

# Student Voices and Advocacy for Student Mental Health

Dr. Amir Whitaker

**YOUTH LIBERTY SQUAD:** Liliana D'aguiar, Danielle Hernandez,  
Hector Hernandez, Julio Aquina, Jason Vasquez, Xavier Ramirez,  
Sidney Benjamin, Clementine Evans

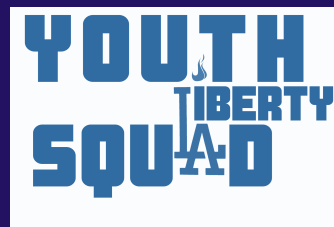


*This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$1,905,974 with zero percentage financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.”*

# Learning Objectives

1. Identify the current mental health needs of youth in CA
2. Identify youth advocacy efforts to increase access to mental health services
3. List two recommendations about how to provide accessible and effective mental health services for youth

# TODAY'S PRESENTERS & PANELISTS



# MORE ABOUT THE YOUTH LIBERTY SQUAD

- Create in 2019 (empower, inform, advocate)
- Students from 50+ schools
- Bi-monthly meetings on Saturdays
- Know Your Rights workshops
- Advocacy at school, district, state levels



<https://www.aclusocal.org/en/campaigns/youth-liberty-squad>

# SCHOOL COUNSELOR SOLIDARITY



# Our Student-Led Mental Health Advocacy

5 surveys, 2 advocacy letters, 3 petitions, statewide presentations, report

- 4/25/20- Conducted statewide student wellness survey
- 5/4/20- Participated in Student Mental Health Week (CASC)
- **5/8/20- Submitted letter and survey results to Governor, State Superintendent**
- 5/5/20- Student testimony in Senate Education Committee
- 5/27/20- Joined and Presented to CDE's Student Support Circle
- 8/27/20- Presented to CDE's Student Mental Health Policy Workgroup
- 9/2/20- Submitted advocacy letter for Learning Continuity & Attendance Plan
- 9/18/20- Conducted statewide student wellness survey #2
- **10/15/20- Launching petition for #CounselorsNotCops and #ArtsNotArrests**
- **1/7/21- Delivered petition to state officials**
- 7/2021- Published "State of Student Wellness" Factsheet
- 2/2022- Published "State of Student Wellness" Report
- 5/2022- **Delivered petition to state officials**
- 5/2023- Hosted Student Mental Health Town Halls
- 2/2024- Launched new petition

# STATE OF STUDENT WELLNESS 2023

## TOWN HALL

SATURDAY

**MAY  
6**

**1:30 PM**

- HEAR FROM STUDENTS DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS
- TREE DEDICATION CEREMONY TO YOUNG LIVES LOST
- ARTS JUSTICE EXHIBIT/ WELLNESS & HEALING ACTIVITIES



**DR. ROCIO RIVAS**  
LAUSD BOARD MEMBER  
DISTRICT 2



**YOUTH LIBERTY  
SQUAD  
STUDENTS**



**DR. ANDRES CASTRO**  
CASC BOARD MEMBER  
COUNSELOR & ADMINISTRATOR



**DR. AMIR WHITAKER**  
SENIOR POLICY COUNSEL  
ACLU OF SOCAL

REGISTER AT [WWW.TINYURL.COM/SOSW23](http://WWW.TINYURL.COM/SOSW23)

LOCATION:

2413 HYPERION AVE  
LOS ANGELES, CA

**100** ACLU  
SoCal

**YOUTH  
LIBERTY  
SQUAD**



**ARTS  
HEALING  
AND  
JUSTICE  
NETWORK**

**MENTAL  
HEALTH  
AWARENESS  
MONTH**



## STUDENT REFLECTIONS:

Share thought from the Town Hall or anything else from your experience.

# YLS STUDENT & LAUSD SUPERINTENDENT & BOARD MEMBERS



lausdsup 🌟 Support saves lives. Together, we are reimagining mental health as a critical part of every child's healthy development. Grateful to meet with students from the ACLU Youth Liberty Squad and @nickmelvoinbd4 to discuss the importance of student mental health. #IBelieveInLAUSD



# The Shocking State of Mental Health and Behavioral Services in California in 2023

By Ana Mendoza / October 18, 2023

by Liliana D., Los Angeles Unified School District student, Class of 2024

**CONTENT WARNING:** This blog and linked resources discuss sensitive or triggering information on topics including but not limited to depression. Please practice self-care. If you need immediate help related to mental health or suicide, please see the resources at <https://www.myschoolmyrights.com/rights/student-mental-health-rights/>.

Almost three full years after the Youth Liberty Squad with ACLU SoCal surveyed the state of mental health in California students, little has improved. Both Governor Newsom and Superintendent Thurmond received a petition about the [survey's findings](#), yet many schools still face the same issues today: unrealistic attendance requirements, extreme methods of discipline, and lack of access to counselors, nurses, social workers, and other resources. School board members aspire to have an inclusive, comfortable environment in districts like mine (Los Angeles Unified/LAUSD), but the reality falls short.

Many of the issues caused by the lack of funding given to mental and behavioral resources are reflected in my school University High School



<https://www.myschoolmyrights.com/the-shocking-state-of-mental-health-and-behavioral-services-in-california/>

# STUDENT EXPERIENCES/ANECDOTES IN LATEST SURVEY

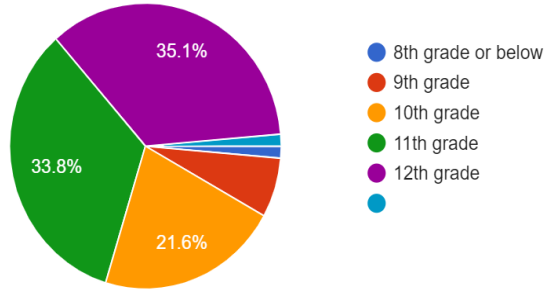
## Student Lead: Liliana D'aguiar

- Barely anyone knows if there are any services at my school
- Counselors should have more extensive knowledge of how being a minority can affect one's experience in the world
- Absences at my school are not excused for "mental wellness days"
- I feel that the counselors and other related staff are not available as often as they should be
- Not being sure who I can reach out
- My school counselor is on maternity leave and her office is in the girl's locker room
- I feel like sometimes when counselors approach a student having a breakdown, it can become more overwhelming for the student especially if questioned in front of others.
- Wellness centers only being opened on certain days, and sometimes counselors don't listen to students.
- it makes me a bit uncomfortable to talk about this kind of thing
- So far it seems that mental health services are always available to me, as well as teacher support.
- Not available during lunch or nutrition. I volunteer at our Wellness Center and it was moved to the least-popular corner of the school when it used to be at the front. No one knows where it is. Even I would not seek help there.
- Our school only has one counselor who is actually a college counselor so she mostly handles our school's dual enrollment program. She always seems to be busy and overwhelmed to the point where its hard to see her
- Our school is also known for our rigorous program so the majority of people in our school are highly stressed in some way but we do not have any type of support regarding a student's mental help other than focusing on tutoring services.
- There is a lack of counselors and mental health specialists at school; even in schools were such staff are available, they either only come on certain days or student are unaware of the staff schedule.

