

Introduction to Mental Health Literacy

A look into framework for promoting mental health awareness.

Joshua Kent, LSWAIC, MHL Instruction Specialist



Washington Office of Superintendent of
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Vision

Mission

Values

All students prepared for post-secondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.

Transform K–12 education to a system that is centered on closing opportunity gaps and is characterized by high expectations for all students and educators. We achieve this by developing equity-based policies and supports that empower educators, families, and communities.

- Ensuring Equity
- Collaboration and Service
- Achieving Excellence through Continuous Improvement
- Focus on the Whole Child



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Equity Statement

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a bright yellow long-sleeved shirt, is sitting on the floor and has her hands raised high in the air. She is looking upwards with an open mouth, appearing to be speaking or shouting enthusiastically. In the background, another child with long brown hair is visible, also with hands raised. The scene is set in a classroom with a whiteboard and colorful posters on the wall.

Each student, family, and community possesses strengths and cultural knowledge that benefits their peers, educators, and schools.

Ensuring educational equity:

- Goes beyond equality; it requires education leaders to examine the ways current policies and practices result in disparate outcomes for our students of color, students living in poverty, students receiving special education and English Learner services, students who identify as LGBTQ+, and highly mobile student populations.
- Requires education leaders to develop an understanding of historical contexts; engage students, families, and community representatives as partners in decision-making; and actively dismantle systemic barriers, replacing them with policies and practices that ensure all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools.



Tribal Land Acknowledgement

We want to recognize our work is on the ancestral land of the Tribal People of the Treaty of Medicine Creek, including the Nisqually Indian Tribe and Squaxin Island Tribe. We acknowledge, and remember those Tribal People not recognized today who were absorbed or relocated into other tribes for survival. We recognize the ancestors and their descendants who are still here. We recognize and respect the Tribal People of the Treaty of Medicine Creek as the traditional stewards of this land since time immemorial and their role today in taking care of these lands in perpetuity. We recognize and have the responsibility to call attention to the histories of dispossession, forced removal, and abridged treaty rights that allowed our nation, state, and city to develop as it has today. We recommend that community members read the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854.





Presentation Overview:

Purpose: Provide a foundational understanding of mental health literacy to promote mental health awareness in the classroom to prioritize the social emotional development of students.

Objective: Prepare educators with the skills and comfort to teach mental health topics and navigate any subsequent follow up with students.

Focus: Create a sustainable opportunity for students to build mental health awareness and skills.

1-Minute MH Check-in

It's an easy activity that any of us can do.

Ask yourself, what emotion would you say you're feeling right now.

If it's a difficult emotion, what is your remedy?

- It could be using coping strategies or other actions to help relieve the emotion if that is needed.





Talking Mental Health – [video](#)





Poll Questions:

Did you relate to this video?

Do you think some of these skills apply to your students or other adults?

How much do you know about Mental Health Literacy?





What is Mental Health Literacy (MHL)?

Involves students' understanding of age-appropriate mental health concepts, recognition of mental health challenges and stigma, awareness of available resources, and development of healthy mental health promotion strategies and skills.¹

**It aims to create a supportive school environment, where
mental health and well-being is prioritized.**





Benefits of Teaching Mental Health Literacy

1. **Fosters Positive Mental Health in Students**

- Improves overall mental health and well-being
- Enhances student learning, attendance, and engagement

2. **Promotes Positive Mental Health for Educators⁶**

- Increases self-awareness and emotional resilience
- Reduces psychological distress and burnout

3. **Reduces Risky Behaviors and Promotes Safety⁷**

- Lowers incidents of bullying, substance misuse, and school violence
- Reduces involvement in the juvenile justice system





Key Points to Consider

When adopting MHL lesson plans, these core elements helped establish a framework for mental health awareness and promotion²:

