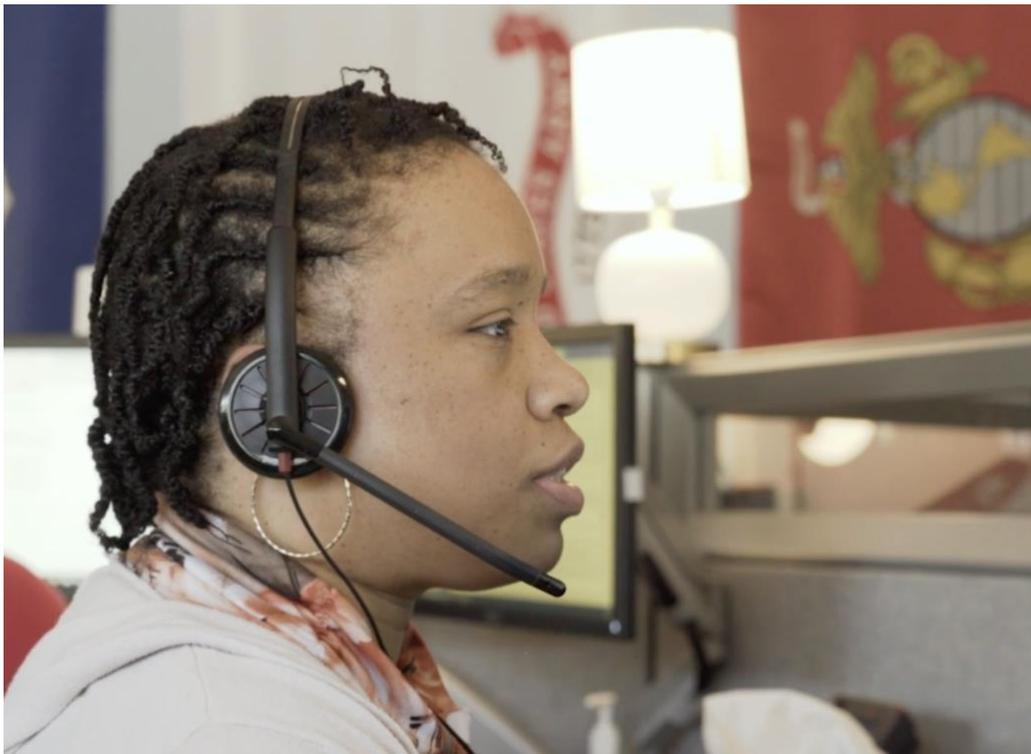


# **YOUTH-LED EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**



## **A Briefing Paper**

By Sam Piha and Samantha Fasen

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Sam Piha has served as founder and president of Temescal Associates since 2007. Sam began his career in 1974 as an afterschool worker, an experience that led to 13 years of classroom teaching and work as a child and family counselor and school social worker. Between 1989 and 2006, Sam managed school-based youth programs at the regional and national levels. He later founded Temescal Associates and The How Kids Learn Foundation, both dedicated to improving the quality of afterschool programs. Sam served as editor and contributing author of several important practice guides and journal articles on afterschool programming. Sam holds a master's degree in Social Welfare.



Samantha Fasen joined Temescal Associates and the How Kids Learn Foundation in 2019 and has fully embraced her work with the afterschool field. She helps to coordinate and develop marketing campaigns and multimedia elements to reach a wider audience and share with people the importance of out-of-school time and youth development.



Ren (Stacey) Daraio brings over 35 years of experience working in the field of youth development as a facilitator, trainer, and coach. She has experience training and coaching diverse audience groups, from afterschool practitioners and parents to funders and technical assistance providers. Prior to her work with Temescal Associates, Ren was the Deputy Director at the Community Network for Youth Development and a consultant for the Institute for Research and Reform in Education.

## ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

[Temescal Associates](#) is dedicated to building the capacity of leaders and organizations in education and youth development who organizations, and policy makers.

[The How Kids Learn Foundation](#) (HKLF) is a 501(c)(3) organization. It is dedicated to improving the effectiveness of settings that support the education and healthy development of youth. This includes schools and out-of-school time programs. The HKL Foundation provides educational and training activities that promote the capacity of organizations that support the education and healthy development of youth. Examples of activities include conferences, speaker forums, screenings of relevant films, training sessions, coaching sessions, the awarding of digital badges to acknowledge exemplar programs and the learning that happens within these settings. Activities also include the development and distribution of educational materials (papers, self-assessment tools, videos, program guides, etc.). You can see a [catalogue of the resources](#) we've produced for the afterschool field.

