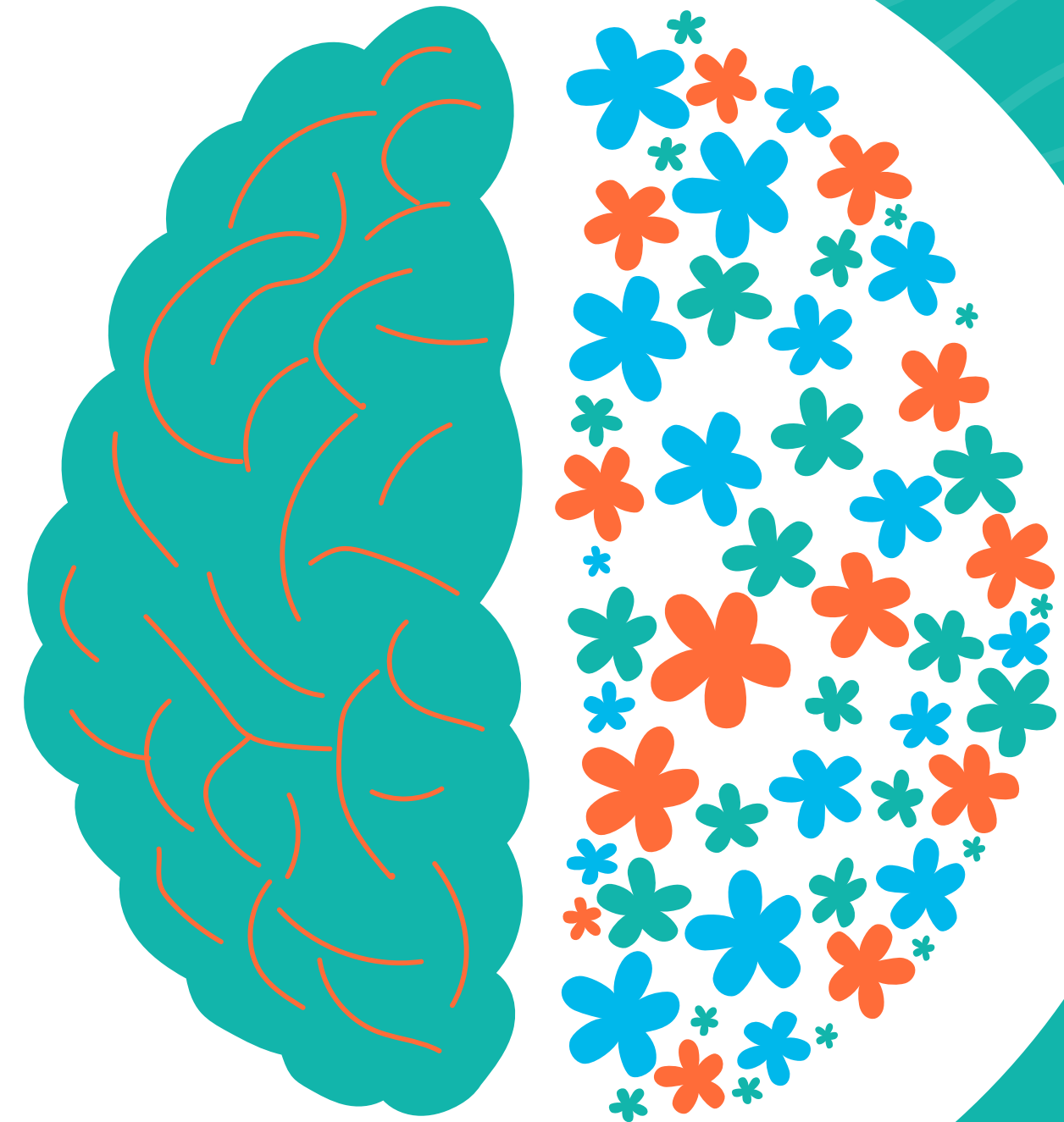




Tier 1 – Universal Mental Health Promotion

AWARE HARRIS PROJECT

***“BREAKING THE STIGMA AND
PROMOTING WELL-BEING”***



HARRIS COUNTY
Resources
FOR **Children**
AND **Adults**

About Us

✿ Harris County Resources for Children and Adults

A department of Harris County, our mission is to support, enhance and advocate for the safety and well-being of children and adults in Harris County.

