



6 Steps

To Guide Your Mental Health Literacy Action Plan

Mental health literacy focuses on recognition, knowledge, and attitudes. It helps us:

- Recognize mental health problems and symptoms
- Know where and how to seek help and information
- Reduce stigma around mental health conditions
- Promote recovery and resilience
- Strengthen overall wellness
- Understand that mental health problems can and should be treated

Everyone in your learning community can help to create and sustain a compassionate school that fosters respect, promotes equity, and improves the resilience of students, families, and staff so that they can lead more productive and healthier lives.

#1: Identify your goal.

Why are you advocating for mental health literacy in your school community?

#2: Get to know your context.

Learn the landscape.
Context matters.

#3: Find partners.

You can't advocate effectively alone!

#4: Back up your position with data.

Share the stats to strengthen your community's advocacy efforts.

#5: Consider communication.

What's your stakeholder engagement plan?

#6: Find the right program.

There are many ways to increase mental health literacy in your school community. Select the program that's the best fit for your school.

Use our Action Plan Worksheet and our 6-step approach to chart your steps and measure your progress toward empowering your school and/or district by increasing the mental health literacy of the students, families, and school staff in your learning community—a key strategy for improving behavioral health outcomes for individuals and families.



This Infographic supports the ["Take HEART" Community of Practice](#), a training activity of the New England Mental Health Technology Transfer Center's School Mental Health Initiative. [Learn more](#) and to access more resources like this to enhance your school-based mental health collaborations, visit the HEART Collective [website](#)!



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Action Plan Worksheet

Step #1: Identify your goal.

- Why are you advocating for mental health literacy in your school?
- Who needs mental health literacy training?
- What's the best way to deliver the training?
- How will you know when you are successful?

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Step #2: Get to know your context.

- What are the mental health policies in your school, district, state?
- What are the mental health needs in your school/district, including cultural/equity considerations?
- What are the challenges around mental health in your school and/or community?

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Step #3: Find partners.

- Who can join your team to brainstorm, advocate, and influence?
- Are your partners representative of all stakeholders?
- How can you work together effectively?

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Action Plan Worksheet

Step #4: Back up your position with data.

- Are there specific compelling incidents, data, stories, etc.
- Mental health challenges have lasting impact on our daily lives, how can you connect your asks to impact?

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Step #5: Consider communication.

- How will you let people know about your plan and why it's important?
- How can you communicate your plan and get stakeholder support in a way that is succinct and compelling?

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Step #6: Find the right program and select a program based on:

- Your target audience: Teachers, administrators, families, students, etc.
- Needs, context, goals of your school: General mental health literacy, focused on prevention, meeting the needs of diverse cultures, etc.
- Length of time and effort: Ongoing, focused professional development, after hours, in affinity groups, etc.
- Budgetary concerns: Low/no cost budget that includes training and coaching.
- Degree of engagement: Consider ways to incorporate the learnings in deeper ways and over multiple times, formats, etc.

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