Cover Photo: [Lines for Life 2019- Always Hope](#)

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# YOUTH-LED EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS



Source: Afterschool Alliance

## INTRODUCTION

Young people have proven to be especially vulnerable to mental health issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. School closures, having to learn remotely, and isolating from friends due to physical distancing have been sources of stress and loneliness. While COVID learning loss in math and reading are of high concern, research about how students are doing mentally and emotionally since the coronavirus pandemic began indicates they are not doing well.

*“The global pandemic, even though it affected all of us, especially caused children and teenagers to be isolated from their peers for prolonged periods of time—and especially during these developmental periods that they showed the most intense need for interactions with peers.”* - [Sarah D. Sparks, Kids Are Feeling Isolated. P.E. May Help Them Bounce Back](#)

The concerns of youth declining mental health are not new. Nor is the shortage of mental health professional in our schools and communities. Both were issues before the pandemic and as a result of the pandemic these issues are of greater concern.

In this briefing paper we examine reasons to involve youth directly in efforts to address youth mental health, current youth-led efforts dedicated to improving youth mental health, interview two youth leaders working to improve the mental health of their peers, and offer resources if readers want to learn more.

## HOW TO USE THIS BRIEFING PAPER

This paper is designed to raise understanding and awareness of the youth mental health crisis and ways that afterschool programs can address these issues. It also provides resources for afterschool and organizational leaders. We recommend that program leaders share this paper with organizational leaders and program staff and consider the best ways to respond to the youth mental health crisis.

# WHY INVOLVE YOUTH DIRECTLY IN EFFORTS TO ADDRESS YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH



Source: Lines for Life 2019- Always Hope

The concerns of youth declining mental health are not new. Nor is the shortage of mental health professional in our schools and communities. Both were issues before the pandemic and as a result of the pandemic these issues are of greater concern.

Youth are clear- they want to be involved as part of the solution. There are several reasons to involve youth directly:

## **The Shortage of Adult Helpers.**

*“On average, there is only one school psychologist for every 1,200 students, far from the 1-to-500 ratio recommended by the National Association of School Psychologists. There are currently 427 school counselors for every student, but the American School Counselor Association recommends one per every 250 children.”*

And the need is clearly growing. For instance, YouthLine, a teen-to-teen youth crisis and support service, received roughly 1,400 contacts, many coming from in state of Oregon. But, by 2021, things had exploded, with almost 25,000 annual contacts from across the country.

*“This issue has intensified in a COVID world, where teens have lost access to school counselors and support systems. Their journey with mental illness or mental health concerns is made much harder, and they are struggling severely with few ways to feel better.” - [Youth Crisis Line Volunteer, Tales of a Teen Crisis Worker](#)*

## **Youth Are Effective**

Teens cope better with stress when they interact with their peers, rather than adults. Seven out of 10 youth say that when they are struggling with something, they are more likely to confide in a peer than a trusted adult.

*“We just have a much better perspective on what it's like to be a teenager today and the complexities that comes with and the strain that that can put on your mental health.” - [Fiona, Youth Line Volunteer](#)*

### **Youth Want to Be Part of The Solution**

*“Youth express a collective desire – they even demand – that adults involve them in creating a more responsive education system so that they can, as one student put it, ‘find our way back to loving learning.’” - [Youth Truth Survey](#)*

*“I wish the school did more to train and educate its students on how to identify ... warning signs of deteriorating mental health, abuse, self-harm, and violence within their peers - and respond appropriately and compassionately.” - [12th grade student](#)*

### **Youth Can Handle the Responsibility**

*“If you’re still uneasy about the idea of youth supporting other youth, I understand, but I challenge you to think of us not as kids thrown on a crisis line, but as trained specialists, adequately prepared and supported in doing life-changing (and at times, life-saving) work on both sides of the phone.” - [Youth Line Volunteer](#)*

