



9TH ANNUAL MIDWEST SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

AUGUST 11TH, 2021

OUR MISSION

Please Pass the Love is committed to increasing school-based mental health supports to improve the quality of life and educational opportunities for children, families, and educators as well as offer culturally responsive comprehensive services and evidence-based supports to school systems. We strive to bridge positive relationships between the educational and mental health communities to more effectively prevent and address mental health issues for our children and adolescents throughout the state of Iowa.

8AM-9AM
REGISTRATION

11:20AM-12:05PM
SESSION TWO

9AM-9:15AM
WELCOME

12:15PM-12:45PM
LUNCH & AWARDS

9:15AM-10:15AM
KEYNOTE #1
DR. H. RICHARD MILNER IV.

12:45PM-1:45PM
KEYNOTE #2
DR. CIERRA KALER-JONES

10:15AM-10:25AM
BREAK/EXHIBITORS

1:45PM-2:30PM
SESSION THREE

10:25AM-11:10AM
SESSION ONE

2:30PM-2:40PM
BREAK/EXHIBITORS

11:10AM-11:20AM
BREAK/EXHIBITORS

2:40PM-3:25PM
SESSION FOUR

Contact us

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Mid-America (HHS Region 7)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



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Keynote Sessions

Psychological (and Mental) Health as Curriculum Sites: Pressing Toward Justice and Equity

Dr. H. Richard Milner IV, Ph.D, MA, Professor | Vanderbilt University

Understanding the psychological, emotional, and mental health of young people and educators is essential to building school communities of success. Centering equity, the keynote focuses on helping educators build tools to identify and cultivate mental health (for educators, social workers, counselors, psychologists, and young people alike). Particular attention will be opportunity-centered practices that address people's inside and outside of school experiences. Issues of race, racism, and racial justice will be framed to advance practices that confront and disrupt the strain of discrimination in relation to the psychological, emotional, and mental health of students, educators, parents, families, and communities. How do we build mindsets and practices that opportunity-centered and that build psychological and mental health?

Reclaim Social-Emotional Learning: Visions for Holistic Health in Schools

Dr. Cierra Kaler-Jones, Ph.D, MA, Director of Storytelling | Just Schools Fund

What does it mean to make educational spaces holistically safe? How can we transform educational spaces to ensure that all young people and adults can thrive? What are the intersections between holistic health and wellness and culturally affirming social-emotional learning? Well-intentioned social-emotional learning programs and curricula have been, in some cases, weaponized as tools for perpetuation oppression. Rather, there are possibilities and potential of the true promise of SEL, if it were culturally-affirming SEL that's grounded in research, personal anecdotes, and historical narratives. Culturally-affirming SEL asks critical questions of all of us: How do people relate to themselves? How do people relate to land? How do people relate to community? Culturally affirming SEL is about reclaiming -- reclaiming our relationships with ourselves and our emotions, our ancestors, our spirituality, our creativity, our land, and our relationships with others. This session will highlight and uplift promising practices and strategies that aid in creating and sustaining holistically -- mentally, physically, emotionally, intellectually, and psychologically -- safe spaces. This keynote will leave attendees with a call-to-action aimed at inspiring each of us to create the world we deserve, which is rooted in love, joy, and community.

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Session One 10:25am-11:10am

Basic Student Mental Health Literacy: Including Suicide Prevention, Mental Health in the Classroom, and Classroom Strategies Room 308

Jessica Christensen MA, Director of Community Development and Training | Please Pass the Love

Jennifer Ulie-Wells, Ph.D. Executive Director | Please Pass the Love

Schools are working with countless young people on a daily basis that are coming in with complex mental health and trauma needs. This course will provide participants with basic information regarding mental illnesses, trauma, and suicide prevention to increase culturally competent mental health literacy

