

# Collaborative Mental Health Efforts:

How Roles in Your District  
Can Support Student  
Mental Wellness

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# Educators, students, parents, and the greater community are facing a mental health crisis.

Fortunately, with the right knowledge and tools, every stakeholder across the community, district, school, and classroom can advocate for mental wellness. By knowing how to help connect students to the right resources and providing comprehensive support for student mental health needs, we can all build a healthy, safe learning environment.

Children and teens interact with school every day. Due to educators' ongoing presence in student lives, schools are uniquely positioned to help identify, support, and connect students to mental health services.

Across all stakeholder levels, districts and schools can take concerted efforts to support mental health and allow students to feel safe, seen, and respected.

**24%**

Increase for pediatric mental health-related emergency visits for young children in 2020.

**1-6  
months**

Average student wait time for a therapy visit.

**13%+**

Increase in moderate to severe depression among adolescents, from 2018 to 2020.

# Role: District Administrator



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Priority	Providing students and educators with a healthy, safe learning environment that is conducive to student learning.
Has Background Knowledge Across	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community demographics and culture</li><li>• Effective means for communication with district parents</li><li>• Funding and budgetary allowances for programs</li></ul>
Major Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education leaders must recognize mental health concerns in marginalized student populations.</li><li>• District leaders understand that mental health in schools extends to staff and students.</li></ul>
Can Support Mental Health by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocating for mental health initiatives</li><li>• Providing increased support and availability for mental health in schools</li><li>• Building relationships with local providers for connection to support services</li><li>• Investing funding into telehealth services</li></ul>



# Role: School Principal



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Priority	Re-establishing routines and building a community that acknowledges and addresses mental health needs.
Has Background Knowledge Across	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School culture</li><li>• Staff bandwidth</li></ul>
Major Considerations	Site-level leaders may develop discipline policies that do not hinder mental health (zero-tolerance policies are proven to increase negative social and academic impact).
Can Support Mental Health by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proactively communicating a solid and clear message about mental health support, availability, and resources</li><li>• Providing basic mental health training for teachers through each school</li><li>• Holding mental health fairs/events for students, parents, and the community in which stakeholders can ask questions and learn about available in-school support for mental health</li><li>• Keeping mental health visible in each building- Hang mental health posters in school that encourage healthy habits, coping guidance, or helpful tips for staying mentally well mental health</li></ul>



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Priority	Creating classrooms that allow students to feel safe, seen, and respected.
Has Background Knowledge Across	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes across student behaviors (academic performance, attendance, tardies, social behavior, etc.)</li><li>• How to identify the warning signs of mental health needs and how to connect a student to help</li></ul>
Major Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers' experiences with students will be different than before. Many more students will be coping with grief, loss, anger, and sadness. Teachers may need to shift behavioral expectations within classrooms.</li><li>• Many educators are placing student well-being ahead of academic performance as they plan their school year.</li></ul>
Can Support Mental Health by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participating in PLCs and other PD on mental health to improve mental health awareness, knowledge, and skills</li><li>• Establishing classroom environments and forums for students to express themselves</li><li>• Volunteering to serve as advisor for clubs and social events that offer a sense of community for students in need of support</li><li>• Developing strong lines of communication between families and the classroom</li><li>• Integrating age-appropriate mental health content into the existing health curriculum</li></ul>



# Role: School Nurse or Health Clerk



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Priority	Keeping students, staff, and the community healthy, safe, and informed.
Has Background Knowledge Across	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students' immediate health needs</li><li>• District and local health policies</li><li>• Effective means for health communication with families</li></ul>
Major Considerations	Many students may report physical symptoms, such as headaches and stomachaches caused by underlying mental conditions, including depression and anxiety.
Can Support Mental Health by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating an open-door policy for students to seek help safely</li><li>• Actively develop a sense of belonging and community for students</li><li>• Communicating connections between mental and physical health to students, parents, and staff</li><li>• Monitoring students on medication to ensure the medicine is being administered as prescribed</li></ul>





