

School-Based Health Care in the Modern Era & Building People Power Capacity in Programmatic Advocacy

August 13, 2026

School Nurse Update 2026

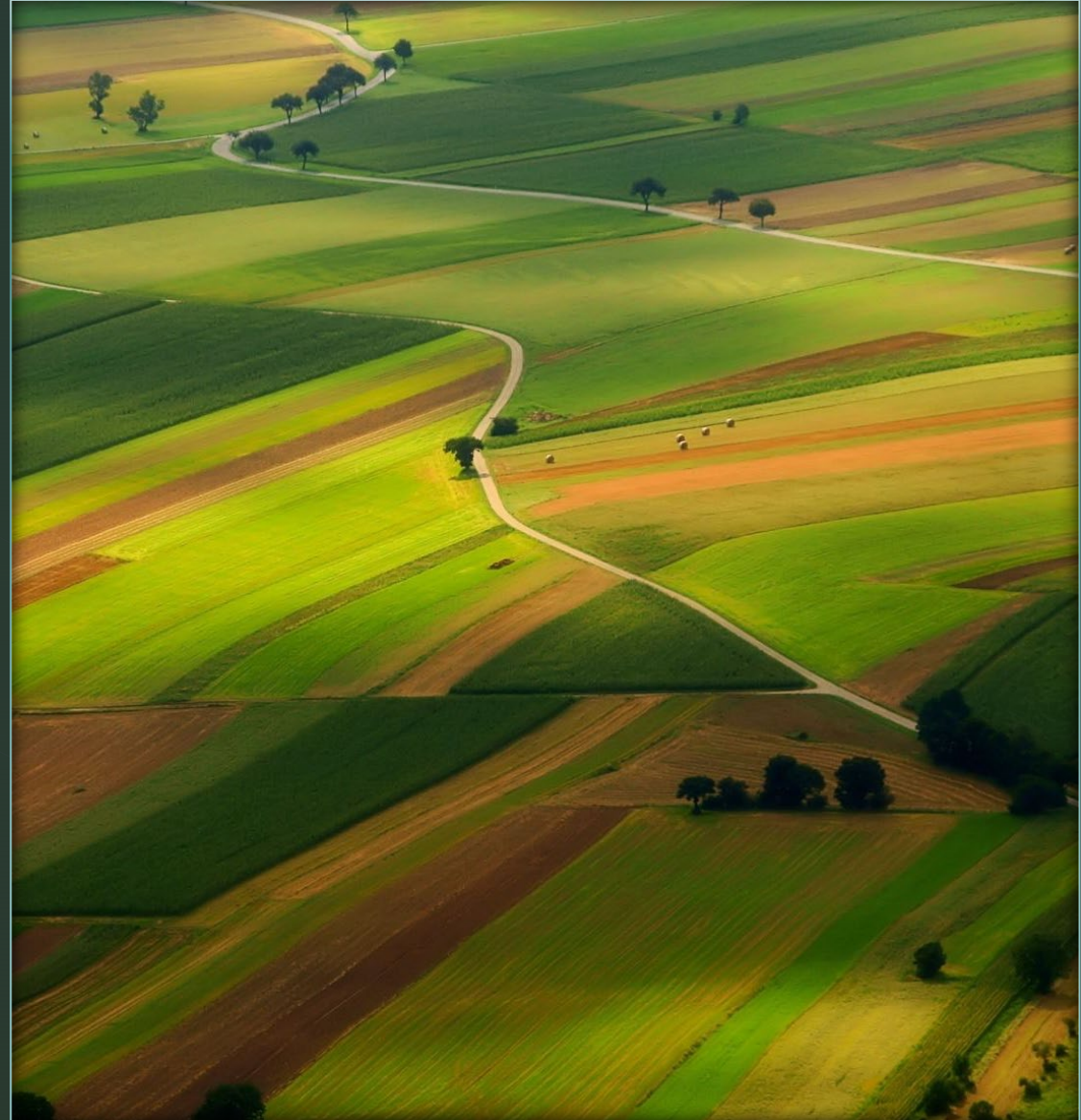


Objectives



- ❖ Review the landscape and benefit of school-based health clinics in Washington State.
- ❖ Review scope of school-based health services and discuss SBHCs as a unique adjunct of Primary Care.
- ❖ Discuss “what is adolescent medicine,” and common conditions teenagers face.
- ❖ Recognize signs of poor school functioning, and when students would benefit from a SBHC visit.
- ❖ Discuss opportunities for advocacy for school-based health services with district leadership as school nurse.

