

BUILDING ON THE POWER OF PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT TO ENHANCE STUDENT WELL-BEING



1203 Preservation Park Way, Suite 302 Oakland, CA 94612 | Tel: 510-268-1260 | schoolhealthcenters.org



Amy Blackshaw, MSW
Behavioral Health Project Director,
California School-Based Health Alliance



Amy Ranger, MPH
Director of Programs
California School-Based Health Alliance



Putting Health Care in Schools

The California School-Based Health Alliance is the statewide non-profit organization dedicated to **improving the health & academic success of children & youth by advancing health services in schools.**

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weitzman institute inspiring primary care innovation

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WHO IS IN THE ROOM?

- FQHC Partners
- CBO Partners
- Behavioral Health Providers
- Medical Providers
- School Staff
- School Administrators
- District Representatives
- Policy Advocates?
- Others?

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- Describe at least three benefits of school-based peer-to-peer mental health support programs
- Deepen knowledge about how peer-to-peer supports can strengthen and supplement existing school mental health programs
- Identify steps for planning and implementing student-driven, peer-to-peer support programs within your school environment
- Identify strategies for scalability and sustainability of peer-to-peer support programs

THE STATE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

OVER 60% OF YOUTH WITH MAJOR DEPRESSION DO NOT RECEIVE ANY MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT.

EVEN IN STATES WITH THE GREATEST ACCESS, **NEARLY 1 IN 3** ARE GOING WITHOUT TREATMENT.

2022 State of Mental Health in America. Mental Health America.

PEER-TO-PEER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS



SMALL GROUP CONVERSATION



Who were you as a middle school student?

Who was a adult or mentor or student you looked up to in school?

Who made you feel seen and how did they do that?

05:00

Emily

WHY PEER TO PEER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS?

- ◆ Youth want to talk to other youth

"We've had students that refuse to talk to anyone else - parents, adults. They want to talk to us. So we take time with them to make sure trust is established"

"We are not professionals, but it does help to have students come in here to talk about their problems in a judgement-free zone"

"Students are more likely to listen to someone else who is their age, rather than an adult. And I find it easier to confide in someone who is my friend and my age rather than a grown up in my life"

PEER LEADERS SAY.....

"Our wavelengths kind of match up more than it would with an adult, you know?"

"Peer-to-peer programs are a great resource for young people, especially for those who feel scared to approach an adult for help. For many of us, there is a barrier that can be felt between us and someone from a different generation"

WHY PEER TO PEER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS?

- ❖ Youth want to talk to other youth
- ❖ **Peer relationships are highly valued by adolescents**

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- ❖ Youth want to talk to other youth
- ❖ Peer relationships are highly valued by adolescents
- ❖ **Critical need for more mental health supports in schools**

"My experience as a Peer Counselor did in fact influence my career plans and until this day I am very grateful for that. My first two years of high school, I didn't have a sense of direction. However, In becoming a peer mentor I found my place and instantly knew that I wanted to study Psychology straight out of high school. Currently I am Working as a Behavioral Counselor at a Mental Health facility.

Vanessa Avila, Peer Counselor and Pomona High School graduate 2017

WHY PEER TO PEER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS?

- ❖ Youth want to talk to other youth
- ❖ Peer relationships are highly valued by adolescents
- ❖ Critical need for more mental health supports in schools
- ❖ **Can increase equity and diversity**

“Like, you are only supposed to talk to someone with a degree; but aren’t your friends or family the ones who should be able to support you? [Especially] if you don’t have access to therapy, or you don’t want to talk to someone you don’t know ... what if we all were better prepared to support each other?”

SOURCE: CYBHI: Youth at the Center report, California Health and Human Services Agency, 2022

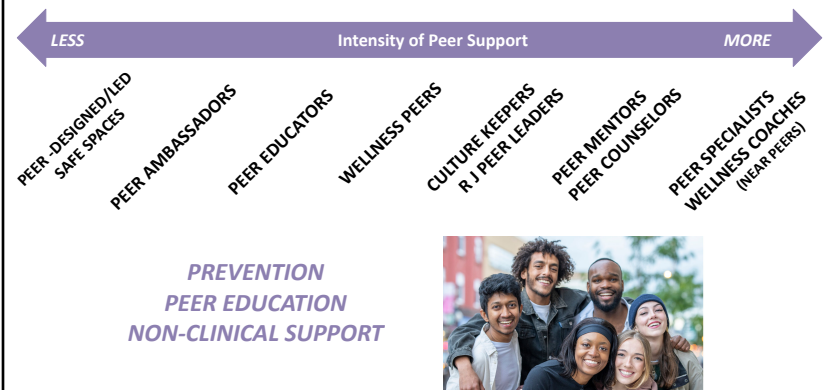
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- ❖ Youth want to talk to other youth
- ❖ Peer relationships are highly valued by adolescents
- ❖ Critical need for more mental health supports in schools
- ❖ Increase equity and diversity
- ❖ **Double impact - benefits for peer mentor and peer mentee**

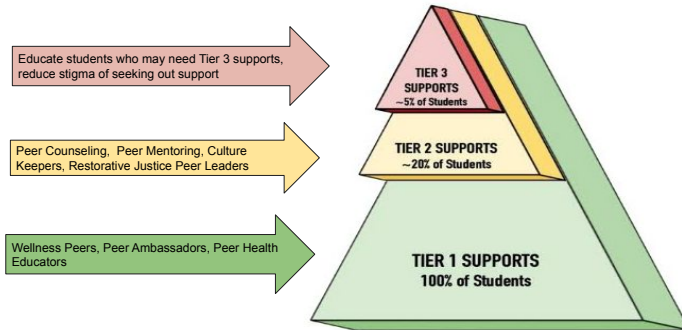
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- ❖ Increase equity and diversity
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- ❖ **Fits into the MTSS as Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions**

PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS - MODELS



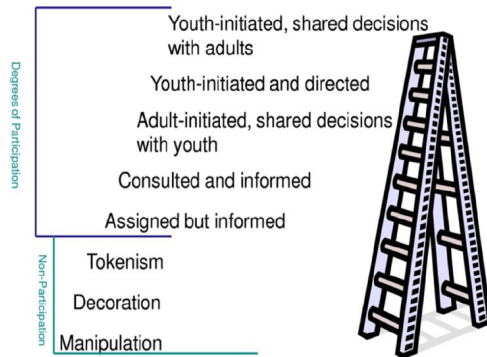
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support



PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE PEER-TO-PEER PROGRAMS

- Clinical support
- Youth input and involvement in program design, builds on youth development principles ladder
- Strong curriculum that is developmentally appropriate, continuously updated
- Social justice and race equity lens
- Strong partnerships and buy-in from school administration
- Dosage of training matches what peer work will be
- Invest in youth as leaders, providing real training on transferable skills.

Ladder of Youth Participation



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

HOW?

- ❖ No one size fits all!
- ❖ Design your "WHY"
 - ◆ Why are you starting a peer-to-peer program?
 - ◆ What need are you addressing?
 - ◆ What data can help you determine what model is the best fit?
 - ◆ Who can partner with you?
 - ◆ How will you know it's working? What does success look like?
- ❖ From Design to Implementation!

WELLNESS AMBASSADORS

NAMI On Campus



active minds



PEER-LED WELLNESS EDUCATION



WELLNESS PEERS

- ❖ Design their school's Wellness Center prior to opening
- ❖ Work in the school's Wellness Center
- ❖ Promote the Wellness Center through events and communication
- ❖ Provide mental health education to students
- ❖ Suggest ways to utilize Wellness Center tools to self regulate
- ❖ Share information about school and community resources



Dr. César Morales
County Superintendent of Schools

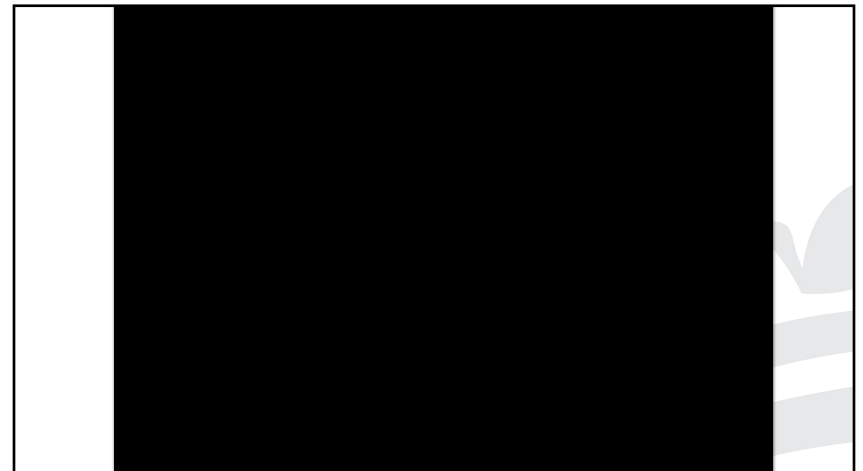


BREAK THE Stigma

BECOME A WELLNESS CENTER PEER

- PROVIDE SUPPORT TO WELLNESS CENTER PARTICIPANTS
- SUGGEST WAYS OF MANAGING SYMPTOMS
- DE-ESCALATE EMOTIONAL SITUATIONS
- REFER STUDENTS TO THE CENTER
- PROMOTE THE CENTER THROUGH EVENTS AND COMMUNICATION PLAN ACTIVITIES
- PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION TO STUDENTS
- ANNOUNCE AND PARTICIPATE IN WELLNESS CENTER WORKSHOPS
- DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION ABOUT ON-SITE RESOURCES

CONTACT THE WELLNESS CENTER COORDINATOR FOR MORE INFORMATION



PEER MENTORING / PEER COUNSELING



PHS POMONA
HIGH
SCHOOL

GHS GAREY
HIGH
SCHOOL

MPA MENTORING

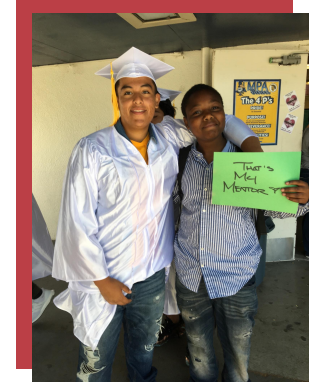


Love your self. You know.
Never be afraid to be your self.

MPA MENTORING



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Never be afraid to be your self.



Madison Park Academy Mentors - Oakland, California

"The challenging part of mentoring is the first days you meet your mentee it's a bit awkward and hard just because you don't know them and they don't know you"

"I enjoy building a bond with the mentees I have, and supporting them. I sometimes see myself in them and it's like talking to my younger self."

"I love checking in with my mentee, she's super joyful and we always have a fun time whenever we are together"

"I make sure to listen to them and ask questions to make them feel that I care because I do. I always have a positive attitude to uplift them."

"The most challenging part was building the connection with my mentee. It took some time to gain their trust and for them to know that I will be there for them."

**MPA PEER
MENTORS SAY.....**

PEER COUNSELING



“BUT THEY ARE JUST KIDS!”

Strong peer mentoring/counseling programs have:

- Very clear guidance around scope of the peer’s role
- Thorough training on red flags that need to be reported to advisor
- Expectations around documentation of all peer sessions
- Expectations around boundaries
- **Lots** of practice - role plays, scenarios, opportunities to grow
- Adequate staff time to oversee the program for quality and safety
- School staff training and buy-in

CULTURE KEEPERS - El Cerrito High School



"Some of the skills I learned were validating feelings, conflict resolution, non verbal communication, body language, open vs closed ended questions, active listening, etc."

"I learned patience, humility, empathy, and the importance of looking at a situation from all points of view."

"Communication, empathy, problem solving, and discernment"

"Communication skills, ability to listen, reading body language/ tone of voice, summarizing to the speaker, case managing, confidentiality are all skills I learned as a peer counselor"

"I learned how to relate to my peers in a way that also kept them safe and made them feel heard."

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SKILLS YOU LEARNED?

SKILLS OF PEER LEADERS

- ❖ Empathetic listening
- ❖ Identifying emotions
- ❖ Recognizing and reflecting strengths
- ❖ Stress management tools
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Relationship-building
- ❖ Organizational skills
- ❖ Social awareness
- ❖ Respect for others
- ❖ Social Engagement
- ❖ Goal setting
- ❖ Paraphrasing
- ❖ Self-confidence
- ❖ Self-efficacy

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT LEADERS

- ❖ Invest in training for schools and CBOs to bring P2P programs to schools.
- ❖ Implement P2P support as part of all schools' Tier 1 intervention
- ❖ Fund programs and partnerships to scale P2P programs
- ❖ Support research and evaluation efforts on Youth P2P programs
- ❖ Consider P2P a critical strategy for improving/diversifying our mental health workforce
- ❖ Commit to co-creating programs with youth, and centering youth voice and experience

CALIFORNIA'S INVESTMENT CHILDREN & YOUTH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE (CYBHI)

- 5-year, \$4.7 billion dollars
- to enhance, expand and redesign the systems that support behavioral health for children and youth 0 -25.
- invitation to think differently about what what supports student mental health and well-being, and by whom it is delivered.



WELLNESS COACH WORKFORCE

- ❖ New Medicaid provider type in California
- ❖ Increase the state's capacity and grow a larger, more diverse behavioral health workforce with lived experience
- ❖ Expansion of non-clinical mental health support and wellness strategies
- ❖ LEAs and community partners will be able to hire wellness coaches and get reimbursed through Medicaid

NEXT STEPS

- ❖ Peer-to-Peer Mental Health Supports Webinar Series next school year
- ❖ Peer-to-Peer Mental Health Supports Learning Collaborative
- ❖ Convening of CA Peer-to-Peer Leaders at our Youth-to-Youth Conference
- ❖ Resources, Toolkits and Online Community



BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

What is an idea/inspiration that you heard today that you want to take away with you?

- ❖ Takeaways
- ❖ Wonderings, Questions, Curiosities
- ❖ Ah ha moment!





Thank you!

Appreciation to the youth who shared their words and voices in this presentation!

Carmen, Vanessa, Jocelyn, Hope, Aaron, Sincere, Daniel, Lena, Myrron, Na'Taisha, Charlie, Laneiyah, Nohemy, Emily, and many many more!

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Gracias

謝謝

Thank you

Cảm ơn

Salamat

Amy Blackshaw, MSW
ablackshaw@schoolhealthcenters.org

Amy Ranger, MPH
aranger@schoolhealthcenters.org

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CME and CE Information

In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by the School-Based Health Alliance and Moses/Weitzman Health System, Inc. and its Weitzman Institute and is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

Through Joint Accreditation, credits are also available under the following bodies:

- American Academy of PAs (AAPA)
- American Dental Association's Continuing Education Recognition Program (ADA CERP)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)
- Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR)

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