*“I asked students, is this too much to take on? But I realized that they’re having these conversations with their peers on a daily basis. In the absence of formal training, they very much carry the weight on their shoulders that they have to fix their friends’ problems. If we’re not engaging them and giving them the right tools and training to engage in those conversations, we’re missing the boat.” - [Suzanna Davis, vice president of operations and programs, Grant Us Hope, and former high school principal](#)*

### **There Are Benefits Accrued by Youth Helpers**

*“Most nights I leave my shift feeling more energized than when I came. Sitting in that virtual space, talking to those most interesting and dynamic teens, clears my heart of a heavy day and wipes my head of the weight of the world. There is no feeling comparable to being a part of someone’s journey to self-love, self-acceptance, and healing, and I gain far much more from the teens I talk to than I could ever give.” - [Youth Crisis Line Volunteer, Tales of a Teen Crisis Worker](#)*

# YOUTH-LED EFFORTS DEDICATED TO IMPROVING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH



Source: [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)

Below we profile youth-led efforts dedicated to improving youth mental health. In some cases, we hear directly from involved youth leaders through interviews or videos.

## **Grant Us Hope**

According to their website, *Grant Us Hope* is a change agent for teen suicide prevention in the Greater Cincinnati region. They are passionate about providing a platform for teens, parents, and families to engage in pro-mental health conversations, activities, and solutions, and they're committed to expanding the availability, reach, and impact of mental health services for teens in distress. Grant Us Hope also implements a Hope Squad program, which they describe as “an evidence-based peer-to-peer suicide prevention program. This school-based initiative includes ongoing mental health/suicide prevention curriculum and empowers youth to apply the lessons using their own creativity”.

You can click on the image below to view a video and learn more about their youth-led efforts.



Source: Grant Us Hope- Hope Squad

## **Hope Squad**

According to [the Hope Squad National Council](#), the Hope Squad program is a school-based peer support team that partners with local mental health agencies. Hope Squads seek to reduce self-destructive behavior and youth suicide by training, building and creating change in schools and communities.



Peers select students who are trustworthy and caring individuals to join the Hope Squad. Squad members are trained to watch for at-risk students, provide friendship, identify suicide-warning signs, and seek help from adults. HOPE Squad members are NOT taught to act as counselors but are educated on recognizing suicide warning signs and how to properly and respectfully report concerns to an adult.

*"Some students won't get help because they're just afraid to ask for it," said Sofia, a senior at Davidson. But if a peer knows, and if their struggle is seen and heard, then they're able to say, OK, yes, I do need the help. And we can get them to go to an adult themselves." - [Students Train to Spot Peers with Mental Health Struggles and Guide Them](#)*

Click on the image below to view a video of statements by Hope Squad youth volunteers.



Source: 2022 Hope Squad National Conference

## **YouthLine**

YouthLine's website describes their program this way: "We are teens helping teens. YouthLine is a teen-to-teen youth crisis and support service provided by Lines for Life—a non-profit dedicated to preventing substance abuse and suicide. YouthLine operates a national helpline that provides crisis support and referrals via call, text, and chat. The YouthLine is answered by teen volunteers daily from 4pm-10pm PST (and by adults at all other times!). Translation services are available upon request. YouthLine also operates a peer-supported outreach program to destigmatize mental health challenges, increase awareness for mental health and wellness, and encourage youth to reach out for help. YouthLine's helpline and outreach programs are supported by our youth development program, which builds skills and confidence around mental health and wellness.

In the Portland YouthLine program each youth volunteer gets more than 60 hours of training, and master's level supervisors are constantly on standby in the room, listening in and reading along, ready at a moment's notice to step in if needed. The PBS News Hour recently toured the Portland YouthLine program. You can click on the image below to view their broadcast.



Source: PBS News Hour

### **Simply Wholehearted**

*Simply Wholehearted* is a non-profit organization providing leadership opportunities to historically excluded students in low-income communities, creating game-changers who live, lead, and inspire. Our goal and mission are to provide equal access leadership with no borders because we believe that leadership shouldn't be exclusive to specific communities. *Simply Wholehearted* was founded by Axel Perez. He was 18 when *Simply Wholehearted* was formally founded (15 if you count the first version created, which stems from his podcast).



Simply Wholehearted supports the youth mental health crisis by connecting them with extracurricular activities that can help boost their mental health and provide resources for organizations servicing mental health. In doing so, we have connected youth to soccer, dance, and student government opportunities. Additionally, *Simply Wholehearted* has hosted mental health workshops for middle and high school students during the summer in partnership with local school districts.

