Engage & Empower:
Youth-Driven Mental Health Outreach in the Online Era

Meredith Nechitilo, MPH

CME and CE Information

In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by 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)

JOINTLY ACCREDITED PROVIDER™
INTERPROFESSIONAL CONTINUING EDUCATION

1

Financial Disclosures

- With respect to the following presentation, there have been no relevant (direct or indirect) financial relationship between the presenters/activity planners and any ineligible company in the past 24 months which would be considered a relevant financial relationship.
- The views expressed in this presentation are those of the presenters and may not reflect official policy of Moses/Weitzman Health System, Inc. or its Weitzman Institute.
- We are obligated to disclose any products which are off-label, unlabeled, experimental, and/or under investigation (not FDA approved) and any limitations on the information that are presented, such as data that are preliminary or that represent ongoing research, interim analyses, and/or unsupported opinion.

2

How would you describe your perfect night's sleep?
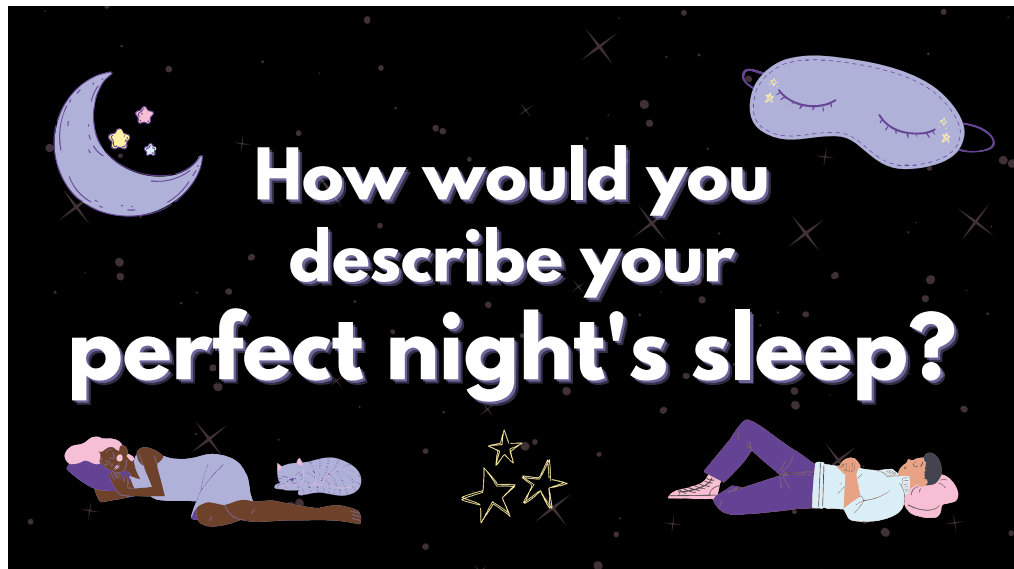
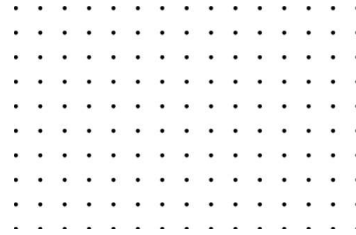# NEW YORK PRESBYTERIAN'S SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTERS (SBHCS)

7 SBHCs

23 SCHOOLS

~8000 STUDENTS K-12

NewYork-Presbyterian

Adolescent wellness programming

Health promotion & engagement campaigns

Classes, workshops, & small groups

Support for parents & school staff

Bridging to community resources

Peer education (NYPeers)

LET'S GO BACK TO THE BAD DAYS.

(Sorry.)

What did the Peers tell us about teen mental health during the pandemic?

#1: Mental health concerns are often minimized and invalidated by parents, peers, and even oneself.

Sometimes friends don't do it intentionally, because I know I've done this in the past. I'd be with my friends and something would happen and I'd make some type of joke about depression or anxiety. I wouldn't do it to be like, "Oh, you're depressed, ew." I would just joke around, and there was probably someone there who was depressed who would hear this and be like, "I feel uncomfortable, you just put me down." I feel like some of us do it without realizing it or we do it unintentionally.

