



A School and Community Approach to Building Mental Health Literacy through Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)

**POLICY & PRACTICE INSTITUTE: DELAWARE'S
CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION
"INSPIRED TO ACTION"
June 21, 2023**



Delaware
Department of Education



About Your Presenters

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Expectations

We are...	
ENGAGED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Leave electronics and distractions to the side● Participate in discussions● Take notes, if helpful to you
REFLECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Share questions you have for full group● Note follow up questions for presentation team and/or individuals● Focus on problem solving around areas of concern● Make note if you have a “parking lot” question
SUPPORTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Share successes, ideas, useful resources● Listen with openness and understanding● Attend to your own needs



Learning Objectives

1. Define Mental Health Literacy (MHL) and recognize its 4 components.
2. Understand the importance of grounding MHL in Regulation 508 as a Tier 1 universal strategy.
3. Identify Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) as a primary strategy to build adult MHL that can enhance appropriate response to emerging youth mental health needs in schools.
4. Understand how adult MHL through YMHFA offers foundation for HB 301 implementation.
5. Discover the school and community connections for YMHFA Support in Delaware.
6. Recognize how administrators can support YMHFA Initiatives in their schools/districts.



Session Materials



Session slides and tools can be found on the DE-PBS website at: delawarepbs.org/policy-and-practice-institute/ or by scanning the QR code.

Policy and Practice Institute

June 21, 2023



Snapshot of Delaware Youth Data



From 2016 to 2020:

- 32.7% increase in youth experiencing anxiety and depression
- Data represents 23,000 youth statewide or 13% of Delaware youth
- Increase reflects national trend

<https://www.bidenschool.udel.edu/news/Pages/2022-National-KIDS-COUNT-Data-Book.aspx>



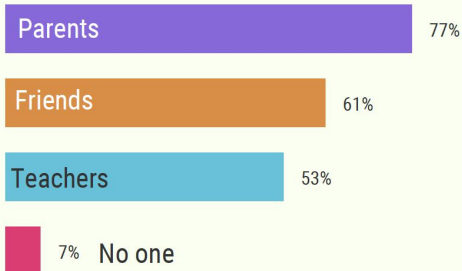
2022 Delaware School Survey



5th Grade

Social Support

Most fifth graders receive support and encouragement from their parents and friends, and a little over half receive support from their teachers.



Mental Health

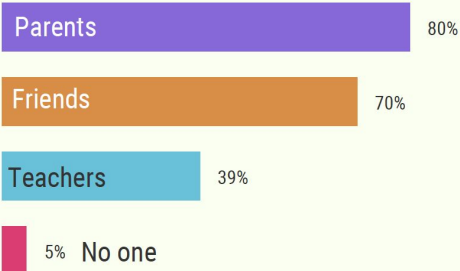


40% of fifth graders say they get the kind of help they need most of the time or always when they're feeling sad, empty, hopeless, angry, or anxious. An additional **29% get help sometimes**.

8th Grade

Social Support

Most 8th graders receive social support and encouragement from their parents and friends, and over a third feel supported by their teachers.



Mental Health

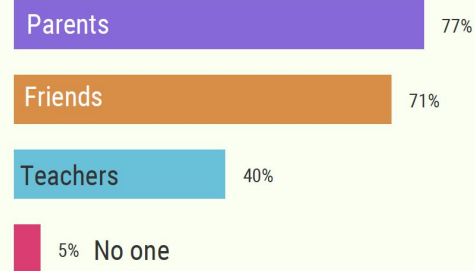
About half of eighth graders (44%) reported being bothered by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless in the past two weeks.



11th Grade

Social Support

Most 11th graders receive social support and encouragement from their parents and friends, and almost half feel supported by their teachers.



Mental Health

About two-thirds of eleventh graders (65%) reported being bothered by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless in the past two weeks.





What is Mental Health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from early childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Positive mental health in childhood includes reaching developmental and emotional milestones and learning healthy social and emotional skills to enhance wellbeing and employ strategies for coping adaptively with challenges.



