Mental Health Awareness in Schools

Presenters: Roisin LeRoy and Julie Casler
Roisin LeRoy

- Training in Early Intervention through PIP
- Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice
- Masters in School Counseling
- Director of Guidance at Justin-Siena 1999-2005
- Counselor at Whitney High School 2005- present
- 20 years as Peer Counseling Moderator
- Currently- School Counselor, Peer Counseling Moderator, Bring Change to Mind Moderator at Whitney High School
Julie Casler

- Bachelor’s Degree in Nutritional Science (Peer Counselor at Cal Poly, SLO)
- Masters in School Counseling and Single Subject Teaching Credential
- 12 years of teaching experience
- Advisor of Peer Education at Amador Valley High School
- Counselor at Whitney High School (present)
  - Peer Counseling Moderator, Bring Change to Mind
  - Moderator, Advisor of GSA Club
Agenda

Mental Health Awareness in Schools

- How to Begin/Manage a Peer Counseling Program
- Maintaining an Active Mental Health Awareness Club
Why is this important?

20%  
1 in 5 youth live with a mental health condition.

8-10 years  
The average delay in treatment is 8 to 10 years after the onset of symptoms.

50%  
Research has shown that half of all lifetime mental illnesses begin by the age of 14.
What Is Peer Counseling/Helping?

Peer Counseling is a program utilized across the United States using many different models. It serves students who want to strengthen their communication and helping skills. The program provides an avenue whereby students can support their peers and, at the same time, extends the opportunity to students to provide a service to their school and community.
Peer Counseling is....

a program based in the simple premise: Within every school, an informal “helping network” exists. Students with problems naturally seek out other students, counselors, teachers, or other school staff whom they trust. Students look to Peer Counselors for advice, assistance or just a sympathetic ear.

Peer Counselors are trained by School Counselors in skills they need to provide effective help to young people who seek them out.
Peer Counselors are not professionally trained therapists or counselors. Knowing their limitations in a helping situation is repeatedly emphasized and reviewed with students. There is a big focus placed on knowing when to refer a student who may be at risk to a School Counselor.
Peer Counseling Models

Model #1 - Full Year Class

Model # 2 - Extra Curricular Club

Model # 3 - Peer Counselors on Duty (Current model at Whitney High School)
Whitney High Peer Counselors
Selection Process

- Course Preview day
- Application
- Interview
- Selection

We are looking for a wide selection of students from different facets of the school community. Students should be caring, empathetic and wanting to make a difference. We are also looking for students who are not over extended/committed.
Training

Half day Training during the week before School Starts

- Listening Skills
- Supporting new students
- **Contract and Expectations**
- Do's and Don'ts of being a being a Peer Counselor
- Weekly trainings- Every Thursday at Lunch

**Peer Counselor Responsibilities**

**Peer Counseling Skills**
A Day in the Life of a Whitney Peer Counselor

Each are assigned a period to be in the Peer Counseling Room

- Check in with New Students
- Check in with Referred Students
- Student request visits
- Random Acts of Kindness
- Prepare Mental Health Awareness Week and Suicide Prevention Week
- Prepare projects and presentations
- Decorate bulletin boards
Grading/Evaluating

Students receive a course grade based on:

- **Core Peer Counseling Duties (80% of grade)**
  - Attendance at weekly meetings
  - Tracking of daily peer counseling activities
  - Presentation at weekly meetings

- **Additional Activities (20% of grade)**
  - Promoting Peer Counselor presence on campus
    - Supporting at School Counselor presentations/workshops, participating in our mental health awareness club
  - Student generated projects (example: organizing a new student lunch)
Mental Health Awareness Clubs

Purpose - To Promote Mental Health Awareness and End the Stigma.

Run by students for students.

Not a place to provide “therapy”
Welcome to your BC2M Club!
What is the BC2M Club?

- Learn and discuss mental health related issues as a group
- Education and Advocacy based
- Open to any student interested in learning and spreading awareness about mental health
- Event and activity driven
- NOT a form of counseling or therapy
THE FUTURE IS STIGMA FREE
Suicide Prevention Week - September
Club Members and Peer Counselors Give presentations
Direct The Change- Whitney Broadcasting

Suicide Prevention
Mental Health Awareness Week
Mental Health Awareness Week

Whitney Broadcasting
Mental Health Awareness Week

Be the CHANGE
Mental Health Awareness Week
Mental Health Awareness Week

National Alliance of Mental Illness

#STOPSTIGMA

Take the Pledge

Educate. Empower. Advocate.

Health Awareness Matters $0
Direct the Change- Whitney Broadcasting

Whitney PSA's
Books and Resources

Peer Counseling Skills, Ethics and Perspectives

Book

Peer Helpers Pocket Book

Book
Thank You!

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Questions..............