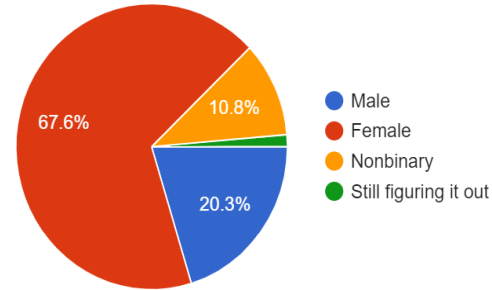
**Student  
quotes** →

# LATEST SURVEY DATA

Grade



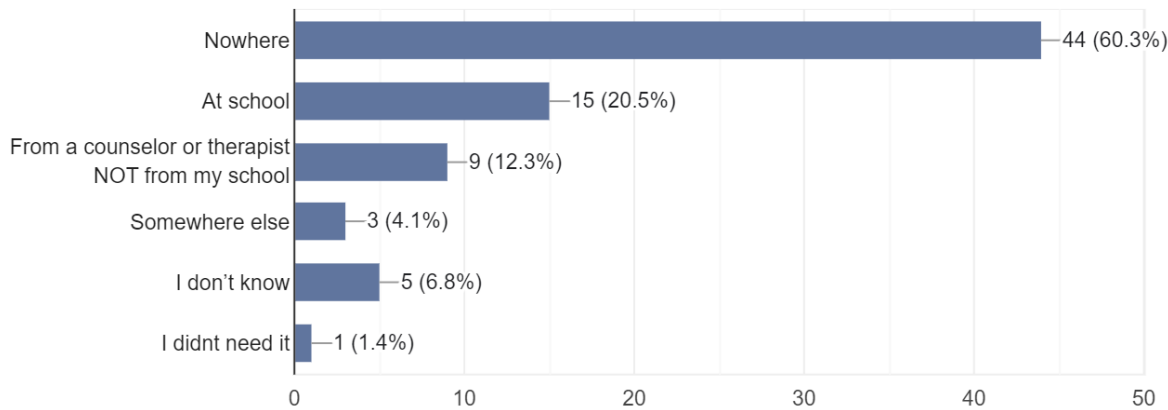
Gender



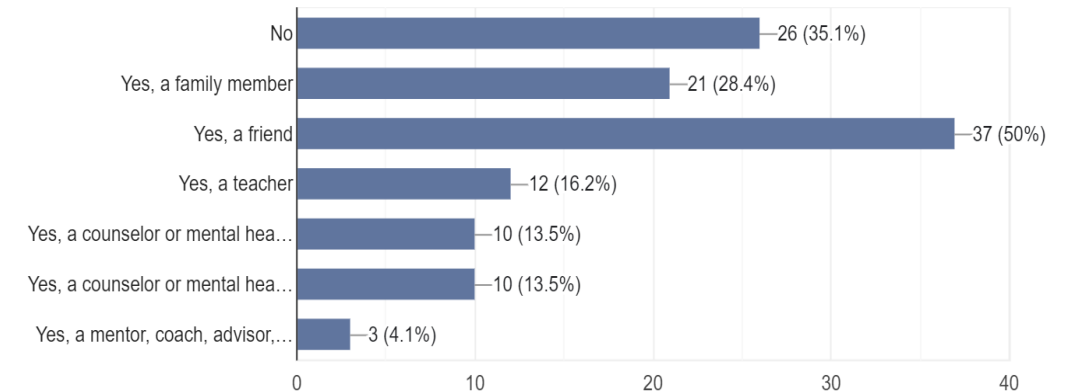
## Student Lead:

School District

In the past year, where did you get help from a counselor or therapist?

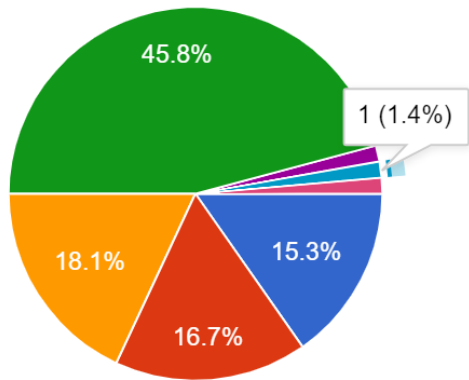


Has anyone personally asked you about your mental wellness over the past six months?



# LATEST SURVEY DATA

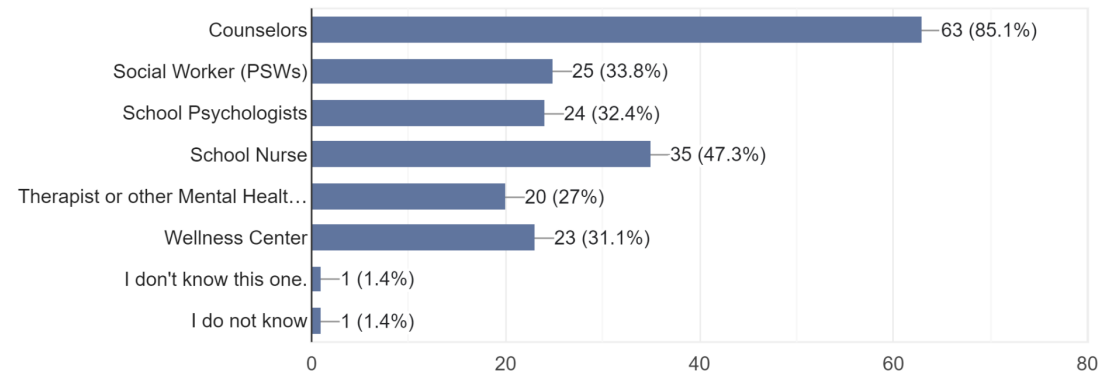
When it comes to supporting your mental wellness...



- I was receiving counseling or therapy BEFORE the pandemic
- I received counseling or therapy for the first time AFTER the pandemic started
- I have never received counseling or therapy, but I think I need services now
- I have never received counseling or th...
- I have received therapy before the pa...
- received therapy during the pandemic...

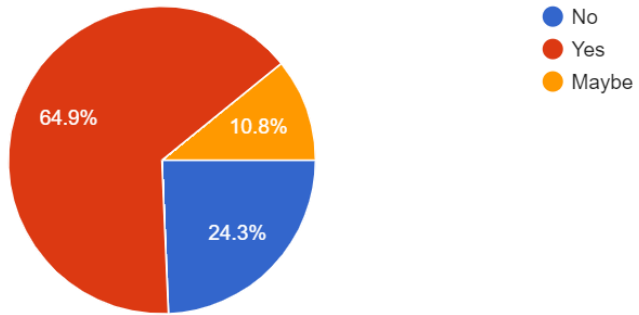
To your knowledge, what mental health resources does your school provide?