Mental Health in the Classroom Room 309

Katie Zimmerman, Project Coordinator | The Kim Foundation

Approximately one in five teens (aged 12 to 18) suffer from at least one mental health disorder. Knowing this statistic, it is more important than ever for educators to feel empowered to have discussions surrounding mental health, so they can be advocates for their students who have mental health conditions. To feel empowered, it is important for educators to be educated on the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions and what that might look like in the classroom. It is also critical for educators to know different ways they can support students in the classroom and that will be discussed throughout the presentation. Through connectedness and using help-seeking language, educators have the power to break down the stigma within their own classroom. If we can start to break down the stigma within each classroom, then we have the power to help every student that has a mental health condition get the help they need and deserve. This presentation will leave you feeling confident to address the topic of mental health in your classroom, while also providing you with tools and resources to be advocates for your students that have mental health conditions. We also know there has been a rise in youth suicides and because of this we will review not only warning signs but protective factors that be put in place to empower students to practice help-seeking behaviors and connectedness.

Using Listening Circles & Restorative Practices to Improve Student Outcomes Room 317

Dorothy Landon Ph.D., MSW, MA, LCSW, School Psychologist | Heartland Area Education Agency

Jean Boger, MSW, LISW, School Social Worker, SEBMH Regional Lead | Heartland Area Education Agency

During this presentation, participants will learn the basic principles of a Listening Circle, engage in an actual Listening Circle experience, and learn how one agency has implemented the practice to support staff across all disciplines and workgroups to process the personal and collective impact of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. A Listening Circle is a restorative practice that can be used to develop relationships and build community. It is a structured process of communication designed to create a brave space for all voices to be heard. With roots in indigenous cultures around the world, Listening Circles provide people the opportunity to speak and listen to each other in an atmosphere of safety, decorum, and equality. Participation in the Circle is an opportunity for participants to feel supported and heard. Some participants find sharing amongst a group can make it easier to bear a problem, by simply giving a piece of the burden away to others in the circle. It is believed that this practice is helpful for building and maintaining a healthy community in which all people feel connected and respected.

Evidence-Based Mental Health Practices Across the Age Span Room 318

Nicole Skaar, Ph.D., NCSP, Associate Professor | University of Northern Iowa

Stephanie Schmitz, Ph.D., NCSP, Associate Professor | University of Northern Iowa

While almost one in five children between the ages of 5 and 18 has experienced at least one mental health disorder, less than half receive treatment; and those who do, often receive such services at school. Educators are uniquely positioned to support students who experience mental health difficulties. This session aims to provide information on and promote skills in mental health assessment and intervention for a range of educators (e.g., teachers, counselors, school psychologists) practicing across the age span, birth through adolescence. This presentation will target assessment and intervention practices across the MTSS.

Social Problem-Solving Strategies to Address Behavioral and Mental Health Needs Room 319

Michael Couvillon, Ph.D., Professor | Drake University

Using the frameworks of specifically designed instruction and social problem-solving, this presentation will discuss specific approaches to help our students/clients identify their own behavioral patterns, improve their vocabulary to express their concerns, and examine specific ways to tailor these strategies to meet the individual needs of our students. Participants can use the QR Code or weblink provided to access templates of the strategies we will discuss. With access to these templates, attendees can personalize them to meet the needs of their individual students/clients.

Use the hashtag #MSMHC21 when you post photos of the conference on social media!

Session Two 11:20am-12:05pm

By the Numbers: The Story of Youth Mental Health Disparities in Iowa Room 308

Rhonda Chittenden, MS, Iowa Youth Health Assessment Program Coordinator | Iowa Department of Public Health

Every two years, Iowa students participate in two youth health behavior surveys that capture data on a variety of measures, including mental health. Since 2014, growing mental health disparities are evidenced by gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation. This session will share quantitative data highlights that can guide school and program planning, funding, and policy decisions. Participants will also learn how they can support the ongoing collection of this critical mental health data in Iowa schools.

Connection is Key: The Relationship Between Inclusive Curriculum and Student Success Room 309

Jordan Mix, C SCA, Deputy Director of Education | Iowa Safe Schools

In this session, participants will begin with a brief overview of basic LGBTQ terminology before moving into a discussion of barriers facing the LGBTQ student community. I will juxtapose student success and wellness (both academic and social) in environments that provide inclusive curriculum and other LGBTQ-affirming spaces, with those that do not. Participants will gain strategies to make their classrooms and school communities more accessible to LGBTQ students.

