



BY ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL

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TOPIC

Mental Health by Cultures

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

This issue is how cultural differences can impact mental health support for students in schools like Alexandria City High School. It affects students from all backgrounds, especially those who feel their culture does not understand or accept mental health challenges. This can lead to students feeling isolated, stressed, or afraid to ask for help, which can negatively affect their academic performance and overall well-being. It matters at ACHS and in Alexandria because the school community is very diverse, and many students may not be receiving the support they need. If this issue is not addressed, it can continue to impact students' success, mental health, and sense of belonging in their community.

BASELINE DATA & GOAL

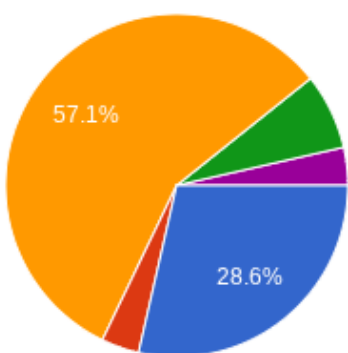
Baseline Data: According to the 2025 City of Alexandria Community Health Assessment, 47.6% of 10th and 12th grade students reported problems with anxiety, showing that nearly half of the students struggle with mental health challenges in school.

Goal: My goal is to reduce this number by creating culturally aware mental health support programs and lower student anxiety rates from 47.6% to 35% within the next 2 years.

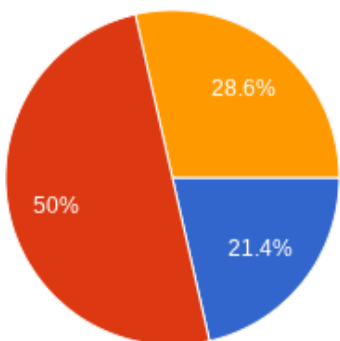
CYCP GOAL & STRATEGIC AREA

The CYCP goal that connects to my issue is improving mental health and emotional well-being for children and youth. My issue fits this goal because culturally aware support helps students feel understood, supported, and safer at school.

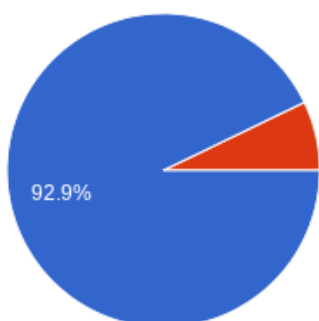
WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW?



This data shows on a scale of 1-5, how comfortable do people in their cultures feel asking for mental health support. This matters because it shows how cultures make people feel about their own emotions, 57.1 % being the highest on 3.



This data shows when someone is struggling, do they usually ask for help directly or indirectly. This matters because it shows how people really feel about opening up to someone, the fear of judgement or anger can startle one. 50% being the highest number for indirectly (through actions/body language).



This data shows if people believe culture affects how people express mental health struggles. This matters because it shares different perspectives from different backgrounds. 92.9% being the highest for yes.

What strategies or actions have already been tried?

ACHS currently provides school counselors, student support teams, mental health resources, and clubs like the Mental Health Matters Club. These programs help students by offering counseling, stress relief activities, and safe spaces to talk about mental health.

Are these strategies working or not working?

These strategies are helping, but they are not fully solving the problem because many students still struggle with anxiety and feel uncomfortable asking for help due to cultural stigma. More culturally aware programs are needed so all students feel understood and supported.

WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN TRIED?

ACHS and ACPS have already put several strategies in place to support student mental health. Every school has Student Support Teams that include counselors, social workers, nurses, and psychologists who provide counseling crisis support, and academic help when students are struggling. The school has also hosted wellness activities, awareness events, and support groups like mental health clubs to encourage students to all about their well-being.

WHO CAN HELP?

The Alexandria Health Department can help by providing mental health services, education, and support programs.

The Campagna Center can help by supporting families through youth programs and connecting them to resources. They also help bridge cultural and language barriers.



WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Quantity: ACPS and local organizations have introduced school counseling services, mental health awareness campaigns, and student support programs.

Quality: These efforts help some students access support and learn more about mental health, but they are not reaching everyone equally. Cultural stigma, language barriers, and lack of awareness still prevent many students and families from using these services effectively.

IS IT ACTUALLY HELPING?

The actions taken so far are helping some students, but the data above suggests the impact is limited. In my school survey results, many students still report feeling stressed, anxious, or not knowing where to get help. While counseling services and mental health programs exist, a large portion of students either don't use them or are unaware of them.

This shows that although support systems are in place, they are not fully effective yet. Students are not significantly better off overall because barriers still prevent many from getting help.

WHAT SHOULD CHANGE? (YOUR SOLUTION)

My solution is to create a school support program where students can connect with mentors, counselors, or peer leaders who share similar cultural backgrounds and experiences. This would create a safe, comfortable space where students feel understood and are more willing to talk about mental health without fear of judgement. It would also help reduce stigma by showing that mental health is normal to discuss in all cultures.

My survey data supports this idea because many students reported that they would be more likely to seek help if they felt understood or shared a cultural connection with the person supporting them. By adding culturally aware peer and mentor support, more students would likely access help earlier and feel less alone.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

If this solution is used, more students would feel comfortable getting help.

Students would benefit most by feeling more understood and supported, improving their well-being and school performance.

CITATIONS

City of Alexandria Community Health Assessment 2025-2026

ALXNow - 2025

ACPS Strategy Plan 2030

Inova Health System

LEARN MORE

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