Classroom
WISE

Well-Being Information and
Strategies for Educators

Discussion Guide

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

To learn more: classroomwise.org

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Introduction

Classroom WISE (**W**ell-being **I**nformation and **S**trategies for **E**ducators) is a *free* 3-part training package that assists K-12 educators in supporting the mental health of students in the classroom. Developed by the [Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC) Network](#) in partnership with the [National Center for School Mental Health](#), this package offers evidence-based strategies and skills to engage and support students with mental health concerns in the classroom. The Classroom WISE online course begins with a brief introduction video on why this work is important and why teachers matter in supporting the well-being of students. The course then proceeds with six modules covering the following:

Promoting the Mental Health and Well-being of Students

○ Module 1: Creating Safe and Supportive Classrooms
○ Module 2: Teaching Mental Health Literacy and Reducing Stigma
○ Module 3: Fostering Social-Emotional Competencies and Well-being

Supporting Students Experiencing Adversity and Distress

○ Module 4: Understanding and Supporting Students Experiencing Adversity
○ Module 5: The Impact of Trauma and Adversity on Learning Behavior
○ Module 6: Classroom Strategies to Support Students

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to further enhance the content presented in the Classroom WISE modules and resources. Each module addresses a different aspect of student mental health and mental health literacy. Watching the modules independently will increase your ability to support and respond to students' mental health needs; however, by incorporating discussion, evaluation, and practice with the knowledge base gained through the modules, you will be able to achieve even greater outcomes and strengthen student supports, especially for students experiencing mental health distress.

NIATx Process Improvement

The discussion questions for each of the six modules provided in this guide were developed from the [NIATx](#) model for process improvement. NIATx is a simple, evidence-based model that uses [PDSA](#) (**P**lan, **D**o, **S**tudy, **A**ct) rapid-cycle testing to implement change and deliver powerful and lasting results. This guide will lead you through each of the six Classroom WISE modules using PDSA to implement targeted and sustainable process improvement in your classroom or school community.

What are the components of PDSA?

Plan

- Plan a change or test aimed at improvement
- Include how you will collect data
- What is your prediction for the test?

Do

- Carry out the change or test, preferably on a small scale
- Document your observations
- Record data

Study

- Study the results—was your prediction correct?
- What worked and what went wrong
- Summarize what was learned

Act

- Adopt the change (or) abandon the change (or) adapt the change and run another cycle
- Celebrate!
- Move on to the next cycle[1]

After viewing each Classroom WISE module, you will be prompted to engage in discussion with your group[2] and identify modifications that can be made in your classroom or school community based on the information presented in the module. You will use the discussion questions provided at the end of this guide to help your group determine which of the proposed modifications are best for your classroom and what your next steps should be to effectively implement these changes. The next time your group meets to watch the following module, you will discuss what modifications were tried, how well they worked, what you would do differently, and what data and resources are needed to successfully implement the modifications you would like to continue using in your classrooms. The discussion questions following each module are designed to lead you through this process.

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[1] *You can also access the NIATx* *PDSA Handout* *for additional details on engaging in rapid-cycle testing.*

[2] *Find more information on establishing discussion groups in the "Structuring a Discussion Group" section of this guide.*

Measuring Change

Data is an important component of this model. Your group cannot understand which changes resulted in improvement, which changes did not, and what additional changes are needed for continued improvement without analyzing the data gathered throughout the rapid-cycle testing process.

Gathering data can seem like a daunting task, especially if your group has limited time or resources. Fortunately, this model provides best practices for collecting and analyzing data in manageable and impactful ways:

Use existing resources

○ What data is currently collected or available to you at the classroom, grade, school, or district levels?

Collect only the information you need to achieve your project goals

Explore the following questions to identify the data that is vital to your goals:

○ What are we trying to accomplish?
○ How will we know that a change is an improvement?
○ What changes can we make that will result in an improvement?

School Health Assessment & Performance Evaluation (SHAPE) System

The SHAPE System, developed by the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH), is a comprehensive tool for collecting school mental health data. SHAPE can help you:

○ Evaluate strengths and identify areas of growth
○ Document mental health services across tiers of support
○ Engage school mental health teams in data-driven, strategic quality improvement
○ Use a robust resource center and guides to outline quality improvement efforts

Structuring a Discussion Group

Determining the structure of your Classroom WISE discussion groups prior to your first meeting will lead to a more successful experience for all. The following are some recommended considerations to review when structuring your discussion group.

How often will you meet, and will all the dates be scheduled in advance?

How will group members be selected?
   (i.e., self-selected, required, appointed, by grade level or subject area, etc.)

Who will facilitate the discussions?

