

“Breaking the Silence, Embracing Connection”

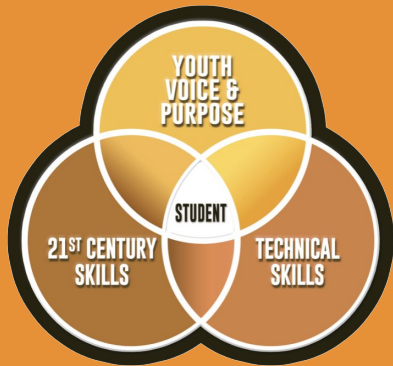
**Supporting our Students Mental Health
Parent and Caregiver Presentation**

#BreakTheSilence

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AUHSD VISION

*To create a
better world
through
Unlimited You*



AUHSD CORE VALUES WE BELIEVE

1. In and model the 5 Cs: collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, communication, and compassion
2. That education must work for students and not the other way around.
3. In an assets-based instructional approach focused on our community's strengths and in nurturing everyone's potential
4. In moving the needle toward equity and justice
5. That our vision, mission, and core values are delivered primarily through instruction.
6. In systems not silos
7. Public schools should enhance and strengthen democracy through cultivation of student voice and problem solving

WELCOME!



Mental Health Awareness Month Campaign 2024

Theme
“**Embrace Connection**”

Promoting positive student mental health by **embracing connections** to create a healthy school environment.

Objective of today's presentation

01

**Embracing
Connection**

02

**Benefits of
Connection**

03

**Connection in
Youth**

04

**Dangers of Low
Connection**

05

**Increasing
Connection**

06

**Community
Resources**

The background features a light green and white watercolor-style texture. There are several circular, bubble-like patterns scattered across the page, some in shades of teal and others in white. A dark teal horizontal line is positioned below the number '01'.

01

Embracing Connection



What is social connection?

- It is the experience of feeling close to and having a sense of belonging with others.
- Social interactions are a human necessity
- Social Connectedness is associated with:
 - Higher self-esteem and empathy
 - Increase life longevity and satisfaction
 - Positive health and mental well-being

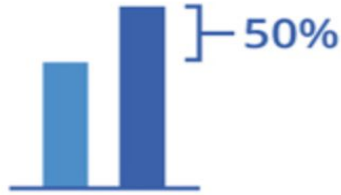


02

Benefits of Connection

Benefits of Social Connection

THE BENEFITS OF HIGH SOCIAL CONNECTION:



50% increased chance of longevity



stronger gene expression for immunity (research by Steve Cole, UCLA)



lower rates of anxiety and depression



higher self-esteem and empathy



better emotion regulation skills



Social connection creates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional, and physical well being.

03

Connection in Youth

Connection in Youth

- The importance of developing a trusting relationship with an adult, particularly their parent/caregiver.
- Actively participating in school activities, community agencies, volunteering opportunities, religious institution, and sports teams.
- Establishing positive and safe relationships with peers who have similar values and goals.
- Developing a sense of connection that empowers and gives students a sense of purpose and creates a sense of being valued, seen, appreciated and safe.

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Dangers of low connection

What signs to look out for?

Social Isolation

- Isolation is not necessarily bad; most people crave solitude at least occasionally.
- Social isolation typically refers to solitude that is unwanted and unhealthy.
- Research shows loneliness and isolation contribute to increased anxiety, fear, depression, panic and disease. This is especially detrimental to children and adolescents during a time of key brain development.

Social Isolation and its impact on child adolescent development: a systematic review
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8543788/>

Signs of Social Isolation

- General lack of interest and social withdrawal
- Poor hygiene and appetite patterns
- Cluttered stuff at home
- Confused thinking, hallucinations, delusions
- Abrupt mood swings
- Depression
- Substance use

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Increasing Connection

How to increase connection in students

Ways to Promote School/Peer Connection

The benefits of human connection have nothing to do with how many friends you have. The benefit comes from your internal and subjective sense of connection!

<u>Engagement in extracurricular activities</u>	Joining a sport allows an adolescent to experience a place of belonging along with the benefits of being physically active
<u>Participating in a club on campus</u>	Increases connection with peers that have like minded values/interests
<u>Attending school activities (e.g. football games, dances)</u>	Participating in school supervised events promotes school pride and inclusion
<u>Attending a concert</u>	Being in a space with live music and others who share the same passion for the music/artist can promote a feeling of positive energy and connection
<u>Spending time with peers on the weekends</u>	Spending quality time doing fun activities with peers
<u>Participating in your community</u>	Engaging in community service, attending church, attending a community event

Ways to Promote Family Connection

The benefits of human connection have nothing to do with how many friends you have. The benefit comes from your internal and subjective sense of connection!

<u>Family meals</u>	Have at least one meal a day together where everyone can eat together.
<u>Cell phone free zone time</u>	Remove the barrier of devices to allow for intentional, quality connection
<u>New experiences together</u>	Make time to experience something you've never done together. Experiences are "relationship glue", you will have something to talk about for weeks to come.
<u>Learning something together</u>	Try a new recipe, plant a garden, sample a new craft, learn a new game
<u>Play together</u>	Laughter and play go hand in hand. Play freeze tag, run through sprinklers, have a water fight. Let loose to be a kid again and experience the wonder of a child together. Our adolescents haven't lost the ability to play - and neither have you.
<u>Acts of service and kindness for others</u>	Compassion and volunteering creates connection and a sense of purpose

<https://www.aha-now.com/creating-family-connections/#why-family-connections-matter>

School and Family Connections in Adolescence Linked to Positive Health Outcomes in Adulthood

YOUTH EXPERIENCE RISKS

17% of students considered attempting suicide

19% have been bullied at school

14% misuse prescription pain medicine



SCHOOL & FAMILY CONNECTIONS HELP PROTECT YOUTH

Adults who experienced strong connections as youth were

48%-66% LESS LIKELY TO:

Have mental health issues

Experience violence

Engage in risky sexual behavior

Use substances

SCHOOLS, FAMILIES, & PROVIDERS CAN HELP



SCHOOLS can implement positive youth development programs



PARENTS can have frequent & open conversations



PROVIDERS can discuss relationships & school experiences



“Breaking the Silence Together”

Breaking the Silence Together

Addressing mental health is a collective effort!

- **AUHSD** "Break the Silence, Embrace Connection" campaign
- Practice to reinforce what you learned today
- YOU HOLD THE POWER to the youth's success and mental health
- Parents and Caregivers have a lot to deal with. You also need care and support for yourself.
- Showing self-care is also a good way of modeling the practice to your teen.



06

Community Resources

Where to ask for help

At AUHSD, we are committed to helping our students and families!

- Counselors
- Social Workers
- School Psychologists
- FACES

Where to ask for help

OC Links -
855-625-4657
ochealthinfo.com/oclinks

California Parent and
Youth Helpline:
(1-855-427-2736)

Crisis Support 24/7

OC Warmline
714-991-6412
Call, text or chat
anytime!

