



# Mental Health Education

## A Powerful Prevention Tool

### Who?

Middle School and High School Students

### When?

Mental health education will be provided in health courses offered in 7th–12th grade.

### What?

**Senate Bill (SB) 224** was approved October 2021 requiring public and charter schools that offer one or more courses in health education to include mental health instruction that advances the knowledge and skills of students in the following:

- **Defining** signs and symptoms of mental health challenges, including warning signs of common issues.
- **Promoting** mental health wellness and protective factors that include creating supportive relationships, practicing problem solving and coping skills, building resiliency, and contributing to a positive school and home environment.
- **Recognizing** evidence-based services and supports that effectively help students manage mental health challenges.
- **Identifying** ways to find and get help for oneself or others.
- **Understanding** the importance and impact of mental health on overall health and academic success.
- **Reducing** stigma surrounding mental health challenges and normalizing access to mental health resources and supports by increasing awareness and promoting acceptance.

### Why?

One in three high school students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, a 40% increase from 2009 to 2019.

Symptoms of depression and anxiety have doubled during the pandemic, with 25% of youth experiencing depressive symptoms and 20% experiencing anxiety symptoms.

Mental health is critical to overall health and well being, as well as academic achievement.

Mental health education is an effective and efficient way to increase student knowledge of key concepts and skills to help reduce stigma, increase awareness, and build lifelong healthy behaviors.

#### Overall Benefit:

To promote healthy development, which includes:

- Academic success
- Higher self-esteem
- Resilience
- Problem solving skills
- Healthy coping skills
- Social and cultural connectedness
- Healthy relationships
- Positive school and home environment
- Avoiding substance abuse and chemical dependence



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