It can be challenging to be both the facilitator and a participant in a discussion group. Some options to consider:

○ Alternating facilitation responsibility between all the group members
○ Bring in an outside facilitator—someone who is not a member of this discussion group
   (e.g., school mental health professional, administrator, or other neutral staff members)

Classroom WISE Implementation Considerations

Classroom WISE was designed to be flexible and adaptable so your school can decide how best to use this content. Before starting the first module, consider the following questions to determine your implementation design.

Initial Implementation Considerations

Will the Classroom WISE Mental Health Literacy Course be suggested or required training?

- Will all school staff or only select school staff take the training?
- Will teachers or school staff be expected to watch all the modules or specific modules?
- Based on your experience of prior implementation efforts in your school, what do you foresee would be a successful rollout for Classroom WISE?

Ongoing Application Considerations

Learning is more effective when it is supported through group discussion, skills practice, and integration. How will your school support the integration and application of the Classroom WISE content?

- Team-based discussion opportunities following each module viewing
- Consultation or coaching supports for content integration in the classroom
- Natural mechanisms for peer support and shared learning
- Learning communities in your school/district/region
- Additional learning resources and opportunities after each module
- Book discussion[3] related to each module specifically and mental health generally

Multilevel Implementation Roles and Responsibilities

Who needs to be involved in the implementation planning and roll-out, and what will be their roles?

- **District Administrators:** (a) communicate how Classroom WISE aligns with strategic priorities, (b) explain how the program fulfills district needs, and (c) clearly outline the purpose of Classroom WISE and the sustainability plan for quality improvement efforts
- **School Administrators:** (a) communicate how Classroom WISE aligns with school priorities, (b) explain how the program fulfills student needs, and (c) identify faculty or staff members who will be responsible for leading the implementation and application of this training
- **School Mental Health Professionals:** (a) support the Classroom WISE curriculum, (b) engage in ongoing discussions of key topics, and (c) assist with problem-solving throughout the implementation and application of the program

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[3] *Find more information on book discussions in the "Book Study Considerations" section.*

○ **Educators:** (a) provide feedback to school mental health professionals and administrators about the application with students, (b) gain experience implementing the strategies suggested in each module, (c) observe the students' responses to applied strategies, and (d) suggest adjustments to the strategies when needed

Book Study Considerations

A book study can be a powerful way for educators to advance their own continued learning on mental health topics. It is an effective form of professional development because new learning can be immediately applied in the classroom. Teachers involved in ongoing book studies and relevant group discussions are able to develop strategies and best practices that improve their school's mental health and wellness efforts.

Choose one book that the group will read together. Everyone can read the entire book, or you could have each member read a different chapter. The group will discuss the themes and information of the book together during group discussion meetings.

Set deadlines by which chapters or sections should be read, as well as when the group will discuss the readings. Creating deadlines can be motivating, but if your group finds the schedule to be unmanageable, feel free to adjust the reading schedule to meet the needs of your group.

Consider structuring your meetings around three main parts:

1. **Invite a group member to *summarize* the reading in their own words.**
   a. Summarizing the main themes of your readings prior to group discussion helps everyone center themselves on the topic at hand. It also ensures all members have the appropriate context to engage in productive discourse.

2. **Transition into a group discussion.**
   a. It might be helpful to position yourselves around a table or in a circle to encourage inclusivity and open communication.
   b. Good discussions are often based on thoughtful questions or comparisons to your own educational environment. Share your own thoughts and questions to initiate the conversation or ask others what questions they have about the reading and how the topic(s) of the reading relates to their students/classroom/learning community.

3. **Ask every group member how they can *apply* the ideas generated by the book and by your group discussion to their own practice.**
   a. It can be helpful to reserve a few minutes of individual reflection after discussing the reading. This gives folks some time to absorb what was discussed, and it can inspire creative practical applications of what was learned.

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Classroom WISE Module Discussion Guides

Modules 1–3: Promoting the Mental Health and Well-Being of Students

Module 1: Creating Safe and Supportive Classrooms

In this first module, we learn about the three components necessary for creating safe and supportive classrooms. We also identify strategies to help students feel engaged and safe in the classroom and help teachers design safe and supportive classroom environments.

Upon completion of this module, educators will be able to:

○ Describe the three components necessary for creating safe and supportive classrooms
○ Help students feel engaged in the classroom community
○ Help students feel both physically and emotionally safe in the classroom
○ Design a safe and supportive physical classroom environment

Discussion Questions:

○ How does Module 1 align with priorities or existing initiatives at our school?
○ What are three things we are already doing in our classrooms or school to build relationships with students?
○ What are three things we are already doing in our classrooms or school to create a safe and supportive learning environment?
○ How do I know these are working or not working? What data do I have to support this?
○ What am I doing well and what can I do better?
○ What are three new ideas or skills learned from this module that I can implement in my classroom to improve student supports?
○ Pick one idea to try. Each member in the group shares what they will try, how they will do it, and what data they will use to identify change.