Landscape & Benefit of SBHCs



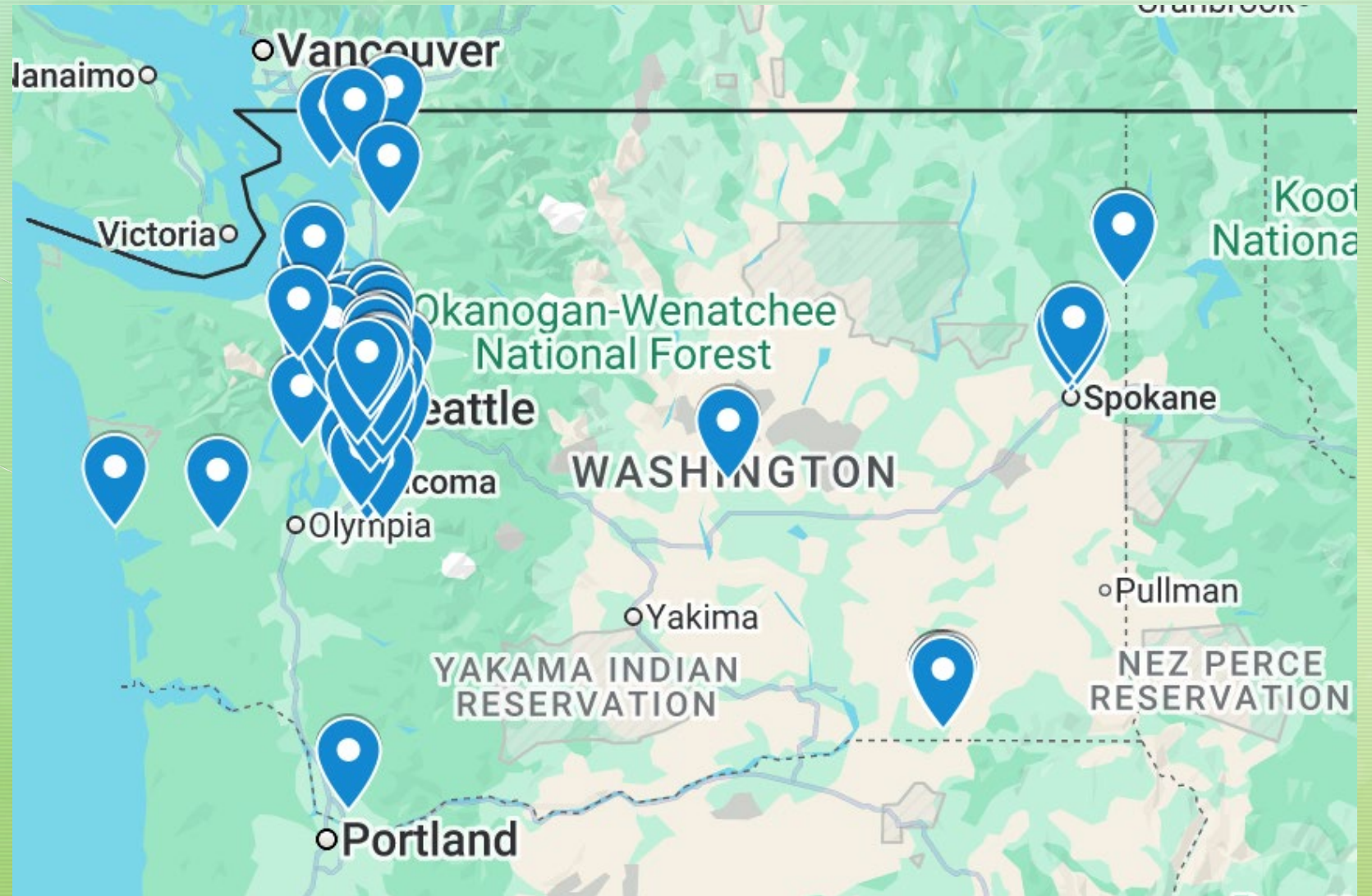
SBHCs in WA State



- ❖ First SBHC established in 1987 with Seattle City Council Pilot Funding; services started @ Rainier Beach HS in 1988.
- ❖ Currently over 70 SBHCs in WA State – number almost doubled since 2017.
- ❖ SBHCs are operated by > 25 different healthcare providers across the state – e.g., 1 SBHC = 1 SBHC.
- ❖ 2021: WA State Legislature passed SHB 1225 – created a grant program for SBHCs at DOH.