Why is Mental Health a priority to you?

What mental health concerns are you seeing, overall, in your schools/districts?



What mental health concerns are you seeing in your students?



What mental health concerns are you seeing in your staff?





Why Mental Health is a priority to us?



1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6–17 experience a **mental health disorder** each year.

9,000 Delawareans age 12–17 have depression.



High school students with depression are more than **2x more likely to drop out** than their peers.

45.5% of Delawareans age 12–17 who have depression **did not receive any care** in the last year.



In addition to clinical data concerns, we are seeing an increase in:

- Truancy Rates
- Drop-Out Rates
- Fighting
- In-school Suspensions
- Out-of-School Suspensions



Why Mental Health is a priority to us

Educators and other school personnel are also affected:

- Burn out
- High turnover
- Limited capacity to take on additional tasks
- Professionals leaving education altogether



More than half of Americans report that **COVID-19 has had a negative impact** on their mental health.

In February 2021, **32.8% of adults in Delaware** reported symptoms of **anxiety or depression**.
16.9% were unable to get needed counseling or therapy.



Why Mental Health is a priority to us





Why Mental Health is a priority to us



How many examples of stigma can you identify?



What is Mental Health Literacy?



*What if Smokey Bear only taught
us how to put out fires?*



4 Components of Mental Health Literacy (MHL)

1. understanding how to obtain and maintain good mental health
2. understanding mental disorders and their treatments
3. decreasing stigma related to mental disorders
4. enhancing help-seeking efficacy

Kutcher, S., Wei, Y., Costa, S., Gusmão, R., Skokauskas, N., & Sourander, A. (2016). Enhancing mental health literacy in young people. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 25(6), 567–569. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-016-0867-9>



What about SEL?

Think of SEL and MHL like Math and Science. They are distinctly different but often work together, and you need them both!

SEL promotes life skills such as identifying and managing emotions, making responsible decisions; balancing stressors, and supporting positive relationships

MHL promotes knowledge of mental health as part of overall health; understanding of MH conditions and treatments; decreases stigma, and enhances help-seeking



Research Supports MHL for Educators

“It is essential that... teachers be well trained in understanding pertinent aspects of student mental health. Teachers do not usually receive substantial education in this domain in teacher’s college, nor do they receive substantive professional development when in practice, despite their concerns about needing to improve student mental health.”

Kutcher, S. and Wei, . (2020), School mental health: a necessary component of youth mental health policy and plans. World Psychiatry, 19: 174-175. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20732>



MHL for Educators & School Professionals

- proactive not reactive
- not clinical or treatment-focused
- not a program, but an understanding, a “literacy”
- focused on mental health as a continuum rather than a binary of wellness and illness
- universal



DE-MTSS (Regulation 508)

“DE-MTSS is a framework designed to meet the needs of the whole child through an integrated, multilevel prevention system that optimizes team-based leadership and data-driven decision making to meet the academic and nonacademic (e.g., behavioral, social and emotional) needs of all students.”





Tier 1 Universal Mental Health

What do ALL Students Need?

