GOAL: Reinforce the importance of mental health and wellness for all school community members and develop skills to become a more trauma informed & sensitive district

Mental Health & Wellness: WHY?

- Recognition of the growing mental health needs of students, pre-pandemic
- Increased emphasis on the impact of student mental health on learning

Post-Pandemic Mental Health Crisis

- Impact of historical trauma, isolation, fear, loss, and health & safety insecurities
- Heightened adverse childhood experiences (“ACEs”) that impact a child’s sense of safety, security, bonding and health
- Increased exposure to violence, abuse & neglect, caregivers with addiction & mental illness; separation from caregivers; and loss of finances
- Increase in anxiety, depression, school avoidance, acting-out, and psychiatric referrals
- Decrease in the ability to regulate emotions and interact & socialize with peers, in-person
- Increased exposure to technology and utilization of social media
Mental Health & Wellness: HOW?

- Regular meetings with stakeholders to collect & review data, including mental health needs assessments and crisis referrals
- Maintain regular communication with Mental Health Team members to address emerging and changing needs of the school community.
- Facilitate community provider partnerships & collaborations
- Encourage community members & parents to communicate concerns and needs
- Review and evaluate implementation practices and impacts

~CONNECT WITH KINDNESS~
Mental Health & Wellness Programs: **WHO?**

*Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss:* supports children and families coping with grief, loss and trauma, utilizing empathy & compassion to foster resiliency and emotional well-being

- **Administrators and Staff Members:** Professional development to prepare us to recognize and increase our sensitivity to the impact of grief, loss & trauma on our school community members
- **Mental Health Team Members:** Trauma specialist training for designated School Climate and Mental Health Team members from each school
- **Parents/Caregivers:** Introduction to loss, grief and mourning workshop
- **Consultation** to develop “Handle with Compassion” Advisory to develop protocols for gathering & sharing information about grief-related events that our students and families are facing

“At school, I didn’t know anyone else whose dad died. But when I come to Imagine, other kids lost their dad too and it feels good to know I’m not alone” – 10 yr old

[https://imaginenj.org/about/](https://imaginenj.org/about/)
Quantum Psychotherapy: Trauma Informed/Nurtured Heart Approach to Education

- Professional development to become more aware and sensitive to the emotional needs of students
- Identify areas of trauma that may impact learning
- Awareness of our own experiences and how they impact our interaction
- Parenting workshop
- Bank of sessions to support families as they transition to permanent service providers

https://quantumpsychotherapygroup.com/

Mental Health Association:

- Mental Health Awareness (Elementary Schools)
- “Gizmo” guided reading and discussion (3-4th)
- Mental Health Awareness discussion and art activity (5th)
- Suicide Awareness & Prevention (SOS) Middle School & High School

https://www.mhainspire.org/

Rutger’s Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Division of Addiction Psychiatry
NARCAN Information Presentations & Kit Distribution: Free Webinar for parents/caregivers and their children, 16+ years of age. Registration is required and kits will be mailed to the registered parent/caregiver

RWJMS.Rutgers.edu/addiction
Mental Health & Wellness: WHEN?

Timeline for Implementation:

- Informal needs identified through research, data review, observations and community member feedback: Fall 2022–ongoing
- Approval of Programs: January 2023
- Parent/District Workshop: February 2023 Mental Health Association
- Elementary School (3-5) Mental Health Awareness Classroom Presentations (MHA): (Hillside, Edgemont, Bullock (May)
- Administrator Workshop: March 2023 (Imagine)/May 2023 (Quantum)
- High School Staff Workshop: May 2023 (Imagine)
- Middle School Staff Workshop: May 2023 (Quantum)
- NARCAN Workshops: May 2023 (5th, 11th, 10th, 20th)
- Trauma Specialist Training: May–June 2023 (Imagine)
- Virtual Parent Workshop: May 2023 (Quantum)/June 2023 (Imagine)
- Middle School Student Presentations: Fall 2023 (Quantum)
- “Handle with Care” Protocols: Fall 2023
- Middle/High School Suicide Awareness & Prevention Student Programs Fall–Winter 2023 (MHA)
MPS Mental Health Resources & Supports

- Please see the District Homepage for access to researched & vetted community providers
- Regular updates are shared with the School Community through messenger

General Mental Health & Wellness  Crisis  Domestic Violence
Homelessness/Child Welfare Support  LGBTQ+ Mental Health & Support
Substance Use  Suicide Awareness & Prevention  Veteran Supports

[Link](https://www.montclair.k12.nj.us/cms/One.aspx?portalId=889560&pageId=73418357)

mdock@montclair.k12.nj.us