SBHCs in WA State

- Geography and Demography





Primary Medical Care

Care may include annual physicals, immunizations, sport physicals; treatment of illness, injury, or chronic illness; lab services, referrals, and more.



Behavioral Health

This care often includes mental health counseling, assessments, additional support service referrals, peer-to-peer support, quiet spaces and more.



Additional Support

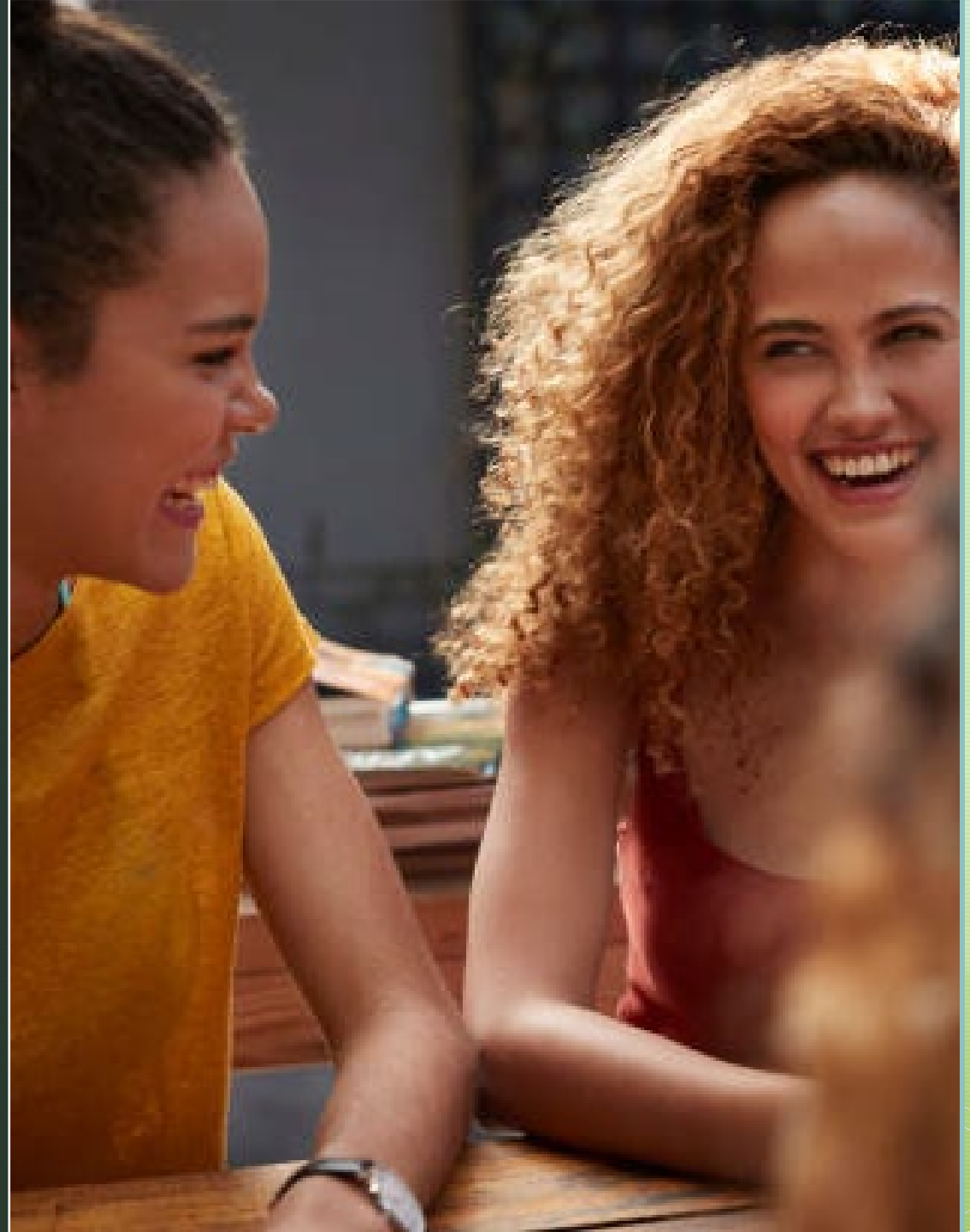
SBHCs provide a variety of supports and services like school-wide health education and community public-health outreach.