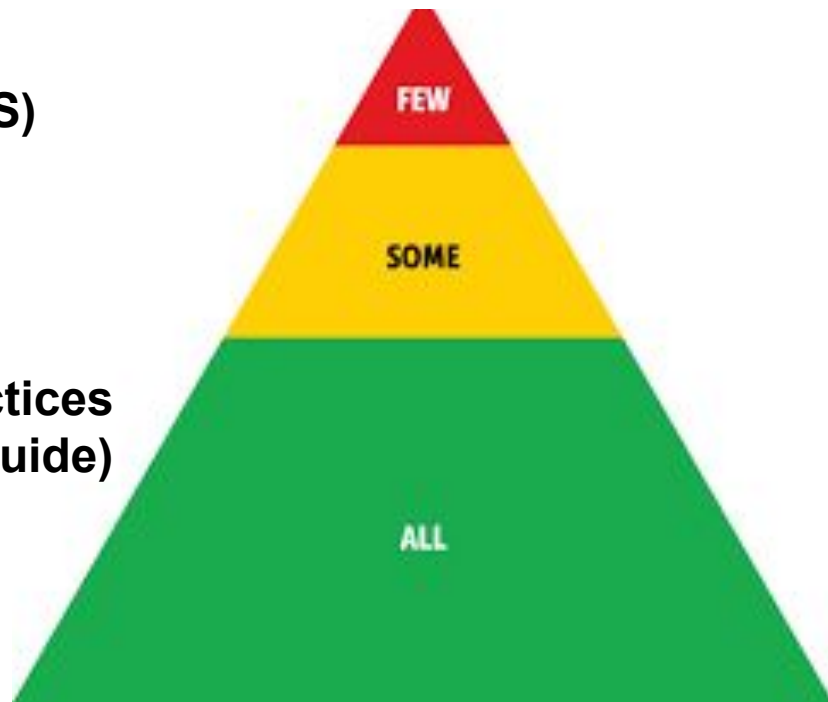
Prevention, data

Strategies to create emotionally supported and physically safe environments for students & identify students at-risk
Gatekeeper training for staff, students and families
SEL interventions to enhance healthy coping & help-seeking
School-wide initiatives to increase protective factors to reduce risk factors (e.g., bullying prevention, trauma-informed practices)
Student Voice
Screening



Tier 1 SEBW in Delaware

- Core SEL skills (CASEL, Second Step, Leader in Me, etc.)
- Universal Positive Expectations (DE-PBS)
- **Mental health literacy for all - HB 301**
- Student, family, community voice
- Restorative Practices
- Universal SEB Screening
- Rethinking policy and exclusionary practices (Code of Conduct → Student Success Guide)





HB 301 Overview

HB 301; Section 1:

- (b) The Department of Education, with the approval of the State Board of Education, shall establish and **implement statewide mental health educational programs** for each grade in each school district and charter school in this State.
- (c) In establishing and implementing statewide mental health programs under this section, the Department of Education shall consult with mental health experts, including individuals with the Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, Mental Health Association of Delaware, Delaware Guidance Services, National Alliance of Mental Illness Delaware, and National Council for Behavioral Health.
- (d) The statewide mental health education programs established and implemented under this section must meet all of the following:
 - (1) Recognize the multiple dimensions of health by including instruction in mental health and the relationship between physical and mental health to enhance student understanding, attitudes, and behaviors that promote health, well-being, and human dignity.
 - (2) Taught by appropriately certified teachers or appropriately certified community mental health providers.
 - (3) Be comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, and sequential in nature.
- (e) A school district or charter school shall provide in-service training required under this section within the contracted school year.
- (f) The Department of Education may, with the approval of the State Board of Education, adopt regulations to implement and enforce this section



What is Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)?

For adults who regularly interact with young people to **recognize & respond appropriately** to signs of **common mental health challenges** in youth



Mental Health **FIRST AID**

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING



Connection: HB 301 & YMHFA

YOUTH
MH
LITERACY

HB 301

Implements statewide mental health educational programs for K-12 students.

Outcomes:

- Improved student mental wellness
- Positive & supportive school climate
- Increased prevention & early intervention
- Reduction in stigma
- Increased confidence/self-efficacy and likelihood to help a young person in distress

YMHFA

Teaches adults to recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health challenges in youth ages 12-18.

ADULT
MH
LITERACY



What is Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)?

WHO? A course for adults who regularly interact with young people, such as parents, family caregivers, teachers, school staff, faith leaders, and aftercare/daycare providers

WHY? To help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addiction challenge or is in crisis

WHAT? Recognize signs of **common mental health challenges** in youth such as anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD), and eating disorders, and distinguish them from typical adolescent development; Learn how to practice **ALGEE**, a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations.



Mental Health FIRST AID






from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING



Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHA)



ALGEE: THE ACTION PLAN

-  **ASSESS** for risk of suicide or harm.
-  **LISTEN** non-judgmentally.
-  **GIVE** re-assurance and information.
-  **ENCOURAGE** appropriate professional help.
-  **ENCOURAGE** self-help and other support strategies.