74 responses

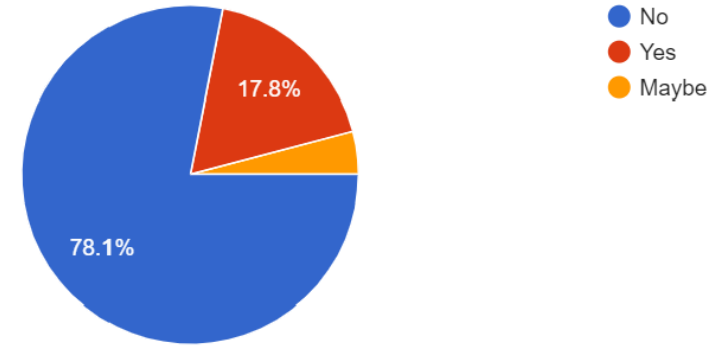


# LATEST SURVEY DATA

Have you ever heard of the 988 hotline that you can call or text for 24 hours support with suicide?

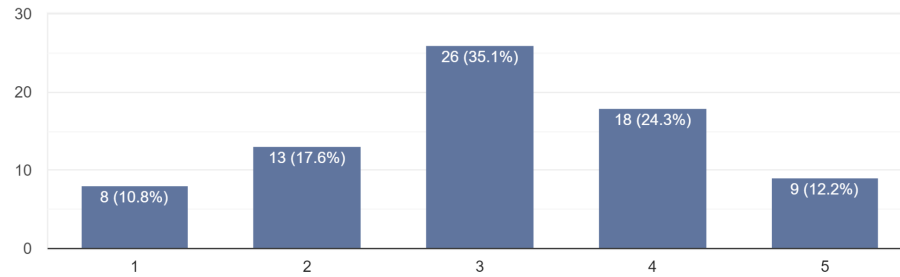


Did you know that California students can receive excused absences for "mental health days" when they are feeling mentally overwhelmed?



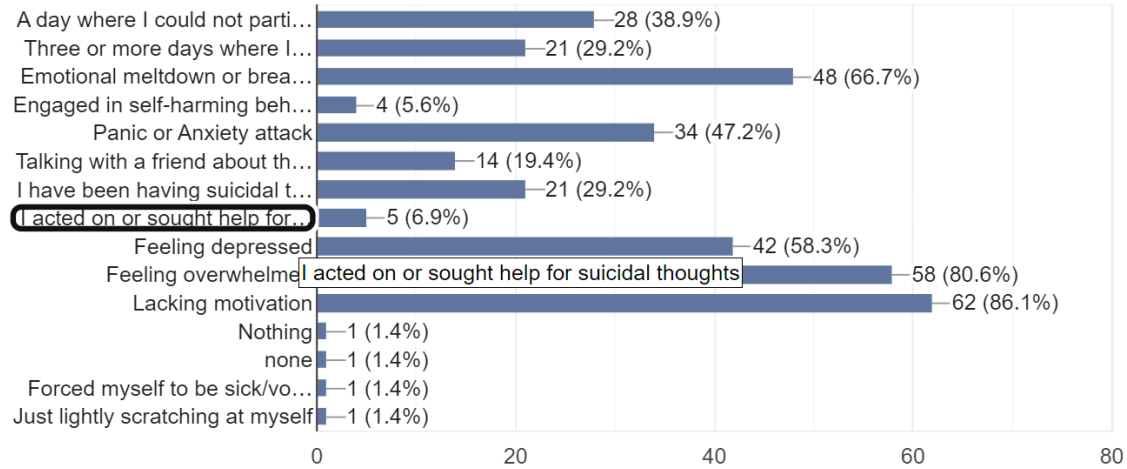
How comfortable do you feel seeking help/support relating to mental health?

