Learn More about Your School

The first thing you want to do is research what resources already exist at your school that are supporting and centering the voices of its students. If possible, explore what resources are there that are specifically for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students, as these voices and experiences are often the least included in conversations around school mental health. Your school’s website or student handbook is likely a good place to start. You may also want to reach out to your school’s counselor or activities coordinator, as they may be the best people to ask about what resources already exist to support student mental health. As you’re doing your research, it’s important to establish your “why” by asking yourself “why is this important to me?” or “why am I doing this research?” This will help you as you research why there is a need to support student mental health and it will help you as you build a coalition to support you and your coalition goals. Start by exploring the answers to the following questions as best you can. (It’s ok if the answer is “I’m not sure” or “I don’t think that my school has that.”) Spending time to do this research will be helpful to your work.

First, consider how mental health disparities affect BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students in your school community. It might be helpful to list some of these and begin thinking of ways to shape them into goals.

What (if any) clubs or student organizations does your school have that directly or indirectly support BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ students? Are there any student mental health organizations in your school? List them here.

What, if any, policies does your school have in place that address mental health? Are there any mental health resources listed and readily available to all students?

Does your school have a strategic plan, plan of action, statements of intent, mission statement, or school activities coordinator? (Your district may have a strategic plan that your school follows, so be sure to check out the district website.) If so, does it mention student mental health?
Reflect on what you have learned so far: Thinking about what you found (or just as importantly, what you did not find) in your school research, what do you think needs to change to center mental health among students at your school, specifically BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ students? How can you advocate for this change in a space that centers the voices of the most underrepresented students? Feel free to think big.