



# A QUICK GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS



**BLUEREFOGE**  
SECURING OUR FUTURE

# THE RATE OF YOUTH EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS CONTINUES TO RISE

*“When a mental health condition is present, the potential for a crisis is never far from mind.”*

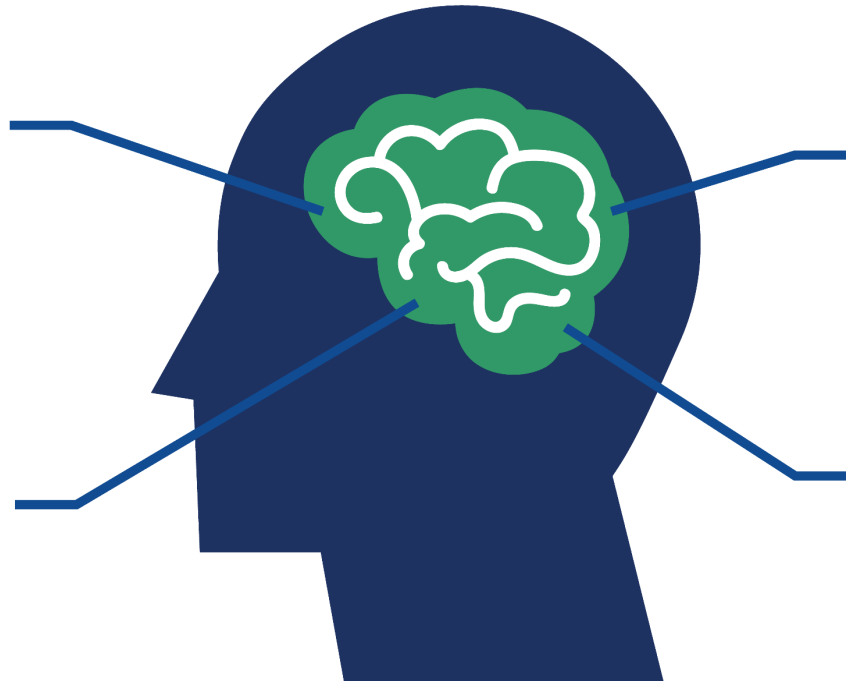
*- Mental Health America, National Alliance on Mental Health*

## FACT

**13%** OF YOUTH, AGE 12-17 REPORT SUFFERING AT LEAST ONE **MAJOR DEPRESSIVE EPISODE** IN THE LAST YEAR.

## FACT

**20%** OF YOUTH AGES 13-18 LIVE WITH A **MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION**.



## FACT

**SUICIDE** IS THE **3RD** LEADING CAUSE OF **DEATH** IN YOUTH AGES 10-24.

## FACT

**8%** OF YOUTH, HAVE AN **ANXIETY DISORDER**.

# 3 MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN

## 1 DEPRESSION

Persistently low mood and feelings of sadness with loss of interest

## 2 ANXIETY

An emotion characterized by feelings of tension and worried thoughts

## 3 SUICIDALITY

Talking about or taking actions related to ending one's life



**EARLY DETECTION & INTERVENTION IS KEY**

# THE WARNING SIGNS

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than 2 weeks (e.g., crying regularly, feeling fatigued, feeling unmotivated).
- Trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so.
- Out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors that can cause harm to self or others.
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or fast breathing.
- Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or gain.
- Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships.
- Repeated use of drugs or alcohol.
- Drastic changes in behavior, personality or sleeping habits (e.g., waking up early and acting agitated).
- Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still that can lead to failure in school.
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities like hanging out with friends or going to classes.

# HOW TO BE A CHANGE AGENT

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## THERAPEUTIC INTERACTIONS



### THERAPEUTIC INTERACTION:

The face-to-face process of interacting that focuses on advancing the physical and emotional well-being of a student or colleague by enhancing comfort, safety and trust.

### EXAMPLES\*:



#### DEPRESSION

- Initiate conversation in a private setting
- Ask open ended questions in a caring manner
- Avoid minimizing concerns, even if the issue seems minor



#### ANXIETY

- Assure them that anxiety is normal
- Reward brave behavior
- Encourage problem solving
- Challenge un-realistic ideas



#### SUICIDALITY

- Engage them
- Use non-judgmental and non-confrontational language
- Ask “Are you thinking about suicide”?

