



SCHOOL SUPPORT INITIATIVE

Mental Health America of Northeast Indiana recognizes that in order to promote the social and emotional health of Indiana students, we must first address the well-being of our teachers.

MHANI partners with schools that are devoted not only to understanding trauma but building communities in which students can process and *resolve* trauma.

GOALS: MHANI will provide resources that increase teacher and student mental well-being, guide schools as they prepare a learning culture to accept and implement social-emotional learning, and help all adults who work with students either directly or indirectly to increase their own emotional intelligence and capacity.

The foundation of our work is based on:

- Increasing knowledge neuroscience to support mental wellness
- Identifying and regulating emotions
- Building health and supportive relationships
- Integrating social-emotional learning
- Understanding warning signs

MHANI recommends and provides supports for:

- Training staff and teachers to increase knowledge of the neurobiological effects of trauma
 - Two-hour overview presentation to gain or review basic understanding of trauma, ACEs, and the brain
 - Periodic, one-hour refresher seminars to keep knowledge top-of-mind
- Building trauma sensitivity within the school culture.
 - Professionally facilitated Teacher Cafes engage and support teachers working to understand difficult classroom behaviors. Cafes also help ensure the transition of integrating social-emotional learning competencies will be successful.
 - Introduce strategies that support using zones of regulation and calming stations
- Creating an action plan to support teacher wellness
 - WRAP courses offered twice throughout the school year. (See reverse for details)
 - Coordinate representatives from community service organizations or small businesses that could offer wellness supports outside of school
 - 30 to 60 minute wellness workshops offered periodically throughout school year

“Students who have experienced high levels of adversity in their lives can dramatically affect all those who work with them. In order to help them learn, teachers need to care for themselves so that they can access the areas of our brain needed to problem-solve and regulate emotions” (Dr. Lori Desautels, 2019).



MHANI is dedicated to supporting schools and all those who work with youth.

“In addition to facilitating learning, teachers are key agents of socialization, helping students reach their highest potential and develop into responsible citizens. But, over the past years, teaching has become increasingly stressful. Today, teaching is one of the most stressful occupations in the United States” (Pennsylvania State University, 2017).

Toxic levels of stress are inherent to the teaching profession. “Teachers carry heavy professional and personal loads and often come into the profession because of their empathetic nature. For this reason, it is imperative that teachers understand the importance of caring for their own mental wellness” (Pennsylvania State University, 2017).

The Four Main Sources of Teacher Stress

1. School Organization: Leadership, Climate and Culture

High teacher trust in both their colleagues and leadership is related to lower stress and burnout. Unsatisfactory relationships within school culture may lower commitment to students (Penn State Univ., 2016).

2. Job Demands

Increased use of high-stakes testing combined with threats of termination based on results paired with difficult students behaviors leave many teachers more vulnerable to depression (Penn State Univ., 2016).

3. Work Resources: Support and Autonomy in Decision-Making

Among professional occupations, teachers rate lowest in feeling that their opinions count at work. Greater job control has been found to reduce the impact of stress on health in teachers (Verhoeven, 2003).

4. Teachers' Personal Resources and Social-Emotional Competence

A teacher's well-being is a key factor influencing student and classroom outcomes. Teachers have had few or no training opportunities to attend to and develop their own social-emotional competence (Penn State Univ., 2016).



Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP)

The Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP®) is a personalized wellness and recovery system born out of and rooted in the principle of self-determination. WRAP® is a wellness and recovery approach that helps people to: 1) decrease and prevent intrusive or troubling feelings and behaviors; 2) increase personal empowerment; 3) improve quality of life; and 4) achieve their own life goals and dreams. Working with a WRAP® can help individuals to monitor uncomfortable and distressing feelings and behaviors and, through planned responses, reduce, modify, or eliminate those feelings. WRAP® participants create a personalized recovery system of wellness tools and action plans to achieve a self-directed wellness vision despite life's daily challenges.

IDOE SEL Competencies and WRAP: **1) Mindset:** By creating a WRAP plan, participants build perseverance, adaptability, self-discovery, and resilience. This plan also helps them develop the critical thinking skills necessary to make constructive choices. **2) Critical Thinking:** WRAP is conducted as a group which increases positive communication and conflict management skills. **3) Regulation:** Participants will work towards identifying emotions and how they affect their thoughts and behaviors. **4) Insight:** WRAP helps build self-confidence, self-esteem, and empathy. **5) Connection and Collaboration:** Developing a WRAP plan in a group setting allows participants to understand the perspective of others and empathize with persons of diverse backgrounds. **6) Sensory-Motor Integration:** WRAP helps participants understand the connection between mind and body by identifying triggers and how they influence emotion and physical responses. In addition to identifying triggers, participants develop wellness tools to increase positive self-control and self-discipline.

WRAP Seminar 1: Participants create their own WRAP plan with two objectives in mind. First, the best way to learn about WRAP is to do WRAP. Pulling from personal experience, plans are created in a 16 hour training facilitated over a span of two days. Second, as we move through the process of developing personal WRAP outlines, group discussion and discovery will lead participants to understand how pieces of WRAP can be implemented into classrooms for both the benefit of teachers and students.

WRAP Seminar 2: After completion of WRAP Seminar 1, trained individuals will have the skills and insight needed to lead others through the process of making their own WRAP strategies. This seminar is appropriate for those who want to facilitate WRAP for middle and high school students, or even school staff and teachers. WRAP Seminar 1 is a prerequisite for WRAP Seminar 2.

Resources

Indiana School Mental Health Initiative. (2019). Indiana Institute on Disability and Community.

Indiana University, Bloomington.

Mental Health America, (n.d.). Addressing Trauma in Youth.

Pennsylvania State University. (2016). Teacher stress and health.

Verhoeven, C., Maes. E., Kraaij. V., & Joeke, K. (2003). The job-demand-control-social-support model and wellness/health outcomes: A European study. *Psychology and Health*.