



**PennState**  
PRO Wellness

SPRING/SUMMER 2021 EDITION



## SUCCESS STORY

*School Clubs During a Pandemic*

**PAGE 2**



## STAKEHOLDER RECOMMENDATION

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**PAGE 3**



## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

*The Power of Positivity;  
Teens: It's Time to  
Take Charge (of your  
Healthcare);  
You Have the Power*

**PAGE 4**

## STUDY OVERVIEW AND UPDATES



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Adolescent mental health needs that are not appropriately addressed can negatively disrupt relationships, academic success, and normal routines. Despite primary care doctors conducting mental health screening with their patients, **less than 40%** of adolescents see their doctor on a regular basis. Between 2018-2021 project SHIELD partnered with 14 high schools throughout Pennsylvania to explore whether the school setting would be an ideal location for mental health screenings to identify students in need. The three phases of this study include:

- 1) Understanding the perspectives of school staff, parents and students on addressing mental health in schools;
- 2) Conducting mood screeners with participating high schools; and
- 3) Engaging participating school communities to help advance mental health awareness and reduce stigma.

The SHIELD team is currently preparing results for publication, gathering feedback on the experiences of school staff, parents, and students with the mood screener, and assisting schools with plans to engage their school communities in activities to improve mental health awareness. This edition features stories and resources that may help any reader identify ways to self-empower and create environments that support mental strength in home, office, or school settings. Please share this newsletter with friends and colleagues who might have an interest in these stories or benefit from these resources.

## MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Teens Talking with Teens about Mental Health

*C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health | January 18, 2021*



**LINK TO FULL STORY:**

<http://bit.ly/TeenTalkMentalHealth>



It takes a strong and caring adolescent to train as a peer support leader and provide support for classmates. Some high schools have initiated programs to train students to listen, provide resources, recognize warning signs, and empower their peers to seek help for mental health when appropriate.

The C. S. Mott Children's Hospital's most recent National Poll on Children's Health surveyed parents of teens to better understand their perspective on these programs. Though concerns about confidentiality, training, and identifying a crisis were raised, the majority of parents agreed that a high school peer support leader program would be a beneficial avenue for teens to confide in somebody that would better understand their challenges.

**Penn State PRO Wellness** is committed to educating and inspiring youth and their families to eat well, engage in regular physical activity, and become champions for bringing healthy choices to life. To learn more about the Center's efforts visit, <https://prowellness.childrens.pennstatehealth.org/>.

## SUCCESS STORY

# School Clubs During a Pandemic: A Story of Empowerment and Engagement

The school environment and the way students interact for academic and extracurricular activities has been forever altered because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the face of change, students in the My Mental Health Matters Club at State College Area High School have adapted their strategies to continue to engage and empower their peers. The SHIELD team interviewed several members of this club to learn how they have maintained engagement and club activities.

**What has your club done differently over the last year that it had not done prior to a virtual/hybrid environment? How has this strengthened your meetings/member's involvement?**

- **Student 1:** *During the last year, we had to move our meetings to biweekly instead of weekly and haven't been able to bring in as many guests to speak and do activities with us. However, many of us have been staying on the online platform to hang out after our meetings, which I think has really strengthened the bond between members of the club. We couldn't have done this after in-person meetings because we need an adult to be in the Wellness Center after the school day.*
- **Student 2:** *Because of the leniency and freedom that learning from home provides, we've been able to meet up more often outside of club time so that we can plan events and discuss other projects that we are working on.*
- **Student 3:** *Although it is different not seeing each other in person, I think that it allows more people, especially new people, to join us because they are not obligated to stay the whole time and can join from a place where they are comfortable.*

**What empowers you to be an active club member?**

- **Student 1:** *I want to make our school a more comfortable place to exist and I want the students to remain happy and healthy.*
- **Student 2:** *I really enjoy what we do as a club. I think the events and activities we participate in are fun, and I like*

*helping to make the school community a better place. I also like knowing that we're making an impact on the school community.*

