

CVHS And Mental Health.

Marcel McNeese

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This book is dedicated to the students of Carnegie Vanguard HighSchool. Not everyone struggles with mental health, but those that do deserve to be heard. Thank you for taking the time to read and help bring awareness to this problem. Going forward, I'd like you to keep in mind what new conversations can be started with your peers regarding general mental health. Change starts with us, and **knowing** is half the battle.

Marcel McNeese

How to scan a QR Code:

- 1. Open the Camera app
on your phone**
- 2. Place camera over the
QR code**
- 3. A link should appear
under the QR code : Tap
the link**

Mental Health Resources

Resource Within Carnegie:

Dedicated Carnegie Mental Health
Counselor **Kylaa.Griffin@houstonisd.org**



Resources Outside of Carnegie:

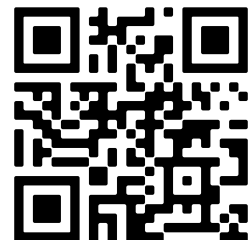
Mental Health Surveys Provided by Mental
Health America



Suicide Prevention Lifeline Live Chat
Talk to a counselor anonymously and gain
additional resources



SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental
Health Services Administration) For info
regarding treatment



So...what is mental health?

Mental health is a person's **emotional**, **psychological**, and **social** well being.

A person's overall mental health is affected by things such as **one's genes**, life experiences such as **trauma**, and **family history** of mental health problems.

Those factors add to something I like to call: A person's **mental landscape**.

What is a mental landscape?

A mental landscape is

How a person's mind functions based on genetics and past experiences, and how it contributes to the actions they make and their response to situations.

Everyone has a different mental landscape, as all of us have different genetic makeups and have gone through different experiences.

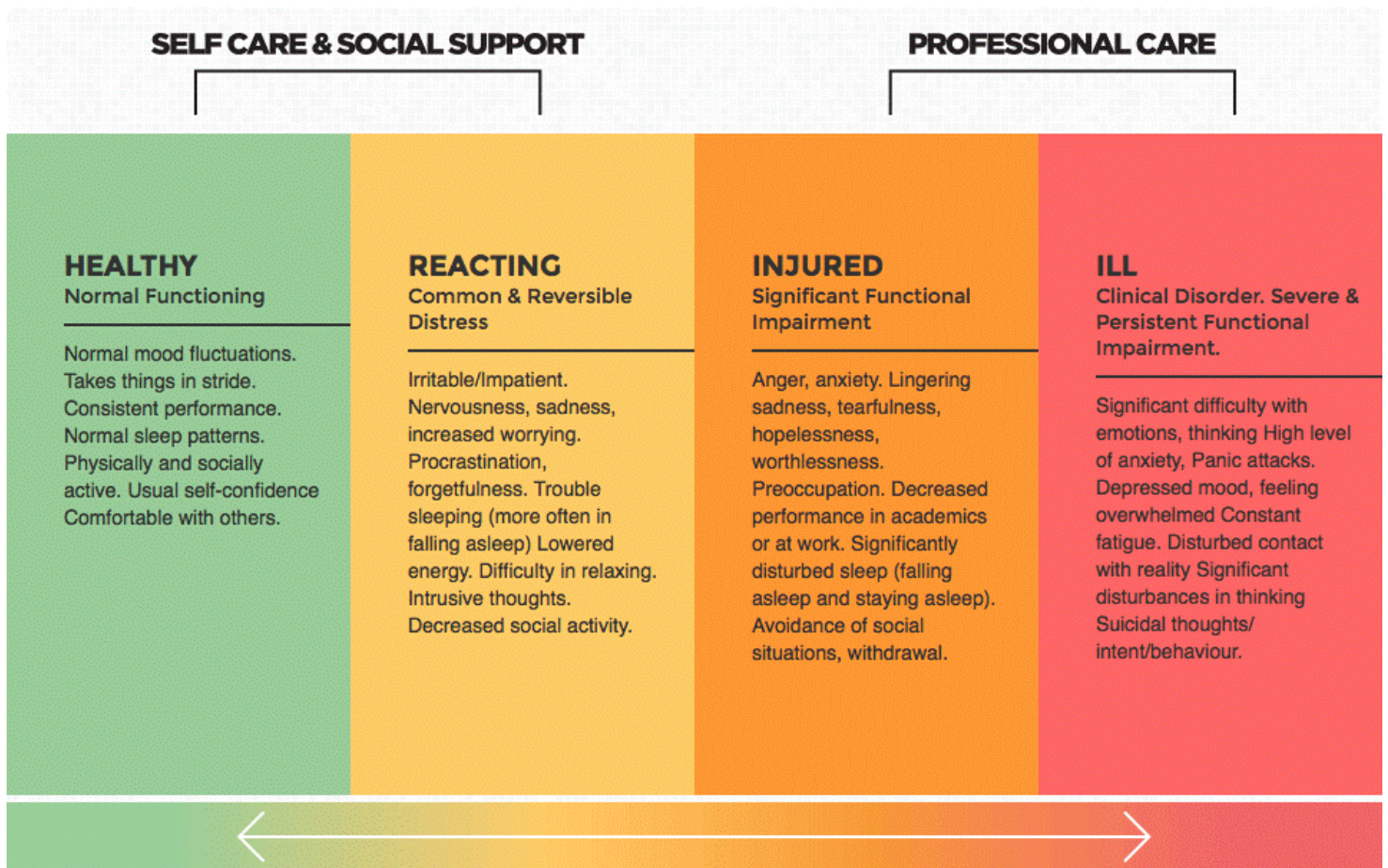
How one **responds to a stressful situation is not the same for another**. Along with situations that make one happy, sad, and all other emotions.