Book Club Suggestions

To further enhance your learning on **creating safe and supportive schools**, consider reading and discussing the following books together:

○ *Creating Safe, Equitable, Engaging Schools: A Comprehensive, Evidence-Based Approach to Supporting Students*
David Osher, Deborah Moroney, and Sandra Williamson

○ *Creating Safe and Supportive Learning Environments: A Guide for Working With Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth and Families*
Emily S. Fisher and Karen Komosa-Hawkins

Group Discussion Notes (Module 1)

Date:

In this module, you learn more about how to teach mental health literacy and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. We review how to provide accurate information about mental health, talk openly, be careful and intentional with language, incorporate the lived experience of those with mental illness, and raise awareness. Teachers are well-positioned to increase understanding and shape students' attitudes about mental health.

Upon completion of this module, educators will be able to:

○ Describe complete mental health
○ Integrate mental health literacy into instruction
○ Address mental health stigma in the classroom

Discussion Questions:

○ What did you try based on our last discussion? What worked or didn't work? How do you know? What process changes are you considering and what will you continue doing?
○ How does Module 2 align with priorities or existing initiatives at our school?
○ How are we currently teaching about mental health awareness or stigma in our school?
○ What are three things we are already doing to address mental health stigma at our school?
○ What are three things we are already doing to integrate mental health instruction?
○ How do I know these working or not working? What data do I have to support this?
○ How can I improve or enhance my instruction on mental health and stigma reduction?
○ What are three new ideas or skills learned from this module that I can implement to teach about mental health and stigma reduction in my classroom/school?
○ Pick one idea to try. Each member in the group shares what idea they will try, how they will implement the idea in their classroom, and what data they will use to identify change.

Book Club Suggestions

To further enhance your learning on **teaching mental health literacy and reducing stigma,** consider reading and discussing the following books together:

○ *Lazy, Crazy, and Disgusting: Stigma and the Undoing of Global Health*
   Alexandra Brewis, Amber Wutich

○ *RECOVER[edu]: A Communication Guide for Addressing Mental Health in Schools*
   Daniel Patterson

Group Discussion Notes (Module 2)

Date:

This module begins by defining social and emotional learning (SEL) and discusses why it is essential to teach it in schools from kindergarten through high school graduation. We learn strategies for teaching these skills to students through lessons and activities, including how to integrate SEL into academic instruction and school-wide programming.

Upon completion of this module, educators will be able to:

- Define social and emotional learning (SEL)
- Describe the five SEL competencies
- Integrate SEL competencies into instruction

Discussion Questions:

- What did you try based on our last discussion? What worked or didn't work? How do you know? What process changes are you considering and what will you continue doing?
- How does Module 3 align with priorities or existing initiatives at our school?
- How are we currently addressing SEL at our school?
- What are three things I already do every day to integrate the five SEL competencies into my classroom instruction?
- How do I know these strategies are working or not working? What data do I have to support this?
- Does our school collect data on our SEL programming? If so, what does the data tell us?
- How can I do improve or enhance the integration of SEL competencies in my classroom?
- What are three new ideas or skills learned from this module that will help me integrate or improve the use of SEL competencies in my classroom?
- Pick one idea to try. Each member in the group shares what idea they will try, how they will implement the idea in their classroom, and what data they will use to identify change.

Book Club Suggestions

To further enhance your learning on **fostering social-emotional competencies and well-being,** consider reading and discussing the following books together:

- *Social and Emotional Learning in the Classroom*, *Second Edition. Promoting Mental Health and Academic Success*
  Barbara A. Gueldner, Laura L. Feuerborn, and Kenneth W. Merrell
- *Permission to Feel: Unlocking the Power of Emotions to Help Our Kids, Ourselves, and Our Society*
  Marc Brackett, PhD

Group Discussion Notes (Module 3)

Date:

Modules 4–6: Understanding and Supporting Students Experiencing Adversity and Distress

Module 4: Understanding and Supporting Students Experiencing Adversity

In this module, we review typical child and adolescent developments and behaviors. Understanding what is typical makes it easier to identify students who may be experiencing adversity and distress. This module also explains what signs might indicate that a student needs additional supports, as well as the best practices for connecting students and families with the appropriate supports and services.