- **Student 3:** *It is really important to all of us to make State High a comfortable and inclusive place for all. It is an amazing thing to make a positive impact on our school community, especially because a lot of us have had to go through difficult situations in regards to feeling uncomfortable at school.*

**What are the strengths of your club? How does this set your club apart from other clubs at your school?**

- **Student 1:** *We strive to create a community inside the club, and connect to the people not involved, so that they can feel welcomed and heard.*
- **Student 2:** *I think our club has a really great environment. It always feels nice to go to meetings, whether in person or virtually. Every club member has a say in what we do and if they want to participate. I think this strengthens us because members are able to do exactly as much as they want to and don't have to worry about doing anything upsetting.*
- **Student 3:** *I truly think that there isn't another club like ours. There are many other clubs that center around creating an equitable environment, but something about the structure and community that we have created for our club really stands out. At the end of the day, everyone has mental health. Whether it be healthy or unhealthy, it is there in everyone, and I really think that is what connects us to so many people.*



# Oxygen, Please



## STAKEHOLDER RECOMMENDATION

*Erich Batra, MD*

*Pediatrics & Internal Medicine  
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Many of you reading this newsletter are in the “business” of caring for others, be it in a school or medical setting. Day in and day out, we put others first. We worry about their well-being and go to great lengths to help those in need. **This is who we are and what we do – and we love it.**

**But giving is not infinite.** There is a price that comes with caring for others. Sometimes that price is that we may neglect our own needs, or the needs of our loved ones.

This last year has been hard. An obvious statement, but one that bears stating. Stop what you are doing, close your eyes, take a deep breath and think about all the ways it has been a hard year – making a demanding job even more challenging.

**COVID, political turmoil, and race issues have all made an already demanding job that much harder. Unless we recognize that it has been extraordinary year, we won't see how important it is to *take a break*.**

If we want to continue to be able to give and serve those that we care about, we need to come to the table whole. By that, I mean we need to be able to say that we have taken care of our own needs. We have to feel **EMPOWERED** to take the time to do the things that are important to us. Taking time for oneself is not a selfish act; in fact, in the end, it helps us serve others better. With 24/7 access to work via your phone, watch, and computer, it seems like we are always on the clock. But the notion that a good employee is always available is *flawed*.

When we travel by plane (hopefully again soon!) we are told at the beginning of every flight that in the case of emergency, put your own oxygen mask on before attending to those around you. Our lives right now are in that state of emergency. What are you doing to put your own oxygen mask on first?

**I encourage you to carve out time to prioritize those things that help get you oxygen.** Perhaps exercise, or time to visit a friend, or to read a book alone. Schedule them and make them a priority.

When you have your mask on and have enough oxygen, you are able to help those around you much more effectively. I assure you that you will feel **STRONGER** and more ready to get back to the “business” of caring.



# Mental Health Resources to Support Teen's Self-Esteem

MAY IS NATIONAL TEEN  
SELF-ESTEEM MONTH!



### The Power of Positivity

Negative thoughts can bog us down, but simple strategies to reframe our mindset can help change our mood and outlook. To hit the mental reset button, check out these resources made available through Mental Health America.



<http://bit.ly/ResourcesMHA>

### Teens: It's Time to Take Charge (of your Healthcare)

Being a teenager comes with many additional opportunities. For most, it means more freedom to make decisions – where to go, who to go with, and what you do when you get there. Some choices don't make much of an impact – like pizza vs. tacos. But some choices can set you up for a safe and healthy future, such as taking an active role in your healthcare.

#### Consider the following:

- **Talk with your parents about your preferences for a care provider** (e.g., male vs. female).
- **Take the opportunity to meet privately with your care provider.** This is a great time to talk about things that might be uncomfortable to say around your parents.
- **Establish a normal routine for visits with your care provider, such as annually.** Don't just go when you are sick.



[http://bit.ly/TeensTakeCharge\\_Health](http://bit.ly/TeensTakeCharge_Health)



### You Have the Power

As a teenager, it is not your responsibility to manage your friend's depression. In collaboration with stakeholders, the SHIELD study team designed this clip to highlight how you **can** help friends during times of need.



<http://bit.ly/TeenMDD>