SBHCs Services

Building self-efficacy.

SBHC Benefits

- **Increased attendance**
- **Reduce barriers to learning**
- **Increase school connectedness**
- **Support school staff**
- **Lower healthcare costs**
- **Kids stay in school!**





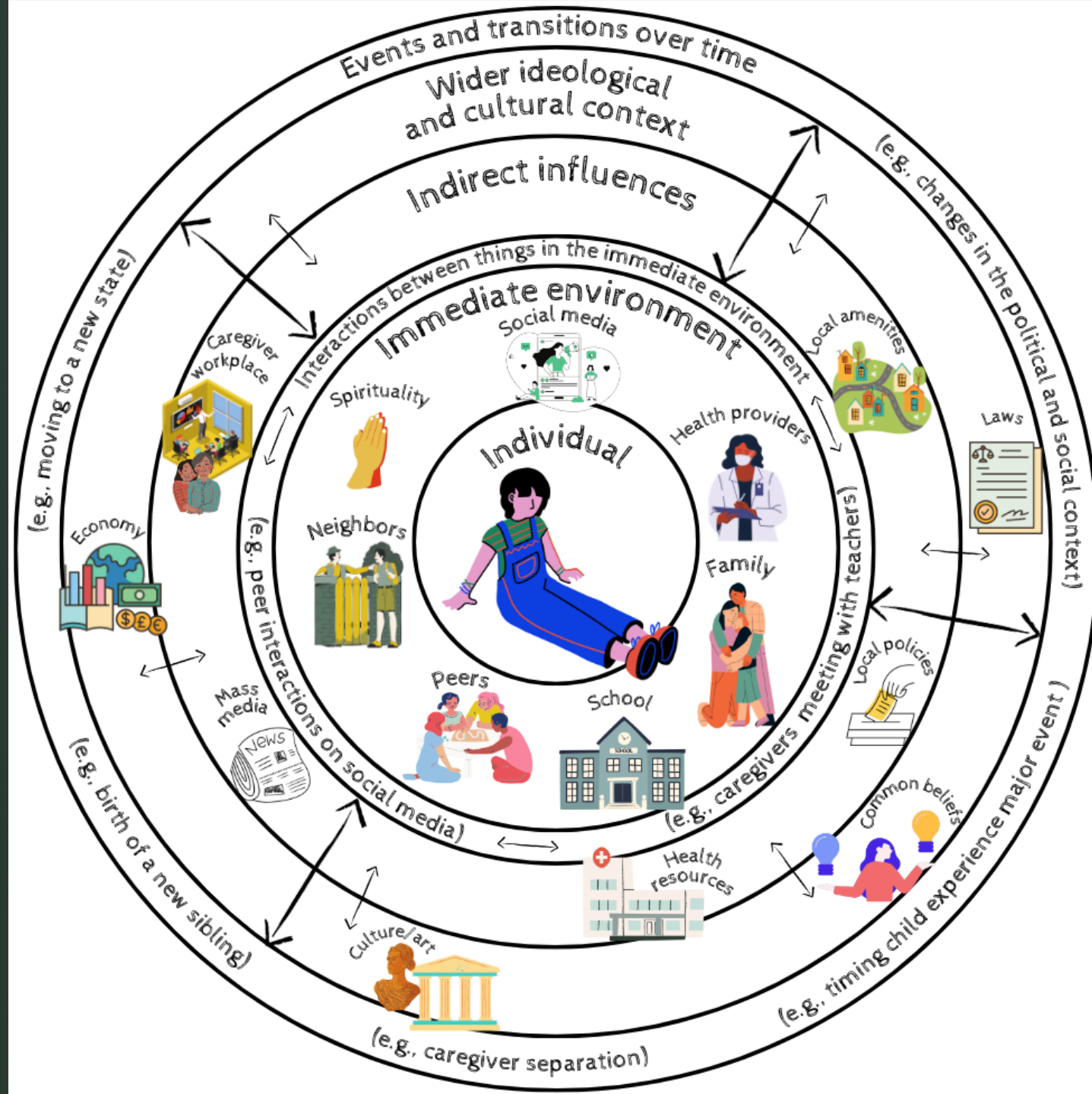
**What is
Adolescent
Medicine?
(And so what?)**