✿ Youth Services Division

We offer services to youth and families experiencing crises, and our goal is to prevent systems involvement (both child welfare and juvenile justice) by providing supports and services.

- 24/7 Family Support Hotline
- Youth Shelter (respite) for Family/Child Conflict & DFPS.
- Diversion Services through Court Liaisons and Wraparound Case Managers at all JP Courts in Harris County.
- Harris County's Community Resource Coordination Group (CRCG)
- OOG's Harris County Care Coordinator for Child Sex Trafficking
- Mental health services & psychological evaluations

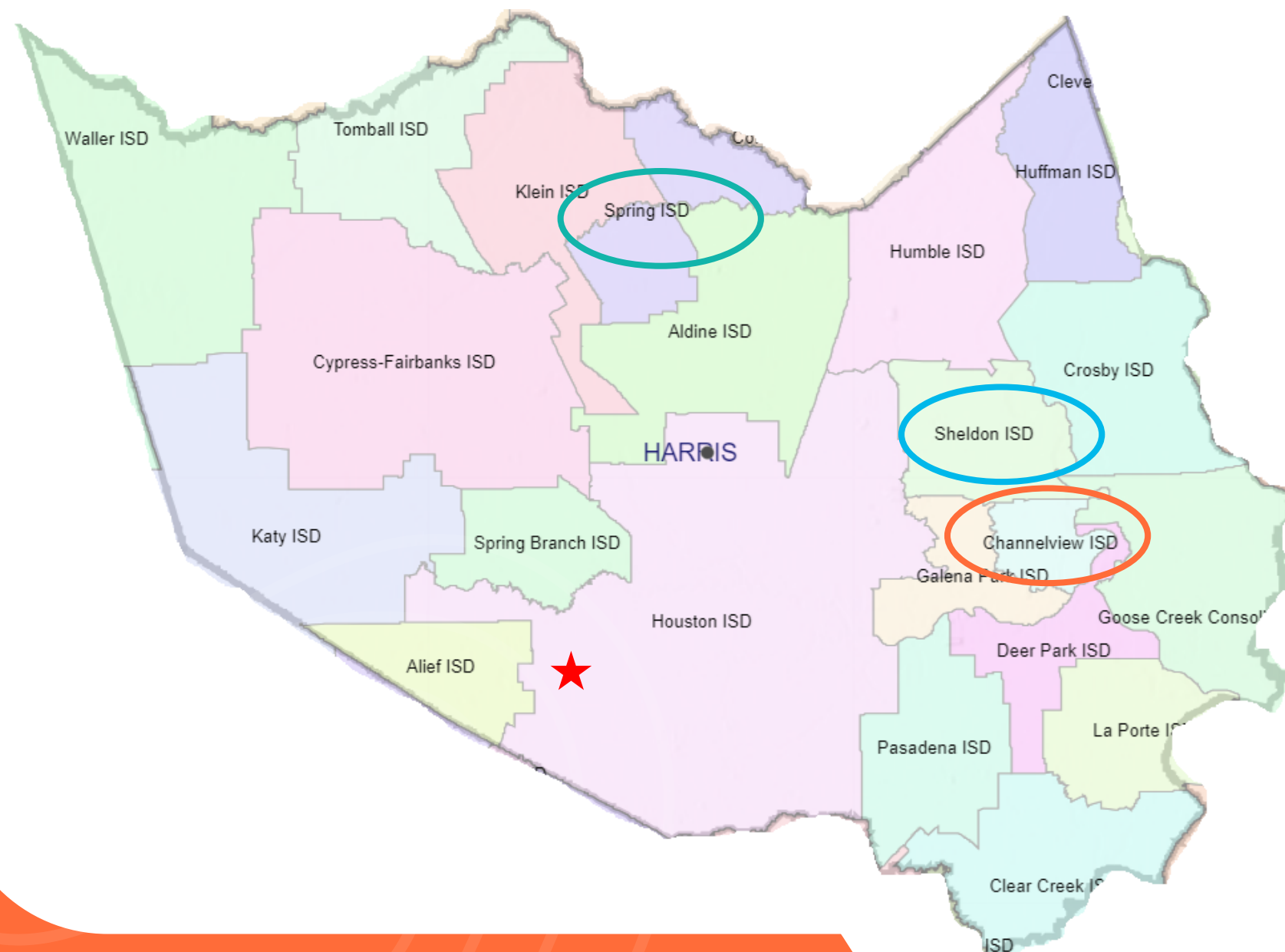
✿ Community Youth Services (CYS)