Upon completion of this module, educators will be able to:

- Understand and promote healthy child and adolescent development
- Recognize signs of student distress and those who may need additional mental health supports
- Connect students in need with appropriate supports

Discussion Questions:

- What did you try based on our last discussion? What worked or didn't work? How do you know? What process changes are you considering and what will you continue doing?
- How does Module 4 align with priorities or existing initiatives at our school?
- How are we identifying healthy and unhealthy behaviors in children/adolescents, and what are we doing to promote healthy development at our school?
- What systems are in place at our school that help us determine healthy/unhealthy student behaviors?
- What systems are in place to help us connect students with additional supports?
- What data are available to us that helps us determine the efficacy (or inefficacy) of these systems and supports?
- Does our school collect data on referrals or referral follow-ups? If so, what does it tell us?
- What can I do to improve or enhance my ability to recognize and respond to signs of student distress?
- What are three new ideas or skills learned from this module that I can implement in my classroom to improve the response to and supports for students experiencing adversity?
- Pick one idea to try. Each member in the group shares what idea they will try, how they will implement the idea in their classroom, and what data they will use to identify change.

Book Club Suggestions

To further enhance your learning on **understanding and supporting students experiencing adversity,** consider reading and discussing the following books together:

- *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*
  Bessel van der Kolk, MD
- *The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults*
  Frances E. Jensen, Amy Ellis Nutt

Group Discussion Notes (Module 4)

Date:

This module helps us better understand trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and how to integrate trauma-sensitive practices in our classrooms. Many students experience trauma or adversity. These experiences can shape brain and body responses and impact a student's ability to be available for learning in school. Understanding the effects of adversity and trauma helps teachers provide safe and supportive environments that can increase student success, even in the context of adversity.

Upon completion of this module, educators will be able to:

○ Define childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACES)
○ Describe the impact of trauma and ACES on learning and overall functioning
○ Demonstrate trauma-sensitive teaching practices

Discussion Questions:

○ What did you try based on our last discussion? What worked or didn't work? How do you know? What process changes are you considering and what will you continue doing?
○ How does Module 5 align with priorities or existing initiatives at our school?
○ How are we currently integrating trauma-informed practices at our school?
○ What are three things I do every day to integrate trauma-sensitive teaching practices into my classroom instruction?
○ How do I know whether these practices are working or not working? What data do I have to support this?
○ Does our school collect data on our trauma-informed practices or programming? If so, what does the data tell us?
○ How can I improve or enhance the integration of trauma-sensitive teaching practices in my classroom?
○ What are three new ideas or skills learned from this module that I can implement in my classroom to improve the supports for students experiencing trauma/ACES?
○ Pick one idea to try. Each member in the group shares what idea they will try, how they will implement the idea in their classroom, and what data they will use to identify change.

Book Club Suggestions

To further enhance your learning on **the impact of trauma and adversity on learning and behavior**, consider reading and discussing these books together:

○ *What Happened to You? Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing*
Oprah Winfrey and Bruce D. Perry

○ *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*
Resmaa Menakem

Group Discussion Notes (Module 5)

Date:

This final module explores the importance of self-regulation and co-regulation. It equips us with specific strategies to support students experiencing problems with emotion regulation, executive functioning, social skills, behavior regulation, and/or substance use.

Upon completion of this module, educators will be able to:

○ Understand factors that contribute to student behaviors
○ Practice co-regulation and self-regulation
○ Identify classroom strategies to support students experiencing distress

Discussion Questions:

○ What did you try based on our last discussion? What worked or didn't work? How do you know? What process changes are you considering and what will you continue doing?
○ How does Module 6 align with priorities or existing initiatives at our school?
○ How are we currently addressing mental health distress at our school? What are our policies and practices that support students?
○ What are three concrete things I do every day to integrate self-regulation and co-regulation practices into my classroom?
○ How do I know these strategies are working or not working? What data do I have to support this?
○ Does our school collect data on student mental health-related behavior? If so, what does the data tell us?
○ How can I improve or enhance the daily integration of regulation practices and support of students experiencing distress in my classroom?
○ What are three new ideas or skills learned from this module that I can implement in my classroom to improve regulation techniques and support?
○ Pick one idea to try. Each member in the group shares what idea they will try, how they will implement the idea in their classroom, and what data they will use to identify change.

Book Club Suggestions

To further enhance your learning about **classroom strategies to support students,** consider reading and discussing the following books together:

○ *Unwinding Anxiety: New Science Shows How to Break the Cycles of Worry and Fear to Heal Your Mind*
Judson Brewer

○ *What Made Maddy Run: The Secret Struggles and Tragic Death of an All-American Teen*
Kate Fagan

Group Discussion Notes (Module 6)

Date: