



Classroom **WISE**

Well-Being Information and
Strategies for Educators

Classroom WISE Implementation Stories: Kingwood Elementary School

Background

Educators and school personnel play a vital role in promoting mental health and well-being and identifying and responding to emerging mental illness in children and adolescents. However, they often have not received the education, training, and/or ongoing support needed to respond in the classroom.

To address this need, the MHTTC Network, in partnership with the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, has developed a free, self-guided online course, video library, and resource collection focused on educator mental health literacy. The 3-part training package, Classroom WISE (Well-Being Information and Strategies for Educators; www.classroomwise.org), was informed by and co-developed with educators from across the nation.

In Fall 2021, the MHTTC Network and NCSMH worked with 13 schools throughout the U.S. to facilitate the implementation of Classroom WISE in their everyday practices. This is the story of how Kingwood Elementary School worked to bring Classroom WISE to their school.

The School

Kingwood Elementary School is a public school within Preston County Schools, located in a small town in West Virginia. Approximately 400 students attend the school, with 18 educators and 33 staff members. They have one school counselor.

The Need

One of the goals included in Kingwood Elementary's strategic plan is to increase opportunities for student growth in the areas of social emotional learning (SEL) and mental health. Implementing Classroom WISE would afford staff an additional avenue for education and training that would further enhance their efforts toward their commitment to making these areas of learning a critical part of their school's mission. It would also enhance the work that their schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team is already doing in the area of support for SEL and mental health.

What Help They Received

A small implementation team from Kingwood, consisting of a school administrator, school mental health staff member, school district representative, and educator, was invited to attend an orientation webinar for Classroom WISE and received a Classroom WISE implementation guide. In addition, they attended two sharing sessions to learn what other schools were doing to implement Classroom WISE, as well as a one-on-one facilitation session with school mental health experts from NCSMH.



MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
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What They Did

Kingwood's implementation team worked with school leaders to bring information about Classroom WISE to the school. The school mandated that educators and classroom aides complete the first module of the Classroom WISE online course. The school was not able to use professional development time as initially planned, but a counselor was able to meet one-on-one with participants to discuss course content. Additionally, the school worked with their district to provide a \$30 per hour stipend to staff members who took the time to complete other modules from the Classroom WISE online course. The school tracked completion of the course by having course certificates forwarded to a guidance counselor.

Who Used Classroom WISE?

Approximately 28 educators and classroom aides were asked to take the first module of the Classroom WISE online course. Kingwood exceeded this target, as 30 educators and school staff members completed module 1. Out of the 30 that completed module 1, 16 went on to complete the whole 6-module course.

What Changed?

After implementing Classroom WISE, course participants indicated a higher level of mastery or competence with information, tools, and/or skills to promote student well-being and support students experiencing adversity, distress, and mental health challenges in the classroom. Participants also indicated they were more prepared to use well-being strategies and reported using strategies from Classroom WISE more frequently in their role.

Barriers and Facilitators

Kingwood staff cited some barriers to using Classroom WISE, including time to take the course and issues with their school's wi-fi filter blocking access to some of the videos in the video library. MHTTC Network staff worked to troubleshoot with Kingwood for the latter. For facilitators, Kingwood staff cited support from their school counselor, as she was very active within the implementation process. They also cited compatibility with other curricula, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and social emotional learning (SEL).

Lessons Learned

Kingwood's school counselor reaffirmed that Classroom WISE is another way to continue their school's efforts to focus on student mental health and emphasize to staff the importance of recognizing students in need of services and how to respond. Those who took the online course indicated that Classroom WISE would have a moderate impact on their work over the next 3 months. Participants also indicated they wanted to utilize the resource library more and discuss the implementation timeline so they could carry over the strategies they learned from Classroom WISE. One participant also indicated they would change their existing practices by using more compassion and de-escalating techniques with students in the classroom

The MHTTC Network thanks Kingwood Elementary School for participating in the Classroom WISE School TA Opportunity, which was conducted from August to December 2021.