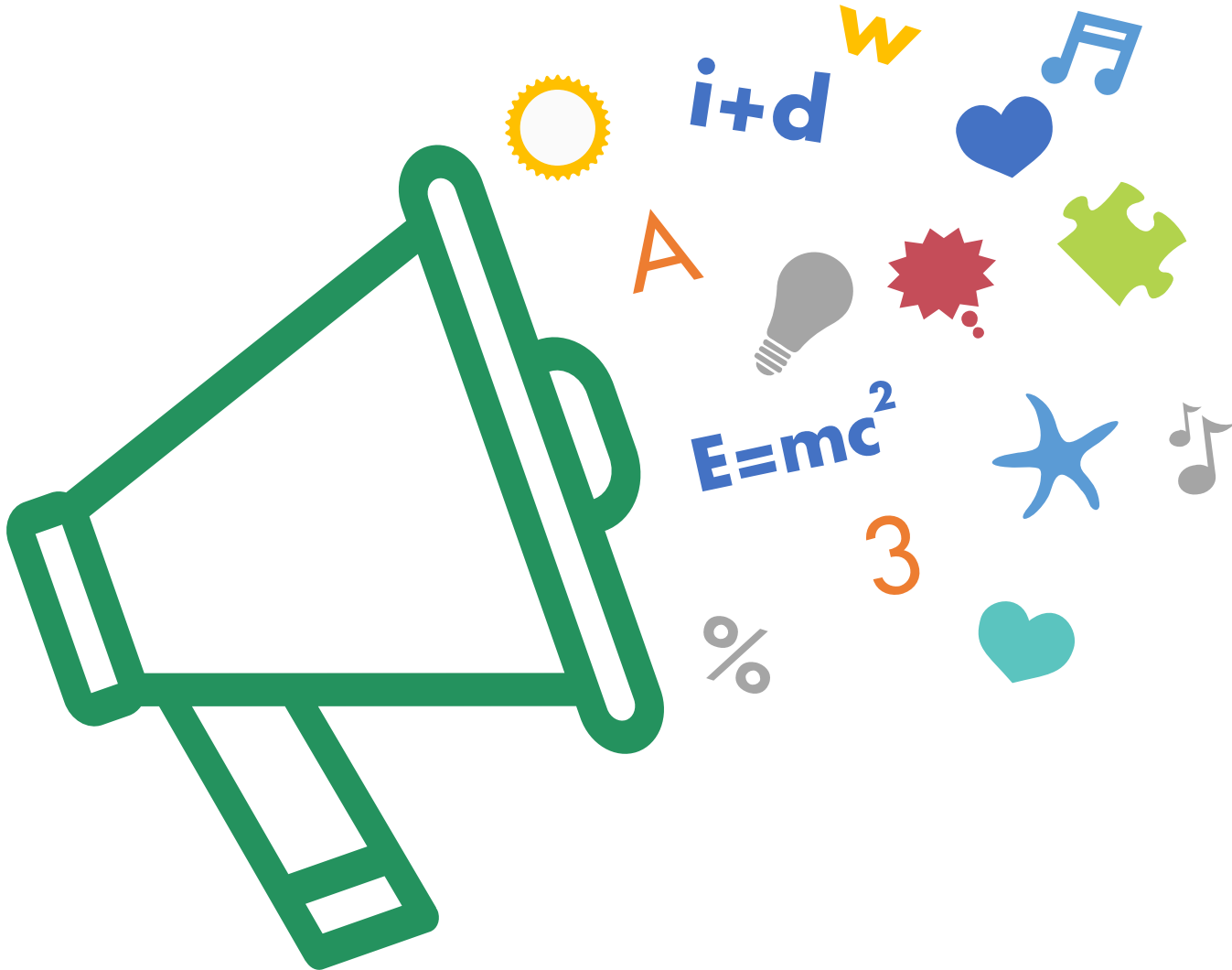
\*This is not an exhaustive list of therapeutic interactions but a reference.

In all scenarios, engage your school mental health expert, counselor or mental and emotional health action team.

# HOW TO BE A CHANGE AGENT

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## METHOD OF COMMUNICATING



### THE 4 C's OF COMMUNICATION

- Clear
- Calm
- Compassionate
- Consistent

# HOW TO BE A CHANGE AGENT

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## DAILY SELF-ASSESSMENT

### CONNECT

Did I “connect” with any students today? Are there specific students I need to connect with tomorrow?

### AMENDS

Do I need to make amends? Are there specific apologies I need to make tomorrow?

### FORGIVE

Is there anyone I need to forgive? Is there anything I need to forgive myself for?

