Shelby School District

Shelby Junior High & High School

1001 Valley Street ~ Shelby, MT 59474
www.ShelbyPublicSchools.org
Phone: (406) 424-8910 ~ Ext. 3

Shelby School District

Why screen for mental wellness?
Because not all students experiencing mental health issues show outward signs, screening for mental wellness can give them, as well as students who do show signs, a chance to be seen, heard, and supported. As the suicide rate in Montana is one of the highest in the nation, it's important to put support in place to prevent these tragedies.

When a student's screening shows they are experiencing suicidal ideation, they are provided with professional mental health support as soon as their parent/guardian has been contacted. Studies show that screening for mental health issues poses no risk to students.

Through the Rural Behavioral Health Institute (RBHI), screening is completely free for schools. Over the last 3 years, RBHI has screened over 38,000 times in over half of the counties in Montana. Among students who have screened more than one time, data has shown a drop in new suicidality and a decrease in anxiety and depression symptoms by over 30%.

How does the screening work?
Through the Rural Behavioral Health Institute (RBHI), screening is completely free for schools. Over the last 4 years, RBHI has screened over 38,000 times in over half of the counties in Montana.

The screening includes three evidence-based assessments: the eC-SSRS which shows students with lifetime and recent suicidal ideation or behaviors with intent, attempt, or preparatory behaviors, the PHQ-A which assesses for anxiety symptoms, and the GAD-7 which assesses for symptoms of depression. These screeners provide information about symptoms a student is experiencing but do not diagnose students.

Students log into the screening platform with a unique code to maintain their privacy. After they complete the screener, a color will be designated to their results. All students who screen in the "red", meaning they are the most at risk, will have a check-in with a licensed therapist that same day after parents/guardians have been contacted. These check-ins will include exploring symptoms, risk factors, protective factors, and recommendations for moving forward. This information is sent directly to the guardians, and schools can access the safety plan to keep it for future use. These check-ins do not involve any evaluations or diagnostics.

In addition to the same-day check-ins, families of students who have screened have the option to access a free service called Care Navigation, which helps families find any services that would be helpful, including long-term mental health care, insurance enrollment, community groups, etc. After families give permission to get involved with the service, RBHI can get students into long-term care typically within 2 weeks of being referred. RBHI also had bridge care services for students who may have to wait for permanent services, ensuring no student identified as struggling will have to wait for services.

Participation in this screener is completely voluntary. If you do not want your student to participate, you can send the opt-out form to Mrs. Watterud at the school, and your student will not be screened.

If you have any further questions, you can contact Mrs. Watterud at (406) 424-8910 or ronnie.watterud@shelby.k12.mt.us.

Kyle Fisher
Principal

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Superintendent

Angela Lamb
Chairman of the Board