***“Youth can get involved by becoming advocates of change and mental health. It is vital that youth speak up and destigmatize mental health, but most importantly, amongst their peers. Sharing their stories and what has helped improve their mental health is a great start, as well as creating school-wide campaigns to recognize mental health and share resources with the school community. Reaching out to school staff, district services, and community organizations and collaboratively bringing them all together to create an awareness event creates an opportunity for youth leadership, especially when it’s student-run and organized.” - Axel Perez, Simply Wholehearted***

# A YOUTH LEADER SPEAKS OUT ON KINDNESS AND THE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS



Source: EduCare Foundation

Meet Axel Perez. He has been a youth leader and activist since he was 15 years old. He is now 20 and Co-Founder/ President of [Simply Wholehearted](#). Axel recently participated in a How Kids Learn Foundation webinar entitled [Promoting Kindness in Afterschool Programs](#) and will be featured in a future webinar on March 15, 2023 entitled, [Youth- Led Efforts to Improve Mental Health](#).

We interviewed Axel Perez about his non-profit, kindness and youth mental health and below are his responses.

**Q: Briefly, what is your story? How did you start?**

**A:** The idea of *Simply Wholehearted* was present way before it became the organization it is now. In my sophomore year of high school, at the age of fifteen, I started a podcast named “*This Teenage Life*,” where I discussed real-life issues teens experience as young adults. When I realized I wasn’t going to be a teen forever, I changed the route of my podcast, rebranded to “*Simply Axel*” and began talking about societal issues, like the separation of families at our borders. Running the podcast with this type of content, I didn’t feel as passionate as I wanted to be. At this point in my life, I had served my fourth year on Student Council (ASB) as Student Body President, Southern Regional Director for the California Association of Student Leaders. I found myself surrounded by leadership but lost when it came to my podcast, and that’s when it clicked! I should make leadership content.

After realizing I was passionate about leadership and had the experience, knowledge, and resources around me, I began sharing my vision and working alongside outstanding individuals to create leadership development curricula and activities. This focus on leadership led us to “*Simply Wholehearted*”. *Simply Wholehearted* wouldn’t have come to life without the support of Magaly Barajas and the [EduCare Foundation](#) team.

At this point, “*Simply Wholehearted*” became a leadership organization. Leadership groups in our community struggle to afford leadership development services that other privileged groups get to attend or receive benefits from, which is why I made it my goal to offer these services to historically excluded students. Since then, we have served over two thousand students for free through several workshops, private training, and leadership curriculum. Our podcast offers topics on leadership with a supplementary worksheet for students to tag along, and our program, *Empower Wholehearted*, provides a groundbreaking curriculum, interactive activities, and wholehearted connections that will leave teams empowered and expand their reach and impact.

**Q: Can you describe your Foundation, *Simply Wholehearted*?**

**A:** *Simply Wholehearted* is a non-profit organization providing leadership opportunities to historically excluded students in low-income communities, creating game-changers who live, lead, and inspire. Our goal and mission are to provide equal access leadership with no borders because we believe that leadership shouldn’t be exclusive to specific communities.

*Simply Wholehearted* was founded based on my experience with leadership in high school. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to get involved with several organizations, but my peers did not have the same opportunities. After realizing communities like mine were not receiving leadership development, curriculum, conferences, or leadership opportunities, I decided to change that factor and give back to my community in a way that would create a generational impact.

**Q: It seems we live in a time in which meanness is in vogue. Do you agree with this? And why do you think this is so?**

**A:** I agree that we are living in a time with high stakes regarding hate, meanness, and pain. I believe this is due to the political, racial, and gender divide that our country is facing. We have forgotten that we are all human and have emotions underneath our beliefs. During the beginning stages of COVID, we learned how to become compassionate and empathetic as we were all experiencing the same emotions. However, as COVID became prolonged and we began to go back to our everyday lives, we forgot how to be compassionate. We no longer made an importance to be kind and understanding towards others.