Healthcare for Teens



Teens are generally healthy, but they still have medical concerns during adolescence that deserve attention and routine visits.



Teaching the Children

Figure 2

Age of onset of types of disorders in children and youth



Age 6
median age
of onset
**Anxiety
Disorders**



Age 11
median age
of onset
**ADHD and
Behavior
Disorders**



Age 13
median age
of onset
**Mood
Disorders**



Age 15
median age
of onset
**Substance
Use
Disorders**

The “Chronic Medical Conditions” of Adolescence

- Anxiety / Depression
- Suicidality / Self-Harm
- ADHD / School Avoidance
- Substance Use
- Parent-Child Conflict
- Homelessness / Inadequate Housing
- Distracted driving
- Disordered eating
- STI Screening and Contraceptive Counseling
- Gender Identity / Dysphoria



Treating Beyond the Band-aid

*School Nurses can
play a pivotal role in
linkage to School-
Based Health Clinics.*

Well Visits /
Sports Physicals

Sick Visits

Prescribing /
refilling Rx when
needed

Injury / Wound

Joint or muscle
pain

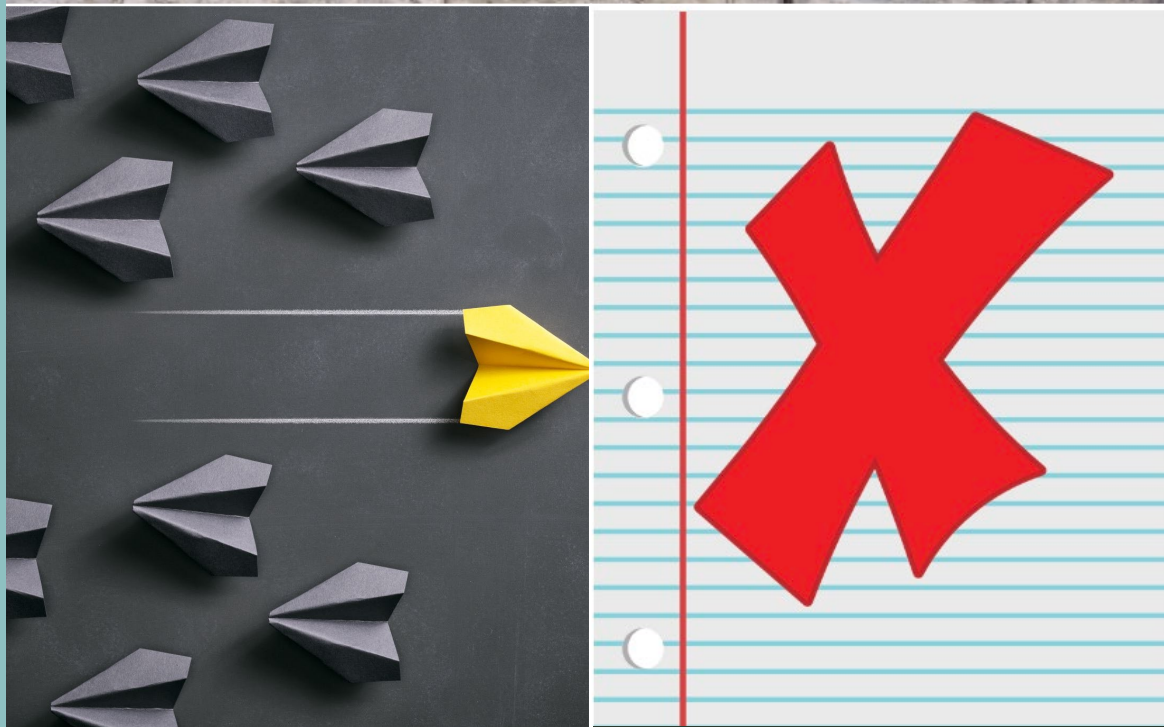
Treating stomach
pain, headache,
or cramps (with
medication).