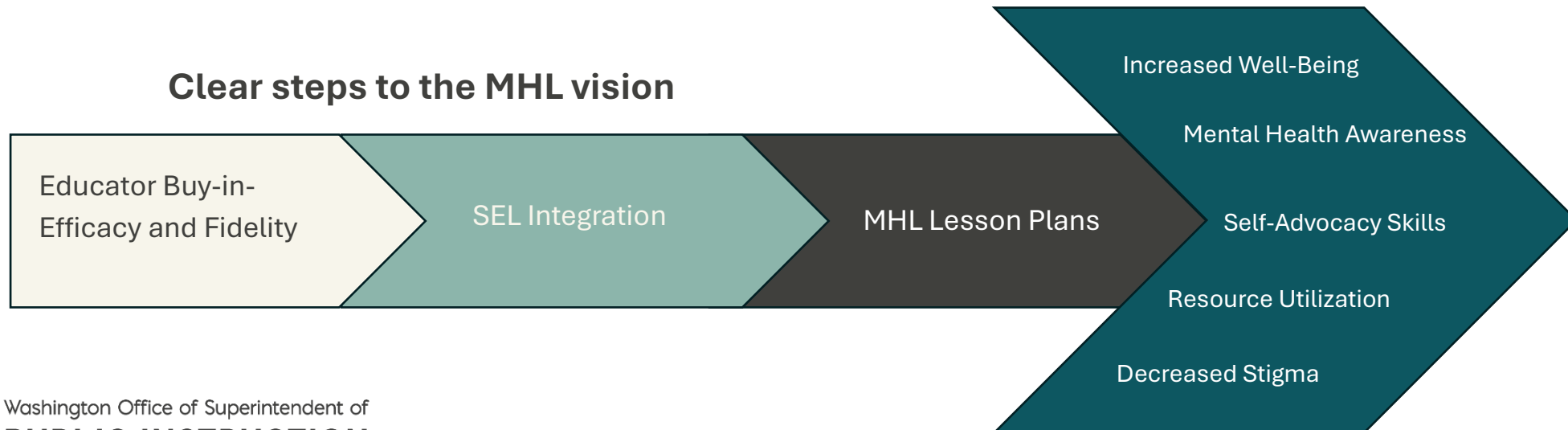
- Strength-based learning,
- Trauma-informed,
- Equity focused,
- Incorporated principles of social emotional learning.



Learning Objectives and Vision

MHL will cover the following primary learning units⁴:

- Mental Health Competency
- Mental Health Promotion
- Mental Health Stigma
- Mental Health Awareness and Advocacy





A Whole Child & Student Approach³

Key Aspects of this approach:

- Strength recognition
- Integrated learning
- Safe and inclusive classrooms
- Student-centered support
- Ease in collaboration

MHL emphasizes:

Nurturing every dimension of a student's development by enabling students to thrive across various domains while empowering them with knowledge and skills related to mental health.





Emphasis on Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

By embedding SEL and MHL into health education, schools can cultivate a generation of emotionally intelligent, resilient individuals who are better equipped to face life's challenges.

OSPI adopted the [SEL standards and benchmarks](#) to ensure that students learn these important skills. These SEL standards are:⁵

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Self-Efficacy
- Social Awareness
- Social Management
- Social Engagement





How Mental Health Literacy and SEL Connect

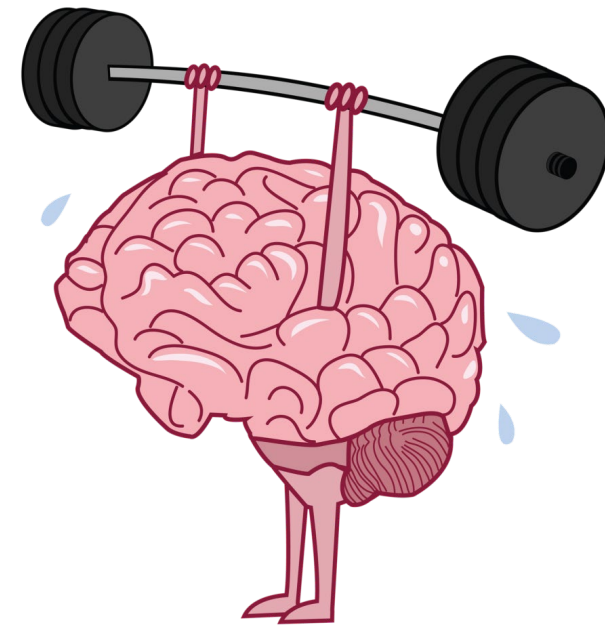
Both have the shared goal of promoting emotional well-being:

SEL Skills	MHL Skills
• Self-awareness • Emotion management • Setting goals • Relationship building • Decision making skills • Social responsibility	• Mental health awareness and competency • Stigma reduction • Promotion and advocacy • Service utilization





Let's Lift-Up Mental Health Literacy in the Classroom..





Mental Health Competency

Purpose: Helps students gain an understanding of common mental health challenges faced by youth, which reduces stigma and increases help-seeking behavior and service support⁹.

