AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

APPLYING PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE: BUILDING POPULATION HEALTH SUPPORTS TO IMPROVE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

(OCT. 22, 2026)

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Youth mental health is not just a school issue or a clinical issue, it is a systems issue. Rising rates of distress among young people, combined with educator strain and uneven access to support, reflect the need for a more coordinated way of working across education, health, and community settings.

This APA webinar will bring together a range of voices to explore what that coordination actually looks like in practice. Panelists will share how youth, psychologists, educators, families, and community partners can work together to create more connected and responsive supports. The focus will be on what helps systems function better, how early signals are recognized and acted on, and how well-being can be supported in ways that feel real and sustainable in daily school life.

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed by the presenters in this webinar do not necessarily reflect the views, policies or positions of the American Psychological Association.

RELATED RESOURCES

American Psychological Association. (2025). *Youth mental health and well-being in pre-K to 12 schools and education*. https://www.apa.org/ed/schools/youth-mental-health

Duagi, D., Carter, B., Farrelly, M., Lisk, S., Shearer, J., Byford, S., James, K., & Brown, J. S. L. (2024). Long-term effects of psychosocial interventions for adolescents on depression and anxiety: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *EClinicalMedicine*, *68*, 102382. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2023.102382

Evans, A. C., Jr. (2024). Embracing a population health approach to improving youth mental health. *Monitor on Psychology*, 55(6)

Fernandes, C.-S. F., Giannattasio, F., & Greene, S. (2026). Partnering with young people to address the mental health crisis: From research to action. *Health Psychology, 45*(9), 907–910. https://doi.org/10.1037/hea0001625

Garber, J., Clarke, G. N., Weersing, V. R., Beardslee, W. R., Brent, D. A., Gladstone, T. R. G., DeBar, L. L., Lynch, F. L., Iyengar, S., Porta, G., & McCauley, E. (2009). Prevention of depression in at-risk adolescents: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 301*(21), 2215-2224. https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2009.78

Hughes, T. L., Hess, R., Jones, J., & Worrell, F. C. (2020). From traditional practice to tiered comprehensive services for all: Developing a responsive school culture for the future. *School Psychology, 35*(6), 428–439. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000410

Raniti, M., Rakesh, D., Patton, G. C., & Sawyer, S. M. (2022). The role of school connectedness in the prevention of youth depression and anxiety: A systematic review with youth consultation. *BMC Public Health, 22*, 2152. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-14364-6

Renninger, K. A., Barton, L. K., Bautista, G., Garcia-Barrios, M., Ogunyinka, I., & Riley, K. R. (2026). Interest, self-efficacy, and belonging in classroom learning. *Educational Psychology Review, 38*(1), Article 18. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-025-10102-7

Whitaker, K., Liu, F. F., Buntain-Ricklefs, J. J., et al. (2026). Twenty years in the making: Government, university, and community partnership to advance school mental health. *Prevention Science*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-026-01979-z

American Psychological Association Population Health Summit
In September 2023, APA organized a Population Health Science Summit to discuss an expanded approach to better ensure the psychological well-being of all. Access summit materials, an executive summary, flash talks, and related resources at https://www.apa.org/science/programs/population-health-science-summit.

Born This Way Foundation
Born This Way Foundation, co-founded and led by Lady Gaga and her mother, Cynthia Bissett Germanotta, empowers and inspires young people to build a kinder, braver world that supports their mental health and wellbeing. Based on the scientific link between kindness and mental health and built in partnership with young people, the Foundation leverages research, programs, grantmaking, and partnerships to engage young people and connect them with accessible mental health resources. Learn more and access resources at https://bornthisway.foundation/.

Harvard University Center on the Developing Child
The mission of the Center on the Developing Child is to leverage the power of science in pursuit of better, more equitable outcomes for young children facing adversity. Learn more and access resources at https://developingchild.harvard.edu/.

Hopelab
Hopelab's mission is to advance the mental health and well-being of young people through uncovering knowledge and evidence, investing in innovators, and funding youth solutions. Learn more and access resources at https://hopelab.org/.

The JED Foundation
The Jed Foundation (JED) is a nonprofit that strives to protect emotional health and prevent suicide for teens and young adults, giving them skills and support. Learn more about JED and access resources at https://jedfoundation.org/.

Making Caring Common
Making Caring Common, a program of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, works to create a better and more just world by supporting educators, parents, and caregivers in raising children, teens and young adults who care for others and the common good. Learn more and access resources at https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/.

National Education Association
The National Education Association (NEA) is more than 3 million people—educators, students, activists, workers, parents, neighbors, friends—who believe in opportunity for all students and in the power of public education to transform lives and create a more just and inclusive society. Access a resource library and more at nea.org.