



**Wisconsin
Mental Health
Literacy
Champions**

Mental Health Literacy Champions Cohort

Participant Guide

**August 2026 - December 2026
Learning Series**

**January 2027 - May 2027
Implementation Workshop**



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An Overview of Mental Health Literacy

Everyone has health and mental health; managing health is part of everyday life. People make many health decisions every day, like what to eat, when to exercise, to take medications as prescribed, to engage in preventative care, among others. At some point in their lives, every person will need to know how to access and use information and services to address a health or mental health concern. A person's ability to do this is impacted by their health literacy. Health literacy is how well a person can find, understand, and use information and services when making decisions about and taking action to support their health and the health of others. (CDC 2023) Mental health literacy is an aspect of health literacy that contains four components:



Mental Health Knowledge: A basic understanding of how healthy minds and bodies function, what impacts mental health, how mental health changes over time, signs and symptoms of mental health challenges, and common treatments. For educators, this includes knowledge of the prevalence and impact of chronic stress, marginalization, and trauma on student's development, how mental health impacts classroom behavior and learning, and how student mental health challenges show up at school.



Ability To Build and Maintain Positive Mental Health: Skills to identify activities and habits that are personally helpful for promoting well-being, consistently doing those activities, and building those habits. It also includes the ability to assess personal well-being and take action to maintain positive mental health. For educators, this includes understanding compassion fatigue and using strategies to promote compassion resilience in themselves and colleagues, implementing policies, programs, and practices that encourage the social, emotional, and behavioral health and well-being of students before they are at risk for developing a mental health challenge.



Ability To Seek Help and Provide Support: The ability to communicate about mental health concerns to trusted individuals, identify and connect to community mental health resources, and use self-help strategies when needed. This also includes skills to support

others in seeking help. For educators, this includes knowledge of the school mental health referral pathway and how to center student and family voice and choice when identifying and referring students to supports, how to implement trauma-sensitive classroom approaches that support students experiencing a mental health challenge, reinforce skills that students learn in therapy in the classroom, and build caring relationships and safe classroom environments.



Mental Health Stigma Reduction: Knowledge of the types of mental health stigma and the impact of mental health stigma, willingness to speak openly about mental health, the ability to identify and use strategies to reduce stigmatizing attitudes, language, and actions, and reflect on how cultural norms, experiences, and exposure to people with mental health challenges has shaped a person's beliefs about mental health. For educators, this includes treating students who have experienced a mental health challenge as strong and capable, creating opportunities for students to speak openly about mental health and share stories of recovery and resilience, and using person-first language when talking about students' mental health challenges.

Participation Pathways

This MHL Champions Cohort is a collaborative learning community made up of Wisconsin school and district staff who are committed to advancing mental health literacy in their local contexts. This cohort is designed to accommodate different organizational needs and capacities. Teams may choose between two participation pathways:

- ❖ **Pathway A (Learning Series Only):** Teams can elect to participate only in *Part 1: The Learning Series (August - December 2026)* if their primary goal is to acquire foundational knowledge and understand core MHL concepts.
- ❖ **Pathway B (Full Cohort & Implementation):** Teams that wish to transition into *Part 2: The Implementation Workshop (January 2027 - May 2027)* to actively design and launch mental health literacy initiatives within their agency must commit to the full year and meet all team composition requirements.

Part 1: Learning Series (August 2026 - December 2026)

The first half of the cohort is dedicated to building foundational knowledge, fostering statewide collaboration, and understanding the core components of mental health literacy (MHL).

Series Overview

During this phase, participants explore the core components of mental health literacy to understand how healthy minds and bodies function, build positive mental health habits, establish help-seeking pathways, and reduce stigma within educational environments.

Team Composition Note: To ensure systemic support and alignment with school or district goals, **teams are highly encouraged to include an administrator** during this learning phase.

Learning Series Schedule

All virtual cohort calls provide group coaching and opportunities to learn from other teams across the state.

Learning Series		
August 26, 2026	1:00-2:00	Virtual Orientation (Introduction to the cohort and assignment for the first independent learning module. (Recorded for asynchronous viewing)
September 23, 2026	1:00-2:30	Virtual Cohort Call
October 28, 2026	1:00-2:30	Virtual Cohort Call
November 18, 2026	1:00-2:30	Virtual Cohort Call
December 16, 2026	1:00-2:30	Virtual Cohort Call

Part 2: Implementation Workshop (January 2027 - May 2026)

The second half of the cohort shifts from conceptual knowledge to practical, real-world application, empowering teams to become active change agents within their local agencies.

Requirements for Participation

Because this phase acts as an active workshop series where teams learn concrete steps to engage in mental health literacy implementation within their agency, the following criteria must be met:

- **Prerequisite:** Participation in the Part 1 Learning Series is required for teams wishing to enroll in Part 2. If an administrator is unable to participate in Part 1, it is strongly recommended that they complete the [DPI Mental Health Literacy \(MHL\) Modules](#) to ensure a shared foundation of knowledge and understanding.
- **Team Composition:** Administrators are *required* to be active members of the team during this phase to ensure systemic implementation, policy alignment, and resource allocation.

A Note about Participants

Participants may register as individuals from a district or as a team; individual participants are welcome to join.

If your team plans to select the full year (Parts 1 & 2), please ensure your school or district administrator is listed as an active team member on the form.

Implementation Series		
January 27, 2027	1:00-2:30	Virtual Cohort Call
February 24, 2027	1:00-2:30	Virtual Cohort Call
March 24, 2027	1:00-2:30	Virtual Cohort Call
April 28, 2027	1:00-2:30	Virtual Cohort Call
May 26, 2027	1:00-2:30	Virtual Cohort Call

Mental Health Literacy Tools and Resources

The Mental Health Literacy Champions Cohort will use resources from two places:

1. [DPI Mental Health Literacy Webpage](#): contains all of DPI's mental health literacy tools and resources
2. [MHL Champions Cohort Website](#): contains links, updates, reminders, discussions, etc. for the cohort.

Attendance Requirements

All participants should attend the virtual meetings. The orientation webinar and virtual cohort calls will be recorded and shared on the MHL Champions Cohort Website.

Registration

To register your team for the 2026-27 MHL Champions Cohort, please complete the [Registration Form Link](#).

Please Note During Registration: When completing the form, your team will be prompted to select your participation pathway. You will need to indicate whether your team* wishes to engage in Part 1 Only (Learning Series) for the educational content, or commit to the full year by selecting Part 1 & Part 2 (Learning and Implementation Series).

Cohort Supports and Contact Tree

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