

Mental Health Case Study

By Zoe's Group



INTRODUCTION

The state of Kansas is currently facing a mental health crisis within teens. This is due to a lack of representation for mental services within schools and their social spheres. Additionally, children and adults are under educated on this topic. Although some programs have been recently introduced to combat this issue, we have more impactful solutions to implement within teen's lives.



What to Know

Mental Health concerns became even more common during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

over
90%
Of Kansas counties are classified as mental-health-professional shortage areas

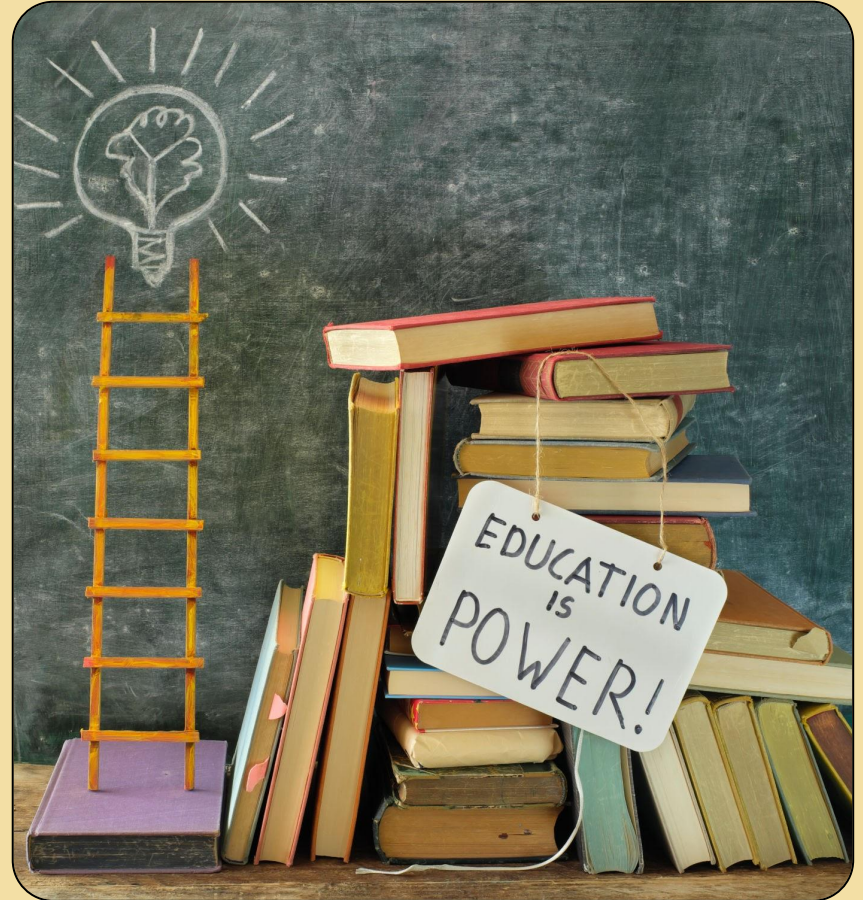
According to recent federal data

Over the past decade, steady increases in anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts among teenagers have occurred

According to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment

No Education

- Many teachers and staff members within schools feel that they lack the time and training to address their students' needs
- Mental health education is being introduced in negative settings, without room for acceptance
- This causes students to feel as though they don't have access to help or may feel like they are a burden to facilitators



