

Youth Mental Health Awareness

Throughout the school year the OLG middle school students have had several conversations, as well as a presentation from [NAMI Seattle](#), around mental health awareness and reducing the stigma around mental illness. As part of that conversation, in March our students in grades 6 - 8 were invited to participate in the [WA COVID-19 Student Survey: Impacts and Implications](#). This survey was completely anonymous and voluntary with the intent to help inform school policies and provide context to best support students. Individual school results were shared with school principals and the statewide results were recently released. The statewide survey of middle schoolers showed that:

- 79.9% believe it is ok to seek help of a professional therapist or doctor if they are feeling very sad, hopeless, or suicidal.
- 20% indicated they needed mental health services this past year, however that rate was higher in participants who self-identified as LGBTQ+, as having a disability, or being financially distressed.
- 16.3% of those who sought mental health services did not receive that help.

While the statistics above apply to middle school students, keep in mind that anxiety, mood, and behavior disorders can manifest in children as young as six years of age. Summer vacation is a much needed brain-break for our students, however days with less structure and away from school support systems can pose a challenge to youth already struggling. There are many resources available for concerned families and friends. Here are just a few:

[Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
[NAMI Seattle](#)
[Child Mind Institute](#)
[CrisisTextline](#)
[Teen Link](#)

Thank you for continuing the important conversation around mental health awareness, helping to reduce the stigma, and supporting all our youth!

[Kim Brunskill](#), School Counselor