CYS is a school-based crisis intervention and case coordination program offered in 14 school districts and in the community. It aims to prevent youth from becoming victims of child abuse, running away, dropping out of school or entering into delinquent behavior.



AWARE HARRIS

The AWARE Harris project services 3 high need school districts to address social emotional, behavioral and mental health needs.



CHANNELVIEW ISD

Channelview ISD is on the eastside of Houston serving over 9,000 students within 12 schools with a primarily Hispanic population.

SHELDON ISD

Sheldon ISD is on the eastside of Houston, serving over 11,000 students within 13 schools with a diverse population that is predominantly Hispanic.

SPRING ISD

Spring ISD is on the north side of Houston, serving over 34,000 students across 43 schools. The district has a diverse student population, with Hispanic students comprising the majority, followed by Black students.

AWARE Harris Tier 1 Universal Mental Health Strategies



**Mental Health
Awareness/
Promotion
Activities**



**Mental Health
Literacy
Activities**



**Universal
Screening**



**Additional
Activities**

AWARE Harris Accomplishments

- AWARE Wednesdays
- Lunch & Learn Presentations to students.
(Suicide Prevention)
- Suicide Prevention Walks
- Promoting "Employee Assistant Program
(EAP)" for school professionals
- Drive-by events
- Back to School activities
- Red Ribbon Week activities
- Wellness Wednesdays
- Testing Support Bookmarks



Mental Health Promotion

Key Strategies

- Integrate mental health outreach into established school and community events to maximize engagement.
- Create opportunities for students and school staff to experience positive emotions.
- Identify times or settings that tend to cause stress for students, and adapt interactions or activities to increase comfort and enjoyment.



AWARE WEDNESDAY Search



All

Images

Videos



🔍 Tips to Improve Mental Health

- ✓ Talk to a trusted adult
- ✓ Smile and have fun
- ✓ Remember you are special
- ✓ 15 Minutes daily journaling
- ✓ Call your school counselor or mental health professional

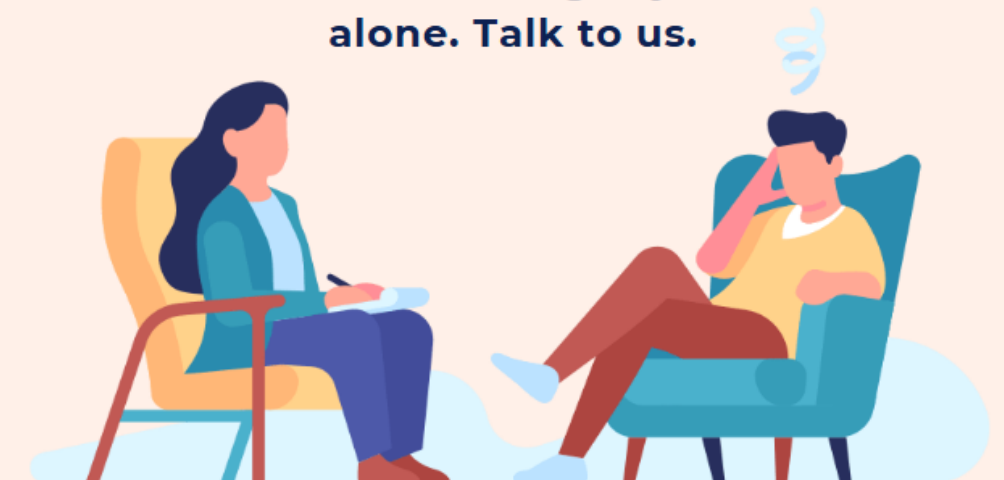
SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE ON YOUR CAMPUS

