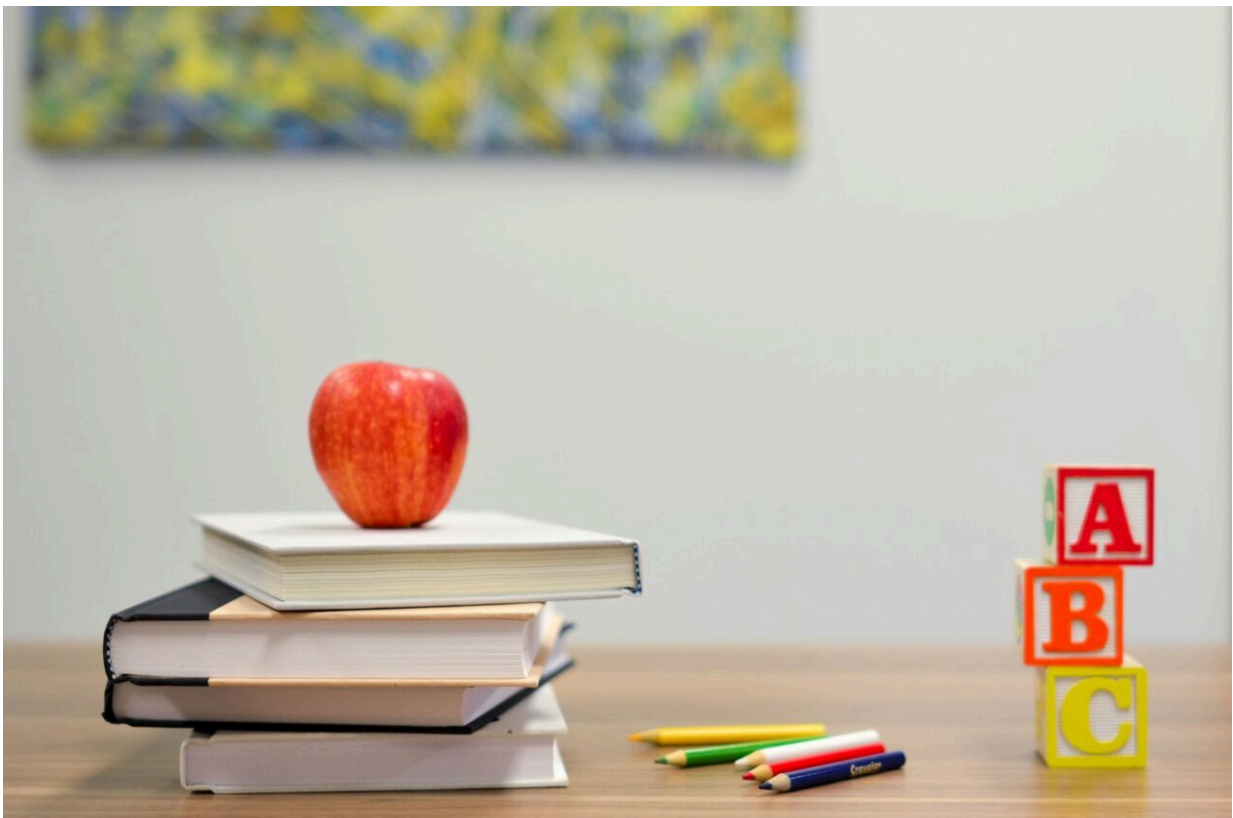


Poll shows support for school mental health training, but 45% don't believe most school staff have received it

August 6 2024



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As children begin to return to school this month, a new poll from the American Psychiatric Association (APA) shows that 84% of Americans

believe school staff play a crucial role in identifying signs of mental health issues in students, but less than half (45%) of Americans believe most school staff have been trained in identifying these concerns.

Americans are also widely supportive of education on mental health for students and school staff:

- 89% say it is important for students to be educated in school about mental health
- 89% say it is important for school staff to participate in mental health trainings

These results come from a poll commissioned by the APA and fielded by Morning Consult. The poll was fielded July 22, 2024, among a sample of 2,223 adults.

According to a U.S. Department of Education School Pulse Panel, in March 2024, nearly two-thirds (63%) of public schools said they offered [professional development](#) to teachers to support student well-being. The survey did not ask the same question about non-teaching staff.

"When school staff and students have access to good quality mental health education, they are more prepared if they or someone they know is struggling," said APA President Ramaswamy Viswanathan, M.D., Dr.Med.Sec. "One of the best things we can do in light of the youth [mental health crisis](#) is to give children and teenagers, and the people that are around them most days, the tools to understand what to do if someone isn't feeling right."

Among parents of children at K-12 schools, 29% are not confident that their school staff has the training to help students with mental health concerns. Nevertheless, 82% believe that school staff would initiate a conversation with them about their child's mental health concerns and

73% believe that the staff would refer their child to mental health services if needed.

Recently, the American Psychiatric Association Foundation (APA Foundation) implemented a free training for K-12 schools called Notice. Talk. Act. at School. The curriculum educates school staff on the signals of a potential mental health concern and equips them with the knowledge and confidence to discuss mental health with children and connect them to appropriate resources. More information on the program is available at: apaf.org/schools.

Almost half (45%) of parents think they should discuss mental health more with their children, according to the poll. Three-fourths (77%) of parents would be comfortable referring their child to [mental health services](#) if they noticed a concerning behavior change. Americans say that bullying and cyberbullying (42%), [mental health](#) (32%), and [social media](#) (30%) are the most concerning issues negatively affecting K-12 students today.

More information: nces.ed.gov/surveys/spp/results.asp

Provided by American Psychiatric Association

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