Planning for Resilience: Crisis Preparation and Prevention to Support All Students Room 317

Hannah West, Ph.D., BCBA, PLP, Regional Trainer | Mid-America Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

Erika Franta, Ph.D., LP, School Mental Health Program Director, Assistant Professor | Mid-America Mental Health Technology Transfer Center, Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center

This last year has been hard, especially for schools, teachers, and students. Schools face a myriad of barriers to developing and implementing effective school crisis planning, including a lack of time and resources. This has, unfortunately, resulted in schools waiting for a crisis to occur before adequately preparing, creating reactive environments rather than preventative ones. However, we know this is not the best approach. While some events cannot be predicted (i.e., worldwide pandemic), we can control how we support students through all crises with effective and comprehensive crisis planning. Participants will leave this session with knowledge of best practices in school crisis prevention and intervention. Further, this session will provide resources for educators as they develop and refine their school's crisis plan, with a specific focus on suicide prevention/intervention and reintegration strategies. Finally, this session will provide information about how educational leadership teams can gain access to training and technical assistance from the Mid-America Mental Health Technology Transfer Center around the implementation of the best practices around crisis planning.

When Our Teachers Thrive Our Kids Thrive Too: Creating and Sustaining Thriving School Systems Room 318

Maria Lantz, MA EdL | Stowe Elementary School, DMPS

Educator burnout and vicarious trauma that many educators are experiencing are ensuring that schools will not get equitable outcomes for kids. When our educators are not cared for properly they cannot give their best selves to kids. It is our job as leaders to create cultures where we focus on the health and well-being of our staff. Throughout this presentation, we will look at ways to increase the SEL of our adults, dig into adult self-care, utilize restorative practices, and determine ways to lead our organizations with a culture of high care and high expectations. Promoting this work with our teams will benefit the "whole" staff member and help change outcomes for our students. You will leave this presentation with a plethora of strategies and an action plan to create a system where every person in your school learns to thrive.

Making Connections and Building Capacity - Iowa Center for School Mental Health Room 319

Gerta Bardhoshi, Ph.D., Nationally Certified Counselor, Certified School Counselors (SD), Licensed Professional Counselor (SD), Licensed Mental Health Counselor (IA), Approved Clinical Supervisor, Associate Professor of Counselor Education and Supervision, School Counseling Program Coordinator, Senior Research Fellow, UPublic Policy Center

Kari Vogelgesang, Ph.D., Clinical Associate Professor, Director, Professional Development, Baker Teacher Leader Center

Allison Bruhn, Ph.D., Interim Executive Director, Iowa Center for School Mental Health

This presentation will provide information about the development of Iowa's new SEBH Center. This includes an outline of a strategic plan and services the center will be offering, a representation of the partnerships and connections the center intends to build across the state, a description of the research that will be conducted, and a timeline for when schools, students, and families can expect the center to begin rolling out various programs connected to the work that will run through the new SEBH Center.

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Session Three 1:45p-2:30pm

Bullying/Harassment Prevention and Intervention - Foundations Room 308

Terese Jurgensen, MS, Education Program Consultant (Bullying), Bureau of Nutrition and Health Services | Iowa Department of Education

The Iowa Department of Education has released a new body of work addressing the issue of bullying/harassment in support of Iowa Code 280.28. The Department collaborated with Area Education Agencies, University of Northern Iowa's Mentors in Violence Prevention, and Dr. Chad Rose, Associate Professor and Director of Mizzou Ed Bully Prevention Lab. The body of work includes cyberbullying, evidenced-based practices, and tiered interventions of support for the bully, bully/victim, and victim. The presentation goes beyond looking at bullying as labeling students or giving detentions but instead supporting all members of the bullying dynamic through tiered interventions of support. Preventing and intervening in bullying/harassment supports Iowa's Differentiated Accountability (DA) model designed to provide support and compliance with state and federal laws for continuous improvement.

