

# Youth – Mental Health – and Transition from High School:

Not Always an Easy Combination



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# Youth in High School Today

- Are dealing with many of the same things we did and some new ones
- One is a doozy.....***Social Media***
- On any given day a student can feel like the whole world (which is the virtual world) is against them



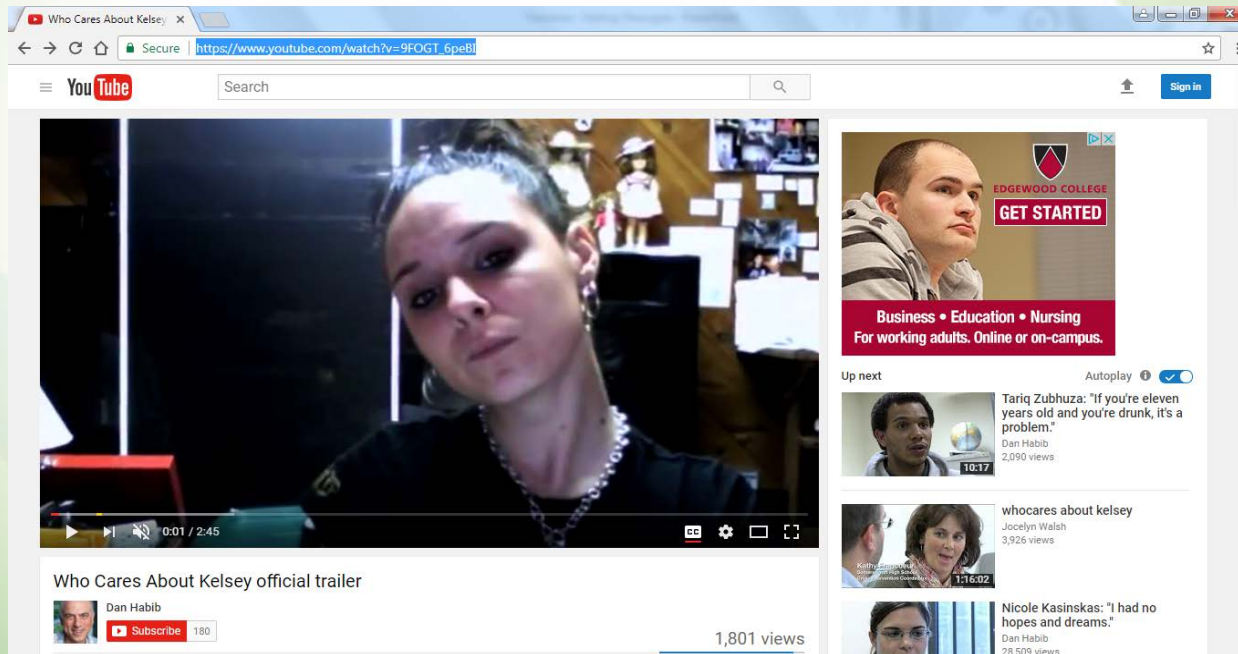
# In Conjunction

- Some have had trauma
- Some have ADHD
- Some have depression
- Some are suicidal
- Some are dealing with substance use
  
- Mental Health is a tremendous concern



# Who Cares?

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CN\\_Zfgxg0Aw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CN_Zfgxg0Aw)



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a YouTube video. The video player is the central focus, showing a woman with dark hair and a necklace. Below the video, the title "Who Cares About Kelsey official trailer" is visible, along with the channel name "Dan Habib" and a "Subscribe" button with 180 subscribers. The view count is 1,801. To the right of the video player, there is a sidebar with several video recommendations. The top recommendation is an advertisement for Edgewood College, featuring a young man and the text "GET STARTED Business • Education • Nursing For working adults. Online or on-campus." Below the ad, there are three video thumbnails with titles: "Tariq Zubhuza: 'If you're eleven years old and you're drunk, it's a problem.'", "whocares about kelsey" by Jocelyn Walsh, and "Nicole Kasinskas: 'I had no hopes and dreams.'" The browser's address bar shows the URL "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FOGT\_6peB...", and the YouTube search bar is visible at the top.

# We Do – So What are We Going to Do About it?

- **Maybe we could leave them alone, but .....that's not how this story goes.**

# Our Top 5 List for Transition

- Emotional Regulation
- Positive Relationships
- Progress toward Graduation
- Self-Determination
- Goals for after High School
  - Education/job training
  - Employment
  - Independent living

# Let's Start with the First 3



- Assisting with the development of emotional regulation – a highly valued skill
- Positive relationships – everybody wants them
- Graduation – that's the goal!

