

Parents, guardians, & school administration/teachers/staff,

Do you remember what it was like to be in grade school, middle school, or high school? You may remember how it is a time of changes and transitions: homework, friends, more demands, more independence, and more responsibilities. Sometimes, these changes and transitions can lead to behavioral or emotional problems. To both children or teens and their parents, this time can be exciting, awkward, and frustrating—often all at the same time. We know you want to give your child every advantage to succeed, but sometimes it is hard to know where to start.

Parents and school leaders want to provide the best resources they can to help children recognize potential emotional challenges and get the help they need so they can succeed in school.

WLCFS-Christian Family Solutions partners with schools participating in the Member Assistance Program to provide a voluntary and confidential emotional risk screening service for children in grades K-12. If your school is looking for a way to proactively address the challenges of childhood and adolescence, please take a moment to consider this screening program.

Why is this stuff important?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends all youth receive an annual emotional health screening
- 10-20% of children struggle with emotional or behavioral health concerns
- 40% of children will have met criteria for a mental health diagnosis by adolescence
- Only 20% of children in need of services actually receive the mental health care they need
- Emotional problems in childhood can develop into greater problems in adolescence and adulthood
- 20% of teens struggle with emotional health concerns
- 59% of parents were unaware of their teen's emotional health concerns before screening
- 66% of teens suffer in silence from not receiving help for their emotional health concerns
- Emotional health problems can interfere with academic success, relationships, spirituality, and well-being and can lead to symptoms of depression, anxiety, alcohol or drug use, or suicide

I'm listening...so what is this screening about?

- A quick screening to identify your child's behavioral/emotional strengths and weaknesses using a valid and reliable screening instrument administered by computer. The screening consists of 23 questions to screen for issues related to depression, anxiety, relational problems, or substance abuse problems.

- 100% voluntary—children or teens can only participate with parental permission
- 100% confidential—all screening results are kept confidential, stored separately from academic records and not shared with school personnel unless there is written consent from parents

So how does it work?

1. Interested parents/guardians complete and return the consent form
2. Screening occurs during the fall semester and takes about 20-30 minutes
 - a. Teens complete the screening questionnaire electronically. They will get a link by e-mail.
 - b. Screening staff will review the questionnaire and discuss the results with the teen
 - c. Any immediate concerns will be explored in more detail with screening staff
3. Parents receive a phone call from the screener highlighting their teen's strengths and/or areas for growth

What happens if there are any reasons for concern in the results?

- If a member of the screening team recognizes any concerns, parents will immediately be notified. Recommendations and options to address any concerns will be provided.

What's the cost?

- Screening costs are covered by the school. Costs vary depending on the size of the school and the number of on-site screening staff needed. Contact the MAP Support Center for a specific quote.
- The screening service is made available by the school at no cost to students

Will my child be asked about self-harm or suicide?

As part of the screening process, students in middle school or high school will be screened for thoughts of suicide or self-harm. A related question is, "Doesn't asking people about suicide increase the chances that they will harm themselves?" The research surrounding the theory that asking questions about suicidal ideation increases the risk of suicidal behavior has been proven to be wrong. This faulty line of reasoning coincides with a fear and stigma associated with mental health, where silence is advocated as the best answer. There is no increased risk in screening for thoughts of suicide or self-harm. Instead, a healthy willingness to discuss those issues and show care and concern reduces the risk for suicidal completion.

For the MAP Support Center, please call **800.438.1772, option 5**, or **262.345.5111**, or e-mail the program coordinator at **map@wlcfs.org**.