**Q: What can we do in afterschool to prevent meanness?**

**A:** Afterschool enrichment is vital to students. An essential factor that afterschool programs should focus on is ensuring their programs offer students a life-learning skill as a takeaway. Along with enrichment, teaching students skills like leadership, integrity, compassion, and gratitude will help improve not only the lives and characters of these students but the culture and climate of your campus and community.





Source: Simply Wholehearted

**Q: What mental health changes have you seen in youth due to COVID?**

**A:** Post-pandemic, we saw the youth struggle with several mental health issues. For youth, it is vital for them to interact with peers and society, as well as explore their surroundings and challenge their abilities. None of this was possible during the pandemic, and still, to this day, we find restrictions with the acknowledgment that COVID is still around. This is how the youth became impacted.

Mental health challenges I continue to see in our youth due to COVID-19 are physical insecurities, anti-social tendencies, anxiety, depression, and many others. These challenges presented themselves as we were stuck at home with no social interaction and living our lives behind the screens of our devices. The lasting effects are some that we are still dealing with today and are challenged to overcome.

**Q: How can youth be involved in improving the mental health of their peers? How does this interact with youth leadership?**

**A:** Youth can get involved by becoming advocates of change and mental health. It is vital that youth speak up and destigmatize mental health, but most importantly, amongst their peers. Sharing their stories and what has helped improve their mental health is a great start, as well as creating school-wide campaigns to recognize mental health and share resources with the school community. Reaching out to school staff, district services, and community organizations and collaboratively bringing them all together to create an awareness event creates an opportunity for youth leadership, especially when it's student-run and organized.

## MORE ABOUT...



**Axel Perez**, 20 years old, is the co-founder and president of Simply Wholehearted, an Expanded Learning Program Lead for EduCare Foundation and educator from Lynwood (CA) who is dedicated to helping students receive equal opportunities in leadership. Axel, a former participant of EduCare programs, now advocates for the important impact afterschool makes on youth. Axel is an inspiring organizer, activist, and creative leader committed to make sure leadership has no borders. He is also the host of SIMPLY AXEL a podcast, an event series and a community that connects and empowers through a personal journey. He is the founder of EMPOWER, a movement created to empower others through kindness and other ways. Axel is a natural-born leader that believes in inspiring those to seek self-discovery.

# A YOUTH LEADER SPEAKS OUT ON A YOUTH-LED MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE



Source: Sofia Mendoza

Since the return of young people to school and afterschool programs after the COVID shutdowns, there have been major concerns raised by educators and youth workers regarding youth mental health, the increase of challenging behavior and a decrease in acts of kindness shown to peers. Youth are not blind to these issues and want to be part of the solution.

In this vein, meet Sofia Mendoza, a freshman at Purdue University. When she was a senior at Hilliard Davidson High School, she served as a peer-to-peer counselor in the Hope Squad program. Hope squad is a school-based peer support team that partners with local mental health agencies. They seek to reduce self-destructive behavior and youth suicide by training, building and creating change in schools and communities.

Below is an interview with Sofia Mendoza about her experiences as a Hope Squad peer counselor. She is also a featured speaker in an upcoming webinar entitled, [Youth-Led Efforts to Improve Mental Health](#).

## Q: Why did you join the HOPE Squad?

A: During my freshman year of high school, I was selected to be a HOPE Squad member as the selection process was based on peer-to-peer nominations. I accepted my role because I did not know what HOPE Squad would look like at my school, but I knew that breaking the stigma around mental health was something I wanted to be a part of.



Source: HOPE Squad

## Q: How were you prepared for this role?

A: As a HOPE Squad member, we all received instruction on how to Question, Persuade, and Refer our peers, better known as QPR training. We learned about the warning signs of suicide, practiced mock

conversations with students, and learned about all the resources students can utilize to find professional help regardless of whether or not the student is in crisis.

**Q: Many people say that youth are not able to handle the responsibility of a peer counselor. Please comment on this.**

**A:** The situations that youth must deal with nowadays can be very challenging to navigate and especially mentally draining. Even if a student isn't a peer counselor, they are already helping their peers through these difficult times.

HOPE Squad equips students with a toolbox to navigate these tough conversations. I would also say that as a peer counselor, we focus our efforts on referring students to the correct resources. We are not expected to solve a student's issues, what we are responsible for is recognizing when students are showing signs of suicide and providing them the support to find the resources best for them. Especially with programming such as HOPE Squad, students work hand in hand with their guidance counselors. This relationship is critical because the student does not have the sole responsibility of ensuring their peer gets help, these counselors are here to support as well.



