

The WNY School Mental Health Task Force identified

PRIORITIES FOR ENHANCING SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH



To enhance school mental health services for **all children and youth**, we must:

The American Academy of Pediatrics declared a state of emergency for child and adolescent mental health in 2021.



Over the past decade, Black youth suicide rates have increased faster than any other racial or ethnic group.

Refine and improve the school and community infrastructure for mental health services.

Amplify Tier 1 supports to address growing mental health needs and prevent severe illness.

Provide greater and improved interventions for anxiety.

Elevate teacher, student and parent/caregiver voices.

To enhance school mental health services for **children and youth who are racialized**, we must:

Reduce barriers to services by increasing cultural match between providers and clients, addressing high costs and increasing the number of providers.

Shift the school's culture toward inclusion, beginning with meaningful professional development for all school administration and staff.

Eliminate discipline policies, procedures and practices that are punitive rather than supportive.

Create interventions that explicitly connect racial identity and mental health, including intersecting identities (such as race and gender).

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2021). AAP-AACAP-CHA declaration of a national emergency in child and adolescent mental health. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Youth risk behavior survey: Data summary and trends report, 2009–2019. This program is supported by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences of the National Institutes of Health under award number UL1TR001412 to the University at Buffalo. The WNY School Mental Health Task Force convened in 2022. More information about the Task Force is available at socialwork.buffalo.edu/schoolmentalhealth.