# Role: School Counselor



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Priority	Promoting social and emotional learning and understanding to help students better ability express emotions and feelings
Has Background Knowledge Across	Early warning systems in place for detecting students in need of mental health support
Major Considerations	All stakeholders can benefit from role-specific mental health tool kits and training for identifying and responding to mental health needs.
Can Support Mental Health by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helping to provide short-term counseling and crisis intervention for mental health concerns</li><li>• Offering referrals to school and community resources that treat mental health issues</li><li>• Educating stakeholders about students' mental health needs</li><li>• Advocating for valid and culturally sensitive screening tools</li><li>• Monitoring the extent to which internal and external stakeholders meet mental health needs</li><li>• Developing environments in which students feel comfortable seeking help for themselves and other students</li></ul>



Priority	Feeling safe and able to access mental health support if/when it is necessary.
Has Background Knowledge Across	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognizing that emotions are okay, and everyone has difficult feelings sometimes</li><li>• It's okay to ask for help when it's needed</li></ul>
Major Considerations	Students must have clarity on how to access mental health resources and who they can turn to for help.
Can Support Mental Health by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participating in peer-to-peer programs</li><li>• Advocating for mental health support for themselves and their peers</li><li>• Helping de-stigmatize mental health concerns by communicating with other students</li></ul>





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Priority	Advocating for their family’s mental wellness and safety and continuing to practice self-care as well.
Has Background Knowledge Across	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child’s health history</li><li>• Past behaviors that may have shifted, including changes in sleeping, eating, and social behaviors</li></ul>
Major Considerations	Some children and teens may not turn to their families for mental health support. It’s best to make sure that children and teens feel understood, safe, and respected with their choice to seek help, even if it’s outside of their family.
Can Support Mental Health by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proactively discussing the availability of help from within the household or outside of the home (school, doctor, friends, community, etc.)</li><li>• Practicing supportive listening techniques</li><li>• Fostering an open, non-judgemental relationship that destigmatizes mental health challenges</li><li>• Leveraging school and community programs and resources for improved mental health</li><li>• Speaking with the child’s doctor, teachers, coaches, and counselors if mental health concerns surface</li></ul>