74 responses

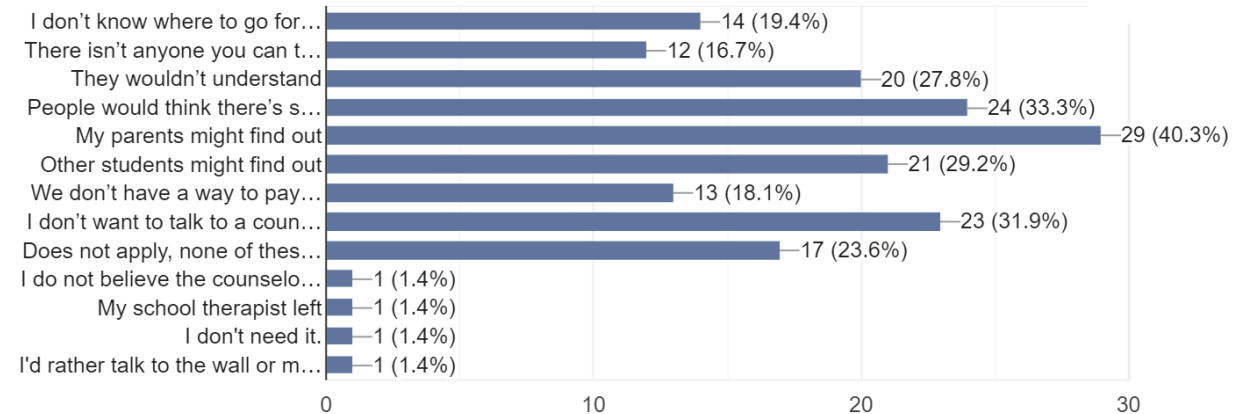


# LATEST SURVEY DATA

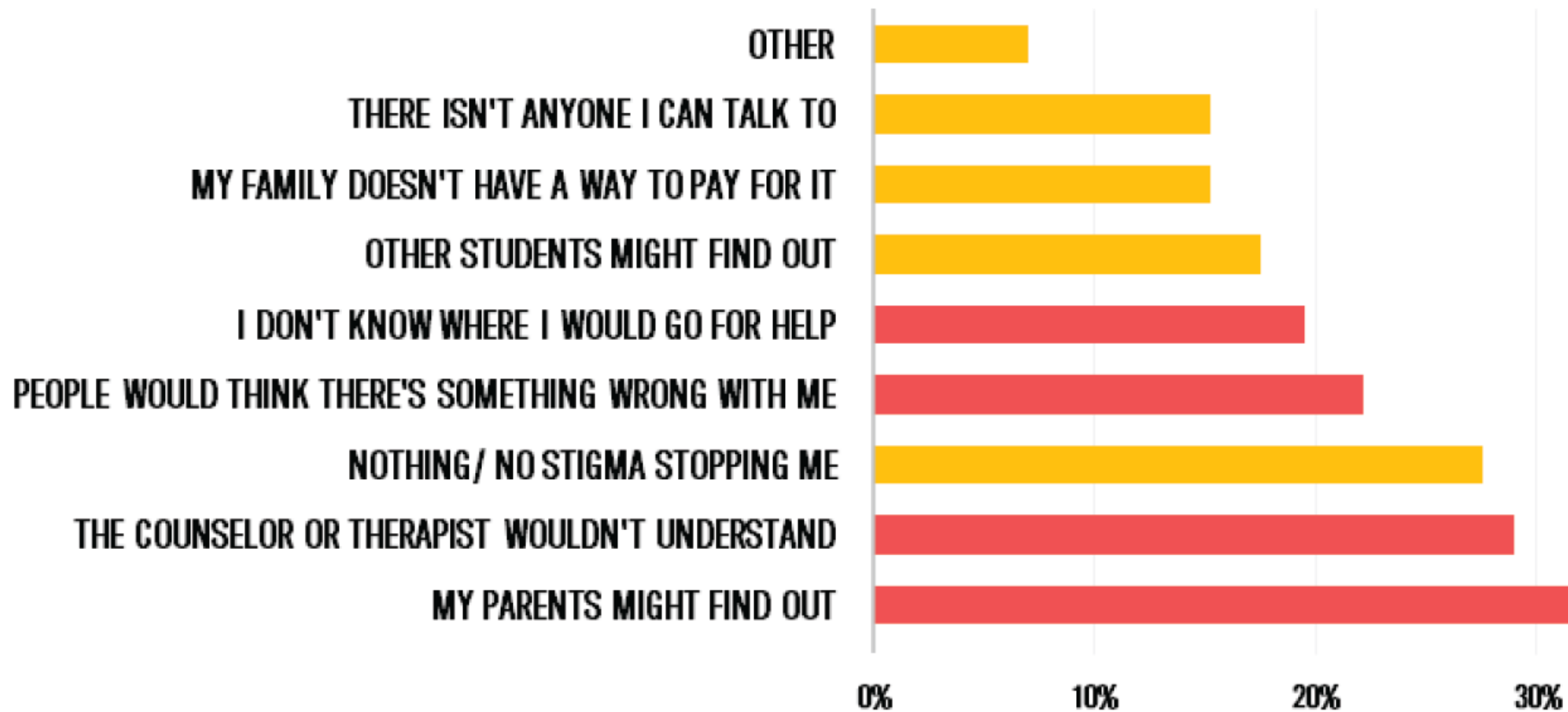
Which of the following have you experienced in the past year? (Check All That Apply.)



If you were very sad or stressed, would any of these things stop you from talking to a counselor or therapist? (Check All That Apply.)



## IF YOU WERE VERY SAD OR STRESSED, WOULD ANY OF THESE THINGS STOP YOU FROM TALKING TO A COUNSELOR OR THERAPIST?



# #BreaktheStigma



## STUDENT VOICES IN ACLU'S YOUTH LIBERTY SQUAD

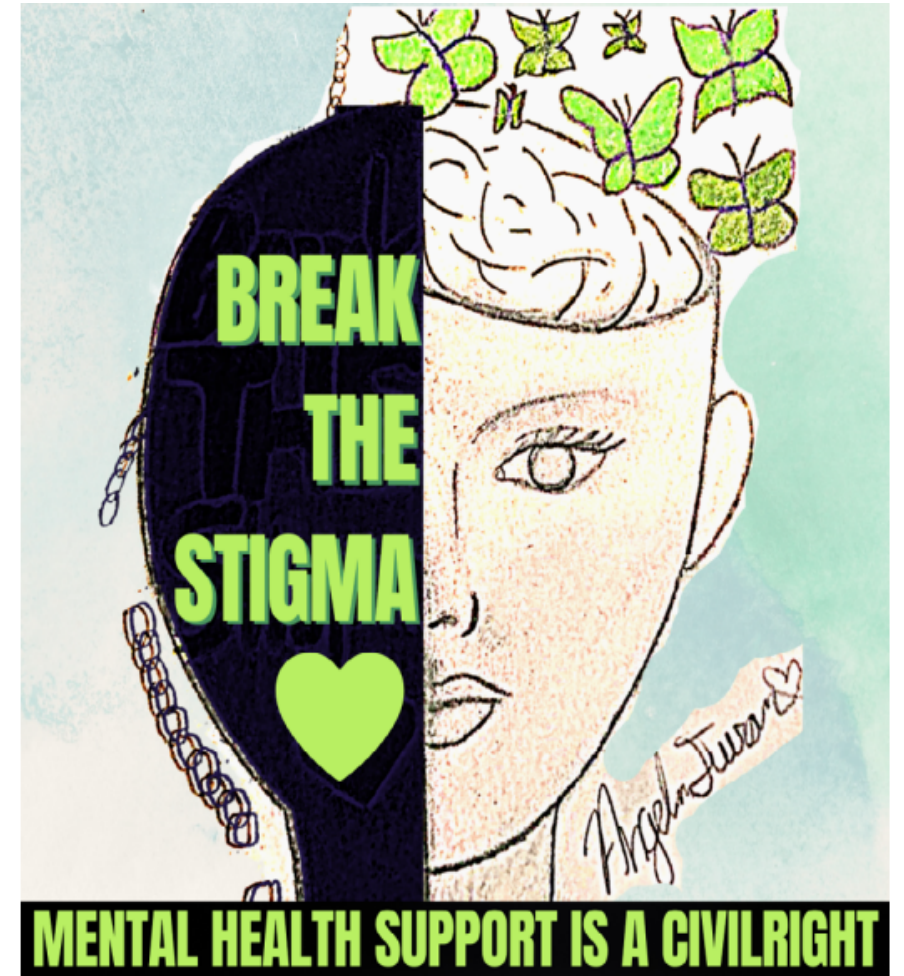
*“One of the main reasons I applied to YLS was because I heard about the work you guys did regarding mental health. This is a topic very close to my heart. During my sophomore year there was an incident that my family and I unfortunately witnessed. Following that my mental health really took a fall and I began suffering from anxiety. I was lucky enough to have my counselor just sit and listen to me, to all the pent up feelings I was dealing with—what happened, stressing with my rigorous course-load, feeling isolated from my peers. It was after talking to someone that things did start getting better, I definitely felt less alone.”*

-Angelina Duran  
Student, Los Angeles



## Angelina Continued....

“I was fortunate enough to have a school counselor who cared enough to listen. Anxiety is still apart of my everyday battle, but my mental health is sooooo much better than it once was. I realized that so many people in my community suffer from mental health issues but because of that **stigmatization**, particularly in my community’s case, that traditional Hispanic mentality of “keep it to yourself... machismo... no one needs to know your business” so few really do reach out. I know so many people who self medicate with drugs(marijuana, vape) and violence, etc. because that’s how they cope instead of asking for help.”





