LeaderinMe®

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"To function effectively, children need social and emotional competencies. They also need the confidence to use those skills constructively and opportunities to practice their skills in order to help develop a sense of identity." —World Health Organization[1]

Youth Depression and Anxiety Is on the Rise

It is common for adolescents to experience anxiety or depression from time to time, but the recent rise in prolonged periods of anxiety and depression in adolescents is new and troubling.

Rates of self-harm and suicidal ideation have **more than doubled** since 2008, which is thought to be related to the prevalence of anxiety and depression.[4]

31.9 percent will experience an anxiety disorder at some point during adolescence.[5]

Severe depression in youth **increased 28 percent** over a five-year period.[2]

A systematic review of 19 studies from 12 countries revealed that **anxiety is increasing worldwide**.[3]

Why Does It Matter?

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Adolescence is a critical time for brain development. Stress and depression can alter brain development, causing long-term negative impacts to learning and mood.

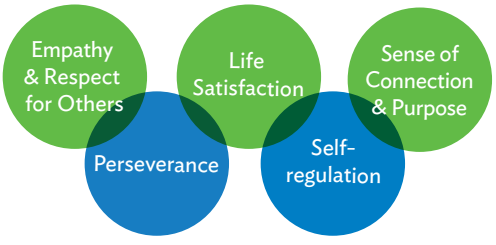
Stress: The brain develops more during adolescence than any other time apart from the first few years of life. When the body's stress response is activated for long periods of time, the brain can't develop normally.

Depression: Sustained depression in adolescence can have a lasting impact on the brain. A child who has even one long-term experience with depression is far more likely to experience depression as an adult.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In contrast, positive mental health in adolescence allows for normal development and leads to the development of social and emotional skills like those identified by the Public Health Agency of Canada:[6]

Social & Emotional Skills Developed Through Positive Mental Health



SO, HOW CAN WE SUPPORT AND PROMOTE CHILDREN'S POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH?

Schools Can Help Build the Positive Mental Health of Our Students!

"Schools play a critical role in promoting the health and safety of young people and helping them establish lifelong healthy behaviors."
—Center for Disease and Control



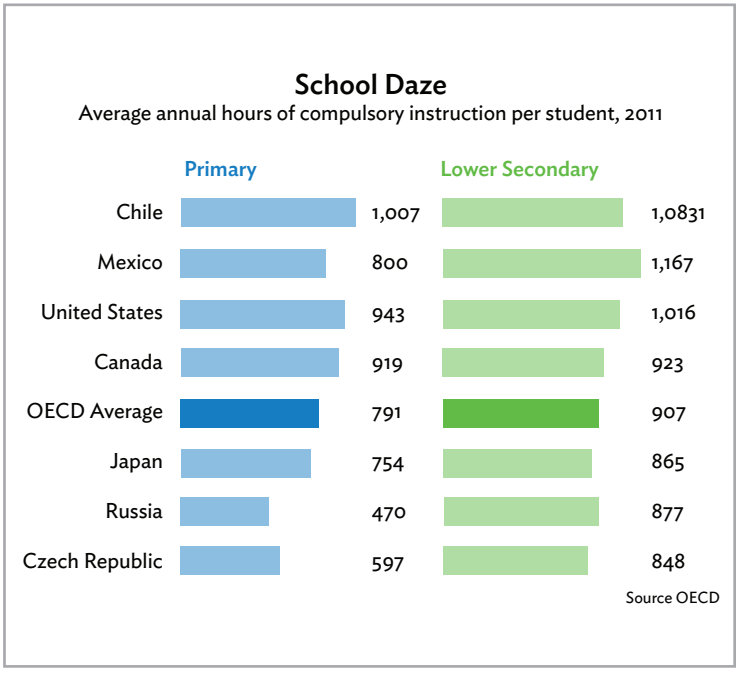
SCHOOLS CAN IMPROVE STUDENT HEALTH BY:

Supporting opportunities to learn about and practice healthy behaviors.	Offering or connecting students to health services and programs.
Creating and supporting safe and positive activities.	Engaging families and communities.

As identified by the CDC[7]

Schools are especially important places to develop positive mental health given the relatively large amount of time students spend in school. This is where the majority of in-person peer interactions occur.

*"[Schools] are the primary institution for **socialization in many societies.** For this reason, and because of the convenience of conducting interventions in a setting where young people spend much of their time, **schools have become one of the most important settings for [positive mental health] interventions for children and youth."***
—World Health Organization[1]



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How *Do* Schools Help Build the Positive Mental Health of Our Students?