Adding Education

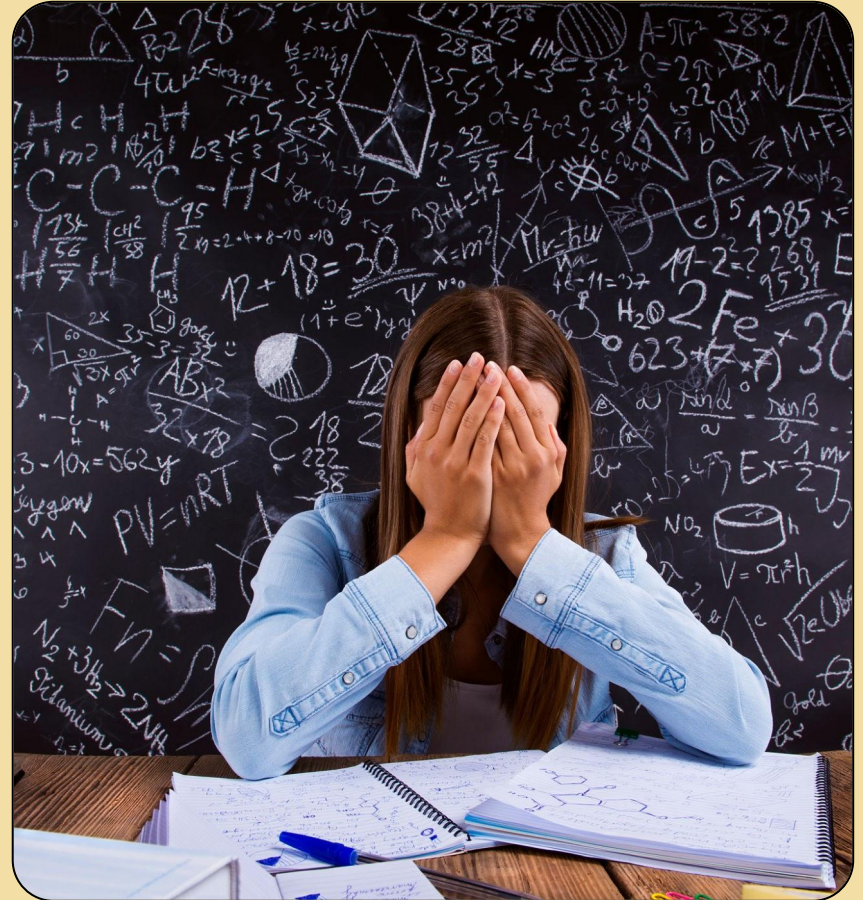
Solution #1

- Educating students at a younger age and making mental health a common conversation at school
- Bringing speakers to schools who have experienced the struggles of mental health first hand will raise awareness by providing an emotional connection
- Offering parents seminars to attend and spreading information online made by the school districts will keep parents informed



Academic Pressure

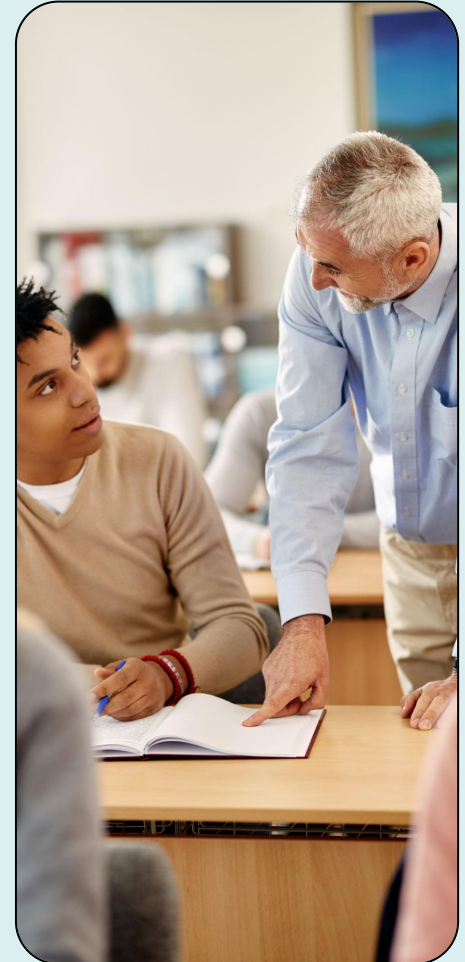
- Students can easily feel overwhelmed by schoolwork, leading to the expectation that grades come before mental health
- Schools can be uncomfortable and lacking a welcoming feeling for students, which drives students away from learning more and having time to complete assignments
- Schedules often are busy and tight, so communication with teachers about any issues students may face is hard



Alleviating Pressures

Solution #2

- Adding more breaks during the school day for students to decompress, talk to teachers, or catch up on assignments will relieve stress
- Longer passing periods will allow students to converse with teachers, grab a snack, and clear the hallways from being crowded
- Creating options for lower-stress classes in the early hours of the day will decrease tension for students with heavy workloads



Fear to be Seen as Weak

- People often feel like they will be judged or shamed for admitting they have mental health issues.
- Many people view their mental health issues as a weakness or a flaw in their character.
- Influence from parents or peers often causes people to keep their mental health issues to themselves, which only hurts them further.



