

**Prioritizing mental Health: Advocating for Increase Access to Resources in Schools.**

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## **Prioritizing Mental Health: Advocating for Increased Access to Resources In Schools**

Imagine a class full of “cracked heads” and “stress drepressys” who find it difficult to concentrate in class due to depression, headaches, anxiety, digestive problems and restlessness. In general, “Mental Illness”. As a college student and being around people who suffer from mental health is overwhelming. For people who are new to this word, mental health problems can be an individual’s nightmare, it makes it hard for a person to live a normal life, mental health can affect a person mentally and physically. This includes painful thoughts and feelings, including fear, sadness, restlessness and hopelessness. “Forty two percent of high school students suffer from stress, anxiety, depression or thoughts of suicide”. Stone, M. (2023) argues, he stated that more and more schools are making effort to improve mental health services in recent years, though there is shortage of mental health professionals and inconsistent funding is setting a barrier. He also elaborated on how young people spend most of their time in school and therefore it is the responsibility of the society to make mental health awareness and accessibility crucial and that the society should make the school a place where they can find a peace of mind, learning emotional skills that will help them improve. He emphasizes on how we should help children who suffer from mental health problems. I agree with Stone (2023). Mental health is an illness that is deadly, and this is why society should assist children who suffer from it at school. I will say that globally we have seen the number of suicidal rates increasing immensely. Most people get mental health problems from their homes, it can be caused by stress or family problems. Schools can be the best places to help them get rid of this problem.

“Solving the problems of American Adolescence, declining mental health will take more than schools, but schools no doubts are a big part of the solution” he says. Some people find themselves in a mental disorder which they cultivate from their homes, a child can be traumatized from being abused without anyone knowing, and this can affect him or her for life, I suggest schools are a primary place get help from, as we all know our professors are our second parents. When mental health programs are active in school, a child can be legally assisted if they are going through abuse or other mental problems. ‘Teachers check how students are doing and they remember that some of these children may have difficulties at home’ UNICEF. (2022). Sometimes students go to school and refuse to go home, this clearly tells how school is like a safe space for them. Physical abuse, yelling or punishing a child in certain ways can cause a drastic mental damage. Some schools now hire school-based therapists or social workers who are professionals that can easily detect mental health problems and help and assist the individual through it.

In contrast, advocating mental health resources in schools can be very crucial for supporting students overall well being and academic performance, providing mental health awareness, psychoeducation and providing access to counseling services will make students feel safe to speech their mental health problems. Before counseling services were introduced in schools, teachers were playing two roles, they teach and serve as counselors. This is not an easy task; today’s students are experiencing increase in mental health problems over the past years. Teachers sometimes find it challenging to help students with mental health problems due to their limited knowledge in counseling and psychology. Some of these children suffer from depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and substance use. Therefore, even if teachers took the responsibility of assisting students with the mental health issues, will they spend enough time supporting them

solve their problems? “School counselors work in three broad domains to enhance a student learning and support secondary readiness: academics, career and social/emotional development” Wendy, R. (2022). To support his statement, in recent years, schools with comprehensive mental Health programs have seen reductions in poor academic performances and disciplinary incidents.

Additionally, critics argue that adding a subject to a tight curriculum could be a burden and a workload for students, especially the ones who are not suffering from mental problems, and that schools face problems to wrap a wide capacity of subjects with a very limited class hour. They also argue that this could lead to an academic pressure which affects students’ mental health. Jones, R. (2023) argue that “mental health education could be stigmatizing and for students particularly those who are experiencing mental health issues.” I personally think that adding a mental health subject in schools will be a burden, this is because if mental health is not taken care of, it will be more challenging for children to the education they need. This is an ongoing problem that need solutions, and as I said earlier schools are one of the best places to educate people about mental health and help the ones who are already swimming in it. To elaborate more on why I disagree with Jones, R. (2023), I will quote from the study of Duchnowski, A. J., & Kutach, K (2011). “Outcomes for students in special education continue to be disappointing and those having emotional disabilities (ED) continues to lag behind” This clearly tells us that students with (ED) which is a mental problem needs assistance in to be able to concentrate and make it in their academics. So therefore, how can these emotional disorders be solved if Mental health services is not prioritized and available in schools.

In conclusion, it’s very important to have more mental health resources in schools, every year more children suffer from mental health due to different reasons. Schools being the sooner place to be for most children, it is very important that the school system gives them the

maximum support they need, and that's by offering things like counselling and educating about mental health. With this, students can do better academically, socially and physically. This will also make nicer environment. Respecting what opponents think about this, I will choose to convince them that advocating mental health in schools is one of the most important things in our societal decisions. Speaking from experience, I lived with a person that suffer from a severe mental health disorder, she hurt herself anytime she is stressed, she was not able to do anything good with her life, she was then introduced to the mental health department in her school, they helped her get rid of this nightmare. some students go through mental health problems and find it difficult to express it because of the fear of being judged or stigmatized by other people, some think it is embarrassing to talk to anyone about it. Now that mental health programs are made available in schools. More students visit their counselor's office and seek the help they need. This works perfectly and it helped a lot of young people, most of these sessions are kept private so the individual will not have to worry about what other people assume and say about them. Let's erase the stigma and empower each other in our mental health odyssey.

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