**Effective Mental Health Prevention and Intervention Approaches**

Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and Kentucky Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities can help schools identify mental health prevention and intervention approaches that have a strong research base showing evidence of good outcomes.

* KDE recently released a four video training series to help all school adults understand how they can help promote student resilience, as well as identify and appropriately support students who may be struggling with a mental health disorder. The videos were developed in partnership with the Center for Instructional and Behavioral Research in Schools (CIBRS) at University of Louisville and are designed increase knowledge of evidence-based PBIS practices to effectively promote and support student mental wellness.

[http://www.cibrs.com/considering-mental-health-videos/#](http://www.cibrs.com/considering-mental-health-videos/)

* Youth Mental Health First Aid certification reduces stigma around mental illness and increases early identification of problems by teaching mental health literacy to adults. This includes:
* prevalence of mental health disorders
* how to build protective factors and identify risk factors
* signs and symptoms that anyone can watch for
* how to appropriately step in and be a support in crisis and non-crisis situations until professional help is available
* how to find help for someone experiencing a mental health problem or crisis

KDE offers this all-day training for free to schools, parents, community and faith organizations, and other youth-serving adults upon request.

* Some young people at risk of suicide or mental health problems won’t have any visible symptoms, so a best practice is to regularly screen all children for mental health concerns using a quick, research-validated questionnaire that is developmentally and culturally appropriate. Some of these screening tools are free, like the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).
* An important concern regarding mental health screening is the need for schools to have a plan in place for connecting young people flagged by the screener to appropriate interventions and services. These supports can be provided by the school or through a community partner.
* The [School Mental Health Referral Pathways Toolkit](http://education.ky.gov/school/sdfs/Documents/school%20mental%20health%20referral%20pathways%20toolkit.pdf) is an innovative, well-researched, and very user friendly guide to help schools and districts maximize mental health resources, build strong collaborations with community providers, and make sure student mental health needs are met effectively and equitably.  Among its contents are:
* a template for parental consent forms
* a template for creating a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with mental health providers
* guidance on information sharing and privacy
* example universal mental health screening tools
* recommendations regarding culturally and linguistically appropriate services
* how to create effective cross-agency school mental health teams
* how to integrate school mental health into a Multi-Tiered System of Support (a.k.a. “MTSS” or “PBIS”) framework
* Just like having school adults become certified in Youth Mental Health First Aid, screening all kids for mental health concerns makes it more likely that problems are caught early, before they lead to greater pain, greater academic and life disruption, and may be harder to treat.
* In partnership with Pulaski and Fayette County Schools, the University of Kentucky Center on Trauma and Children created a [video training series](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCF1Ek4OebwCC6cxbth-EvcA) for caregivers and educators.  The training series includes short videos on:
* *Self-regulation Techniques for Children*
* *Why Experiences Matter: trauma 101 for caregivers*
* *Get Connected: enhancing resiliency through school connectedness*
* *When to seek help if your child has experienced a traumatic event*
* KDE and the Kentucky Center for School Safety provide schools and districts with support in creating high quality emergency operations plans that include pre- and post-vention activities when a crisis occurs, including a suicide or other event that can have a traumatic impact on the school, district, and community.