Dismantling Fear

Solution #3

- Promoting online and in-person options to share mental health issues anonymously will allow more expression of people's feelings
- As many options as possible will be accessible to allow everyone to share their issues however they want
- Increasing education on mental health issues and how to help those struggling will eliminate stigmas and further awareness



Perception of Weakness

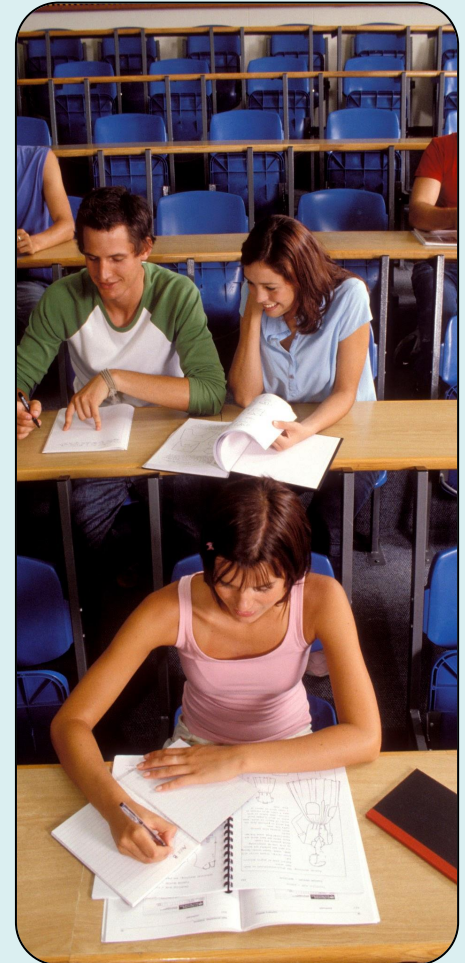
- Many struggling youth avoid help because they think asking for support is a sign of personal weakness
- Kansas only has 1 school psychologist per 1,114 students, which is double of the recommended national ratio.
- Teens use of social media can increase feelings of loneliness and unrealistic expectations of being “good ”



Decreasing Stigma

Solution #4

- Programs like the Mental Health Intervention Team (MHIT) are actively breaking the stigma in schools
- Incorporating blocked out times during the school day to build a community of randomly selected students to participate in games and activities and also discussions make topic more approachable to these individuals



Uncomfortable Topic

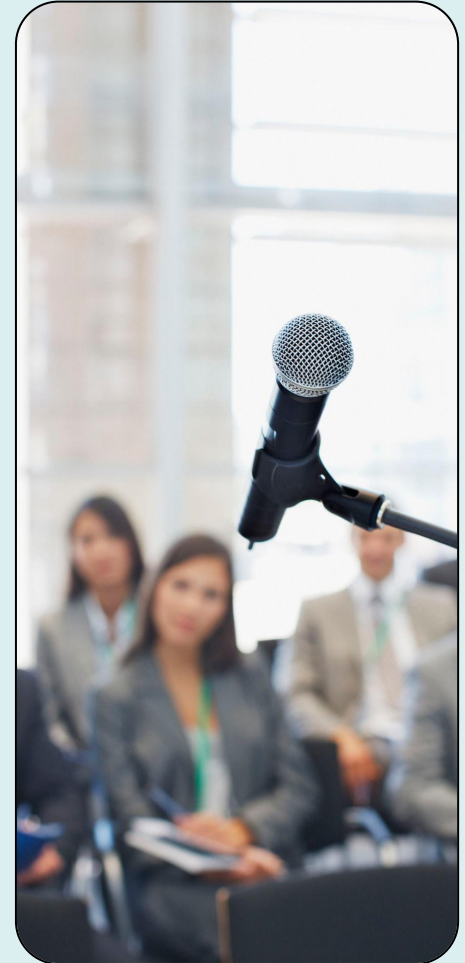
- Some find it hard to find a time to bring up their mental health problems to others
- People do not want to feel like they are ruining fun times by bringing up their issues and potential questions
- Many counselors and other professionals that can be talked to about your issues may not be able to adequately help you



Making It Easier to Speak Up

Solution #5

- Creating more ways to speak to professionals, with little barrier to entry and more start to conversations
- Talk more about mental health to remove or weaken common stigmas surrounding the issues
- Participate in support groups so people know they have a safe place to share their issues and won't feel alone in their struggles



Mood Boosters

Community Service

Serving others above yourself can bring you fulfillment and appreciation

Service Animals

Interacting with animals such as cats and dogs can lower anxiety and heart rate to improve your mood.

Self Care

Self care isn't always a spa day, sometimes its reading a book, drawing, or playing with your NeeDoh



THANK YOU