**BREAKING NEWS** Del Mar Beach closed after shark attack [Read More](#) »

CALMATTERS

## When children suffer: California to funnel billions into mental health overhaul

The Newsom administration plans to spend \$4.4 billion addressing mental health needs among young people. But will it come soon enough?



<https://www.cbs8.com/article/news/local/california/calmatters/california-to-funnel-billions-into-mental-health-overhaul/509-ca46ea99-1b49-4a53-b315-b432de1a2960>

# TEXT FROM ARTICLE

Amanda Arellano felt a heavy weight pressing down on her chest. It was May of 2021, and the teenager struggled to breathe. Maria Arellano rushed her 17-year-old daughter to the pulmonologist.

Amanda has cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, asthma and a heart murmur. With COVID on the prowl, they couldn't be too careful.

This wasn't an asthma flare-up, the doctor told them. This was anxiety. Sitting in a Jack in the Box near their home in Boyle Heights last month, Maria's eyes filled with tears as she searched for the words to describe watching her normally gregarious daughter struggle.

"It makes you feel very powerless," she said.

Many California parents know this feeling well. Two years into the pandemic, our children are in pain. Rates of anxiety and depression have shot up so quickly that several national leaders—including the U.S. Surgeon General—have issued urgent public health advisories. School-based therapists report long waiting lists and an increase in fighting and behavior issues. Emergency room doctors say they are overwhelmed by the number of children coming in after trying to harm themselves. On top of all this, the state is facing a shortage of mental health providers.

# MORE TEXT FROM ARTICLE

Always a strong student, Amanda grew increasingly frustrated during virtual learning. Sometimes a shaky internet connection booted her out of Zoom class. Other times, teachers were hard to understand.

“I don’t know what I can do to calm myself down,” Amanda told her mother.

Maria would see tears in the long-lashed brown eyes of the daughter she’d always known to be creative, happy and resilient. She’d pull out photos they’d taken on pre-pandemic outings.

“It won’t be this way forever,” she’d tell Amanda. “One day this will end.” Amanda tried meditation and exercise. She lost herself in video games, playing Roblox until her hands hurt. As the months wore on, Maria saw the toll on her daughter’s self-esteem. On Dec. 18, 2020, Amanda sent an email to a teacher, apologizing for missing certain assignments: “I am very embarrassed,” she began.

For months, she explained, “I have felt constant headaches and I have felt very dizzy; I have been extremely fatigued. Never, since I started school, have I left assignments without finishing them. I have always been a good student. But in this moment with the pandemic, my life has been impacted in many ways, especially with Distance Learning.”

Her teacher reassured her: “You are an amazing student that inspires everyone you meet.”



# STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH RIGHTS

## CONTENT WARNING

These *Know Your Rights* materials and linked resources discuss sensitive or triggering information on topics including but not limited to alcohol/drugs, child abuse, self-harm, and suicide. Please practice self-care.

If you need immediate help related to mental health or suicide, please see the resources at the bottom of the page and contact someone immediately.

To learn more about Student Health rights, visit <https://www.myschoolmyrights.com/student-health-rights>.

## Can my school tell me how to access mental health supports at school?

**Yes.** Your mental health can impact your ability to do well in school. Access to mental health services has been shown to improve attendance and academic performance, lower rates of suspension, as well as increase rates of graduation.

School is often the place where you spend most of your time. For this reason, school staff like teachers are the first to notice when you are struggling or may be in need of additional support. School counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and school nurses can support you to address any challenges you might be experiencing that creates barriers to your well-being and success.

## What kind of mental health supports can I receive at school?

Mental health support at school can include a broad range of services including crisis intervention, counseling, individual or group therapy, assessments, and referrals to community-based organizations. School staff like school counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and school nurses can provide these types of supports. Schools also partner with community-based providers to support the mental health of students.

## Who can provide mental health support at my school?

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), school-based mental health (SBMH) providers include school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists. School counselors provide academic counseling along with social emotional support when you are struggling. [Students have the right to request a meeting with their counselor through office referrals or by visiting the counseling office.](#) However, California school counselors have some of the highest caseloads in the country, and this can contribute to a delayed response. School counselors have training and experience in creating safe learning environments, improving school climates (i.e., bullying on campus), and building positive relationships with students, teachers, and parents.

School social workers, like counselors, can also facilitate prevention and intervention programs on issues like substance abuse, bullying, anger management, and more. Depending on your school, some social workers provide short-term counseling for students who are in crisis, chronically absent, feeling anxious or depressed, engaging in self-harm, or having thoughts of suicide. School social workers can also provide support to you or your family to seek outside referrals that you may need related to food security, housing, and healthcare.

## How can I find out about mental health supports at my school?

In California, you are guaranteed the right to attend a school that is safe, secure, and peaceful. To ensure this, public and charter schools are required to develop and maintain Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSPs). As a part of these safety plans, schools may have guidelines that focus on mental health and intervention services. It is important to ask a school staff member about your school's safety plan to find out more about the support that is available to you.

Note that you can also seek mental health support outside of school through your health insurance. For example, if you are under 21 years of age and have full-scope Medi-Cal, then you are eligible for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefits. EPSDT provides screening and services for both physical (e.g., hearing, vision, dental) and mental health needs. Mental health services through EPSDT can include therapeutic behavioral services (TBS) and in-home behavioral services (IHBS).

## Should I be learning about mental health in school?

**Maybe.** As of 2022, the law related to health education has been expanded to include mental health instruction for middle school and high school students. Because of this law, if your middle or high school teaches health classes, then your school must also teach you about topics like mental health wellness, identifying signs and symptoms of mental health challenges (e.g. anxiety, depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder), and services that can help you manage your mental health. Education on these topics must be provided in a way that is accurate, unbiased, appropriate, and inclusive to all students regardless of their race, gender, or sexual orientation. If you are a student with a disability or an English learner, your school must provide you with this education in a way that is accessible to you.

Note that the California Department of Education will be working on its plan to implement the new requirements under this law through 2024.

## Does my school have to provide me with mental health or behavioral health supports?

**Maybe.** If you are a student with a disability and have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that includes mental or behavioral health supports, then your school must provide you with the behavioral supports and interventions outlined in your IEP.

If you have an IEP, then your school can assess you for two primary IEP classifications that are related to mental health. One of these is "Emotional Disturbance" (ED), which is broadly defined and does not require a mental health diagnosis though your school should evaluate, or assess, you for it. For example, repeatedly feeling unhappy or depressed to the extent that it "adversely" affects your academic performance can be considered an emotional disturbance. A professional evaluation must occur first for students to be considered as a student with ED. An adverse effect means your disability makes it more difficult for you to learn in school. Likewise, difficulty maintaining good relationships with your peers or teachers may also qualify you for this type of disability category. The second IEP classification is more general and categorized as an "Other Health Impairment" ("OHI"). This could include Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which can make it more difficult to pay attention.