YMHFA

Mental Health First Aid Research in the United States

Updated: February 2023



Mental Health
FIRST AID

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
MENTAL WELLBEING

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a skills-based training that teaches people how to



identify



understand



respond

to signs and symptoms of mental health or substance use challenges in adults 18 and older and youth ages 12-18. [Global research](#) and [evaluation](#) of these programs have contributed to a robust evidence base, which is crucial to highlight strengths and gaps across the program and to inform future program developments.

Major findings for Youth MHFA



FINDING:

Increased mental health literacy, including^{1, 2, 14, 16, 18, 23, 28, 40, 42}

- Knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental health and substance use challenges
- Ability to identify appropriate types of professionals and self-help resources for youth with a mental health or substance use challenge.

FINDING:

Increased confidence/self-efficacy and likelihood to help a young person in distress.^{1, 4, 5, 14, 23, 28, 40, 45}



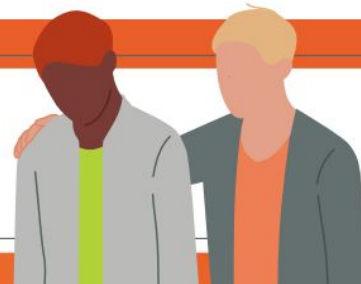
FINDING:

Reduced stigma and increased empathy/acceptance toward youth with mental health challenges.^{7, 16, 24, 25, 30, 43-44}



FINDING:

Use of MHFA skills after training.^{2, 37}



https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023.03.01_MHFA_Research-Summary_infographic.pdf

