

WE ARE AWARE

The Latest from Colorado Project AWARE

In this issue

Tips for Talking with Students About Conflict in Ukraine

Supporting Students Who Are Transgender in School Mental Health

Behavioral Health Administration Updates

Shared Risk + Protective Factors Conference

In every issue

CO Educator Supports Opportunities

Evaluate Your Life: News from Amy

Upcoming Professional Development

Worth a Listen (Podcast or Webinar)

Tribal Suicide Prevention Funding Opportunity!

The purpose of this program is to support implementing youth suicide prevention and early intervention strategies in schools, institutions of higher education, educational institutions, juvenile justice systems, substance use and mental health programs, foster care systems, and other child and youth-serving organizations.



[Click Here to Learn More](#)

10 Tips for Talking with Students About Conflict in Ukraine

UNICEF KidPower

When an escalating conflict like the current situation in Ukraine makes the headlines, it can cause feelings of fear, sadness, anger, and anxiety both at home and in the classroom. Students look to trusted adults for a sense of safety and security – even more so in times of crisis — which is why we’re sharing some important tips for talking to your students about the current conflict (although these tips are relevant to any conflict).

1. Find out what students know, feel, and validate feelings.

Choose a time where the topic might come up naturally, like a morning meeting or specific discussion time - avoid transitions or the end of the day. Be open to verbal and non-verbal communication from students allowing them to share as much or as little as they are comfortable. Normalize their reactions and give reassurance as much as possible.

2. Keep it calm and age appropriate.

Adults have a responsibility to keep students safe from distress. It's normal if you're feeling sad or worried, but keep in mind young people take their emotional cues from adults. With younger students you may decide to steer clear of the word 'war' and instead use language like 'increasing conflict'.

3. Focus on the positive.

It's ok to not have the answer to every question. You can use the unknown as an opportunity to look up information from organizations like the UN. When you can try to focus on stories of hope highlighting every day heroes, or brainstorm solutions for ending the crisis.

4. Focus on the helpers.

There are lots of people working hard around the world to stop the conflict and find peace. Focus on the young people calling for peace - as they will help your students feel connected in a positive way. UNICEF kid power videos also directly impact help provided in Ukraine. The free videos are available here.

5. Spread compassion, not stigma.

Remind students that conflict can often result in prejudice and discrimination. Every one deserves to feel safe at school and in society, and we should be supportive and kind - especially during times like these.

6. Close conversations with care.

Reinforce messages about hope, courage and care. Remind your students you are available to listen and support them in all the ways available to you.

7. Continue to check in.

Reinforce messages about hope, courage and care. Remind your students you are available to listen and support them in all the ways available to you.

8. Provide stress reducing activities.

After closing the conversation with care try implementing a mindfulness exercise like deep breathing or a grounding exercise naming 4 things you see, 3 things you hear, 2 things you feel (tactile), and 1 thing you can taste.

9. Team up with caregivers.

Reach out to families if a student is showing significant distress.

10. Take care of yourself.

If you're feeling upset or anxious take time to reach out to trusted colleagues, family, or friends. It's important to do your own processing of this information and implement stress relieving strategies.



Supporting Students Who Are Transgender in School Mental Health

Transgender students may be experiencing undue stress and lack of felt safety due to the legislative changes impacting school communities throughout the country. Click [here](#) to view a memo from the National Center for School Mental Health for ways to support students.



Colorado Department of Human Services News

CDHS Celebrates Behavioral Health Care Transformation with HB22-1278

Lt. Governor Dianne Primavera and the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) held a press conference earlier today alongside other partners to announce the introduction of HB22-1278. The bill assigns specific duties to the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), ensuring Coloradans can access behavioral health care regardless of where they live in the state or their ability to pay. The BHA will establish a people-first system that is accountable, equitable and transparent. Including: Universal standards for accessibility and quality of care; A behavioral health performance monitoring system; A comprehensive behavioral health safety net system; Regionally-based behavioral health administrative service organizations to ensure every region in Colorado has accessible and high quality services; and A statewide behavioral health grievance system. Read more [here](#).

TIP Colorado Initiative

In January, CDHS were excited to help launch the [Tip Colorado Initiative](#), which helps children grow up happy, healthy and safe in communities that prevent children from experiencing sexual abuse. If enough adults in a community take the [interactive online training](#), then, together, we can create a new standard of child safety in your community and throughout Colorado.



Dr. Medlock's State Tour Continues

Behavioral Health Commissioner Dr. Medlock is continuing her statewide tour to better understand the behavioral health needs of Coloradans. [Two weeks ago](#) she met with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe to discuss creating a culture of inclusion, and visited the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Fort Logan where she saw firsthand the dedication of direct care staff to put people first. [The first week of March](#) she met w/ the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition and Denver Indian Health and Family Services to discuss improving equity and empowerment for individuals with disabilities and Native populations. Follow us on [social media](#) as she shares more from the road.

Colorado Educator Supports

NEW! [Administrator's Corner!](#)

- Learn about tools you can use in your leadership role.
- Develop techniques for stress management and emotional regulation specific to building level administrators.



Department of Psychiatry

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

COLORADOEDUCATORSUPPORT.COM

Evaluate Your Life: News from Amy

We will be spending time in our April LEA Manager's Support Call on April 1st to explore the current AWARE Evaluation and Reimagine and Strengthen it together.

Shared Risk + Protective Factors Conference

Kyle and Morgan will be attending the 2022 [Shared Risk and Protective Factors Conference](#) in Keystone CO June 1st through 3rd. The Conference attracts adults and young people from across Colorado actively engaged in upstream or primary prevention efforts at the state and local level. This event aims to strengthen collaboration efforts across organizations and funders; build skills to enhance implementation of evidence-based prevention practices, policies, and programs; and highlight successful efforts of community-led coalitions.



Upcoming Professional Development

- 3/24 Intricate Roots Foundations 4 (Rescheduled)
- 3/24 [Psychological First Aid During COVID](#) hosted by American Indian Alaskan Native MHTTC
- 3/30 [Medicaid + School Mental Health](#)
- 4/13 Panorama PLC Call
- 4/25 [MHTTC Trauma Responsive Practices](#) (Travel)
- 6/1 [Well-Being Retreat In Person!](#)



Click Here to access the AWARE Workforce Development Document

Worth a Listen

Developing Appropriate Expectations
[Click Here](#)



If you'd like to submit something you think is worth a listen or want to highlight something happening in your LEA in upcoming editions email [Morgan](#).