If you have an IEP based on an ED or OHI classification, then you may qualify for counseling, psychological and/or social work services. This can include individual or group counseling for yourself and in some case your parent(s).

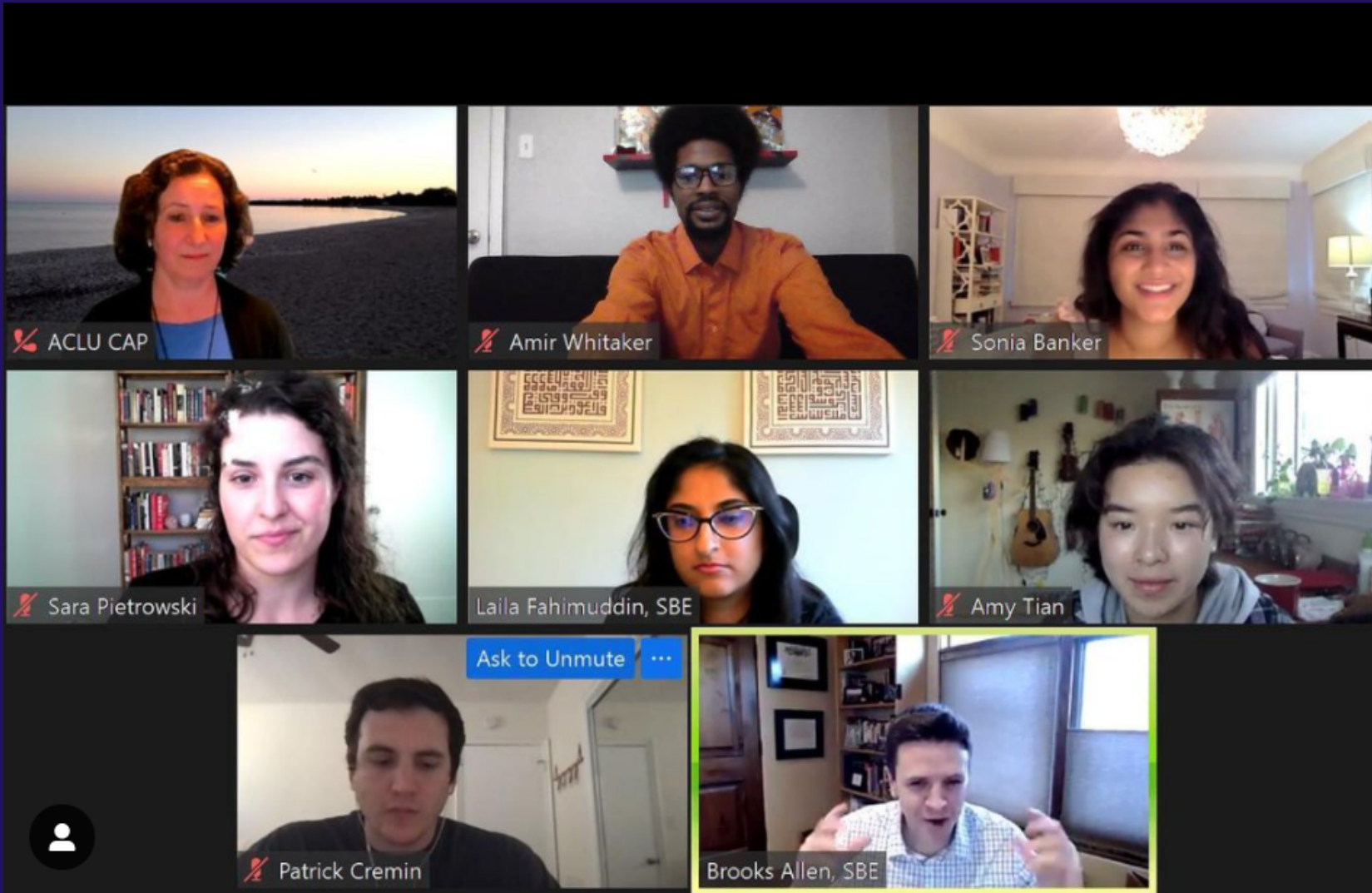
If you do not have an IEP, you may still be eligible for mental health services through a Section 504 plan. Unlike an IEP, a Section 504 plan does not require that you have a specific disability or diagnosis. Section 504 plans are intended to provide students with disabilities appropriate and individualized education services. A qualifying disability for a 504 plan includes a physical or mental impairment that makes it difficult to do "major life activities" like walking, seeing, hearing, breathing or learning. Physical impairments that can also limit your ability to do "major life activities" may include depression, anxiety, asthma, or a heart condition.

If you do not have an IEP or 504 plan, your parent or guardian can request that your school conduct an evaluation or assessment to

<b>STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN THE PAST YEAR (APRIL 2021)</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Lacking motivation	77%
Feeling overwhelmed	72%
Emotional meltdown or breakdown from stress or being overwhelmed	63%
Feeling depressed	45%
Panic or anxiety attack	43%
A day where I could not participate in school or do work because of your mental health	38%
Three or more days where I could not participate in school or do work because of your mental health	22%
I have been having suicidal thoughts myself	19%
Talking with a friend about their suicidal thoughts	17%
Engaged in self-harming behavior like cutting	11%
I acted on or sought help for suicidal thoughts	6%

<b>HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC IMPACTED YOU?</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
My mental health (anxiety, stress, depression, etc.)	66%
My physical health (weight gain or loss, eyesight, etc.)	58%
I feel burnt out right now	55%
I feel overwhelmed with virtual learning. I have limited time for self-care	51%
My home environment or noise/distractions makes school difficult	42%
I lost of a loved one	31%
I feel like I might not be the same again. I might be traumatized.	22%
The pandemic HAS NOT impacted me in a significant way	16%
I had to take a job to support my family	5%
I had to move to a new place	4%

# Meeting with State Board of Education about Student Mental Health



aclu\_calaction • Following



aclu\_calaction Our @youthlibertysquad met with the State Board of Education this month to talk about their petition to prioritize school based mental health and arts education in the budget 🙌🙌.

Our youth leaders are doing big things!

10w



Liked by youthlibertysquad and others

FEBRUARY 19



Add a comment...