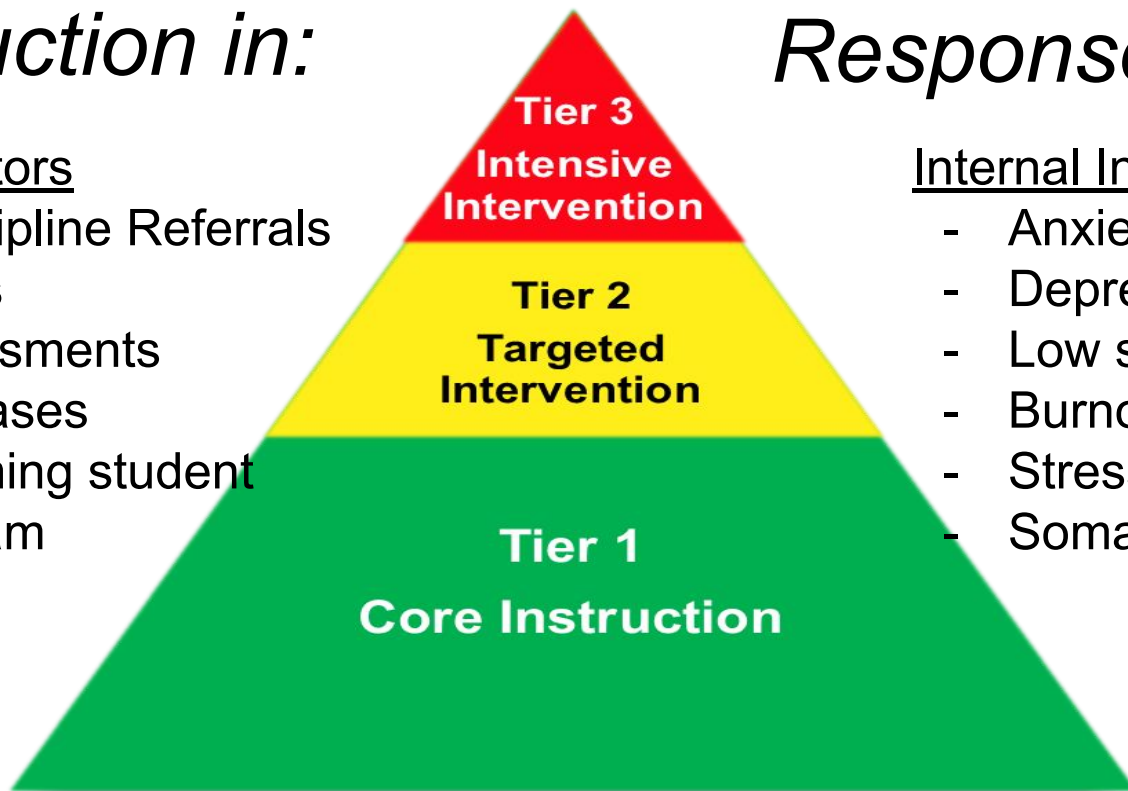


YMFA as a Tier 1 Preventive Framework

Reduction in:

External Indicators

- Office Discipline Referrals
- Crisis Calls
- Risk Assessments
- Truancy Cases
- Overwhelming student support team



Response to:

Internal Indicators

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Burnout
- Stress
- Somatic Symptoms



Federal grant funded by SAMHSA in 2018 - now in its final year of implementation

Purpose - implement evidence-based mental health services in school settings within the context of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) in order to promote wellness and resilience in school-aged children

- Strengthen school referral and assessment process
- Additional human resources in each District - mental health professionals
- Youth Mental Health First Aid - mental health literacy
- Universal Screening Process
- Mental Health Awareness Campaign



Social Emotional Behavioral Wellbeing (SEBW) Plan

- [Website](#)
- [Overview Video](#)





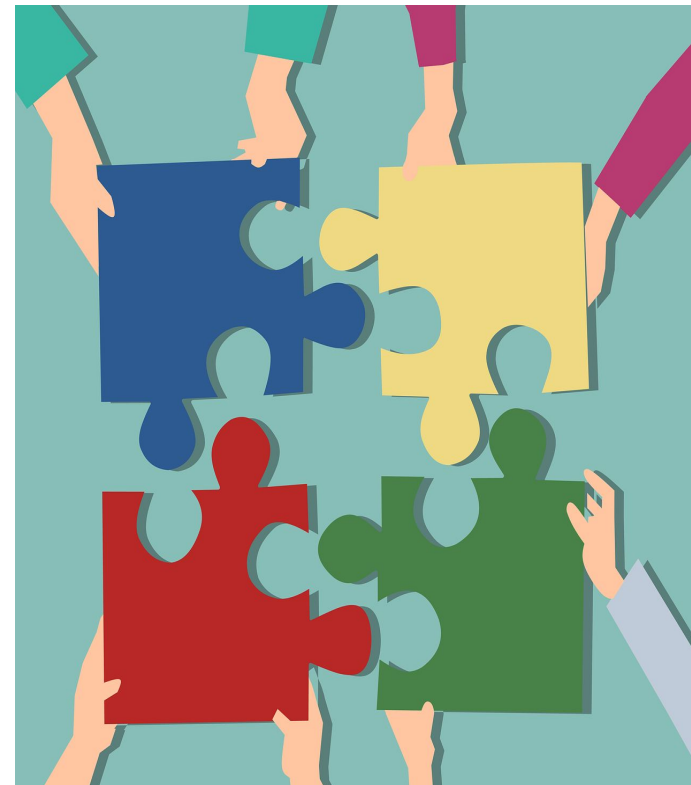
The School and Community Connection

Trained Instructors in LEAs

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| ★ Academy Antonia Alonso | ★ Freire Charter |
| ★ Appoquinimink | ★ Indian River |
| ★ Brandywine | ★ Kuumba Academy |
| ★ Caesar Rodney | ★ Lake Forest |
| ★ Cape Henlopen | ★ NCCVT |
| ★ Capital | ★ Polytech |
| ★ Christina | ★ Red Clay |
| ★ Colonial | ★ Smyrna |

