

Classroom Mental Health Contract

HOW TO USE

1. Define mental health for students

As a classroom, begin defining what mental health means to you. This can mean safety, support or self-care, to name a few options. Students may not know what mental health means. To start the conversation, use NAMI's Ending the Silence resource to develop a foundation of mental health and how you will define it in the classroom.

2. Reflect and explore students' mental health needs

Allow students time to reflect on situations they face at school that can impact their mental health. You can do this individually, in small groups or in a large classroom. For example, students can share that they suffer from bullying, stress during exams, relationship disruptions, etc. During this reflection, encourage students to express how these situations make them feel and behave.

3. Identify supports

Bring up ways you can support your students and how students can support each other when mental health situations arise, such as active listening and being respectful. Ask students to write positive messages for each other on a poster to read when they are needing encouragement. Make sure that the poster also lists concrete supports available in the community, such as counseling centers, peer support groups, and general support like NAMI's HelpLine where students can "Text "HelpLine" to 62640 for support. This gives students a clearer idea of what they can do when they are feeling mental health symptoms

and helps them feel empowered to access help.

4. Summarize students' ideas

This is a chance to show your students that you hear them, to validate their ideas and to ensure you are capturing everything from their perspective. By summarizing their ideas, you have the opportunity to guide students and ensure that they have listed everything essential for their mental health.

5. Turn ideas into a contract

Create a poster or a chart to display the finalized contract. The contract should include your classroom's mental health definition, rules, ways you will support each other and places to find support. Make sure to include supports both online and in-school.

6. Sign the contract

To create true accountability, you and each of your students should sign the completed contract. Place the contract in a place in the classroom where it will be most visible.

7. Hold ongoing contract check-ins

Schedule regular mental health check-ins. Ask students to determine if any updates or supports should be added to the contract.

WHEN TO USE

Use the Classroom Contract at any time to break the mental health stigma and encourage students to talk openly and frequently throughout the school year:

- At the beginning of the school year
- During a stressful school season such as prom, midterms, beginning of sports seasons and finals.
- Upon returning from a long break