It also proactively teaches coping and resilience skills by teaching students to identify risk factors and develop protective factors to minimize the impact of stressors on mental well-being.





Mental Health Promotion

Purpose: To empower students to enhance their overall well-being, build resilience, and prevent mental health challenges.

It focuses on fostering positive mental health rather than solely focusing on mental health challenges. It integrates these elements into everyday life, helping individuals thrive while addressing potential challenges proactively.

MHL aims to emphasize on autonomy and empowerment.





Mental Health Stigma

Purpose: Educating students about stigma helps them understand that mental health challenges do not define a person. Recognizing stigma promotes a more supportive, accepting environment for peers.

Types of Stigma¹⁰:

- **Structural Stigma** are laws or policies that limit the rights of people with mental health challenges.
- **Public Stigma** is negative societal attitudes about people with mental health challenges.
- **Self-stigma** is internalized shame or self-blame by individuals living with mental health challenges.





Awareness and Advocacy

Purpose: To empower students to support mental well-being and ensure access to resources and care when needed. Advocacy and seeking help will normalize mental health conversations and promote early intervention.

- **When to seek help:** If experiencing persistent and unmanageable symptoms like sadness, anger, irritability, or feelings of being overwhelmed.
- **Effective help-seeking:** Utilize school resources like counselors, social workers, or mental health professionals.
- **Accessing therapy:** Through primary care providers, school counselors, or community services, with considerations for cultural, religious or personal preferences.





What is the MHL Connection to MTSS?

MHL is a tier 1 intervention, it acts as a preventative and early identification measure to provide each student with education and ability to manage mental health challenges as they occur.

MHL has shown to have positive implications to MTSS and school support systems.

- MHL can strengthen the capacity of the school system to respond effectively at advanced tiers.
- MHL fosters a compassionate school culture, creating a solid foundation for the MTSS framework to thrive¹².





Mental Health Literacy at OSPI

As we have discussed during this training, Mental Health Literacy (MHL) is important to supporting students holistically.

The primary goal is to embrace mental health literacy and prioritize student well-being.





Mental Health Literacy Webpage

A webpage dedicated to this instruction has been organized, and you can access the available content and resources on the topic.

Please utilize this content as well as the resources to get you prepared for classroom use.





Guidance Document

This document was created to provide the educator or facilitator with an overview of the four mental health literacy learning units.

It will help with preparation for application of these lessons and provide you with considerations around the topic and classroom guidance to navigate the sensitive topic.

Please visit our webpage to download the materials.





Mental Health Literacy Lessons

Lessons have been adopted to have classroom ready activities that align with the newly updated health education standards as well as with the Social Emotional Learning adopted standards and benchmarks.

There are currently four lessons available to use, each covering a component within the Mental Health Literacy framework.

Please visit our webpage to download the materials.





One Major Consideration to Remember

If a student discloses a mental health challenge to you, or in the classroom, please follow school policy on reporting, and consider these guidelines to help you navigate this moment:

- 1. Assess Risk and Follow Protocols**
- 2. Know Your Role**
- 3. Make a Referral**
- 4. Provide Non-Emergency Support**





Example Lesson Walkthrough

Finally, I want to go through a sample lesson that covers a [Mental Health Promotion](#) topic within the mental health literacy learning units.

The aim is to show how simple the activity can be while allowing students to explore stress and ways to manage it.