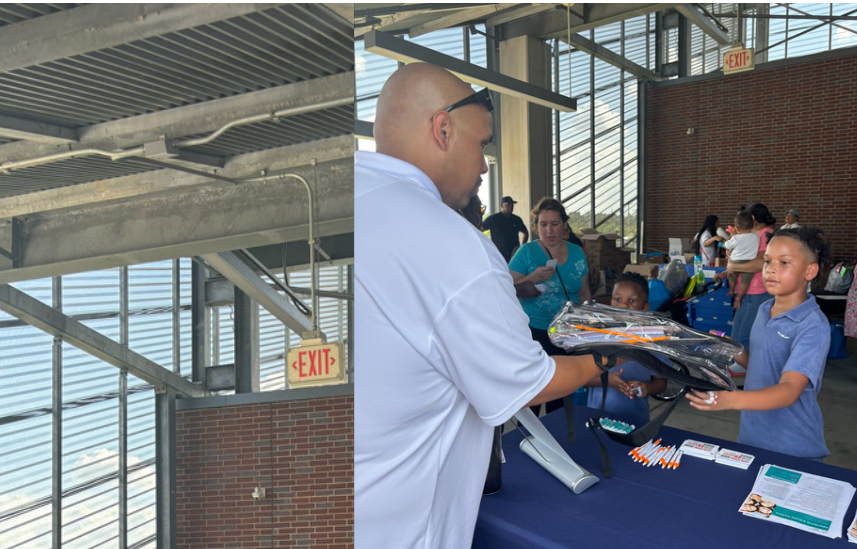
AWARE HARRIS PROJECT



IT'S OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP

You don't have to fight your battle
alone. Talk to us.





LIFE CAN GET DIFFICULT SOMETIMES.

YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) CAN PROVIDE A HELPING HAND.

Scan for more information 

EAP SERVICES ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND CAN HELP WITH

- DEPRESSION, GRIEF, LOSS AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING
- FAMILY, MARITAL AND OTHER RELATIONSHIP ISSUES
- LIFE IMPROVEMENT AND GOAL-SETTING
- ADDICTIONS, SUCH AS ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE
- STRESS OR ANXIETY WITH WORK OR FAMILY
- FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONCERNS
- IDENTITY THEFT AND FRAUD RESOLUTION
- ONLINE WILL PREPARATION AND OTHER LEGAL DOCUMENTS

CONTACT EAP
24 hours a day
seven days a week
888-293-6943
(TTY Services: 711)
healthadvocate.com/standard



AWARE Harris Project
spring ISD
Harris County Resources for Children and Adults



"Mind full of facts, not fear!"

DON'T STRESS THE TEST.
You're smarter than your jitters!

Follow these tips to stay calm on test day



Get enough sleep the night before.

Drink plenty of water before and during your test.

Slow down. Read the instructions carefully.

Encourage yourself with your words and thoughts.

Take deep and slow breaths if you start to feel nervous.



