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for children 10-14 and 3rd leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults ages 15-24
- 90% of those who die by suicide had an underlying mental illness
- 50% of students with diagnosed mental illnesses drop out of high school
- There is an alarming increase in teens experiencing mental illnesses. Since 2007, the suicide rate among children and teens has doubled.

How many youth report mental health problems?

**Stress**
- 11% of middle school students and 37% of high school students report their life was “very” stressful in the past 30 days. The biggest source of stress among high school students was stress related to school, with 68% reporting that they worry about school “often” or “very often.”

**Depressive symptoms**
- Depressive symptoms (feeling so sad/hopeless for two or more weeks that you stopped doing usual activities) were reported by 11% of middle school students and 20% of high school students in the past 12 months.

**Self-injury**
- 6% of middle school students and 12% of high school students reported self-injury (cutting, burning, or bruising yourself on purpose) in the past 12 months.

**Suicidality**
- 11% of high school students seriously considered suicide and 3% attempted suicide in the past 12 months.
- 9% of middle school students seriously considered suicide and 2% have attempted suicide in their lifetime.
## Metrowest 2016 Study: Metrowest Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Health</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life &quot;very&quot; stressful (past 30 days)</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>35.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depressive symptoms (past 12 months)</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-injury (past 12 months)</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered suicide (past 12 months)</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted suicide (past 12 months)</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Types of STIGMA

• Mental health stigma can be divided into two types:
  1. Social stigma: characterized by prejudicial & discriminating behavior directed towards individual with mental illness.
  2. Perceived stigma or self stigma: is the internalizing by the mental health sufferer of their perception of discrimination & perceived stigma can significantly affect feelings of shame & lead to poorer treatment outcome.
STIGMA:

- Mental health disorders are treatable. Suicide is preventable. With treatment, over 85% of people suffering from mental illnesses will recover and lead healthy lives. (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015)

- Excerpt from CSS Student Essay (11th grade female):

“They think it’s genetic because my Grandmother had it too, but maybe it’s just ‘nature vs. nurture’. It doesn’t really matter to me where it came from or how I got it, I just have it. I don’t want to live but I’m too wimpy to die. I know people think it’s selfish for someone to commit suicide and I get that, but at the same time they are also being selfish for making me suffer through life. Either way someone is going to suffer. I just feel trapped. My depression has gotten worse over the years causing me to lose interest in things that would give me a reason to wake up in the morning. What really helps me at school is being able to find a place to breathe and take some space from the outside. I color or draw and listen to music and if I have work I need to make up I can work on it. There’s nothing they or really anyone can do to completely fix me, that’s going to take time, but at least these kinds of places in school have things that can help and sort of make things bearable.”
Ways to fight Mental Health Stigma:

- Be Conscious Of Language
  - Using words like crazy, psycho in everyday conversation
  - Using conditions, such as “OCD”, as an adjective
- Encourage Equality Between Physical And Mental Illness
  - Mental health conditions are diseases
- Show Compassion For Those With Mental Illness
- Become educated about mental health challenges
- Choose Empowerment Over Shame
EMPATHY - WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
Connection - SEL and EMPATHY

According to a national survey of middle and high school students:
- less than one third indicated that their school provided a caring, encouraging environment,
- less than half reported that they had competencies such as empathy, conflict resolution and decision-making skills.

By strengthening students' social support networks and their skills in self-management - SEL can help to unleash the potential within academic environments to support students' well-being and success.

(Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011)
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING:
RESEARCH SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING:

- Student’s participating in SEL programs at school showed an 11 percentile-point gain in academic achievement compared to students who did not participate in SEL programs. (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011)

- Compared to students who did not participate in SEL programs, students participating in SEL programs showed improved classroom behavior, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school. (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011)
Bringing DBT to the High School:

What is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)?