The Mental Health Continuum

Mental health is a **complex topic**. There is no **black** or **white**, nor a simple explanation for the “whys” and “hows” of how a person behaves. Instead, **everything is on a spectrum of many intensities and variations**. This is an idea expressed in the **Mental Health Continuum**.

The **Mental Health Continuum** is a scale based on mental health that ranges from “**III**” to “**Healthy**.” On the “**Healthy**” side a person is **high functioning and able to take care of themselves**. Whereas on the “**III**” side of the spectrum, the person **requires professional care**.

The Mental Health Continuum Scale



The Mental Health Continuum Scale (Chosen Hill School, fig.1).

Healthy : **Content with life**, well balanced emotionally. Can deal with the normal stresses of life, and challenges of things like tests. Exhibit good self care such as regular sleep and exercise.

Reacting : Shower slight difficulty in dealing with stressful situations, but **able to function normally in day to day life**.

Injured : Show high difficulty in dealing with normal and higher stress situations. **Stress can not be alleviated with regular stress relieving practices. Struggling in performing day to day functions.**

III : **Unable to deal with stress**, having **serious impairment** in day to day life functioning. Having things such as **suicidal thoughts, tendencies, panic attacks**. In **need of professional help**.

What this Means for You

As a student attending Carnegie Vanguard High School. It's **important to understand what side of the Mental Health Continuum Scale you are on.**

Unknowingly being on one side can impair your academic performance without you knowing.

I encourage you to **self reflect** and **try to identify with one side or another, or all the in between.**

How your Peers Feel

Question : How has Carnegie affected your personal mental health?

“Not only is the workload extreme from the beginning of freshman year to end of senior year, But the expectations that are set for students are unattainable for a large majority. The issues this causes not only mentally and academically for the students, but at home, is an entire added pressure. Yes, we are supposed to be preparing for the real world and whatever but this is not how it's done in my opinion.”

“The stress that comes with this school made me sleep less which led to insomnia and as a person who is bipolar, I started to feel less happy more often than happy. Also some of the teachers rely on students to teach themselves and that doesn't help with the scrunch up time we have.”

“Everything it stands for. I have literally almost killed myself from the amount of stress this school put me through.”

“For the most part in person it's been great, I've been able to associate with my peers and that sense of community really helps me get through it. Over the pandemic though, the isolation combined with a heavy AP course load that I took that year definitely burned me out severely for the second semester. My mental health took a nosedive.

Question : How would you describe the mental health Care Carnegie provides for its students?

“I know it exists but I have not heard much about it.”

“I believe it is adequate but it isn't highly publicized or accessible.”

“Slim to none. Like there has been the dog visits which brightens up the day but there is barely any assistance. But the new staff member has made it much better because she listens to what we have to say.”

“Might be effective but not everyone has the courage to talk about their emotions to others such as counselors.”

“A teacher reported me for saying I wanted to die and Ms.----- legit just made me sign a form saying I wouldn't kill myself and then never talked abt it again.”

“The mental health care is there however not a lot of students know about it very small person percentage of students actually know where the counselors office is and actually know who the mental health counselor is because most students only know the guidance counselors but they aren't who you would go to for emotional support”

“I think it's changing for the better - I don't see many students taking advantage of it.

Question : How could Carnegie do better for students in your opinion?

“Provide us with more opportunities to release any stress and actually address the mental health issues within our school. There is absolutely no reason why it is a known common thing for CVHS students to constantly talk about wanting to jump off a bridge or end their lives in other forms of self harm”

“I think monthly check-ins and surveys for students to explain their mental distress would benefit them and their teachers in understanding the student’s situation. this could also be an opportunity for the emotional support counselor to reach out to certain students.”

“Teenagers. Have. Lives. It’s a simple fact, and they get more than enough pressure from their parents to be the best and put all their time into studying and academically exceeding, when in reality it is just as, if not more important, to find hobbies and passions outside the classroom because that is what will get you places in life, not an A in calc. Carnegie needs to give students more time to be teenagers and not a class rank, that’s not something that happens by bringing a therapy dog, it happens by truly understanding your student body outside the red wall.”

How I feel

Carnegie has been quite the experience for me. Freshman year, it seemed to bring out more dormant mental health problems that weren't as noticeable before. I've personally struggled with anxiety and depression. From panic attacks to severe depressive episodes, I've gone through that whole range of emotion and what it entails. It's hard honestly. Having that emotional baggage that gets made worse by daily stresses. At times, it does become unmanageable. Although I'm what one would call "High Functioning", where I can perform day to day tasks normally. That can shift dramatically depending on external and internal factors. Some days, that isn't quite the case. It's hard to function some days. This has taken a large toll in school, and personal life. I created this book with you and me in mind. Because I know I'm not the only one who suffers, everyone does in one way or another. ***I want you to know you are not alone.*** Even though it may seem like it at times. ***You aren't .***

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About the Author

Marcel McNeese is a Junior at Carnegie Vanguard High School, graduating class of 2023. He enjoys skateboarding, sewing, and writing.



He wrote this book for his TPSP product as an accessible way to inform Carnegie students about mental health and ways of receiving assistance.