Mental Health Literacy

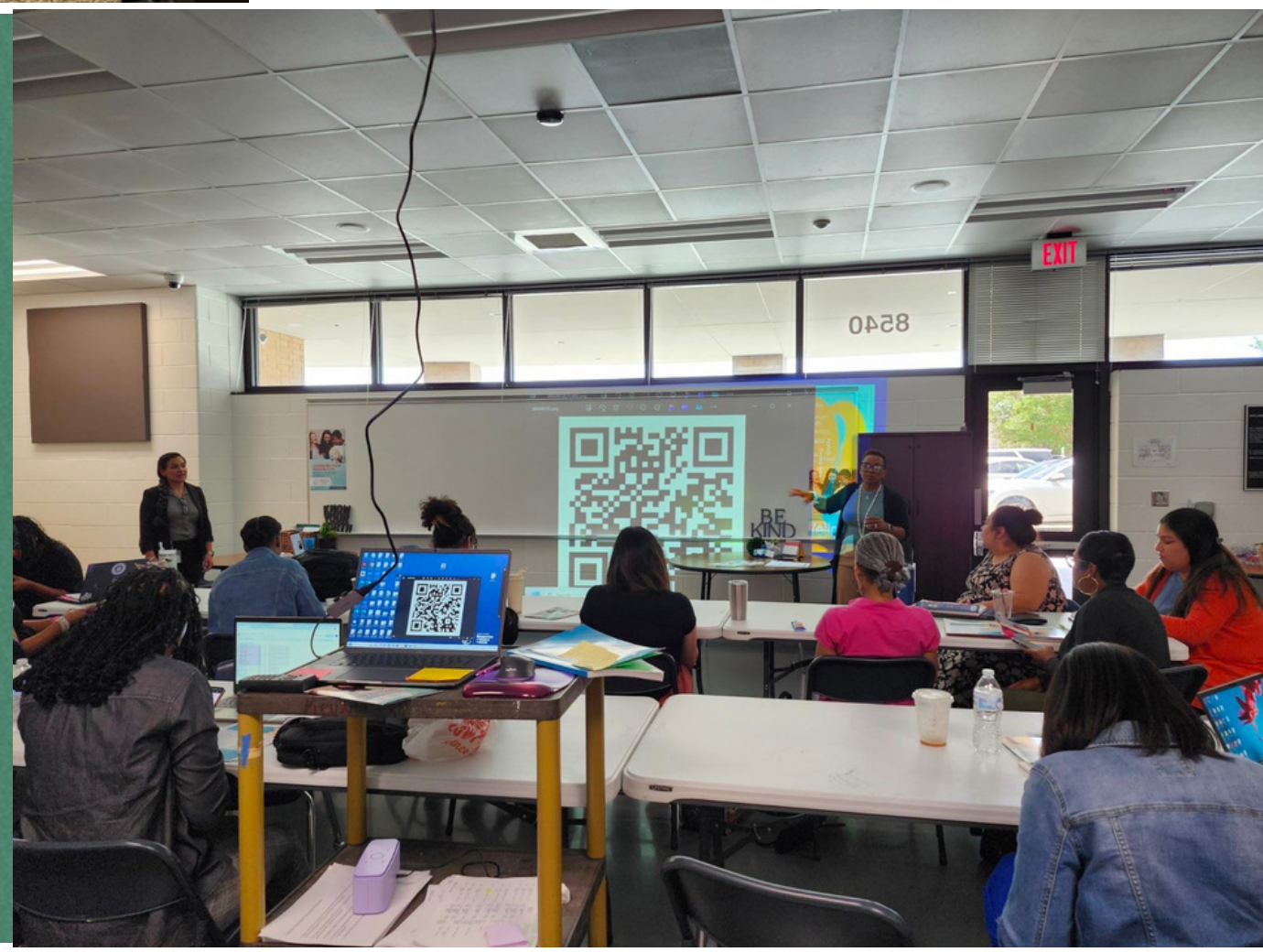