**Q: Why do you think this peer approach is important?**

**A:** Unfortunately, there are many students who do not have strong support systems to lean on when going through difficult times.

Often when students do have these support systems, they would rather lean on their peers anyways because they do not want to burden their parents and mentors, or they simply may feel

uncomfortable talking about their mental struggles. This is where their peers come in because the trust and confidence built between friendships is like no other. Because of these relationships, peers can notice these mental struggles earlier and have the ability to intervene. We must equip youth with the tools to listen and adequately respond when they believe their friends are in crisis. This is why this approach works because speaking about personal struggles comes much easier than discussing these issues with adults.

**Q: What impact did serving as a peer counselor have on you?**

**A:** I have gained a new awareness when interacting with people and I feel this experience has increased my emotional intelligence. I do my best to spread positivity each and every day by recognizing that the interactions I have with people can have a huge impact on their lives.

**Q: Can you define "kindness"?**

**A:** To me, kindness means being emotionally aware of others and offering continuous support to those around you. Kindness can be shown from little things such as saying thank you, holding the door for others, or even complimenting someone. It can also be exemplified through larger things such as assisting someone through difficult times.

**Q: In your experience, what was the impact of the covid pandemic on young people?**

**A:** The little good that did come from COVID was that the pandemic highlighted the importance of self-care practices. Many students went from rigorous schoolwork and busy lifestyles to immediate isolation. This shift illustrated that it is okay to take breaks and not force students to stretch themselves thin.

Additionally, many young people’s lives changed by the pandemic whether their financial, family, or physical situations had changed. These unforeseen circumstances shifted many people’s views on what they truly value in life.

**Q: Did you find that self-care was important in your role? Can you say more about this?**

**A:** You cannot fully help people when you are not meeting your own needs. Even before joining HOPE Squad I had struggled with this because I enjoyed giving and helping people even when I could not give anymore. Once I was in this role, I found that our curriculum had equally emphasized the importance of self-care, and I even learned about new activities I could try to decompress. I have found that self-care is one of the most important things you could do in order to recharge your social, emotional, and physical batteries.

**Q: If schools and youth programs want to learn more about youth led peer counseling, who could they contact or what resources would you recommend?**

**A:** I would recommend schools and youth programs to look into starting a HOPE Squad. This organization has done a good job developing a curriculum for students to follow in order to begin breaking the stigma around mental health. If this opportunity is not an option, an alternative could be hosting educational events centered around mental health by consulting mental health experts in the area. Anything that involves talking about mental struggles and acknowledging that everyone deals with these issues whether big or small, is one step closer to normalizing discussing mental health.

Additionally, I would also recommend having all faculty to be Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) certified, sponsored by a Youth Suicide Prevention organization, as this is one of the most important educational tools I have been taught. As a society, I think it is important to be able to recognize the warning signs of suicide because this information alone can save lives if we correctly respond to these signs.

Click the image below to hear an interview with Sofia when she was named “A Rising Star.”



**MORE ABOUT...**

**Sofia Mendoza** is a freshman in First-Year Engineering at Purdue University. She serves as the project manager for the Women in Engineering section of the Engineering Projects in Community Service initiative at Purdue, as well as a multi-faceted dancer for *XSeries* and the *Purdue Contemporary Dance Company*. Along with her passion for STEM and dance, she has an extensive history with advocating for mental health as a past member of HOPE Squad, a peer-to-peer suicide prevention program.

## KEY TAKE AWAYS

Young people have proven to be especially vulnerable to mental health issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. School closures, having to learn remotely, and isolating from friends due to physical distancing have been sources of stress and loneliness.

Below are some key take aways from this paper:

- The concerns of youth declining mental health are not new. Nor is the shortage of mental health professional in our schools and communities. Both were issues before the pandemic and as a result of the pandemic these issues are of greater concern.
- Promoting the mental health of and self-care practices by youth is the responsibility of provider organizations and program leaders. These things require the building of awareness, knowledge, and program planning through training, facilitation, discussions and program improvement planning.
- There are many reasons to involve youth directly: the shortage of adult helpers, youth are very effective, youth want to be part of the solution, youth can handle the responsibility, there are many benefits accrued by youth helpers
- There are many organizations that provide models, literature, training and technical assistance on how to address the youth mental health crisis.