Mental Health
(evaluation &
treatment)

And more!

When to refer





Signs of Mental Health Challenges in Classroom Settings

- **Only another short list.**
 - Truancy – frequently late or frequently absent)
 - Spending a lot of time alone
 - Poor grades / concerns about grades
 - Not turning in homework
 - Facial expressions and body language
 - Substance use
 - Eating challenges

Three L's of Psychosocial Support



Look

Looking for signs of distress and assess student needs



Listen

Listening to student concerns, provide emotional support



Link

Linking student to information, services, and social supports

Linking to early intervention

- Important to...
 - Get early help for physical health problems
 - Support young people in early stages of feeling emotionally distressed
- School nurses can play an important role in connecting young people to help early on.
- When you notice signs of “distress,” refer to the SBHC.



Teens Health Literacy

www.teenhealth.org

<https://youngwomenshealth.org/>

<http://youngmenshealthsite.org/>

<https://www.bedsider.org/>



WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

As in, you can
ask us anything.

Really.

Don't worry if
this takes a minute
to sink in.

We're not
going anywhere.

Take your time.

And if we don't
hit the mark, let
us know.

ADOLESCENT HEALTH INITIATIVE

Transforming adolescent and young adult health

Advocacy Crash Course: Building Capacity and People Power



Before the District

Principles of Community Organizing



- Identify and understand the community.
- Advocate/Organize bottom up.
- Sustain the community.
- Build the community.
- Balance outcome and process.

Before the District

Building a Network of Support

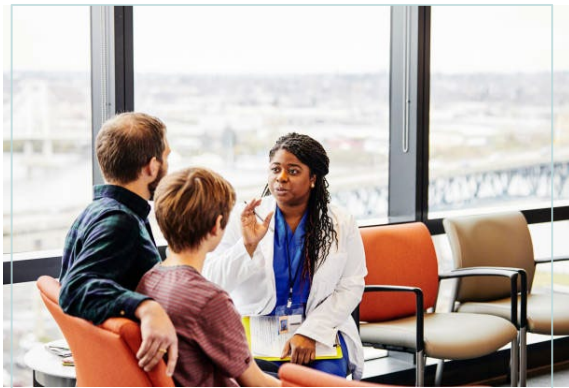


Talking to...

- Parents
- Teachers
- Guidance / Social-emotional counselor
- Community organization / clinic

Create a “Board of Champions,” then advocate up and out.





Partnerships Needed

Speaking of building community...

2026 Student Health Conference



2026 Student Health Conference

Blazing Trails:

*FORGING SHARED APPROACHES
FOR STUDENT HEALTH*

Washington School-Based Health Alliance **2026 STUDENT HEALTH CONFERENCE**

BLAZING TRAILS: FORGING SHARED APPROACHES FOR STUDENT HEALTH



OCTOBER 23RD, 2026

9am – 3pm

<Registration & Breakfast at 8:15

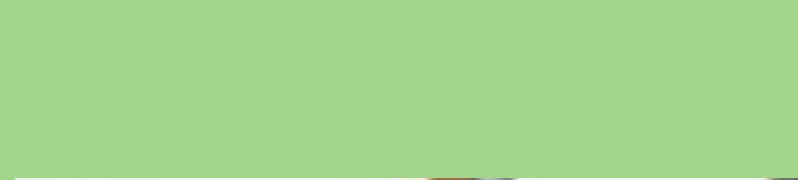
WENATCHEE, WASHINGTON

Confluence Technology Center

Free Parking & Hotel Block Available >

Join us for a full-day conference dedicated to advancing the impact of school-based health centers and supplemental health services across the state. This event is geared towards a diverse group of professionals in school-based health, including healthcare staff, educators, and school administrators. Attendees will leave with practicable skills and a community with which to explore them.

4.25 CE credits available.



Thank You!

Questions & Discussion