# LETTER TO GOVERNOR & SUPERINTENDENT

May 7, 2020



The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor  
State of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
1430 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Dr Nadine Burke Harris, California Surgeon General  
California Health and Human Services  
1600 Ninth Street, Room 460  
Sacramento, CA 95814

CC: First Partner, Jennifer Siebel Newsom

Dear Governor Newsom, Superintendent Thurmond, and Dr. Harris,

We applaud your leadership during COVID-19 and all that you do for us fellow Californians. We understand you are receiving these letters daily and that you too could be experiencing struggles with your mental well-being. We therefore took the liberty to include some emojis to brighten your day. 😊

We are the Youth Liberty Squad, a group of High School aged youth founded by the ACLU of Southern California. We are taking part in California's first "Student Mental Health Week" (SMHW) with thousands of students and educators. We are working with the California Association of School Counselors to make this happen. This is long overdue, yet it comes at a most critical time. In anticipation of this day, we mobilized over 640 students to complete a survey to share the impact of COVID-19 on our mental wellbeing. The survey reached students across 60 schools and 40 districts and is one of the most significant projects to check-in on how students are feeling conducted by any organization in California. We reached back out to students and have the sign-on support of our peers at over 100 schools for this letter (see attachment). We also have the support of X organizations and leaders like Y and Z for our letter. We are reaching out to you because you are the leaders who have the most influence on the educational policy impacting us six million public school students, and we hope and expect a response.

We understand that you are dealing with many unprecedented emergencies right now, but through the information gathered in our survey in which we asked students to recommend solutions, we would like to present ways in which problems affecting students can be resolved. We also connected with educators and advocates for input. Here is a list of suggestions for your offices to consider prioritizing student success and wellbeing.

- Commencement: High school seniors have a great deal of uncertainty and fear that is compounding with anxiety. We have been deprived of a moment we and our families – particularly for families with students who are the first to graduate from high school – have looked forward to for years through graduation, and we are still figuring out if we will have any ceremony at all. Consider delivering a virtual commencement address to the Class of 2020 to provide encouragement and assurance.
- Invest in virtual tutors and other forms of supports such as “sufficient resources for the summer months to provide school meals and to address the significant learning loss that has occurred”
- Urge colleges to support flexible planning when considering the impact on college admissions and anxiety about the fall. After this hectic time, schools should be allowed time to transition.
- Issue a letter in support of Student Mental Health Week and acknowledge access to school-based mental health a civil rights issue.
- Host a town hall on student mental wellness. Invite students to speak at the forefront. We are happy to help you organize this and can recommend other student organizations that should be engaged.
- Issue a directive calling on districts to stop spending LCAP funds intended for high-needs students on law enforcement. A [report](#) by Pomona Student Union Youth Organizers and other/some of the signatories of this letter found over 40% of districts in Southern California are illegally spending LCAP funds. Direct them to spend money on school-based mental health and counselors, not cops.
- Continue to address the digital divide and inequalities that have been exposed in the transition to distance learning. Consider the impact on students experiencing homelessness and the 1.1 million students who are English learners in the state.



## EVEN IN COVID, STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH IS STILL NOT A PRIORITY

Governor Newsom should fund student mental health.



By Catherine Estrada

JANUARY 6, 2021 - 4:00PM



In the early days of the COVID-19 lockdowns, as schools transitioned from in-person to remote learning, students were among the first to feel the effects of social isolation. We suffered silently as schools adjusted to virtual learning while paying little attention to the impact of this transition on students' mental health. But the lack of mental health resources isn't just a result of changes due to COVID-19 — the pandemic exposed an existing problem.

Student mental health has never been prioritized in this state. California ranks 48th in the nation when it



LAUSD student Catherine Estrada at a rally in Los Angeles (Photo courtesy of Catherine Estrada).

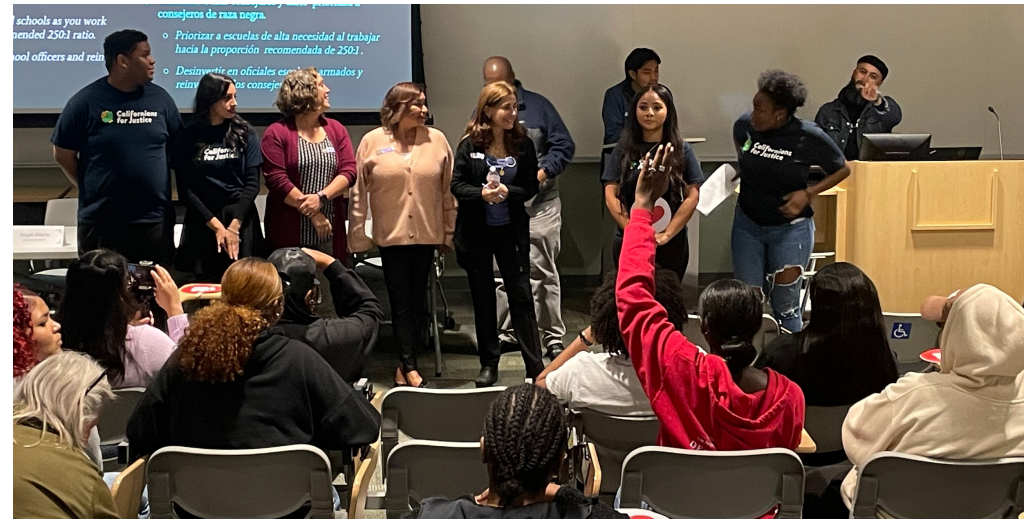
*“As a student, I feel mental health check-ins between administrators (teachers, social workers, counselors, etc.) and each and every individual pupil should be mandatory along with a period of rest.”*

<https://www.aclusocal.org/en/news/even-covid-student-mental-health-still-not-priority>

<https://www.pbssocal.org/students-fight-for-holistic-mental-health-support-in-high-schools>

# LONG BEACH: ADVOCATING FOR COUNSELORS WITH STUDENTS

- Hosted Town halls in 2022 and 2023 to “Reimagine School Counseling”
- There were **20% fewer** counselors in 2022 in the district than in 2008
- In LBUSD, **85%** of counselors are spending over 25% of their time on non-counseling.



**REIMAGINE SCHOOL COUNSELING IN THE LBUSD**  
 Virtual Town Hall  
 Tuesday, October 11, 2022 at 5pm

Illustration: Joel Garcia (Huichol)

Join us to mark the Angelversary of Mona Rodriguez and discuss the next steps to be taken as we reimagine school counseling as a way to fully support students in the Long Beach Unified School District.



