Student Mental Health During COVID-19:
How to Prepare as Schools Reopen
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Presenters:
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Participant Question & Presenter Response

Q1 *How can we support the needs of our staff with constant changes and challenges, both professionally and personally, during COVID-19?*

A1 Promote teacher wellness by attending to and supporting both physical and mental health, professional development and support, and effectiveness in the classroom, among other practices.

RESOURCES:
Teacher well-being is a critical and often overlooked (Child Trends)
Self-Care Through the Summer (Mid-America MHTTC)

Q2 *How can caregivers identify and address mental health concerns at home if access to professional help is a barrier?*

A2 Caregivers may notice changes in their children that could suggest that a child is struggling to cope. Some of the symptoms to look for are: worries, tearfulness, sadness, tantrums/meltdowns, loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities, isolation, suicidal thoughts/behaviors, inattention/difficulty engaging in activities, difficulty following simple directions, and difficulty following previously followed routines.

Practices that are supportive to overall well-being and coping include: creating supportive family relationships, setting clear expectations for behaviors and values, and creating a simple household structure, predictability, limit-setting, monitoring.

RESOURCES:
Supporting Families During COVID-19 (Child Mind Institute)
Youth Mental Health: Protective and Risk Factors (Youth.gov)

Q3 *How can we address mental health stigma in our communities to allow for identification of mental health concerns?*

A3 We can address the stigma surrounding mental health by increasing understanding of mental health concerns. The Mental Health Literacy model focuses on: understanding how to obtain and maintain good mental health, understanding and identify mental disorders and their treatments., and enhancing help-seeking efficacy.

RESOURCE:
[Mental Health in Schools (National Alliance on Mental Illness)](#)

Q4 *How can emergency responders increase outreach to marginalized students, families, and schools? What materials could we provide?*

A4 It will be important for teams to review communication tools that have worked in the community the past. Once identified, then team should problem-solve ways to adapt to those modes to fit the current climate and increase accessibility. Some questions for teams to consider when adapting materials and/or dissemination:

What are new ways to invite family organizations to share their voices in distance settings – i.e., by phone call, mail, email, video, etc.?

Are there community partners that represent the population(s) you are serving?

RESOURCES:
[Responding to Death in the COVID-19 Context: Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams (National Association of School Psychologists)](#)

[School Mental Health Crisis Leadership Lessons: Voices of Experience from Leaders in the Pacific Southwest Region (Pacific Southwest MHTTC)](#)