

**Intentional Strategies for Reaching
and Engaging Diverse Student
Populations: Making Mental Health
Accessible for Everyone**

Martina Glenn and Ruby Lorono

Introduction

- August 2021
- Trials and tribulations
- Intentional and targeted interventions
- Student populations that would not have accessed mental health services before
- Understanding the diversity on our campus
- Inclusive atmosphere
- Students feel valued, respected and supported
- Community feedback
- Meticulously collected data
- Student-led Peer Wellness Support group



Our school

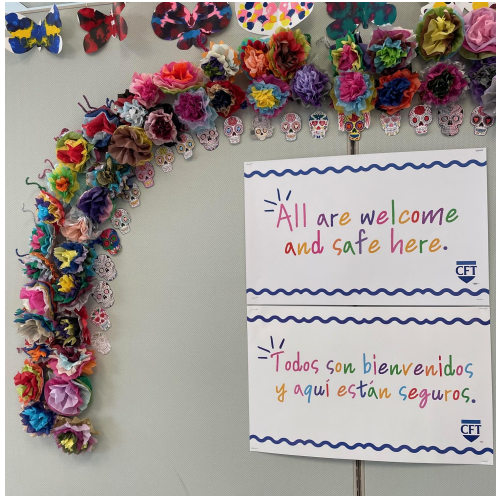
- Ann Sobrato High School
- Morgan Hill, California

- Demographic data as of 3/1/2024
 - Total enrollment: 1,494
 - Latino/Hispanic: 42%
 - White: 28%
 - Asian: 15%
 - Black or African American: 1.3%



Our roles and processes

- Ruby's role in the Wellness Center
- Martina as a school therapist
- Our referral process, therapy sessions



Ruby and Martina

Putting out fires vs. intentionality and prevention

- Dark times after the covid pandemic
- Wellness Center as a hub for students who needed urgent help
- Stigma of asking for help
- Need to bring awareness to our presence
- Intentional activities
- Determined to change the world
- Support of Dr. Nikki Citerella, Principal Ms. Sage, our school team



Most important question of all

NOT JUST

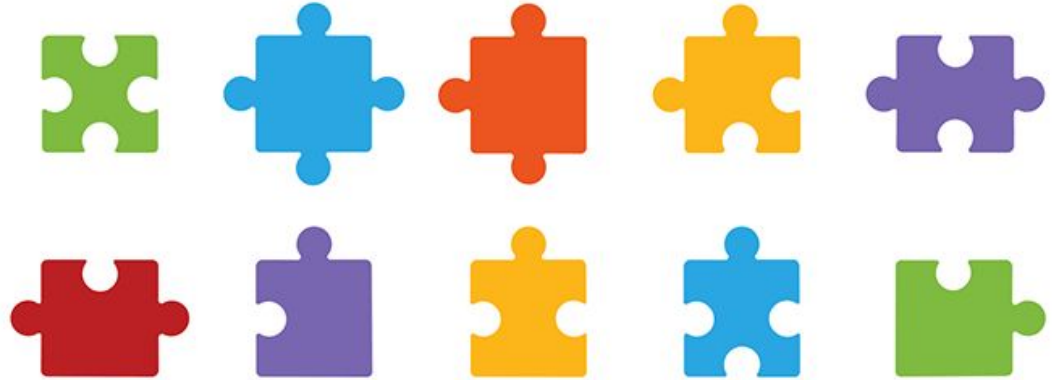
“How do we make talking about mental health cool?”

BUT

“How do we make mental health cool without the students realizing that we are making mental health cool?”

Puzzle pieces

- Our personalities
- Being visible means accessible
- Knowing your population
- Embracing diversity
- Working as a team
- Listening to feedback
- Students doing the work



Our personalities

- We are a team
- Perfect combination of loving, quirky, supportive and goofy
- Wearing many different hats
- Responding to many different situations
- Always being authentic
- Examining what we can bring to our students and where we need to reach out to others



Our personalities

- What do you personally bring to your campus?
- What unique characteristics or talents do you have?
- In what ways can you inspire your students and others on your campus?
- How do you personally change the world for your students by being you?
- What kind of environment and atmosphere do you create around yourself?
- What student groups do you naturally draw to yourself?
- What student groups do you find it hard to connect with?



Being visible means being accessible

- All of our students know where we are and who we are
- Posters with crisis numbers and mental health resources
- Poster with a QR code to our Wellness Website
- Happy bubbles everywhere
- Good Luck candy
- Attending events where our students might need our encouragement and support - band concerts, theater performances, honor roll assemblies, freshman awards ceremonies...



Being visible means being accessible

- In what ways can you make yourself visible around your school?
- How can you send the message that you are approachable?
- How can you show your students that you care about them?
- How can you show your students that you are proud of them?



Knowing your students

- Making everyone feel welcome
- Stigma of mental illness or asking for help
- **Traditionally, those who need mental health support and therapy are the most likely not to get it**
- Focus on providing therapy services to the students who would not otherwise be able to reach them
- Significant barriers
- Removing all possible barriers that prevent our students from receiving help
- CareSolace
- Trauma-focused work, cultural humility, equality, respect



Knowing your students

- Who needs you the most?
- How can you make sure that you understand what your students need?
- How much do you know about your students' values and backgrounds?
- How can you continue educating yourself?
- How do you practice self-care when the pain becomes overwhelming?



