



Classroom **WISE**

Well-Being Information and
Strategies for Educators

Classroom WISE Implementation Stories: Buffalo Grove High 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 Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC) Network, in partnership with the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, 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 Spring 2023, the MHTTC Network Coordinating Office, in partnership with the NCSMH, led the 2023 Classroom WISE School TA Opportunity, which involved working with 15 schools and school districts throughout the U.S. to facilitate the implementation of Classroom WISE in their everyday practices. This is the story of how Buffalo Grove High School worked to bring Classroom WISE to their school.

The School

Buffalo Grove High School is a public school within High School District 214 in Illinois that houses 2,000 students, 139 educators, and 80 other staff members. School mental health staff include 9 school counselors, 3 school counselor interns, 2 school psychologists, 2 social workers, and one school social work intern.

The Need

Buffalo Grove High School indicated that after providing training and reviewing best practices for trauma-informed schools, their educators did not feel qualified to help students with their mental health needs. Buffalo Grove indicated that Classroom WISE would benefit their school by supporting educators in their ability to make connections with students, manage students' social-emotional concerns, and make appropriate referrals to student services staff. Classroom WISE implementation would also bolster their Tier 1 social-emotional supports.

What Help They Received

A small implementation team from Buffalo Grove, consisting of a school administrator, three school mental health staff members, a school district representative, and three educators, was invited to attend an orientation webinar for Classroom WISE and participate in sharing sessions to learn what



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other schools were doing to implement Classroom WISE. They also received a Classroom WISE implementation guide.

What They Did

Buffalo Grove's implementation team disseminated information on Classroom WISE to school staff so they could decide if they wanted to take the Classroom WISE online course. While the school did not mandate that educators and other school staff complete the online course, they offered suggested deadlines and scheduled group discussions to reflect on the pros and cons of the online course modules and generate ways to disseminate Classroom WISE to more school staff. The school also utilized Google Forms to track completion of the online course and gather reflections from the modules.

Who Used Classroom WISE?

Thirty educators and school staff were encouraged to take the Classroom WISE online course. Buffalo Grove had 27 educators and school staff members enroll in the 6-module course, with 8 completing the course and approximately 10-20 staff members watching videos or downloading resources from the Classroom WISE website, video library, or resource collection.

What Changed?

Buffalo Grove High School focused on first introducing Classroom WISE to a small group of school staff to see whether there would be interest in implementing the training schoolwide. The staff members who took the online course spoke about implementing strategies they learned from the course and how it reminded them of the importance of social-emotional learning. Staff felt Classroom WISE strategies were easy to implement and benefited their work, and more educators and administrators have increased their awareness of the online course and its potential to help students.

Barriers and Facilitators

Buffalo Grove staff cited some barriers to using Classroom WISE, including limited time to take the course due to competing initiatives and mandates, mixed perceptions about administrative support, and some disagreement among educators as to whether they are open to supporting student mental health. For facilitators, they cited the helpfulness of the course content and the ability to discuss information from the course with other school staff.

Lessons Learned

Those who took the Classroom WISE online course rated it as having a moderate to high impact on their work over the next 3 months. Buffalo Grove's implementation team also indicated Classroom WISE has had a moderate impact on their school and would continue to have a moderate impact over the next 3 months. The implementation team is looking to get more feedback from students about the impact of the new Classroom WISE strategies that educators are using in their classrooms. In the meantime, Buffalo Grove has decided to include Classroom WISE as part of their professional development for educators during the 2023-24 school year.

The MHTTC Network thanks Buffalo Grove High School for participating in the 2023 Classroom WISE School TA Opportunity, which was conducted from January to April 2023.