— AD

I hate when people belittle me and my feelings. I'm not wrong for feeling how I feel.

— MG

Whenever I would open up, my mom would invalidate my feelings, so I was like, "Okay, let me not go to her anymore." Then I started seeing that it started to affect me, not just mentally, but also the way that I interacted with people. I was very closed off, I didn't want to open up to them, because I was afraid that if I told them something, they would either use it against me or invalidate the feelings that I had and make me feel like I was insane for feeling those feelings or even thinking of that thought in the first place.

— DL

#2: There are layers of stigma around mental health concerns - and around accessing care for them.

[Parents] always hit you with the, "Oh, I went through this, that, and I'm still here, I'm still fine. You're over here crying over nothing." They always want to make it seem like what they went through is bigger than what you're going through, and it just makes you feel like, oh, wow, maybe I'm taking this too far.

— AD

Parents do this thing where it's like, "Oh, but you should be grateful because other people have it worse," or they'll be like, "Oh, back in my day it wasn't like that."

Times change. How things were in your time is not how things are in our time.

— GM

I can't talk to [my mom] about things. She's always like, "Oh, you can tell me anything, I'm your mom, you should be comfortable with me," all that. But then at the end of the day, once you approach them, it's like, "No you don't, you don't feel this way, you're just being dramatic, it's your friends who are making you feel this way or act this type of way."

— SC

I think it may be harder for parents to reach out to their child especially when that parent is an immigrant. I know that some Hispanic parents don't believe in mental health and may deem their child as lazy because it is something that has a stigma around it.

— CV

[People say] psychologists are just for crazy people.

— AM

Society makes it seem like if you're depressed or you have some type of mental health issue, that you're broken, that something is wrong with you, when in reality it's so normal. And some of these people who think [that way], they're probably going through [the same things].

— AD

That stigma that having a therapist means you're crazy just sucks. I really enjoyed having one but I was told [by others] that I was fine so I left it at that [and stopped seeing them].

— MG

Guys feel like they can't go to their friends about weak spots in their lives, because they feel like it makes them look weak. Guys are allowed to feel, they're allowed to have these emotions, and society teaches them that they're not, and that's something really wrong. That's something we have to fix, because guys are sometimes the ones who more quietly take it. There's guys who you won't notice that they're hurting, and then those are the same guys that commit suicide.

— GM

My friends, my family, my church — they kept telling me to pray. "Go to God! If you need better mental health, go to God!" I definitely needed [therapy], and it took me a while, because there's a bad stigma in the church saying how if you need to go to a therapist then you're weak in the Lord, like you're not praying enough or you're not being spiritual enough. So I always felt like if I went to a therapist, that was saying I wasn't strong enough in my faith. It took me a while to get over that bad stigma and stereotype [to] go help myself.

— DL

#3: Destigmatizing mental health concerns, normalizing care-seeking, and facilitating access to care are all key to meeting teen mental health needs.

Asking for help is hard.
— SD

If it's hard to ask a teacher for help with a [homework] problem, it feels awful to ask help for a big issue like mental health.
— AK

As a teen, sometimes it's harder to look for somebody who can listen to you and understand you and give you the right advice.
-AG

**Q: What makes it hard?
What's the concern or fear there?**

Being disregarded.
— EM

Some people don't want to feel like a bother.
— LP

I feel like I'll be annoying to the person I'm talking to.
— MG

Not being taken seriously.
— CV

Sometimes it's just a fear of not being listened to.
— CR

I don't talk about my feelings with my parents, you know, we don't have that relationship. Same thing with my friends. And I feel like that's a big issue that we've got to do something about. I feel like it's important to talk about teen mental health because it follows you into adulthood, and that really impacts you, and if you have kids it's going to impact your kids, and then it's just going to keep on going. It's going to have a huge domino effect. So we should start now.
— AD

I don't think we have more mental health issues than those before us, I think there are many of us who are brave enough to start the conversation and to normalize mental health issues, which makes more people open up.
— AK

[It's important to] destigmatize the conversation around mental health, and also make it more accessible, so that everyone knows mental health is important and you don't have to be going through depression. You can go through hard times, and it's okay to get a therapist and lean on someone else.
— SD

Action steps to meet teen mental health needs

1. **Destigmatize** and **validate** mental health concerns
2. **Normalize** care-seeking
3. Provide **skills** to support mental and emotional health
4. Create **opportunities** to connect to care

Okay.
Now what?