Embracing diversity

- Our student population is very diverse
- Reflecting diversity in our environments
- Our walls are decorated with student artworks
- Weekly art and educational activities
- Activities corresponding to various cultural events and celebrations
- We might not be able to reach every population that needs our help
- Importance of reaching out



Embracing diversity

- How well do you know your student population? Who is visible and who is invisible?
- How can you intentionally create activities that would bring students together?
- How does your space reflect your student populations?
- How can you teach your students about other cultures and cultural values?



Working as a team

- Academic counselors, teachers, admins, community liaison, attendance ladies, nurse, campus monitors, maintenance staff, registrar...
- Our families
- Importance of connecting to resources - holistic approach
- Positive Behavior interventions and Support (PBIS)
- English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), Cafecito
- Important relationships
- Community of allies



The Sobrato Way
Do good, be great!

Working as a team

- How can you connect to your team on your campus?
- How can you inform your team about the work you do?
- Who can be your ally? How can you help your students together?
- How can you turn your colleagues to your allies?



Listening to feedback

- Are you brave enough to embrace feedback?
- What voices tend to be strongest?
- What voices do you need to listen to?
- What voices are afraid to speak up?
- How can you use feedback to improve your space and your processes?



Students doing the work

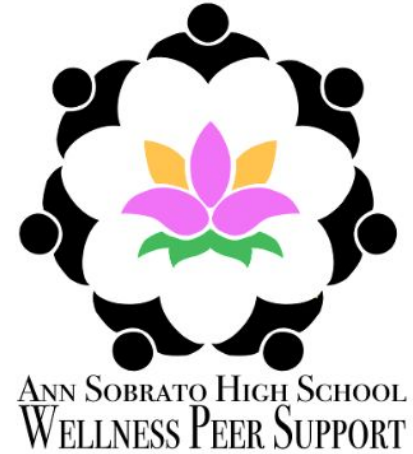
- The Vision
- Create an approved student-led peer to peer group under Wellness
- How does this look like?
- [Create a seat at the table](#), THIS CREATES A SENSE OF BELONGING, INCLUSION
- Create an agreements, and why they want to join. THIS IS ACCOUNTABILITY
- Have the students create their own website, and give them the ability to make decisions.

THIS IS POWERFUL!

- Find resources like the Wellness Education Lab where students can earn certificates
- Finally create a feedback form each meeting so you can learn how the group can continuously improve
- To learn more about how to create a student led peer to peer group, look on the back of the brochure and scan the QR code

“Students as leaders & trusted ambassadors for our work”

“They make talking about mental health cool”



Students doing the work

- Do you already have some students who could form this group in mind?
- What's stopping you from forming this group?



Our Data

- From putting out fires to advocacy for mental health and prevention
- 2021 - 2022
 - 231 referrals, 706 therapeutic sessions; 575 visits to the WC during class time and 10,118 visits before school, during brunch and lunch
- 2022 - 2023
 - 291 referrals, 699 therapeutic sessions, 1,292 visits to the WC during class time and 7,940 visits before school, during brunch and lunch
- **2023 - 2024 - from August to December (included)**
 - 212 referrals, 385 therapeutic sessions (360 student and 25 staff sessions, 165 individual students), 618 visits to the WC during class time and 3,033 visits before school, during brunch and lunch
 - As of last Friday 295 referrals and 581 sessions...

Safety plans

- Safety plans:
 - 2022 - 2023 - 14 safety plans
 - 2023 - 2024 - 4 safety plans (from August to December)
 - Hopefully this this number is so low because our students are more comfortable seeking mental health help before their feelings become unbearable and they need a safety plan or hospitalization



Significant trends

- Historically, people of color were less likely to seek mental health services even though they were oftentimes experiencing higher levels of depression, anxiety or trauma > removing all the possible barriers to receiving mental health support

2023 - 2024 (August to December)

- Hispanic or Latino: 53%
 - Male: 45.8%, Female: 54.2%
- White (not Hispanic): 19%
 - Male: 38%, Female: 62%
- Asian: 4%, Black or African American: 3%
- Two or more: 9%, not specified: 8%



Significant trends - 23/24 Aug to Dec

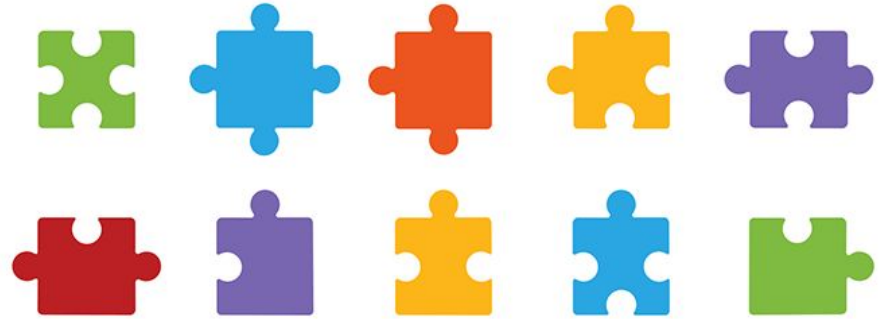
Percentages from total number of therapy sessions (total of 360):

- Female Hispanic or Latino: 28%
- Male Hispanic or Latino: 24%
- Female White (not Hispanic): 12%
- Male White (not Hispanic): 7%
- Female two or more: 5%
- Male not specified: 5%
- Male two or more: 3%
- Female not specified: 2%
- Male Asian: 2%
- Female Asian: 2%
- Male Black or African American: 1%
- Female Black or African American: 1%



Our Contact Information

- Martina Glenn - glennm@mhusd.org
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- Website: sobratowellness.com
 - Photos, FAQs, comments, calendar, referral form, activities calendar, Wellness Peer Support Group website...
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We'd love to hear from you!