Research suggests social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions can be effective in lowering the rates of non-clinical anxiety and depression and building positive mental health.[8]

By guiding the **development of positive social and emotional competencies,** schools lay a protective foundation for a **lifetime of mental health.**

By **building the capacity of families**, they further create conditions that are **protective to non-clinical anxiety and depression.**

HOWEVER, TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE, THERE ARE ARE CERTAIN FOUNDATIONS NEEDED IN AN SEL INTERVENTION...

The Comprehensive School Health Framework[9] involves a whole-school approach that includes four interrelated pillars that provide the foundation for this model.



Pillar 1:
Social and Physical Environment

The quality of the relationships among staff and students; the emotional well-being of students; and the buildings and surrounding grounds.



Pillar 2:
Teaching and Learning

Resources, activities, and curriculum that provide students with age-appropriate knowledge and experiences that build their skills and improve their health and well-being.



Pillar 3:
Partnerships and Services

Collaborations among a school, its students' families, and surrounding community organizations that support and advance positive mental health.



Pillar 4:
Healthy School Policy

The procedures and policies within the school promote health and well-being, and shape a respectful, welcoming, and caring school environment.

THE *LEADER IN ME* SEL APPROACH ALIGNS TO THE PILLARS OF POSTIVE MENTAL HEALTH

The *Leader in Me* is a whole-school improvement process that provides educators with the training and structure needed to create environments that promote positive mental health through students' social-emotional development.

For research evidence and examples of how to implement *Leader in Me*, see the table on the next page.

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Pillars of Positive Mental Health	*Leader in Me* Practices, Principles, and Supporting Research[9]
Social and Physical Environment	*Leader in Me* Schools use key leadership practices to build a feeling of community, establish a common vision, and build trust and unity through regular routines and activities. "TLIM *helps to build a positive school climate... it creates conditions in which teachers relate and communicate more effectively to students, work more collaboratively with one another in planning and coordinating lessons, and spend less instructional time dealing with behavior issues."* —Dr. Corcoran, Reily, & Dr. Ross, John Hopkins University (2014) "[LiM] *creating a whole school language within the school and community was pertinent to recognizing the strengths of the community and school"* and *"fosters respect for all individuals and unifies all individuals."* —Dr. N. Bryant, Capella University (2016)
Teaching and Learning	*Leader in Me* integrates social and emotional learning schoolwide, from the classroom to the playground, and to families and home. As students learn valuable social-emotional skills, they can also apply them through public speaking, service learning, goal achievement, and Student Leadership Roles where they plan, organize, and lead classroom or schoolwide activities, as well as routines and special events. *"Overall, an emerging theme from the parental interviews was that the school used the leadership program to accentuate a child's strengths, and positive reinforcement encouraged leadership and other desired behaviors."* —Dr. S. Evans (2014) Virginia Commonwealth University, p. 113 33 percent increase in independent social/emotional behaviors. —Dr. Andersen, St. John's University (2011)
Partnerships and Services	Because a student's positive mental health is impacted largely by how well his or her needs are met, the *Leader in Me* focuses on creating empowering support systems schoolwide, and through training and partnerships with families and the larger community. 30.71 percent improvement in parent's mental well-being* after completing the *7 Habits*® program, taking them from significantly below average to average well-being. *These results were statistically significant at the p< .001 level.* *Based on results from the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). —The National Health Services of Scotland and the Fife Council (2015) *"By utilizing a 'whole-school initiative' such as the* Leader in Me*, the administrators were also able to include parents and community members in the initiative."* —Dr. N. Bryant (2016) Capella University, p. 86
Healthy School Policy	*Leader in Me* is a whole-school improvement process that begins by building the professional and personal capacity of the adults in the school. The adults then lay the foundation of a socially, emotionally, and academically supportive school environment by modeling healthy attitudes and behaviors, and collaboratively creating systems that reinforce the development of students' personal and interpersonal leadership. Significant correlation (p< .01) between teachers' beliefs about school vision of leadership and the 7 Habits, indicating that: *"[Teachers] not only believe that their students are leaders, but they envision them living the 7 Habits, as leaders would do."* —Dr. K. Cummins, University of Louisiana at Lafayette (2015) *Since starting* Leader in Me*, "there is a stronger sense of cohesiveness in the school environment as well as the classroom"* —Dr. C. Tidd, Walden University (2016) Teacher interviews and student essays revealed *"an emphasis on creating a positive, inclusive, and egalitarian classroom climate by helping others."* —Baldwin, et al. (2012) The College of Saint Rose, p. 8

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