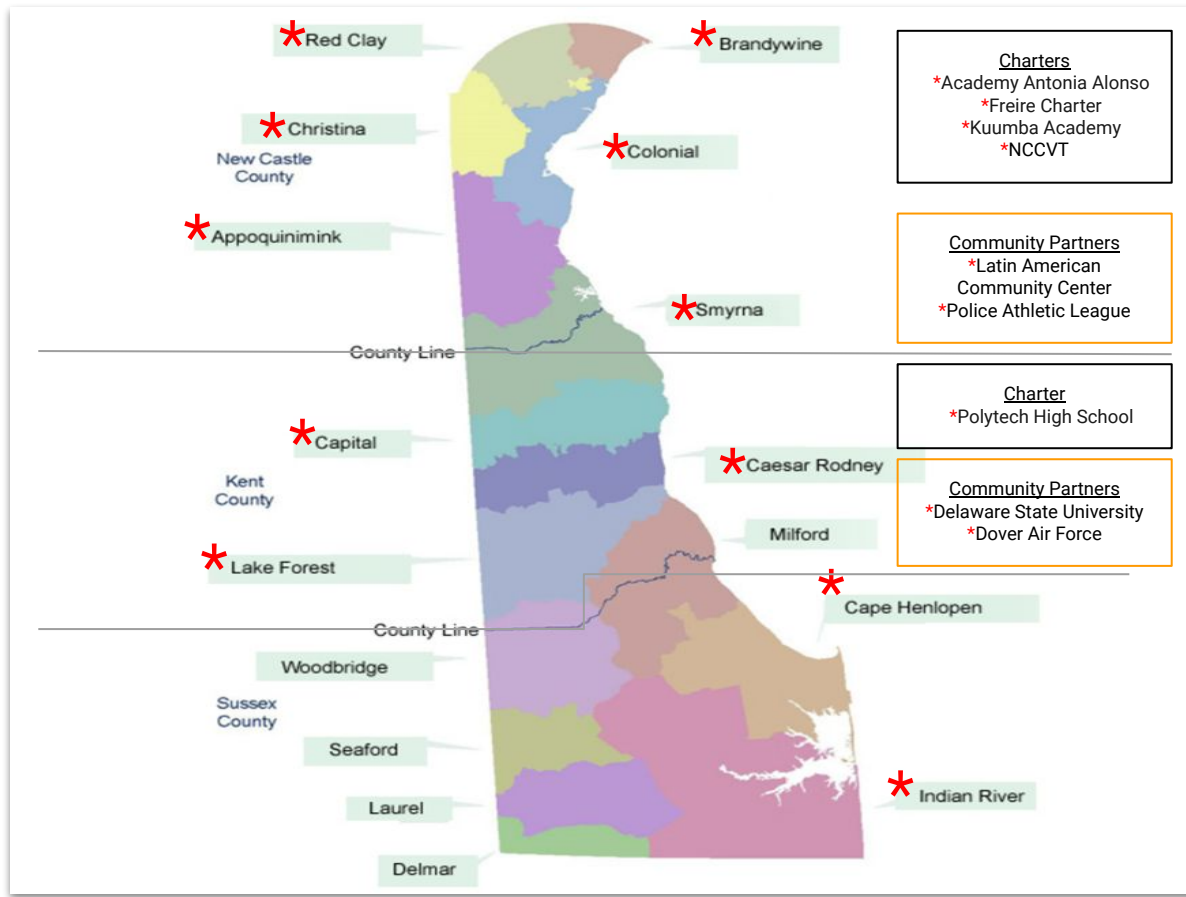
Trained Instructors in Community Organizations

- | | |
|---|---|
| ★ Brandywine Counseling & Community Services (BCCS) | ★ Delaware State Education Association (DSEA) |
| ★ Center for Disability Studies (CDS) | ★ Delaware State University |
| ★ Children's Beach House | ★ Delaware Guidance |
| ★ Connecting Generations | ★ Dover Air Force Base |
| ★ Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) | ★ Latin American Community Center |
| | ★ Police Athletic League |
| | ★ NAMI Delaware |