www.MentalHealthInstruction.org



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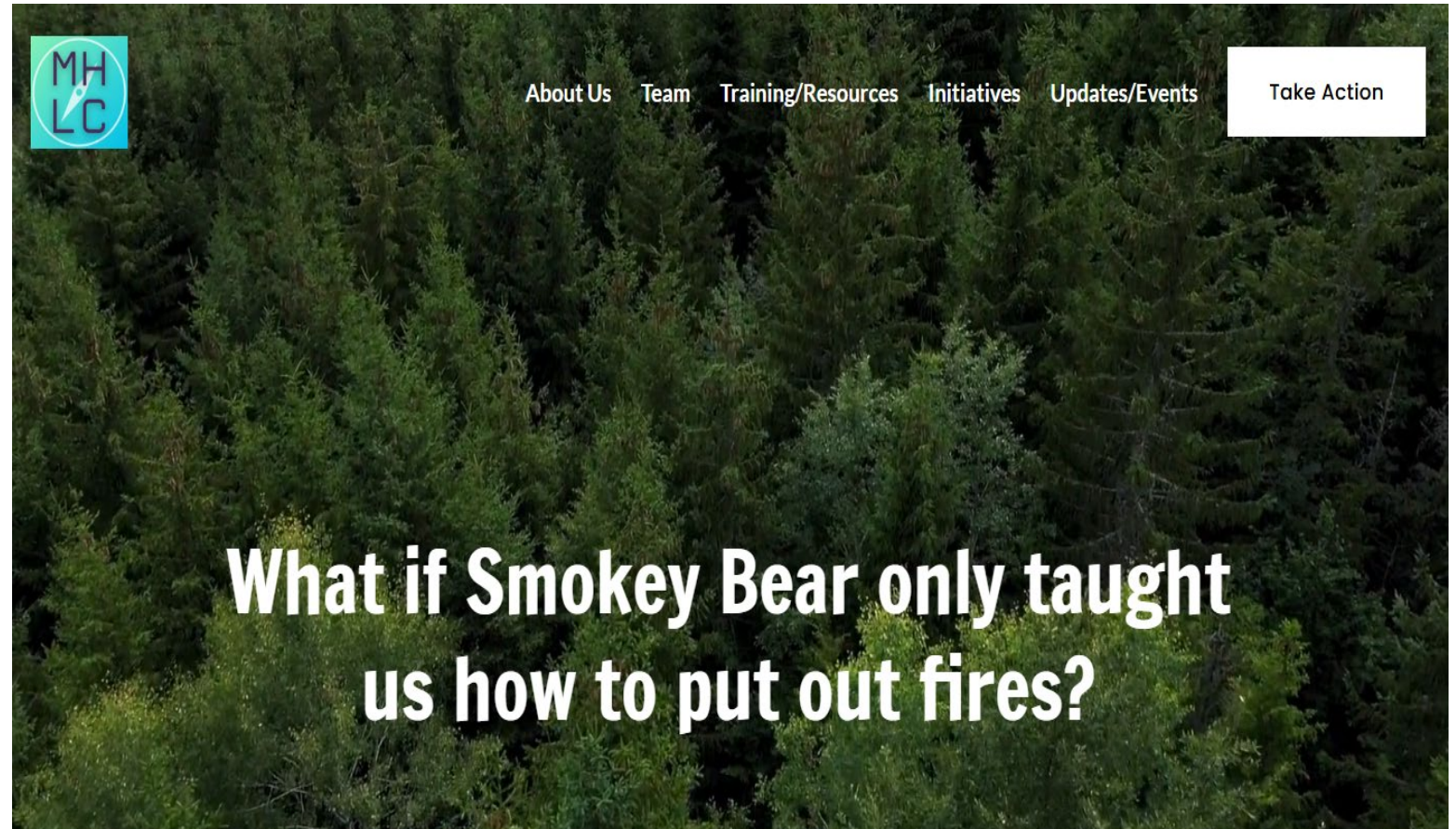


Mental Health Literacy Collaborative

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

Check out their site for more information on mental health literacy.

They offer trainings and community of practice calls on various topics to increase your mental health literacy toolkit.



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National Resources that are Leading the Way for Mental Health Literacy:

- [Mental Health Literacy | Recovery Albert – Mental Health and Addiction Services](#)
- [Mental Health Literacy | Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#)
- [Oregon Department of Education : Mental Health Toolkit : Mental Health : State of Oregon](#)
- [HELPS Project | School of Health and Exercise Sciences | College of Health, Education, and Human Services | Wright State University](#)
- [Download the Guide – Curriculum](#)
- [The Mental Health Literacy Collaborative](#)
- [Mental Health Collaborative | Nobody Needs to Suffer in Silence](#)



Additional Resources for MHL:

1. [OSPI SEL](#) Webpage offers a breakdown of SEL in WA state, implementation resources, professional development and additional resources.
2. [CASEL School Guide](#) has documented, field-tested, and refined a strategic, collaborative process for schoolwide SEL.
3. [National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\)](#) has education resources for information on mental health topics, including lesson plans and activities.
4. [Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) has education resources on mental health comprehension, and common mental health challenges and disorders.
5. [CDC](#) offers resources and information on mental health stigma.
6. [Youth.gov](#) offers information on mental health promotion and prevention.



Open to questions and support...

Let us know what you're thinking, any clarifying questions.

Please reach out to let us know.



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Available Survey with Clock Hours

Make sure to complete the survey to get SEL clock hours for this webinar.