"Where the Wild Things Are": Cultivating Courageous Kids Room 309

Ryan Allen, PhD, CTP-E, ERTY500, RCYT95, Educator/Consultant | Lumin Therapy

This session will explore the research and methodology of integrating yoga and mindfulness into school classrooms and counseling sessions, the workplace, and the home. We'll discuss how to connect different generations through yoga and mindfulness to facilitate belonging and to create and foster a trauma-informed space. We'll examine the parallels and intersections with clinical approaches like cognitive behavioral therapy, applied behavior analysis, and structured sensory interventions, as well as more school-based approaches like PBIS (positive behavioral interventions & support). Drawing heavily on Circle of Courage philosophy and practice, we'll look at how teachers and counselors, caregivers, and/or providers can create the conditions to keep our kids and our communities healthy and whole.

Rethinking ADHD: Understanding Executive Functioning to Help Students Succeed Room 317

Jennifer Null, LMFT, RPT-S, Learning and Development Manager, Therapist | Meraki Institute of Learning at Tanager Place

Most adults understand the basics of ADHD and have some tools which help some of the youth they serve. However, youth with ADD/ADHD can present with significant symptom variability and unpredictability of what interventions will work. This variability is due to the 6 areas of executive functioning impacted by ADD/ADHD and the unique wiring of each youth's brain. In this presentation, participants will learn about a new model for understanding ADD/ADHD through understanding these six areas of executive functioning. You will learn how these areas impact a youth's learning style, response to traditional interventions, and new ways to engage and support youth with ADD/ADHD diagnosis or symptomology.

Taking Care of Educators Who Take Care of Kids: An Introduction to the Adult Resilience Curriculum (ARC) Room 318

Brittany Liebsack Ph.D., LP, Faculty Trainer, Assistant Professor | Mid-America Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC), Munroe-Meyer Institute

Erika Franta, Ph.D., LP, School Mental Health Program Director, Assistant Professor | Mid-America Mental Health Technology Transfer Center, Munroe-Meyer Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Sara Wise Ph.D., PLP, Regional Trainer, Postdoctoral Fellow | Mid-America Mental Health Technology Transfer Center, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics

Teaching ranks as one of the most stressful occupations in the United States, with a huge proportion of teachers exhibiting symptoms of burnout each year (Jarvis, 2002). Highly stressed teachers tend to have lower self-efficacy (Kyriacou, 2001), poorer implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs; Larson, Fiat, Cook & Lyons 2017), weaker relationships with students (Yoon, 2008), and higher rates of illness, absenteeism, and attrition (Leiter & Maslach, 2004). During a COVID/post-COVID era, teachers are likely to experience exacerbated stress as their demands and responsibilities increase, schools face budget restrictions, and systemic inefficiencies emerge that limit schools' and teachers' ability to be responsive to difficulties as they arise. Despite the recognized need to address teacher stress and burnout, there are few teacher well-being and resilience programs available that are cost-effective, easily accessible, adaptable to individual needs, and that incorporates an explicit systems implementation methodology.

The Necessity of Adult Healing for Truly Restorative, Equitable School Communities Room 319

Taelar Spindler, M.Ed., Ed.D. Superintendency Candidate (Drake University), Associate Principal | Abraham Lincoln High School, Des Moines Public Schools

Krys Rankin, M.Ed., Special Education Teacher | Abraham Lincoln High School, Des Moines Public Schools

As educators, we are often trained in "initiatives" that teach us how to address and support student behaviors; however, the deeper understanding of the role teachers as human beings play is often forgotten. In this session, you will dive in beyond the surface level of restorative practices and adult socioemotional learning and look deeper at the adults in our schools whom we empower and support in the dynamic work that is teaching our youth. This session will connect the methods of restorative practices, adult SEL, equity, and trauma-informed practices to look closer at ourselves and at the adults in our schools with the goal of supporting schools and districts in providing spaces for adult healing and resilience. *A basic understanding of restorative practices and SEL competencies would be beneficial for this session.*

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Session Four 2:40p-3:25pm

Building Resiliency with the Crucial Cs: Count, Connect, Capable, Courage Room 308

Kristin Meany Ph.D., LMHC, RPT-S, Mental Health Coordinator | Waterloo Community School District

Cory Arensdorf, Teacher | Abraham Lincoln High School, Des Moines Public Schools

Resilient children have four character traits in common, called the Crucial Cs: count, connect, capable, and courage. As children develop these characteristics they are better able to handle life's challenges and be responsible, contributing members of classrooms and society. In this session, we provide a rationale for fostering students' Crucial Cs, an explanation of how to assess them, and intervention strategies to use in schools.

