

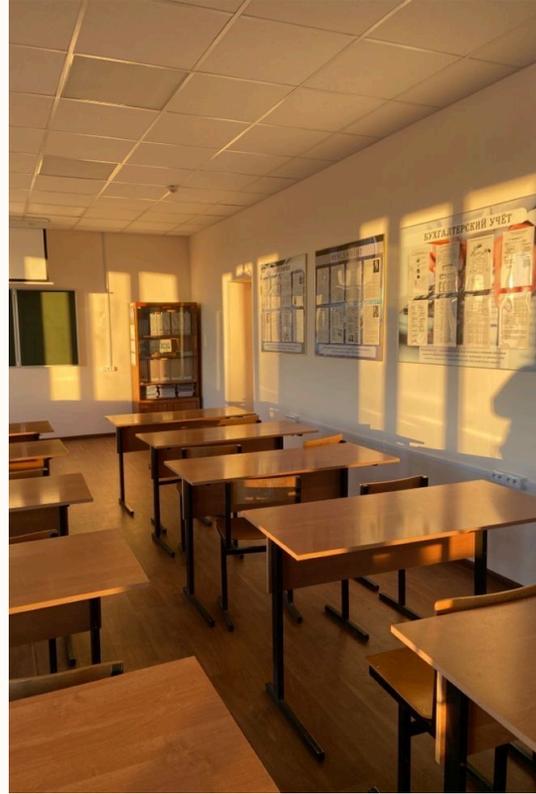
Talking Tazewell

August 2025, vol 7 The Wellness Playbook

Welcome to our August edition of The Wellness Playbook! With the return of a new school year, comes a new opportunity to recognize how deeply mental health and education are connected.

Whether it's stress from academic or social pressure, or the emotional weight that comes with navigating the world as a young person, schools can play a crucial role in shaping mental well-being.

Let's take this month to continue to learn, uplift and build spaces where everyone feels seen, safe and supported.



DID YOU KNOW...

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among young people ages 10-24¹.

Additionally, 12.3% of youth ages 12-17 have seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year².

Let's take a moment to discuss how we, as educators, can best support the young people in our lives on the next page.



In this edition, we will focus on what educators and school staff can do for students or other young people in their lives. Next edition, we will discuss parental supports and other resources for parents with young children and teenagers.

Schools are often the first place where signs of mental health challenges in young people are first displayed or noticed. Here are some things educators can do to help students in need.

1. Incorporate social emotional learning into your classroom whenever possible. MHA has a great article about SEL and how it can be done in the classroom.
 - a. One great example is relationship building. Use things like circle agreements (speak from your heart, respect others, what happens here, stays here, etc), discuss a quote for the day or week, daily or weekly check in, icebreaker questions, mindfulness/meditations.
2. Expect disorganization and forgetfulness. Children who are sad, angry or afraid probably don't have their homework at the top of their priority list, and make adjustments as necessary. This means being familiar with alternatives/accommodations.
3. Find the good and praise it. Young people who experience emotional or behavioral problems sometimes find school extra difficult and often deal with low self-esteem. They may be extra sensitive and much harder on themselves.
4. Be able to recognize signs and symptoms of anxiety, depression, and have a basic understanding of trauma and how it is caused and presents (see next pages for some signs/symptoms).
5. Remember to take care of your mental health too. You cannot pour from an empty cup (at least not for long).

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Youth Mental Health (For kids & teens)

Nurturing Belonging, Emotional Well-Being, and Safety In A New School Year - August 13, 2025

Setting Kids Up For A Mentally Healthy School Year - August 20, 2025

Both of these webinars, and much more information can be found at mhanational.org

HAVE AN IDEA OR TOPIC YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT?

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Warning signs

If you think someone you know is considering suicide, look for these warning signs:

- Threats of suicide – either direct or indirect
- Verbal hints such as “I won’t be around much longer” or “It’s hopeless”
- Obsession with death
- Depression
- Overwhelming sense of guilt, shame, or rejection
- Putting affairs in order (for example, giving or throwing away favorite possessions)
- Sudden cheerfulness after a period of depression
- Dramatic change in personality or appearance
- Becoming angered easily
- Bizarre thoughts
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Changes in school performance
- Lack of interest in future plans

Signs of depression

It is important to recognize depression so it can be treated. The earlier you get help, the sooner you can get back to feeling like yourself. If you have some of the symptoms below and they aren't going away, you might be dealing with depression.

- Having trouble with schoolwork
- Not participating in activities you used to enjoy
- Sadness and hopelessness
- Lack of enthusiasm, energy, or motivation
- Anger and rage
- Overreaction to criticism
- Feelings of being unable to meet expectations
- Low self-esteem
- Trouble with making decisions, lack of concentration, or forgetfulness
- Restlessness and agitation
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Rebelling against parents, teachers, or other authority figures
- Suicidal thoughts or actions

Signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Your mind can be put under a lot of stress if you are experiencing trauma over a long period of time or dealing with an extreme event. When this happens, it's possible to develop post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. If you have some of the symptoms below, you might be dealing with PTSD.

- Stressful memories of the event that pop up often and distract you during the day
- Nightmares or trouble sleeping
- Flashbacks, which make you feel like you are reliving the traumatic event
- Feeling jumpy and on edge
- Feeling emotionally or physically bad when you are reminded of the event
- Trouble concentrating
- Blaming yourself for what happened
- Negative feelings and thoughts about yourself, other people, or the world
- Difficulty feeling positive or happy emotions
- Avoiding people, activities, or places that remind you of what happened
- Angry outbursts
- Trouble remembering things that happened before or after the traumatic event

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Types of anxiety

Generalized anxiety

- Feelings of constant, exaggerated worry and tension
- Always expecting the worst
- Difficulty relaxing or sleeping
- Physical symptoms such as fatigue, trembling, muscle tension, headaches, or hot flashes
- Tightness in your chest or knots in your stomach

Phobias

- Being afraid of an object or situation that is actually relatively safe, but the thought of facing it brings on a panic attack or severe anxiety
- Intense fear of being humiliated or embarrassed in front of other people which keeps you from being social
- Having intense anxiety about being in places or situations that might make you feel helpless or trapped, often making it difficult to leave the house

Panic

- Unexpected attacks of extreme terror, which often have physical symptoms like shortness of breath or rapid breathing, shaking, choking sensation, sweating, and a fast heart rate
- Feeling like you're losing control of your mind/body or dying
- Intense fear between attacks about when and where the next one will happen

Social anxiety

- Extreme fear of social or competitive situations
- Being terrified of humiliation, rejection, or being judged negatively
- Physical symptoms such as rapid heart rate, sweating, and racing thoughts at the idea of interacting with people or being in large groups

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