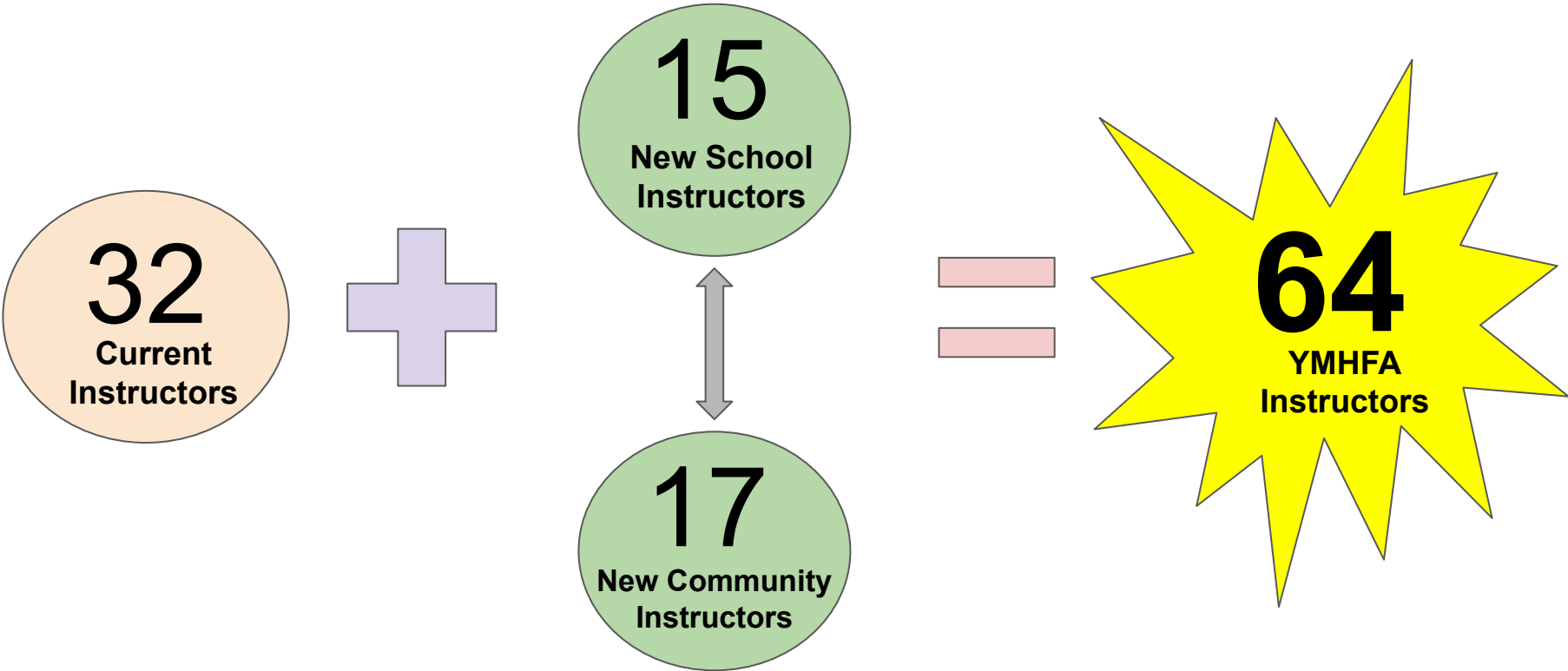
DDOE Trained YMHFA Instructors Across the State

- Community Partners
- *Brandywine Counseling & Community Services
 - *Center for Disability Studies
 - *Children's Beach House
 - *Connecting Generations
 - *DDOE
 - *Delaware Guidance
 - *DSEA
 - *NAMI Delaware