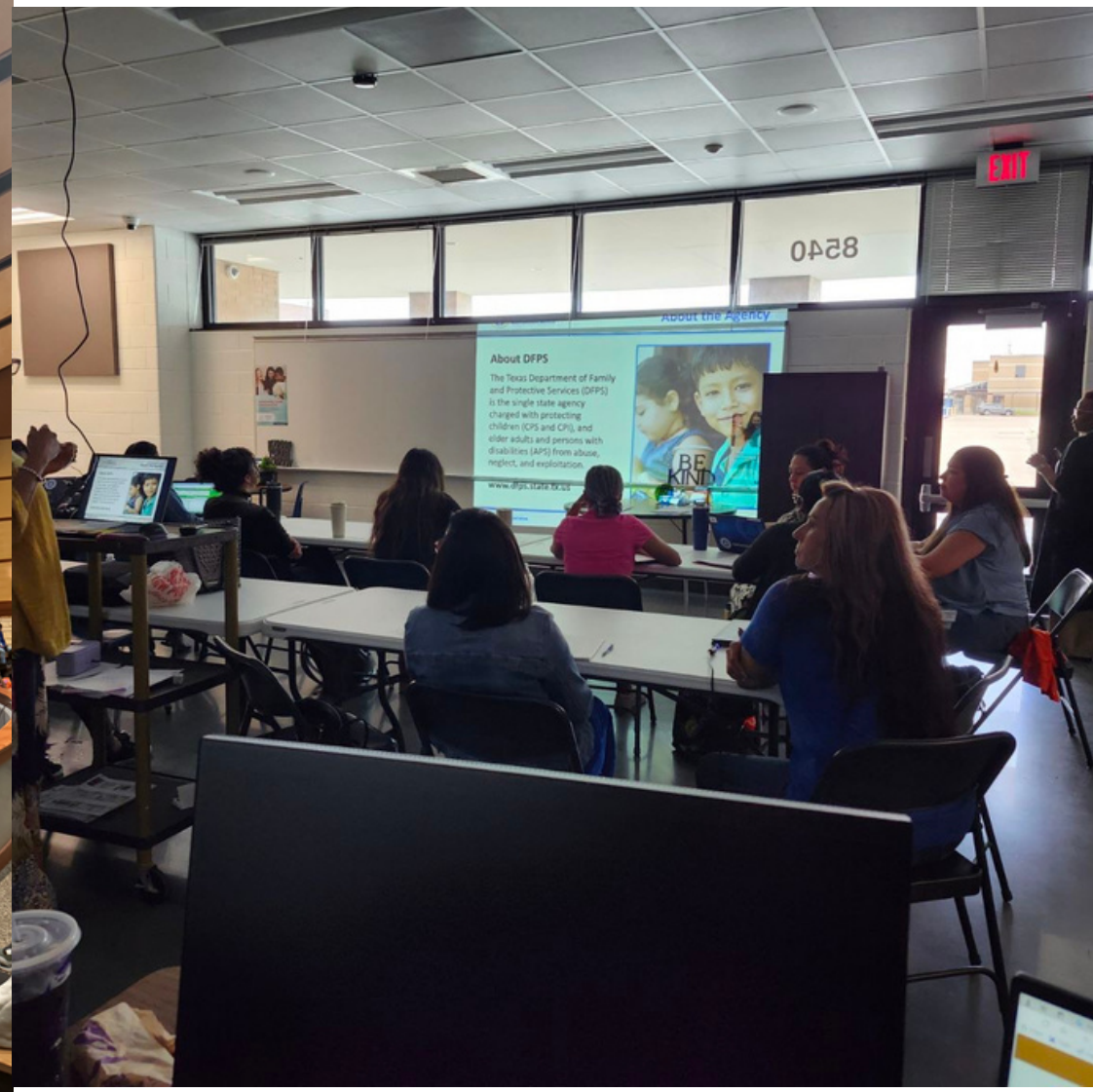
AWARE Harris Accomplishments

- Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainings for around 500 school staff.
- Suicide Prevention, Self Care and other Mental Health Trainings for over 1,075 educators.
- Parent Trainings 88
- Student Trainings 1,711 (small group or assembly style)
- Training Subcommittees in each LEA
- Tipsheets, bookmarks, educational materials, printed materials.
- Established referral pathways.

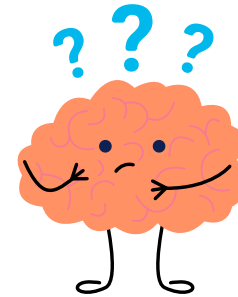
Key Strategies

- Embed mental health language into daily routines and school culture to reduce stigma and create safe, open spaces where mental health is valued and discussed positively and naturally.
- Help students and adults understand what it means to be mentally healthy and how to maintain emotional well-being through everyday habits and behaviors.
- Teach students how to recognize signs of emotional distress in themselves and others, and provide clear pathways to access support when needed.





Universal Screening



What is Universal Screening?

- A proactive process to identify students who may be at risk for mental or behavioral health challenges
- Not a diagnosis, but a tool to guide timely intervention and support
- Supplements referrals and academic/behavioral data for a fuller picture of student needs

Why Does It Matter?

- Catches internalizing issues (like anxiety or depression) often missed in traditional behavior referrals
- Promotes equity—ensuring all students are seen, not just those who act out
- Enables Tier 2/Tier 3 interventions to be delivered earlier, more effectively



Universal Screening

Universal Screening Tools

Utilized by AWARE Harris LEAs

- Student Risk Screening Scale – Internalizing and Externalizing (SRSS-IE)
suggested for elementary level
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)
suggested for secondary level as self-assessment for older students

**Spring ISD is in their first year of implementation of the AWARE Project. They are working towards conducting their first universal screening by the end of the school year.*

Channelview ISD

Implementation Highlights

- Year 1 - **248** students were screened using SRSS-IE.
- Created a voiceover instructional video to train teachers on SRSS-IE.
- Year 2 - **2,616** students were screened using SRSS-IE.
- Preparing self-assessment roll-out for older students (SDQ).

Sheldon ISD

Implementation Highlights

- Utilized SDQ for all grades. (parent report)
- Formed a dedicated subcommittee for implementation
- Linked **85** students to Tier 2 or 3 services
- Established a Safety Plan Committee to enhance crisis response.

Universal Screening Reflections



Challenges

- Navigating Varying Levels of Readiness
- Clarifying Referral Pathways
- Balancing Staff Capacity with New Initiatives
- Need for Clear Communication with Families
- Technical and Implementation Issues
- Infrastructure for Follow-Up Not Fully in Place
- Need for Automated Universal Screening Scoring
- Relevance to Community and their Values



Solutions

- Engage district leaders in individual meetings; introduce screening through small pilots, meet them where they are.
- Create clear, visual referral flowcharts that are campus specific. Provide step-by-step staff trainings.
- Develop ready to use materials like scripts and forms to reduce burden; coordinate timing with school calendars.
- Prepare info letters, FAQ sheets and consent forms in multiple languages. Utilize parent input through SHAC and Advisory Board meetings. Provide schools with outreach templates and key talking points to build trust.
- Use of “voice-over” training videos, simplified protocols and post-round reviews to refine processes.
- Establish school based and district level teams to monitor results, integrate screening data into district data platforms to make informed decisions.
- Create online links for SDQ and a SDQ Scoring/Analysis tracker
- Appropriate tools available in multiple languages, partner with bilingual staff, review related data.



Universal Screening



Key Strategies

1. Start with listening, not logistics—understand staff beliefs, concerns, and prior experiences.
2. Build a shared WHY - Align screening with district goals like MTSS, student well-being, or school climate work.
3. Identify and empower internal champions to build trust.
4. Pilot small before districtwide rollout to test and refine workflows and reduce resistance
5. Select screeners that reflect student needs and the school community context.
6. Develop clear referral pathways and follow-up processes in advance.
7. Use multilingual, non-judgmental, stigma-free communication with families.
8. Train staff on both logistics and the 'why' behind screening. Provide ready-made tools (scripts, checklists) to minimize staff workload.
9. Hold collaborative review meetings after implementation and use data to adjust plans.
10. Integrate screening into MTSS and school improvement plans for sustainability.
11. Honor readiness - Don't force it. If not ready, focus on Mental Health Awareness and build trust over time.