1. Online
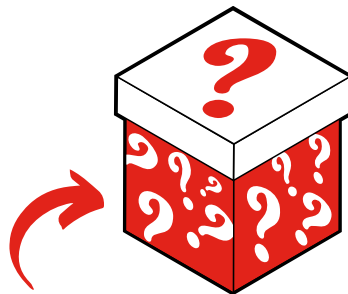
Mystery program

1. Online
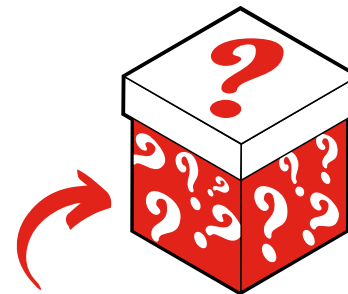
2. Social

Mystery program

1. Online

2. Social

3. Sleep
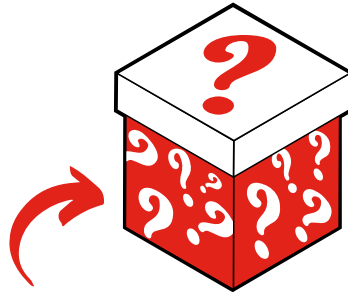
Mystery program

What are the SLEEP RULES?

Threading the needle

Addresses key needs

Constructive

Credible

Evidence-based

Non-prescriptive

Fun

Approachable

Flexible

Why participate in the SLEEP CHALLENGE?

1 Learn **tips and skills** for getting better sleep

2 Get **support** from healthcare professionals and other teens

3 Earn the chance to win **prizes** through weekly raffles

4 Discover the many **health benefits** of getting better sleep

Click here to learn more and register for the Sleep Challenge!

I'M A #SLEEPCHALLENGE TEAM CAPTAIN

Join the Challenge: bit.ly/SleepChallenge2021

READY FOR A RESET?

JOIN THE #SLEEPCHALLENGE

"I want to wake up in a good mood and stop falling asleep during class."

"My sleep has been all over the place recently."

"I want to fix my sleep so I can start doing well in school again."

"I've been having a hard time falling asleep at night."

"My sleep has been really bad because of my mental health."

"I want to fix my sleep schedule so I'm not a zombie."

SOUND FAMILIAR?

These are some of the reasons your fellow students are joining the #SleepChallenge. Join the Challenge today and get your sleep schedule back on track.

Daily sleep journal

Weekly Zoom workshops

C_____ 37:17
haven't had a good night sleep in over a year

G_____ 37:18
insomnia is kicking my behind

A_____ 37:19
same

J_____ 37:21
cant sleep at all

M_____ 38:22
I sleep around 1 or 3 and miss my first class at 8:30 🕐

N_____ 54:26
welll my body is always like i would like to SLEEP but when i try its like nah nevermind and im just sitting there like BRUHH

N_____ 38:41
i thought I was the only one sleeping bad

C_____ 49:25
the reason I stay up is because that's when I have all my free and alone time

C_____ 49:33
at night

J_____ 49:35
^^^

Y_____ 49:36
exactly

S_____ 49:37
exactlyyy

F_____ 49:37
exactly ^^

A_____ 49:42
fr

S_____ 56:44
People say to not use screens for an hour before bed but thats my only time to do it

S_____ 56:46
^^

A_____ 56:51
^^^

A_____ 56:53
yeppp

h_____ 36:17
I feel miserable, I feel like I'm literally forcing myself to stay up. It's as if I'm fighting myself

The Challenge's challenges

Teamwork made the dream work
(with much effort)

