Bringing Mental Health Stories to Life

How KyleCares and Wonder Media are working together to reach teens through animation.

KyleCares and Wonder Media have begun working together around a shared belief: that young people need relatable, accessible ways to talk about mental health—and that storytelling can be a powerful place to start.

Both organizations are committed to supporting children, teens, and young adults as they navigate increasingly complex mental health challenges. By combining KyleCares' experience working directly with schools and students across New England with Wonder Media's expertise in mission-driven animation, this collaboration explores how creative media can help foster connection, reduce stigma, and encourage help-seeking behaviors.

At KyleCares, we work every day to create spaces where young people feel safe, seen, and supported. Working alongside Wonder Media allows us to bring those conversations to life in a way that truly resonates with students. When students see their own experiences reflected in a story, it opens the door to connection, understanding, and hope.

Animation has a unique ability to meet young people where they are. Through age-appropriate, non-aggressive storytelling, animated content can open doors to difficult conversations and help students see that their thoughts and struggles are shared by others. Wonder Media has long focused on creating intentional animation that equips young people with strategies to navigate trauma, isolation, and emotional distress—work that aligns closely with KyleCares' focus on building high school and college cultures where students feel safe, seen, and supported.

A key element of this collaboration is student involvement. In the months leading up to KyleCares' 4th Annual Teen Mental Health Conference at Gillette Stadium on April 9th, Wonder Media mentored students from seven KyleCares partner schools as they developed original animated mental health stories using Wonder Media's *Story Maker®* process. These student-created animations that were featured as part of the conference keynote presentation, and covered the following topics: social media, family dynamics, academic pressure, isolation, acceptance, social pressure, and empathy & understanding.

Participating schools included Greely High School, Randolph High School, Millis High School, The Williston Northampton School, Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical High School, East Bridgewater High School, and Cardinal Spellman High School. Through this exploration of personal stories and mental health themes, students worked together to

construct outlines, write scripts, and record voice performances for animation guided by Wonder Media's creative team.

Wonder Media CEO Terry Thoren brings a rare blend of creative legacy and purpose-driven leadership to this work. A former CEO of Klasky Csupo, the studio behind iconic shows like *The Simpsons*, *Rugrats*, and *The Wild Thornberrys*, Terry left Hollywood more than a decade ago to focus on producing animation with impact—stories designed to prevent childhood trauma and support young people when they need it most. Noted Thoren: "Animation can reach young people in ways few other tools can—by meeting them where they are and helping them feel seen. What's most powerful about this collaboration is that the stories are coming directly from students, and we've seen how creative expression can build connection, reduce isolation, and remind young people that their lives have value."

By centering student voices and creative expression, KyleCares and Wonder Media are working together to demonstrate that meaningful mental health conversations don't have to be intimidating—they can be engaging, hopeful, and rooted in shared experience.

At its core, this collaboration reflects a mutual commitment to remind young people of a simple but critical truth: no one has to face mental health challenges alone, and when students see themselves reflected in a story, they begin to believe in something life-changing: **they matter, they belong, and their life is worth living.**