**A Step-by-Step Strategy for Creating Mental Health Initiatives in Lutheran Schools**

**CRAWL**

Crawl steps do not require much money or extravagant resources. They are beginner steps for creating mental health initiatives.

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| **Action** | **Ideas** | **People Involved** | **Target Date** | **Completion Date** | **Notes** |
| Have a designated Mental Health Advocate (MHA) in your school. | The MHA participates in MHA group each month, receiving guidance and support. |  |  |  |  |
| The MHA helps build a mental health ministry (MHM) team in your school with the support of the principal. | Consider other teachers, staff, PTA members, and possibly a few mature students with a variety of talents and those with lived experience. Name your group. |  |  |  |  |
| **Action** | **Ideas** | **People Involved** | **Target Date** | **Completion Date** | **Notes** |
| The MHA communicates and collaborates with the MHA of the church that the school is affiliated with (if there is one). | The school MHA and congregational MHA(s) regularly communicate and collaborate via in-person meetings, phone calls, emails, etc. |  |  |  |  |
| Conduct the Congregational Mental and Behavioral Health Needs Assessment survey within your school and/or use data from a RemedyLIVE Get School Tour. | Distribute the link to the assessment survey via email, newsletter, website, etc.  |  |  |  |  |
| Create a simple plan of action based on the assessment results. | Review the survey data with you and help guide your next steps to best meet expressed needs. |  |  |  |  |
| **Action** | **Ideas** | **People Involved** | **Target Date** | **Completion Date** | **Notes** |
| Utilize the Mental Health Toolkit resources within chapel, koinonia groups, staff devotions, etc. | Use the Bible study, hymns, prayers, posters, etc. Receive and share ideas from the MHA monthly meetings and on the MHA Facebook Group. |  |  |  |  |
| Create a mental health display area in the school. | This could be a table, bulletin board, etc. with flyers, brochures, articles, LUI crisis cards, etc. |  |  |  |  |
| Participate in Companionship Training and basic suicide prevention training such as QPR |  |  |  |  |  |
| Share the “Resource Guide” with your principal, school secretary, staff, and families | Have copies of the Resource Guide (accessible on the MHA Private Resource Page) available in the school office. |  |  |  |  |
| Pray for people who are living with mental illness and their families in chapel services and privately. | Use the prayers in The Mental Health Toolkit.  |  |  |  |  |
| **Action** | **Ideas** | **People Involved** | **Target Date** | **Completion** | **Notes** |
| Give hope to staff, students, or their family members who are mentally ill by providing encouragement. | Phone calls, texts, emails, cards, in-person conversations, meals, prayers, etc. |  |  |  |  |
| Encourage staff with mental health needs to use the mental health counseling sessions covered by their health insurance policy/EAP.  | Check with your school’s HR person to become more familiar with your mental health benefits.  |  |  |  |  |
| Plan to attend the 2025 Look Up Conference on 5/6/25. | Encourage the principal and several others from the school to attend.  |  |  |  |  |

**Walk**

Walk steps require some training and minimal financial support. There is a greater level of commitment, but most schools can take these steps.

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| **Action** | **Ideas** | **People Involved** | **Target Date** | **Completion Date** | **Notes** |
| Build a mental health library with books and other resources. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Conduct a Bible study on a mental health topic during staff Bible study/devotion time. | Refer to the Look Up Indiana faith-based resources and The Mental Health Toolkit for ideas. |  |  |  |  |
| Train more staff in Companionship, QPR, ASIST, Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA), etc. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Offer workplace wellness presentations, workshops, or retreats for staff. | Run Hard. Rest Well retreats or their Restorative Wellness Tips and Tools curriculum, Mental Health America Northeast Indiana’s Workplace Wellness Trainings, etc.  |  |  |  |  |
| **Action**Hold quarterly educational workshops/trainings at your school for parents and the community on various mental health topics. | **Ideas** | **People Involved** | **Target Date** | **Completion Date** | **Notes** |
| Regularly connect your school with opportunities to serve those with mental illness. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Communicate about your mental health ministry on a regular basis. | Include articles in a mental health section of your school’s newsletter, announce events in posters and social media posts, have a tab on the school’s website, etc. |  |  |  |  |

**Run**

Run steps require a higher level of commitment, more extensive training, financial support, and some trained school staff.

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| **Action** | **Ideas** | **People Involved** | **Target Date** | **Completion Date** | **Notes** |
| Provide school staff and mental health ministry team members with more advanced mental health training. | MHFA, YMHFA, C-SSRS, Living Works Faith, Spiritual First Aid, etc.  |  |  |  |  |
| Create a care team who will commit to help with basic needs of families impacted by mental illness. | Create a meal train, offer to babysit, provide gift cards, etc. |  |  |  |  |
| Have people in your school trained to be the trainer of various mental health workshops. | QPR, ASIST, Mental Health First Aid, Youth Mental Health First Aid,  |  |  |  |  |
| **Action**Host a mental health fair introducing your school and neighborhood to resources in the community. | **Ideas** Contact local resources in the community: Parkview Behavioral Health, Lutheran Social Services of Indiana, Cross Connections, the county health department, MHA to provide resources. | **People Involved** | **Target Date** | **Completion Date** | **Notes** |
| Create a new full-time or part-time staff position for mental health counseling in your school. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Become a model of what every school can do about mental illness by being a reliable source of information about mental illness. | Share your knowledge with other schools to assist them in their mental health ministry initiatives. Collaborate with other schools. |  |  |  |  |

*\*Note: This checklist has been adapted from “A Church-Initiated Mental Health Strategy” from Saddleback’s Hope for Mental Health.*