**2ND ANNUAL LBUSD TOWNHALL:**

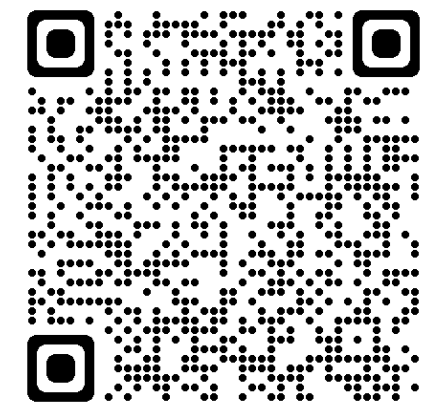
**Reimagining School Counseling: Centering Student Voices**

**THURSDAY NOV 16, 2023**

**4:30PM - 6:00PM**

**Location:**  
 LBCC (PCC)  
 1305 E Pacific Coast Hwy  
 Building: QQ

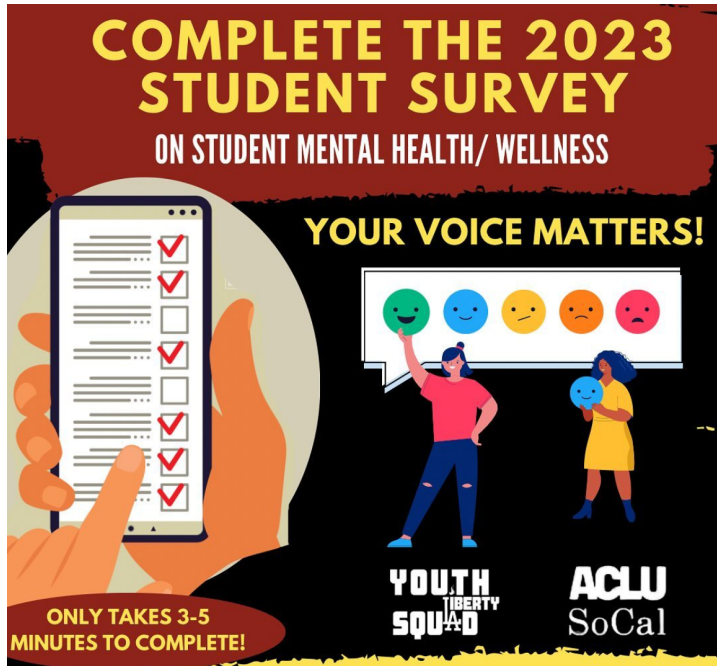
**Snacks, Drinks, Childcare, and Interpretation Provided**



**PLEASE SIGN OUR PETITION**

# CALL TO ACTIONS:

- Sign and share 2024 petition (include **LINK**)
- Share student wellness survey with students (include **LINK**)
- QR CODE



[www.tinyurl.com/smhw2023](http://www.tinyurl.com/smhw2023)



# QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. What do you think are the most common and/or concerning behavioral health needs of youth right now?
  - a. What do you see your friends struggling with?
2. Please tell us your thoughts and experiences about accessing counseling services. (Access? School, Community)
3. How would you describe counselors or counseling services that work well for youth?
  - a. What doesn't work well?
4. In a perfect world, what would mental health services look like in schools?
  - a. What would you tell your principal, teachers, and school counselors?
5. You have a room full of counselors and counselors in training, what do you think we need to hear?
  - a. What recommendations do you have for counselors working with youth across CA?

What do you think about social media and mental health?

- 1. How can school counselors stay informed about the current mental health needs of high school students in California, and what strategies can they use to address these needs?**
- 2. In your opinion, what are some of the most significant challenges that high school students face in accessing mental health services, and how can counselors actively support and advocate for increased access?**
- 3. Discuss the role of school-based mental health as a civil rights issue. How can counselors contribute to ensuring that all students have equal access to mental health support?**
- 4. How can personal experiences be utilized to create a more empathetic and understanding environment for discussing mental health concerns among high school students and counselors?**
- 5. What innovative approaches or programs have been implemented in other schools or communities to reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health services, and how can counselors incorporate these into their work?**
- 6. Based on the findings of recent wellness surveys, what trends or patterns have emerged regarding the mental health needs of high school students in California?**
- 7. In your opinion, what are the key elements that contribute to providing accessible and effective mental health services for youth, and how can counselors actively implement these in their schools?**
- 8. Considering the unique challenges of the youth population, what recommendations would you offer to counselors for creating a safe and supportive space for discussing mental health issues openly?**

## **POTENTIAL POLL QUESTIONS**

- 1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel in identifying and addressing the mental health needs of high school students in your current role?**
- 2. What strategies do you currently employ to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health in your school community? (Open-ended response)**
- 3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how comfortable do you feel engaging in conversations about mental health with students and encouraging them to seek help when needed?**
- 4. How open are you to incorporating new technology or digital platforms to enhance communication and support for students' mental health needs? (Very open, somewhat open, not open)**

# THANK YOU!

- [Link to ACLU/CASC/CSULB Report https://aducalaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2022\\_State\\_of\\_Student\\_Wellness\\_Report\\_.pdf](https://aducalaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2022_State_of_Student_Wellness_Report_.pdf)
- [Link to Children Now Report https://www.childrennow.org/portfolio-posts/2022-california-childrens-report-card/](https://www.childrennow.org/portfolio-posts/2022-california-childrens-report-card/)
- [www.aclusocal.org/en/campaigns/youth-liberty-squad](http://www.aclusocal.org/en/campaigns/youth-liberty-squad)
- Presentation on historic funding for CA Mental/Behavioral Health
  - <https://vimeo.com/639285846>
- <https://edsources.org/2022/anxiety-stress-remain-top-concerns-for-california-students-survey-finds/666596>
- Know Your Rights (Student Mental Health)
- <http://www.myschoolmyrights.com/rights/student-mental-health-rights/>

<https://www.mindoutloud.org/>

<https://www.indieflix.com/california>



# STUDENT SOLUTIONS & IDEAS PRESENTED TO LAUSD

1. Health **classes** will be required to cover **mental health** and wellness ([SB 224](#) state law)
2. Peer counseling/**Peer-to-Peer** programs to support students' social-emotional wellbeing and academic success. Support for an LAUSD pilot program
3. Support **substance abuse & behavioral health** programs. Fentanyl prevention/intervention ([SB 10](#))
4. Counselors should have less supervisory/administrative tasks and **more time to counsel students**
5. Clarification and implementation of **Student Mental Health Absences Days**. Students are unaware of this AND administrators are denying it.
6. Clarification that schools and students can and should **call/text 988** OR LAUSD hotline for suicide/mental health emergencies **instead of 911**
7. Clarify that **school police should NOT** be first to **respond** to student mental health/suicide (LASAR)
8. Language and support for reducing mental health **stigma**
9. Support for PPS **Staff** (counselors, PSW) staff and community partnerships
10. Support and expand **BSAP** staff to support Black students
11. Establish a **student advisory committee** for mental health and wellness

More [Details HERE](#) for each point



Questions Regarding the Equity and Justice Focused Integrative Behavioral Health Training Project can be directed to:

[ibhequity@sfsu.edu](mailto:ibhequity@sfsu.edu)

To see a schedule of future events and archived webinars, visit:

[ibhequity.sfsu.edu](http://ibhequity.sfsu.edu)