~ A comprehensive cognitive-behavioral method developed to treat problems caused by emotion dysregulation

~ DBT balances - teaching acceptance strategies & change

~ DBT teaches students emotion regulation, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness/communication, & mindfulness

~ Outcomes: Improved attendance, fewer hospitalizations, decreased SIB and SI in students, improved academic engagement & performance

~ (COURTNEY BALACCO, WHS CLINICAL COORDINATOR CSS)
IN RESPONSE TO STUDENT NEEDS: WHS LIBRARY

● Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant from MBLC (2015-2016)
  ○ Collaborations with Public Library, Youth and Family Services, Yoga instructor (trauma sensitive)
  ○ NAMI presentations
    ■ Whole School - In Our Own Voice
      ● People with lived experience discuss their illness through the lens of dark days, treatment, coping strategies, recovery and hopes and dreams
    ■ Psychology in Literature
      ● People with lived experience hold a class session and open dialog for students to ask questions
      ● Focus on Empathy, Social Emotional Learning and Breaking Stigma
    ■ Yoga, Mindfulness, Poetry Residence focused on mental health, Art collaborations, Town Read with Author with a full day at HS (assembly, writing marathon, small group w/author)
IN RESPONSE TO STUDENT NEEDS: HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY

Therapeutic approach to Literature - Bibliotherapy

- Bibliotherapy - collaborations with Clinical staff
  - Individual Students in need
- DBT/Bibliotherapy: Students themed groups - ie. Loss/Grief
  - 6 week groups based around a theme using short stories/books
    - Elements of DBT - common language for teachers and students
    - Elements of Mindfulness and yoga
- Collaborations with classroom teachers
  - Psychology in Literature -
    - Guided Inquiry Design: A framework for inquiry-based learning and design thinking that allows space for students to reflect on their learning habits and attitudes
    - Students often choose to study a mental health condition that affects a family member, friend or self
IN RESPONSE TO STUDENT NEEDS: HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY

● Collaborative Activities
  ○ Community Coloring, Mural Making, Poetry Open Mics, Poetry Installations
  ○ Poetry club - a safe/brave space for students to hold space for each other around challenging topics

● Lunch in the Library
  ○ Daily
  ○ Listening Lunches

● TAB - Joint Teen Advisory Board with WPL
  ○ Social Making - using maker philosophy to create authentic student voice opportunities:
    ■ Humans of Westborough
    ■ Kindness Project
    ■ Promapalooza
IN RESPONSE TO STUDENT NEEDS: PUBLIC LIBRARY:

- Materials and resources for teens
- Young Adult Librarian position
Youth Mental Health First Aid: Collaboration with WPL, WYFS, SYFS, WHS to bring training to community - Town employees, library employees, teachers, parents

- common mental health challenges for youth
- reviews typical adolescent development
- and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations: assess risk, respectfully listen to, support the individual in crisis, and identify appropriate professional help and other support
- Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including ADHD), and eating disorders
RESOURCES - HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY:

LIBGUIDE

- Library materials
- Training information for teachers
- Bibliotherapy information
  - Book lists
  - Personal articles and MBLC Grant
RESOURCES - PUBLIC LIBRARY:

Events:

- Exam Cram (with therapy dogs!)
- Teen Yoga & Mindfulness
- Books on mental health topics for teens & parents
Community Resources:

Youth and Family Resources

● Youth Mental Health First Aid Certification

National Alliance on Mental Illness

● Programs
● Training

Community Crisis Resources

● Riverside Trauma Center
● Wayside Trauma Intervention Services
Going Forward WHS Library:

- Expand Bibliotherapy and DBT programs
- Continue to offer programs and collaborations that contain elements of Social Emotional learning
- Continue to collaborate with clinicians within the school and beyond
Going Forward: Collaborations WHS + WPL

- Continue to collaborate with:
  - TAB
  - Community Reading Programs that focus on teens and issues that affect them
- Teen Forums and programs that provide safe/brave space for adolescent voices to be heard within the community
- Humans of Westborough - the stories of our town, captured through photography, video, interviews (A TAB project)
REFLECTION - INDIVIDUAL:

● What are you noticing in your libraries or interactions with students and parents in relation to mental health?
● Did this presentation help you to make connections to how you can support students?
● What is your takeaway?
DISCUSS and Q&A:

- SHARE YOUR REFLECTIONS
  - Small groups
- WHOLE GROUP SHARE and DISCUSS
THANK YOU!

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