

## Viewpoints

# Meaningful Change in How Schools Address Mental Health



Improving schools' approach to mental health requires a holistic integration of emotional wellness into the fabric of education, beyond mere reactive measures. Schools must shift from crisis intervention to proactive, everyday support, embedding mental health literacy into curricula, and normalizing conversations about emotional well-being. This can be achieved through comprehensive training for educators, enabling them to identify early signs of mental health issues and provide appropriate support. Additionally, schools should collaborate with mental health professionals to offer on-site counseling services and build strong partnerships with families, fostering a community that emphasizes the importance of emotional resilience in both academic and personal success.

To truly enhance mental health support in schools, the culture surrounding mental health must be transformed. Creating safe spaces where students feel comfortable discussing their struggles without stigma is crucial. Peer-led initiatives, mindfulness programs, and access to mental health resources like digital platforms can empower students to take charge of their well-being. Schools should also reevaluate workloads, ensuring that academic



pressure does not contribute to student burnout. By integrating emotional wellness into every aspect of the school experience—through policies, pedagogy, and support systems—schools can help foster healthier, more resilient students prepared for the challenges of life.

**All schools devote resources to coping with student problems. Some are able to offer a range of student and learning supports; others can provide only what is mandated. In the majority of schools, what is available usually covers relatively few students. More resources would help. But school budgets always are tight, and adding the number of student support staff that advocates call for is really not in the cards.**

**In general, districts plan and implement student and learning supports in a fragmented and piecemeal manner, generating a variety of specialized programs and services. Over many years, increasing concern about fragmented approaches has produced calls for “integrated services” and, recently, for “integrated support systems.”**

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## Professionals

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**Dee Anna Hassanpour**

Partner

**Los Angeles**

323.330.6817

[dhassanpour@f3law.com](mailto:dhassanpour@f3law.com)