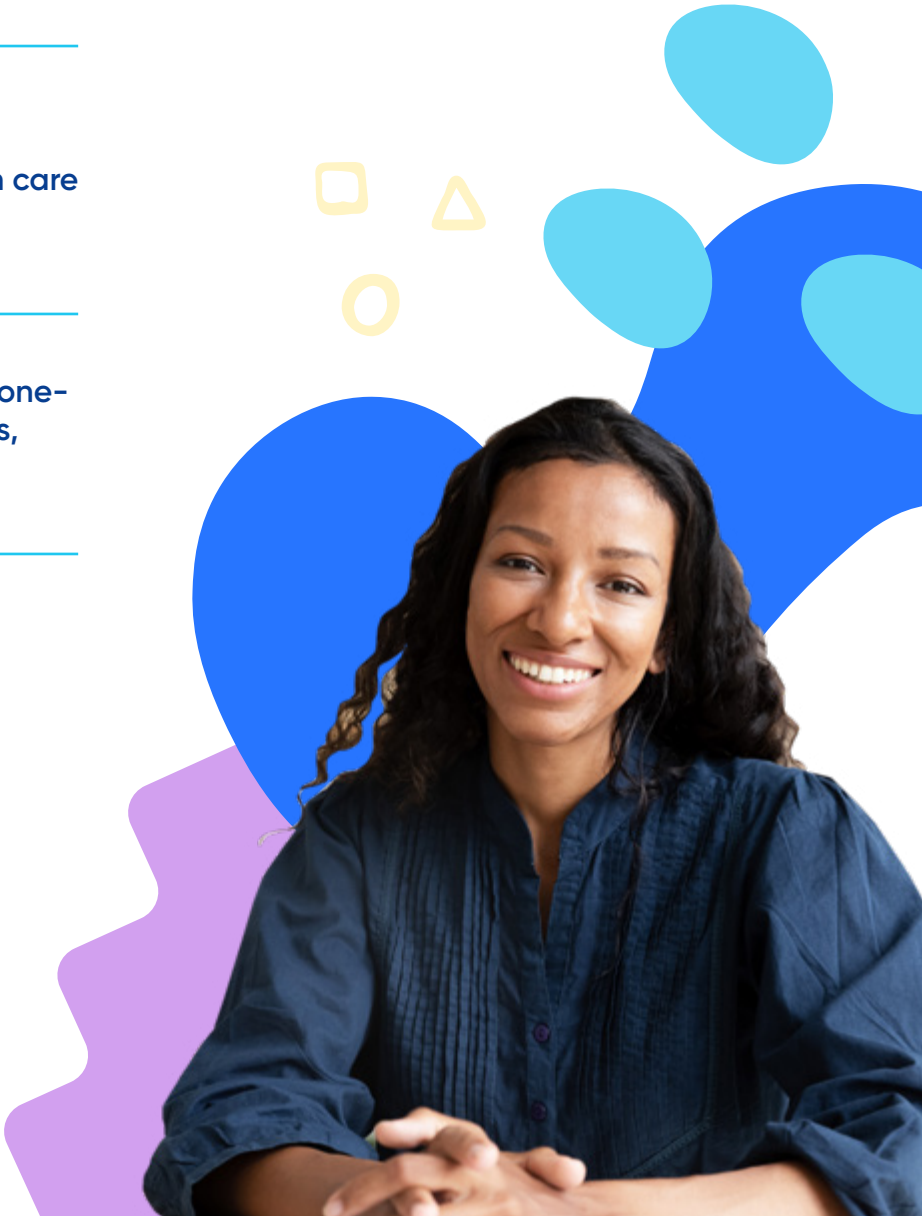


# Role: Mental Health Professional



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Priority	Providing timely, consistent, reliable mental health support to all students.
Has Background Knowledge Across	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experience working with vulnerable populations</li><li>• Evidence-based practices for providing mental health care</li><li>• Cultural elements and student diversity</li></ul>
Major Considerations	Mental health professionals know that support is never one-size-fits-all. It's critical to provide individualized services, goals, and approaches for each student.
Can Support Mental Health by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increasing availability and access to students seeking mental health support</li><li>• Offering strength-based and solution-focused services to students</li><li>• Communicating needs and trends they see within the student population and sharing new resources with schools and the community</li></ul>



# Role: Community Providers



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Priority	Ensuring students have access to appropriate services promptly.
Has Background Knowledge Across	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to connect support programs to school needs</li><li>• Effective communication practices within the community</li><li>• Best practices for maintaining open communication across community partners and schools</li><li>• The connection between resources (housing, food, transportation) and the overall development and well-being of children in the community</li></ul>
Major Considerations	Deep insight into the needs of the community is critical to effectively support student mental health initiatives.
Can Support Mental Health by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partnering with school mental health liaisons to drive successful programs</li><li>• Communicating the availability of mental health resources and support to district stakeholders</li><li>• Driving awareness about the community's shared goals and efforts to provide mental health support and services</li></ul>



# About Hazel:

Hazel Health partners with schools to eliminate barriers to quality whole child care for all students. Hazel's culturally competent care team works alongside school nurses, counselors, and parents to treat students' physical and mental health concerns, connect families to local health resources, and advise on the next steps to ensure continuity of care. Schools using Hazel have seen a decrease in chronic absenteeism, and improved learning and health outcomes.

Learn more, or set up time to discuss how Hazel can help your district provide whole child care to students in your schools.

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For more information  
and resources for district  
leaders and parents

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