Additional Activities

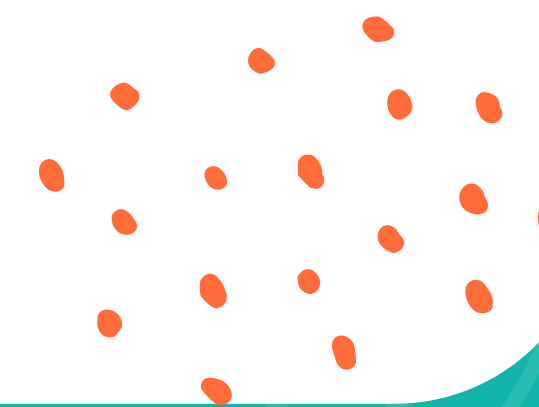
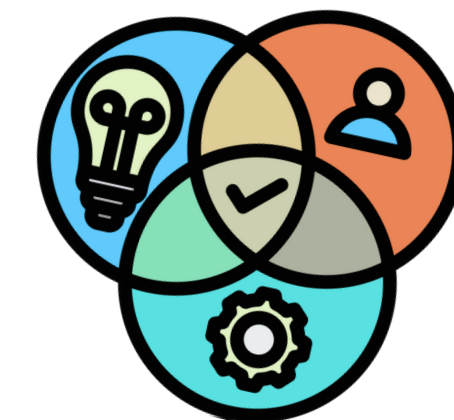


AWARE Harris Accomplishments

- Hope Squad- peer led suicide prevention program for 4 schools.
- Wellness rooms for staff
- Emotional Literacy Curricula, PAX Good Behavior Game
- Emotional check-ins, mental wellness practices
- School Pulse text based anonymous student support service for 19 schools.
- Presentations to Advisory Boards to accelerate MOU processes. 5 MOUs established.
- Tipsheets, bookmarks, educational materials, printed materials.
- Caregiver support groups, events, trainings.
- Student recognition systems to highlight empathy.
- Themed wellness campaigns,
- Debriefing sessions for educators/school staff.
- YMHFA trainer/facilitator certification for 23 educators/school staff.

Key Strategies

- Leverage peer to peer models to reduce the burden on educators/counselors.
- Create dedicated wellness spaces and positive physical and social-emotional environments.
- Embed mental health into core instruction
- Integrate “Mental Health Promotion” into daily routines
- Utilize technology for student voice and emotional monitoring while reducing the burden on school staff.
- Regularly bring in presenters to build strategic community partnerships.
- Create parent nights/events to increase familiarity and buy-in. Incorporate caregiver feedback to increase relevance.
- Celebrate and reinforce positive school culture.
- Build internal capacity for sustainability.





What you can do when readiness is an issue

Engage the Community

- Partner with youth centers, libraries, churches, and nonprofits
- Host caregiver workshops on mental health, stress, and trauma
- Join school supply drives and community events to provide resources
- Deliver trainings to community leaders and afterschool staff

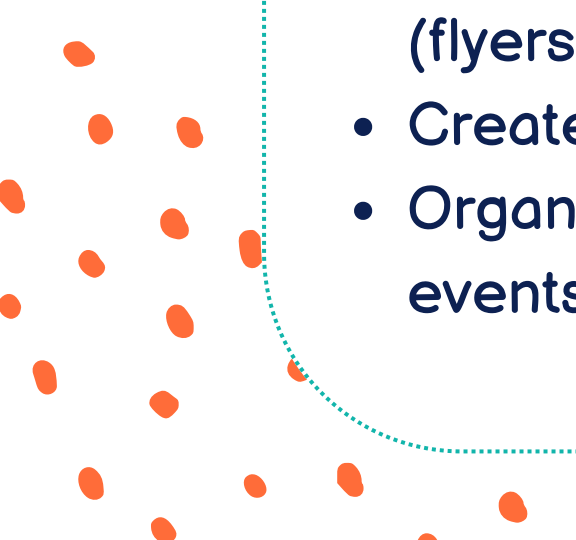
Promote Mental Health in Public Spaces

- Run awareness campaigns (flyers, billboards, social media)
- Create and distribute community-facing resource guides
- Organize student-led PSAs, art projects, or storytelling events

Build Infrastructure for Later

- Train individuals (YMHFA, self-care, trauma-informed care) outside schools
- Develop toolkits, templates, and resource libraries now
- Track successes and collect stories to share with hesitant districts

Start Small, Build Trust

- Work with open-minded champions in schools—even if few
 - Offer value-added supports (e.g., wellness rooms, optional trainings)
 - Use community success to re-approach district leadership when ready
 - Utilize creating supports through already existing initiatives such as EAP for educators.
- 



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**THANK
YOU**

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