***We want to hear from you!*** What types of youth-led initiatives are you using to promote the mental health of youth participants in your program? Would you add any additional resources that would be valuable to afterschool stakeholders? Email us at [info@temescalassociates.com](mailto:info@temescalassociates.com).

# LEARN MORE

There is an abundance of information on youth mental health, prevention, and youth-led mental health initiatives. In addition to the links cited above in this paper, below are some additional websites and resources on the topics discussed.

## MENTAL HEALTH

- [Shaping Minds: The Mental Health Benefits of After-School Programs](#)
- [5 Things We Learned About Student Mental Health in 2022](#)
- [Supporting and Promoting Mental Health in Out-of-School Time](#)
- [Sports Coaches Want More Training on How to Address Young Athletes' Mental Health](#)
- [K-12 Mental Health & Psychopathology Toolkit](#)
- [Spotlight on Student Mental Health](#)
- [2022 Mental Health By the Numbers](#)
- [4 ways to ensure your school's mental health initiatives support transgender students](#)
- [SUCCESS STORY: A District Fought Student Anxiety — and Won!](#)

## BULLYING

- [Preventing And Tackling Bullying](#)
- [Standing on the Edge: How School Leaders Apply Restorative Practices in Response to Cyberbullying and Online Aggression](#)
- [11 Facts About Bullying Everyone Should Know](#)

## SELF-CARE FOR YOUTH

- [9 Steps to Taking Care of Yourself](#)
- [11 Self-Care Tips for Teens and Young Adults](#)
- [Self-Care](#)
- [80+ Self-Care Activities for Teens](#)

## YOUTH SUICIDE

- [Addressing the Rise in Youth Suicide](#)
- [Suicide Prevention](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)
- [Youth & Teen Suicide Prevention & Awareness Training](#)

## YOUTH-LED EFFORTS TO IMPROVE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

- [Peer Counseling May Reach Teens in Ways That Adults Can't](#)
- [Grant Us Hope](#)
- [Hope Squad](#)
- [YouthLine](#)
- [Simply Wholehearted](#)

## SPEAKER'S FORUMS/ TRAINING WEBINARS

Temescal Associates and The How Kids Learn Foundation have recently sponsored webinars on the topic of kindness and youth mental health. We invite you to view these presentations by clicking on the image below.



### **How Afterschool Programs Can Respond to the Youth Mental Health Crisis**

This webinar offers a deep dive into the issue of youth mental health (stress, trauma, anxiety and depression) and how best to respond to this in afterschool programs. This webinar features developmental psychologist, Dr. Gil Noam, Associate Professor at Harvard Medical School and founder of Partnerships in Education and Resilience (PEAR). Dr. Noam discusses how these issues manifest, who we

should involve if we have concerns, and what strategies we can use in afterschool to help alleviate these issues.



### **Managing Challenging Behavior in Afterschool**

This webinar focuses on managing challenging behavior, supporting kids who struggle, finding your footing (spot) when the behavior of certain kids (or parents!) pushes your buttons. Our featured presenter is family therapist, school consultant and parenting expert, Sheri Glucoft Wong, LCSW. We also hear from a panel of afterschool leaders, Autrilla Gillis (ISANA Academies) and Ludecea Nunis, MSW, ASW (YMCA Urban Services Bureau), and open up the rest

of the time for comments and questions of the registrants.



### **Promoting Kindness in Afterschool Programs**

This interactive webinar will focus on strategies of how we can promote kindness in our afterschool programs. Our featured presenter is Stu Semigran, Co- Founder and President of The EduCare Foundation. He just authored a book entitled, *Heartset Education: A Way of Living and Learning*. Following his presentation, registrants share their strategies and ask questions.



### **Youth-Led Efforts to Improve Mental Health**

This webinar will feature youth leaders who have worked to improve youth mental health and are associated with Simply Wholehearted and Hope Squad (providing peer-to-peer mental health support). We will hear their perspectives and from a school official on the importance of engaging youth in mental health initiatives. Our speakers will share their programs they are involved with, direct participants to resources, and answer any questions.

Participants will also be encouraged to share strategies they are using to improve youth mental health.