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Classroom Mental Health Contract

HOW TO USE

1. Define mental health for students
As a classroom, begin defining what mental health means to you. This can mean safety, support or self-care, to name a few options. Students may not know what mental health means. To start the conversation, offer NAMI's *Ending the Silence* presentation to develop a foundation of mental health and how you will define it in the classroom.

2. Reflect and explore students' mental health needs
Allow students time to reflect on situations they face at school that can impact their mental health. You can do this individually, in small groups or in a large classroom. For example, students can share that they suffer from bullying, stress during exams, relationship disruptions, etc. During this reflection, encourage students to express how these situations make them feel and behave.

3. Identify supports
Bring up ways you can support your students and how students can support each other when mental health situations arise, such as active listening and being respectful. Ask students to write positive messages for each other on a poster to read when they are needing encouragement. Make sure that the poster also lists concrete supports available in the community, such as counseling centers, peer support groups, and general support like NAMI's Helpline where students can "Text Helpline" to 62640 for support. This gives students a clearer idea of what they can do when they are feeling mental health symptoms and helps them feel empowered to access help.

4. Summarize students' ideas
This is a chance to show your students that you hear them, to validate their ideas and to ensure you are capturing everything from their perspective. By summarizing their ideas, you have the opportunity to guide students and ensure that they have listed everything essential for their mental health.

5. Turn ideas into a contract
Create a poster or a chart to display the finalized contract. The contract should include your classroom's mental health definition, rules, ways you will support each other and places to find support. Make sure to include supports both online and in-school.

6. Sign the contract
To create true accountability, you and each of your students should sign the completed contract. Place the contract in a place in the classroom where it will be most visible.

7. Hold ongoing contract check-ins
Schedule regular mental health check-ins. Ask students to determine if any updates or supports should be added to the contract.

WHEN TO USE
Use the Classroom Contract at any time to break the mental health stigma and encourage students to talk openly and frequently throughout the school year:

- At the beginning of the school year
- During a stressful school season such as prom, midterms, beginning of sports seasons and finals.
- Upon returning from a long break

MENTAL HEALTH CONTRACT EXAMPLE

In our classroom, mental health means

- We agree to support each other with kindness and understanding by:
- For additional support, we know we can:
- We agree to honor this mental health contract by:

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NAMI Text & Young Adult Helpline Call: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) | Text: "Friend" to 62640 | Email: help@nami.org

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Finding a Trusted Adult

Reaching out about mental health can be or feel overwhelming, embarrassing or just hard. Choosing someone to confide in is an important step to getting the help you need.

Who can be a trusted adult?

- Parent, stepparent, guardian or older sibling
- Older relative (cousin, aunt or uncle) or grandparent
- Parent or guardian of a close friend or neighbor
- Teacher or coach
- Faith leader
- Counselor
- Peer support worker

What is a trusted adult like?

- Respectful
 - They don't make you feel inferior and don't push your comfort levels.
- Non-judgmental
 - They don't judge you based on your appearance, values or decisions, even if they don't agree with them.
- Trustworthy
 - They keep vulnerable information secret and ask permission before telling anyone. They also know when it's not ok to keep a secret, times when someone may be a danger to themselves or someone else and professional help is needed.
- Accountable
 - They admit when they're wrong and try to make things right when they make a mistake.
- Helpful
 - They know when to offer solutions and when to just listen.
- Thoughtful
 - They are attentive and mindful listeners. They act and react with love, kindness and patience.

How to start a conversation

Once you've picked out someone you trust to talk to, decide when and where you want to have a conversation. Choose what will make you most comfortable.

Make a plan

- Plan what you want to say.
- Find a private space to talk.
- Explain as clearly as you can how you're feeling.
- Share how they can best support you. Discuss possible next steps.
- Keep the conversation going.
- Tip: If you're not sure if you can confide in your trusted adult, test them on something small.
 - Example: "I'm thinking about dying my hair purple. What do you think?"

If they are not supportive

Adults were your age once, and most of them want to help however they can. Some adults might be scared or confused or might not be very good listeners. If your conversation starts to go in a way you don't like, give the adult some time. If you aren't receiving the support you're looking for, it might be that this adult isn't the right fit, and you need to reach out to another adult.

- Talk to someone else in your family/network.
- KEEP TRYING!
 - It can be hard to find someone you feel comfortable confiding in. Many people care deeply about you. Be brave and keep asking for help!

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Reaching out about mental health can be or feel overwhelming, embarrassing or just hard. Choosing someone to confide in is an important step to getting the help you need.

If you're not sure who to go to, try asking a friend who they talk to about their mental health

What is a trusted adult like?

- ## How to start a conversation

- Explain the effort you've put in.
- Let them know there are resource affordable options.
- Talk to someone else in your family/network.
- **KEEP TRYING!**
 - It can be hard to find someone you feel comfortable confiding in. Many people care deeply about you. Be brave and keep asking for help.



Use This Calendar To Enhance The Emotional Well-Being Of Students In Your Class
 ***You can tailor these activities to fit the needs of your students and age appropriateness.

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*For more information on negative bias visit: verywellmind.com/negative-bias-4589618



1 GET CURIOUS

2 GET CONCRETE

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Helpline Call: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) | Text: "Frien

3 STAY COMPASSIONATE



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