Exploring Mental Health

Presented by: The BEM Unified Mental Health Team
Today’s Agenda

● Introductions
● Mental Wellness
  ○ Mentally Healthy
● What can Impact Mental Health
  ○ Risk Factors
● Mental Illness
  ○ Depression
  ○ Anxiety
● Signs of Self-Harm
● What Can be Done to Help
  ○ Resiliency Factors
● Self-Care
UMHT Members

Social Worker: Provides mental health support and is the link between the school, student, family, and community. Referred by counselor for targeted and intensive interventions

Counselors: Works with all students on Academic, Career, and Personal Development. Primary contact for all students.

Psychologist: Provides behavioral and mental health support; Referred by counselor for targeted and intensive interventions

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Michelle Black
UMHT Members

**Student Assistance Specialist:** Works with at-risk students and those with substance use and/or mental health concerns

**Nurse:** Provides care for acute medical concerns and manage care for chronic conditions at school.

**Administrators:** Provide leadership and support to entire school community, as well as communicate and promote UMHT services and initiatives to entire school community.

Kim Hager

Isabelle Tracy

David McKenzie

Ryan Hitchman

Felecia Lewis
Why UMHT?

Questions and Common responses:

How are you feeling? Exhausted, Distracted, Lonely, Worried, Overwhelmed, Empty, and Hopeless.

Keep in mind there are students who feel as though: They have no friends, are having trouble balancing life, and are unsure of who they can talk to when they have a problem.

Our students feel as though BEMS needs to focus our attention/help with managing stress, social skills and understanding mental health.
Why UMHT continued

According to our check-in:

BEMS are still unsure or could not name one adult in the building who they felt they could talk to about their mental health nor felt as though they could talk to their parents about social-emotional issues.

Check-in indicated that there has been a significant amount of students who were concerned about a peer and not sure what to do.

Additionally students were unsure of healthy ways to handle their own stress and/or anger.

Worry and Stress was the number one requested topic for small groups.
Mental Wellness

Mentally Healthy

- What does a person who is mentally healthy look like, act like, feel like?
- What kind of things do they do?
Positive Mental Health Examples

- **Health** - Work out, eat healthy, don’t drink/do drugs, enough sleep, safe choices
- **Job/School** - Do their best, pay attention, care about performance
- **Faith** - Have a belief system, maybe attend services/youth group
- **Friends** - Have at least a few friends, friends are positive influence
- **Interests/Sports** - Have some interest they care about outside of just attending school, balance
- **Family** - Good communication, help each other, spend time together
- **Self-Worth** - Make safe choices feel ok about self, surround self with good influences.
Risk Factors

- Academic Difficulties
- Lack of Positive Role Models
- Family Factors
  - Economic Difficulties
  - Poor Parental Relationships
  - Divorce
- Gender/Ethnic Discrimination
- Exposure to Violence and Crime
- Physical and Psychological Abuse
- Stressful Life Events (e.g., death of a loved one)
- Gang Involvement
- Developmental Factors
Depression and Anxiety

- Two of the most common emotional problems impacting teens are depression and anxiety
  - What does depression look like?
    - Irritability
    - Diminished interests
    - Change in weight/eating
    - Sleep disturbance
    - Fatigue/low energy
    - Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt
    - Social withdrawal
    - Thoughts of or plans of death
    - Substance use
Depression

- So, when does this go from being everyday teenage ups and downs or moodiness to depression?
  - **Symptoms** -- several
  - **Severity** -- causing impairment in life functions
  - **Duration** -- at least two weeks

3.2% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 1.9 million) have diagnosed depression
Anxiety

● What does Anxiety look like?
  ○ Restlessness/on edge
  ○ Easily fatigued
  ○ Difficulty concentrating/mind going blank
  ○ Irritability
  ○ Sleep disturbance
  ○ Panic attacks
  ○ Phobias -- intense and unreasonable fears
  ○ Substance Use
  ○ Familial trait

7.1% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 4.4 million) have diagnosed anxiety
Anxiety

- So, when does this go from being everyday teenage ups and downs or moodiness/stress to anxiety?
  - Severity - causing impairment in social/school or other important areas
  - Duration - for more days than not for previous 6 months
  - Prevalence - one in 20, some kinds more prevalent in females
Self-Harm

- 90% percent of people who engage in self harm begin during their teen or pre-adolescent years.
- Females comprise 60 percent of those who engage in self injurious behavior.
- Children and young people who self harm usually do so as a way of dealing with overwhelming emotions. This could be due to:
  - Bullying
  - Pressure to do well in school
  - Grief
  - Difficulties with family or friends
Signs of Self Harm

- Unexplained cuts, bruises, or burns
- Keeping themselves fully covered at all times, even in hot weather
- Low mood, fearfulness, or lack of motivation or interest in anything
- Wearing long sleeves even in hot weather
- Keeping sharp object on hand

- About 50 percent of those who engage in self mutilation begin around age 14 and carry on into their 20's.
- Approximately two million cases are reported annually in the U.S.
Self-Harm in Students

**What to do**

- Refer students to school mental health professionals (school counselor, school social worker, school prevention specialists, or school psychologist)
- Offer to go with the student to speak with someone in the school counseling office
- Understand that this is the student’s way of dealing with internal pain.

**What to NOT Do**

- Do not handle it on your own
- Do not judge the student even if you don’t understand their behavior
- Do not say anything to cause the student to feel guilt or shame, e.g. “Why did you do this to yourself?”, “You need to stop right now.”
What we do at Belmont Ridge

Self-Harm: LCPS has protocol and action plans for self-injurious behaviors and suicidality. Trained staff will meet with the student(s) to conduct the C-SSRS (Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale)

- More information: [https://www.lcps.org/Page/1817](https://www.lcps.org/Page/1817)

Gaggle Reports: Administrators and counselors receive gaggle report notifications when students enter key words on their chromebook, referring to self-harm, violence, etc. Trained staff or administrators meet with students to discuss the gaggle report and conduct the C-SSRS if necessary.
How to help your child

● Show them that you trust them
● Learn their triggers
● Have them write you an email or letter if they don’t want to talk
● Build their confidence and self esteem
● Speak with the school and your child’s doctor
● Recognize your own needs and get support!
Tools for Resiliency

1. Building relationships with supportive/caring adults
2. Promoting a Positive Environment
3. Provide them with Information/Life Skills
4. Encouraging Strong Ties to Family
5. Taking care of yourself

resilience
(noun) re-sil-i-ence

"...the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors."

"It means ‘bouncing back’ from difficult experiences."

Source: American Psychological Association
More tips...

- Being careful not to over schedule
- Nourish and move your body
- Get adequate sleep (at least nine hours)
- Breathe deeply
- Do something fun
- Connect with others
- Focus on the positive
- Shut off screens 30 minutes before bed
MYTH - Discussing suicide & self-harm with your child will put that idea in their head.

Discussing suicide & Self-Harm with your teenager does not “put the idea in their head,” but sets you up as a person with whom they can discuss anything with.

MYTH - Self-Harm is considered a suicide attempt.

Rather, this type of self-injury is a harmful way to cope with emotional pain, intense anger and frustration.