Sub Plans Suck but Take the Day Off Room 309

Allison Rasmussen, MA, Instructional Coach | Waverly-Shell Rock Community Schools

Why do I go to work sick? Why do I choose to put my job above my health? What can I do to help myself when I do take the day? These questions will be answered with some basic research and simple suggestions on how to increase your well-being.

Ideas for Making SEL Doable Room 317

Aimee Schuppe, Ed.S, NCSP, Social Emotional Behavior Mental Health (SEBMH) Regional Lead | Heartland Area Education Agency

Implementing, embedding, and integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) can seem like a daunting task. This session will strive to make SEL doable by showing how many of the evidence-based strategies for promoting SEL are aligned to effective instructional practices that may already be present in your setting. Participants will leave this session with practical, reasonable, and doable strategies to implement SEL instruction in a more purposeful and intentional way.

Supporting Staff During a Pandemic and Beyond Room 318

Jadie Boens, Ph.D., Director of Special Programs | Heartland Area Education Agency

Jean Boger, MSW, LISW, School Social Worker, SEBMH Regional Lead | Heartland Area Education Agency

Supporting the social-emotional needs of staff is important and became even more important during the pandemic. Learn how Heartland AEA implemented Listening Circles and infused SEL signature practices into meeting structures this past year in an effort to support complete mental health and staff well-being.

Be a Space Maker Room 319

Kara Graft, B.S., 200 Hour Kriya Yoga Instructor, Reiki Master Teacher, Mindfulness Meditation Instructor, Educator Liaison | Four Oaks

Brittany Roberts, BA, Education Liaison | Four Oaks

What do you get when you blend a foundation of Trauma-Informed Care Principles with an infusion of mind-body-energy movement philosophy and a dash of Marie Kondo? SPACE MAKING! The quality of our interactions, growth, and learning potential can be directly related to the intention that is put into our spaces, relationships to others, and relationships to ourselves.

Join us to learn how being a "Space Maker" will enhance the way you move through your life and work.

All online sessions are available to attendees via the conference page

CEU and License Renewal Information

For anyone wanting continuing education and license renewal credits, you will need to sign in at the CEU table at the beginning and at the end of the day.

For more information on CEU and License Renewal Information, please go to our website: pleasepassthe love.org

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How to Get Involved with Please Pass the Love

Online School Mental Health Academy

All courses are self-paced, with no deadlines, and completely online.

- Support Staff Certification Classes (take all five for SMH Academy Certificate)
 - Suicide Prevention
 - Basic School Mental Health Literacy
 - Trauma-Sensitive Spaces
 - Reducing Undesired Student Behaviors
 - Self-Care For Support Staff
- Online Credit Courses (take for grad, license renewal, or audit credit)
 - When Self-Care Isn't Enough
 - Basic School Mental Health Literacy
 - Racial & Cultural Trauma
 - Building Strong Student Relationships

Please Pass the Love Comprehensive Services

- School mental health can feel overwhelming and complicated. We work with schools to minimize confusion and help navigate the school mental health journey through research and evidence-based strategies and frameworks. The return on investment for improved school mental health can be felt in improved outcomes across any building or district.
- We provide comprehensive services through data collection, action planning, and intensive training.

S.O.S - Stomp Out Stigma Youth Program

- S.O.S Stomp Out Stigma is a youth program led by Please Pass the Love.
- Empowers students to become mental health ambassadors in their schools to work together towards creating change in their school climate.

Support Please Pass the Love



You can find more information about all of these programs & upcoming events at www.pleasepassthelove.org!

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