

What Teachers Need to Know and Be Able to Do When Challenged by Student Mental Health

1. Awareness of the continuum of mental health – mental illness and early warning signs of mental health concerns
2. Communication skills that work for connecting with all students – especially troubled students
3. Who they can count on to support/guide their work with students and to offer collaborative services for the students.
4. How to help the school make systemic changes so they are better able to promote healthy social and emotional development, prevent and respond and not just identify and refer those with severe problems
5. Know their personal and professional limits, when to ask for help with a troubled student and who to ask
6. The language and skills to communicate mental health concerns about a child to parents and colleagues
7. Appreciation and awareness of diverse populations within the school and to embrace the importance of cultural competence
8. Classroom management strategies
9. Identify their own stigmatized ideas about mental health and illness and personal mental health issues and experiences and how they affect the students' experience in the classroom
10. Identify social and emotional developmental benchmarks/milestones
11. Symptoms and impact of treatment interventions (includes time) at various ages
12. Work with colleagues to identify strategies that can help struggling students
13. How to build trust, empathy, and communication between school and family to improve academic performance and classroom behavior
14. Skills to differentiate curricula appropriate for different learning styles among students
15. Knowledge and skills to work effectively as a member of a multidisciplinary team

Reference: Proceedings from National Summit on School Mental Health held in Milwaukee, WI September, 2007

Contact nahec@nahec.org for more information.