Limited access to students

Recruitment challenges

Variable participation

Team cohesion
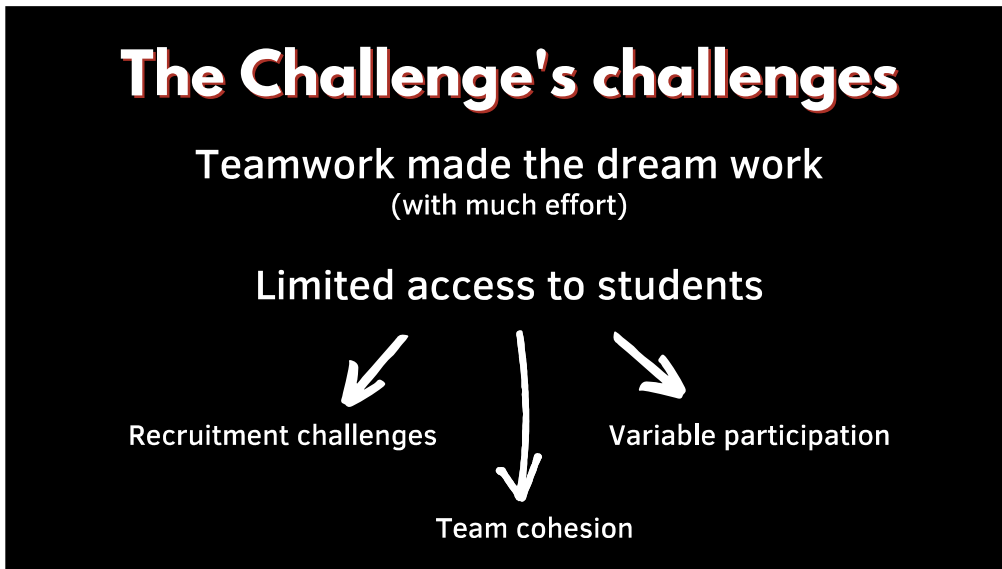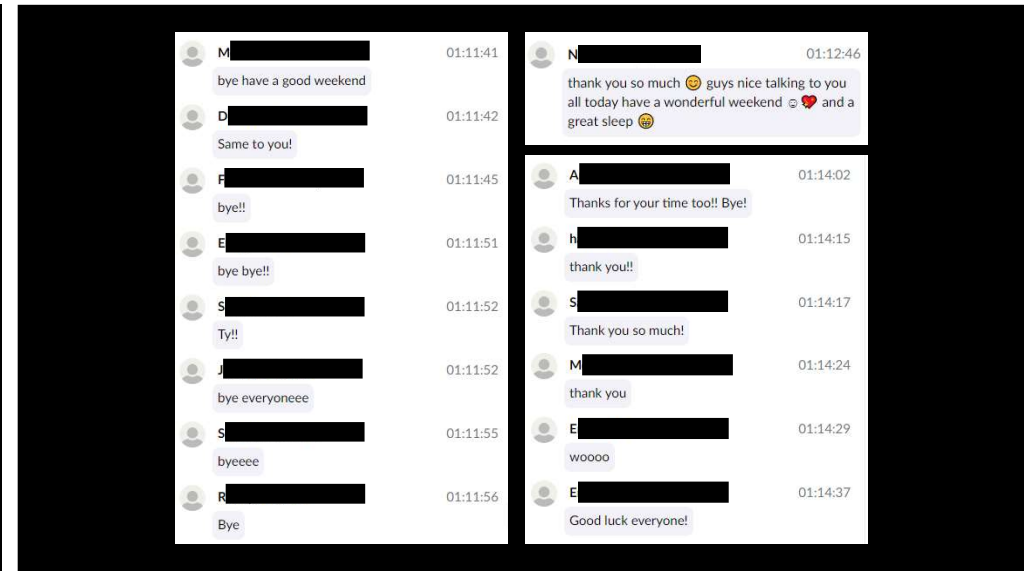
Did we accomplish our action steps?

✓ **Validated** sleep issues and related concerns (e.g., stress, feeling detached or adrift, "pandemic snacking")

✓ **Normalized** care-seeking

✓ Provided **skills** to support healthier sleep

✓ Created **opportunities** to connect to care

Gratitude Challenge 2021

I'm grateful for my dad being a single parent and still showing the love and safety I need. –D.H.

I'm grateful for finding the right amount of money to buy a hot chocolate! -J.L.

I am grateful for clothes fresh and hot out of the dryer. -E.M.

I'm grateful for the gift of writing that I have and how I am able to speak my opinion. -L.A.

I'm grateful the train was on time today. M P

I'm grateful for being in school in person. -A.V.

NewYork-Presbyterian

Gratitude Challenge 2022

I'm grateful to my grandma for taking me in when my mom passed away. - I.M.R.

I'm grateful that I woke up and was able to get my day started without hearing or seeing anything negative that might ruin the good day I had planned ahead of me. - T.B.

I'm grateful for communication. I don't know where I'd be without it. -J.J.

I'm grateful for safe travels. - J.B.

TODAY I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE ABILITY TO FEEL WHETHER IT'S SADNESS, HAPPINESS, SHOCK, AND OTHER EMOTIONS IN BETWEEN - I AM THANKFUL TO BE ALIVE AND TO FEEL. -J.R.

I AM GRATEFUL FOR MY DAD, WHO GOT ME A SANDWICH WHILE I WAS SICK. - R.D.

NewYork-Presbyterian

Gratitude Challenge 2023

I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE SUN BEING OUT TODAY. J.N.

I am grateful for everything especially EARTH! - D.A.

I AM GRATEFUL FOR VIDEO GAMES. -J.O.

I'M GRATEFUL TO KEEP GOING. -J.J.

I'm grateful for my friends that are there for me when others aren't. - W.P.

I AM GRATEFUL FOR MY MOM AND THE FACT THAT SHE ENSURES THERE IS ALWAYS FOOD IN THE FRIDGE. -D.R.

NewYork-Presbyterian

I am grateful for this gratitude challenge!!

Grateful for this challenge making me more appreciative of the little things.

I am grateful to be part of the gratitude challenge.

I'm grateful for the Gratitude Challenge. It helps remind me to stop and think about the things I'm grateful for.

I am grateful for this gratitude challenge that is prompting me to focus on what is good.

Self-Care Month

Month-long campaign in January to provide practical self-care tips for youth and staff struggling with stress, burnout, and seasonal depression

NewYork-Presbyterian

Self-Care Month (slide 1)

ADD SOME SUNSHINE TO YOUR PLATE!

One reason we tend to feel more tired and sad in winter is that the short, cloudy days mean that many of us are low on the Vitamin D we usually get from the sun.

Read on to learn about 5 foods rich in vitamin D that can help balance you out!

EGGS
Keep the yolk - it has all the Vitamin D!

MUSHROOMS
Look for "UV-treated" or "enriched with Vitamin D" on the label.

FORTIFIED CEREAL
Many breakfast cereals have added Vitamin D and other important nutrients.

AND ONE LAST THING...
Food has a big impact on how we feel physically & mentally. If you're not feeling great about your eating right now, your School-Based Health Center can support you in figuring out the plate that's right for you.
Make an appointment!

NewYork-Presbyterian

Self-Care Month (slide 2)

What brings you relief when you're feeling really stressed? (Select all that apply.) / ¿Qué te trae alivio cuando te sientes realmente estresado/a? (Selecciona todas las que correspondan.)

- Talking with someone / Hablando con alguien
- Taking a shower or bath / Tomar un baño
- Practicing my skin or hair routine / Practicando mi rutina de piel o cabello
- Taking a walk / Dando un paseo
- Writing / Escribiendo
- Reading / Leyendo

Shh...listen. What kinds of sounds can you hear, right now? (Select all that apply.) / Shh...escucha. ¿Qué tipo de sonidos puedes escuchar ahora mismo? (Selecciona todas las que correspondan.)

- People sounds (ex: talking, laughter, footsteps) / Sonidos de personas (ej: conversaciones, risas, pasos)
- Nature sounds (ex: rain, wind, animals) / Sonidos de la naturaleza (ej: lluvia, viento, animales)
- Technology sounds (ex: music, TV, keyboard typing) / Sonidos tecnológicos (ej: música, televisión, tecleando)
- Mechanical sounds (ex: street traffic, heating vent, subway train) / Sonidos mecánicos (ej: tráfico en la calle, ventilación de calefacción, el tren)

Where do you feel most at peace? / ¿Dónde te sientes más en paz?

- In nature - it helps put everything else in perspective / En la naturaleza - ayuda a poner todo lo demás en perspectiva
- In your bedroom - it's the most personal and private space you have / En tu cuarto - es el espacio más personal y privado que tienes
- In the shower or bath - ahhhhhhhh... / En la bañera - ahhhhhhhh...
- Out and about - the energy of the city makes you feel part of something / Fuera de casa - la energía de la ciudad te hace sentir parte de algo

When do you feel most relaxed? / ¿Cuándo te sientes más relajado/a?

- By yourself / Estar solo/a
- In a crowd / Con mucha gente

NewYork-Presbyterian

Self-Care Month (slide 3)

NEW YEAR, SAME STRESS.

A new year is here, bringing with it all the possibilities of the future ahead.

(Please, 2023: be gentle. We've earned it.)

Still, our stressors and anxieties have a way of following us onto the new calendar page. In fact, for a lot of people, January is one of the most stressful times of year.

HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS:

Mindfulness techniques have been scientifically shown to reduce stress and anxiety and improve emotional wellbeing.

Practicing one of these techniques can help you carve a little "me time" out of even the most stressful situations.

4-7-8 BREATHING
Great for managing stress and for relaxing into sleep at night!

1. Find a place to sit or lie down comfortably.
2. Release a long exhale through your mouth to empty your lungs.
3. Close your mouth and inhale through your nose for 4 seconds.
4. Hold your breath for 7 seconds.
5. Exhale strongly through your mouth, making a whoosh sound, for 8 seconds.
6. Repeat 3 times.

5 SENSES GROUNDING
A super flexible option for taking a step back from anxious or racing thoughts.

First, recognize 5 things you can see right now.
Now, 4 things you can touch.
Now, 3 things you can hear.
Now, 2 things you can smell.
Finally, 1 thing you can taste.

Repeat whenever you need to need to carve out a moment of calm for yourself.

5 FINGER BREATHING
Combines mindful touch and breathing to put calm back within your grasp.

1. Stretch your hand out like the picture.
2. Starting with your thumb, use 1 finger of your other hand to slide up each finger (breathing in) and down the other side (breathing out).
3. Continue tracing up (breathe in) and down (breath out) each finger until you reach the other side - then go back the other way.
4. Repeat 3 times, or as many times as you like!

Not every technique is going to be the right fit for every person, so we encourage you to experiment and find out which of these mindfulness practices work best for you!

Bring it on, 2023. You've got this.

And students, remember that you can always make an appointment at your School-Based Health Center for support in coping with stress.

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT!

NewYork-Presbyterian

Sleep Challenge (slide 4)
(take 4)

THE CLASSIC   THE SPOON   THE STARFISH

No matter which way you sleep, make it count.
#SleepChallenge2024
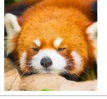
THE ADVENTURER   THE SIDE-SADDLE   THE SOUTH POLE

Learn more and sign up today!

NewYork-Presbyterian

#SLEEPCHALLENGE SIGN-UP FORM

Week 1: Give it a Rest

Week 2: Rise & Shine

Week 3: Phone hacks

Characteristics of mental/emotional health programming

1 Approachable

2 Flexible

3 Skill-based

4 Participant-led

What is "youth-driven" programming?

"As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence."

– bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*

"I cannot think *for others* or *without others*, nor can others think *for me*. Even if the people's thinking is superstitious or naïve, it is only as they rethink their assumption in action that they can change. Producing and acting upon their own ideas – not consuming those of others – must constitute that process."

- Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Takeaways

There is power in the collective

Everyone is the hero of their own story

Look for what you *can* do

People change by feeling good

Thank you!
Any questions?
men7007@nyp.org