# Classroom-based Strategies

A few ideas:

- Self-assessment
- Check-in/check-out
- Scheduled breaks
- Manipulatives
- Music or noise-blocking headphones
- Peer mentoring





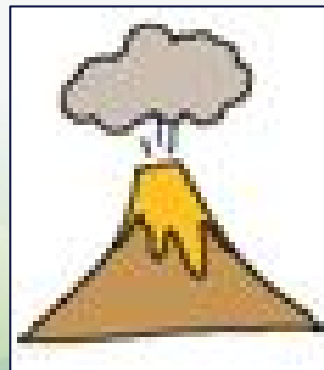
# Self-Assessment

- Support students to be part of the process when determining what they need to improve and why
- Ensure that students have clear information about expected behaviors in the classroom and a way to understand how their own actions deviate
- Provide a method for students to track their own progress toward meeting expectations and opportunities to reflect when they do not



# Check-in/Check-out

- Create a system whereby students have to do a quick check-in before class starts (gives the student a chance to share emotional temperature)
- Then, have the student check-out with the teacher before heading to next class or activity
- This process can help catch and address issues early – and prevent major blow-ups



# Scheduled Breaks

- Work with the student (and look at data) to determine the right frequency and duration for breaks
- Can be at the desk or table, or require a walk to get a drink or use the restroom
- Can also be built into full-class routines (might be good for other students too)



# Music or Noise-blocking Headphones

- Depending on the student, music can be very calming – or noise-blocking headphones might be the right choice to support maintaining emotional control
- Can be offered to all students, depending on the particular classroom environment



# Manipulatives

- We've all see them in schools and classrooms (and adult learning environments)



- Can be specially purchased items, or simply a stress ball, pencil, eraser, or silly putty.

# Peer Mentoring

- Peer provide an excellent source of positive role modeling
- Students with mental health issues often struggle with positive peer relationships too
- Educators can be intentional about setting up situations in which positive role modeling can take place (assign peer partners, time for games and age-appropriate activities)



# Connected Concepts

- Help students stay and be successful in classes – and build self-esteem
- Foster success in general education classes is essential to graduating and going on to college or job training
- Support college and career readiness skills



# The Next 2

- Self-determination (we can help, but only you can shape your future)
- Postschool goals – give students something to look forward to – next life steps
- Immediate benchmarks get set from those





# Transition Planning Checklist

- Student must be involved
- Assessment of preferences, interests, and needs (PINS)
- Goal for education
- Goal for Employment
- Goal for Independent Living
- Coursework
- School Transition Services



# Academic Career Planning (ACP)

## Know-Explore-Plan-Go!

- From 6<sup>th</sup> grade and up, students will be engaged in ACP
- Vast majority will use Career Cruising
- Families need to be informed of contents at least twice per year

<https://dpi.wi.gov/acp>

# Transition-focused Lesson Plans

- To support student understanding of her/his strengths and accommodation needs
- Information important to adequate planning for college, job training, and employment

<https://www.witig.org/wisconsins-self-directed-transition-planning-lesson-plans.html>



# WiTransition App

- Provides a way for students to generate a transition planning report
- Fosters self-directed meetings
- Gives the student another way to have a say



<https://www.witig.org/witransition-app.html>

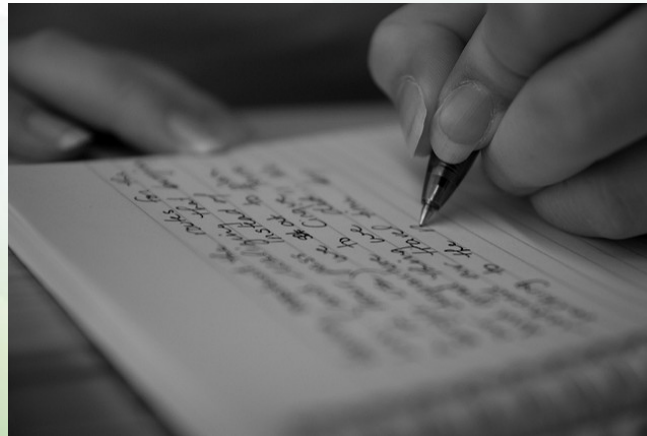
# Beyond Academic Classes

- Journaling
- Artistic Expression
- Involvement in clubs/extra-curricular activities
- Physical activity
- Work-based learning
- Employment



# Journaling

- Help students understand the personal benefits of writing down their thoughts and feelings
- Make journals and time available (study hall time/resource room activity)



# Artistic Expression

- Dance
- Drawing
- Sculpture
- Can be good ways of getting out frustrations and feeling too



# Clubs and Extra-curriculars

- Students who struggle with emotional regulation may be reluctant to join activities due to previous negative experiences
- Educators can support involvement with some of the strategies suggested for classrooms
- Relationships with one or more adults and peers can help with emotional regulation skill development





# Physical Activity

- Schools can also support engagement in physical activity as a way to help students regulate emotions
- Make weight room and other exercise equipment available (provide access)
- Add yoga and other exercise classes available
- Consider mindfulness training/meditation as part of the school offerings



# Work-Based Learning

- In-School
- Youth Apprenticeship
- Internships
- Business Tours
- Informational Interviews
- Gives students another way to explore interests and strengths



# Employment

- Summer
- After School
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)



- Employment during high school is a strong predictor of employment in adulthood
- More than one job is even better

# Independent Living

- Linked to Employment
- Financial Literacy
- Self – Home – Car
- Medical Needs
- Mental Health
- Community Resources



# Supporting Transition

- Every student is different
- Therefore, the path, the journey, and the goals are different too
- Requires **flexibility** and **persistence** on our part



# Thank You!

- For being here today
- Participating in this session
- For all you do for youth every day

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