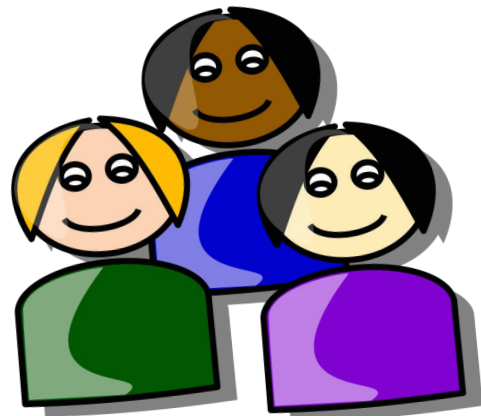


Delaware DOE Trained YMHFA Instructors

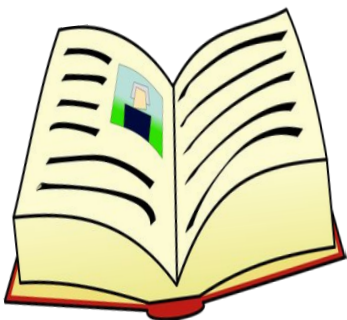




YMHFA Participants Trained Through SEBW Initiative

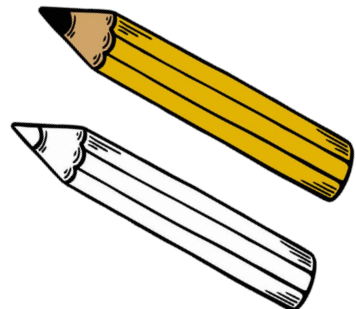


275 participants
Certified YMHFAiders



9 Charter Schools

18 School Districts





YMHFA Implementation Highlights

In addition to supporting district employees to become YMHFA Instructors, some districts and charters have:

- Developed [ACTION PLANS](#)
- used professional development time or
- offered compensation for trainings completed outside of contractual hour (i.e. EPER, SNOW Hours, Summer PD Days, Stipends).

Instructors have worked with state and local leadership to complete action plans for YMHFA implementation to incorporate district PD plans, MTSS framework, and utilize strategic planning.





What is the YMHFA instructor commitment?

Requirements	Commitment
Youth Mental Health First Aid Instructor Certification	To become certified: approx. 8 hrs pre-work (asynchronous) + 3 virtual 8 hr days of interactive, virtual training + approx. 4 hours post-work (asynchronous)
<i>*SEBW requirement</i>	<i>Action Planning for training delivery in partnership with DOE</i>
Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainings	Coordinate and deliver at least 3 YMHFA (6.5 hr) trainings within one year of your certification date. The role also includes online platform coordination for your participants (1-2 hr per training)



On-going YMHFA Instructor Support

- Action Plan Development & Coaching
- Coordination & Technical Assistance for School/District Trainings
- Quarterly Instructor Cohort
- Technical Assistance as needed





YMHFA Instructor Testimonial



Dr. Jennifer Martin,
*Supervisor of Health & Wellness,
Caesar Rodney School District*



“For anyone considering taking a course on YMHFA or for becoming a YMHFA Trainer- it is definitely worth every minute.

...this training is something that all ancillary and non-ancillary staff in education need to have access to.

We are dealing with unprecedented times in our students’ lives and anything that we can do to support them, and proactively intervene when we, as adults, recognize signs and symptoms of non-crisis or crisis mental health concerns, will empower our educational community to respond in appropriate ways.”



How Administrators Can Support YMHFA Initiatives in Your Schools/Districts

- Establish a YMHFA Instructor Team within your school/district
 - *Partner with your Instructors to develop your school/district Action Plan*
 - *Provide opportunity/time for instructors to participate in training and ongoing support*
- Incorporate YMHFA training into your Professional Development days
- Incorporate YMHFA training into your new employee onboarding activities
- Develop a strategy to support the time commitment required for YMHFA implementation for Instructors and participants if training is offered outside of contractual time
- Partner with DDOE YMHFA supports and initiatives through the SEBW Plan
- Identify funds to sustain the cost of YMHFA classes - grant funding opportunities may be available!



We need your help

- You can identify the champions from your teams to help us move ahead
- You can provide your teams the tools to help their students and families
- You can encourage universal MHL for students, staff, and families:
 - deeper understanding & increased confidence
 - reduced stigma
 - increased help-seeking
- You can improve the mental wellbeing of your students, staff, and families
- You are the heart of your school community





Session Materials



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Policy and Practice Institute

June 21, 2023



Social, Emotional, Behavioral Wellbeing Conference

For Families

For Schools



Contact Us!

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