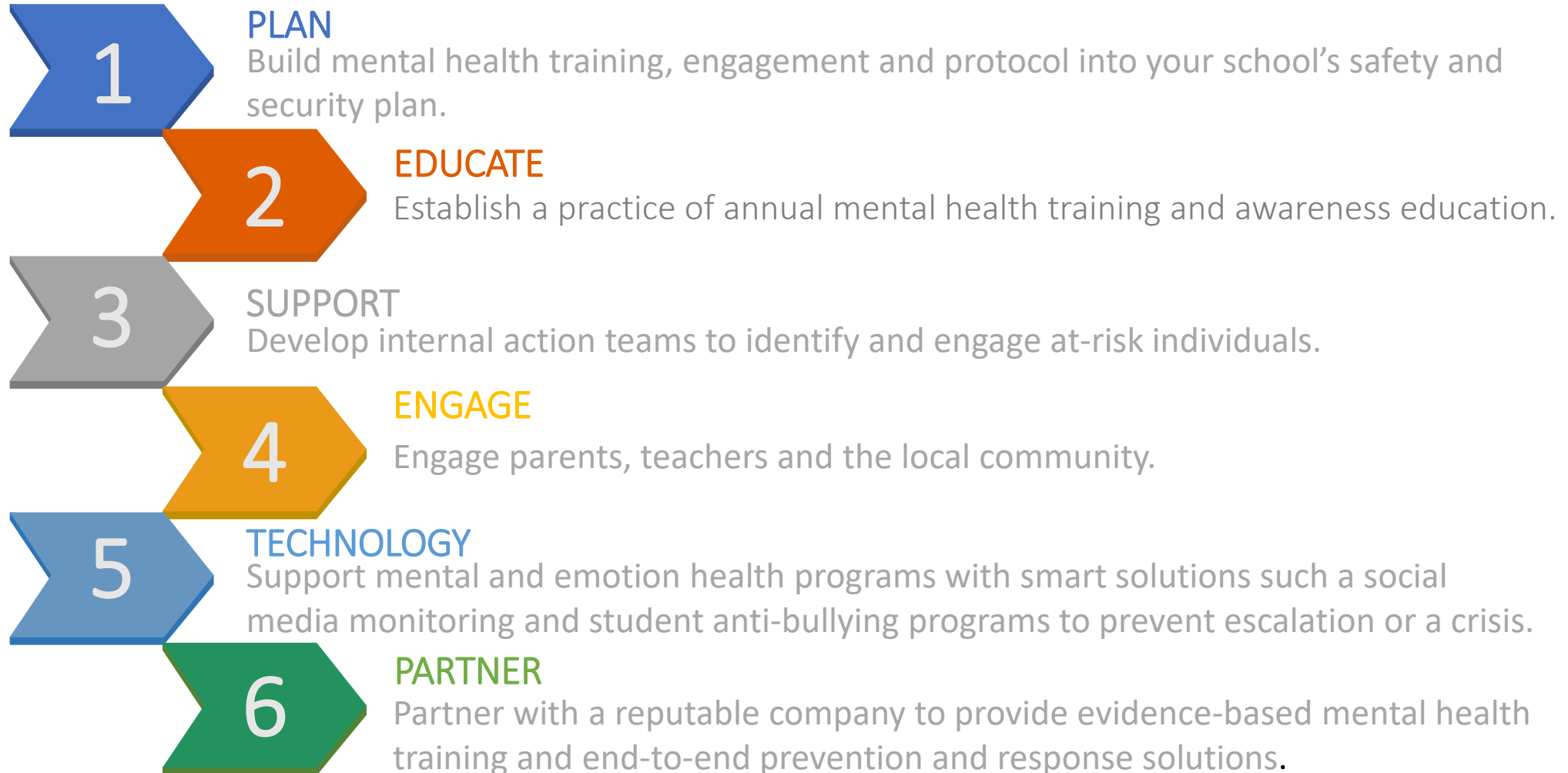
### LESSONS LEARNED

What did I learn today about my students? What did I learn today about myself?

### INTENTIONALITY

Is there anything I can be intentional about today in order to strengthen community in my classroom tomorrow?

# BUILDING A STRATEGIC PLAN





# THE BLUE REFUGE PREVENTION PROGRAM

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RESTORING PEACE OF MIND  
TO YOUR SCHOOLS & INSTITUTIONS



**BLUEREUGE**  
SECURING OUR FUTURE

# THE BLUE REFUGE PREVENTION PROGRAM

## PHILOSOPHY

### PEOPLE ARE AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO

That is why *proactive prevention* is such an important part of the Blue Refuge comprehensive solution. Our approach focuses on the well-being of people by destigmatizing and bringing awareness to the impacts that mental and emotional health have on all of us; initiating the process of support, healing and a return to security.

## METHODOLOGY

### OUR ON-STAFF MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT IS AT YOUR DISPOSAL

Blue Refuge has developed *research-backed and evidence-based* training to empower your staff to recognize risk factors, respond using therapeutic interactions and engage students and colleagues who are showing signs of distress or emotional crisis. Staff members are equipped with the resources and strategies necessary to build rapport and deescalate.

## OUTCOMES

### HOPE FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Creating safer institutions and healthier students.

**Blue Refuge understands the importance of community, which is why we facilitate partnerships with local non-profits and community agencies to strengthen the support systems and resources at your disposal to address the youth mental health crisis.**



## COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION PROGRAM

We do the heavy lifting; you reap the reward.

- On-going, district-wide, on-site training by an expert in student mental health.
- Mental and emotional health resources and on-line training modules.
- Facilitation of an internal *Action Team* framework for risk identification, engagement plans and on-going monitoring.

## AUGMENTED PREVENTION PROGRAM

Our team supports your in-house expert.

- One train-the-trainer style session with your counselor, mental health or crisis management expert.
- A rollout framework for district-wide training and maintenance.
- Supplemental mental and emotional health resources.

BLUE REFUGE MENTAL  
HEALTH EXPERT



**JON EBERT**

Director of Prevention Services

*“Oftentimes, therapy is used in response to an incident that has already occurred. Students and staff are offered post-event resources and mental health counseling for coping with the aftermath. At Blue Refuge, we believe that mental health awareness, preemptive behavior identification, therapeutic strategies and people engagement are the keys to the **PREVENTION** of incidents; for this reason, we have invested heavily in this critical area.”*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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