

Answers**4**Families.org



PTI & Answers4families Webinar

*Presented by PTI Nebraska
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Outreach Specialist*

Promoting Positive Mental Health in School-Aged Children

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Parent Training and Information Nebraska

PTI Nebraska is a statewide resource for families of children with disabilities and special health care needs.

- PTI Nebraska's staff are parent/professionals
- PTI Nebraska conducts relevant workshops across the state.
- PTI Nebraska has printed and electronic resources available at no cost.
- PTI Nebraska encourages and supports parents in leadership roles locally and statewide.



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Family to Family Health Information Center

PTI Nebraska is the home of
Nebraska's Family to Family
Health Information Center

- "This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number and title for grant amount (H84MC08009, Family Professional Partnership CYSHCN, total \$96,700, no other additional funds provided). This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government."*

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Thank you to Our Partner

Answers  **Families.org**

Special thanks to
Answers4families in providing
the website connection allowing
PTI Nebraska to share
information with families and
professionals
free of cost.

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Answers Families.org

Check out
answers4families.org

For more information about children with special healthcare needs and/or disabilities:

- Self-Assessments for Services
- Discussion groups
- Ask an Expert
- Ask Rx
- Nebraska Resource & Referral System (NRRS)
 - A state wide system to locate services in your area by
 - State, county, city or zip code.

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Focused on Families

- As the Parent Training and Information Center for Nebraska, our goal is to inform families of the systems and resources that serve their children.
- It is important for professionals to know about the information we share with families. We value their participation in the webinars.



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Webinar Information

- Adjust your computer volume for your hearing and comfort.
- Please ask questions to guide your learning.
 - Open the chat box on your computer for questions or comments or
 - Email questions to nbaker@pti-nebraska.org for answers after the presentation
- Documents are available
 - All handouts will be emailed following final presentation
- Certificate of Attendance is available
 - Emailed to all registered participants

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Promoting Positive Mental Health in School-Aged Children

Strategies to use to help improve
a student's life and future

Presented by Jenn Miller
from PTI Nebraska

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Addressing Mental Health Issues in School

- Why should schools focus on and promote good mental health?
 - Because 1 in 5 children and adolescents will experience a significant mental health problem during their school years
 - Because approximately 70% of those children who need treatment will not receive appropriate mental health services
 - Because failure to address these mental health needs is linked to poor academic performance, behavior problems, school violence, dropping out, substance abuse, special education referral, suicide, and criminal activity (U.S. Surgeon General, 2000 Report)

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Mental Health Focus in Schools

- Mental health and school success are closely related since untreated mental health issues can be significant barriers to learning (Sander, 2012)
- Schools are excellent places to promote good mental health which is central to a student's social, emotional, and academic success. Since children spend a significant amount of time in schools, educators have the opportunity to observe and address student's needs (Whelley, Cash, Bryson, 2004)

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Teachers Role

- It's important for teachers to be able to:
 - Recognize student's mental health/socio-emotional needs
 - Understand how symptoms of the student's disorder may impact school functioning and learning
 - Understand how to provide basic interventions to address those needs

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Teacher's Role

- REMEMBER: Teachers are NOT licensed or certified mental health professionals! They can't diagnose a mental health issue or provide the same kind of specialized, intensive treatment that a mental health professional can

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Teacher's Role

- Teachers can make changes to the physical environment and their instructional approaches and academic supports, as well as provide social skills instruction and socio-emotional and behavior support to help students who have mental health challenges in school

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Primary Goal

- School climate is defined as:
 - ...The quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices, and organizations structures.
(National School Climate Council, 2007)
- A primary goal is to support and instruct to a range of individual differences while sustaining a caring atmosphere.

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Four Common Mental Health Conditions

- ADHD
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

Remember the school climate primary goal: To support and instruct to a range of individual differences while sustaining a caring atmosphere.

Let's take a look at some individual differences that can be found in few mental health conditions and the kinds of support students might need.

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ADHD Symptoms

What it could look like in school:

- Short attention span, lacks attention to detail, easily distracted and off task, issues with organization (may lose books, supplies and homework), has trouble listening, fails to finish assignments, makes lots of errors in work, is forgetful.
- Fidgets a lot, has difficulty staying seated, always on the go, talks too much and blurts out answers, interrupts others, has trouble playing quietly and taking turns, poor social skills, can have behavior problems that disrupts the classroom

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ADHD Accommodations

School Accommodations:

- Provide frequent opportunities for movement (taking way gym or recess is not a good consequence for inappropriate behavior), let student get up, move around, write on the board, stand while working, schedule breaks and allow fidget opportunities (squeeze ball)
- Provide preferential seating based on needs
- Break down directions into smaller steps and break down assignments into smaller tasks
- Have student repeat back directions

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ADHD Accommodations

- Provide visual support and examples/samples
- Provide signals and cues to help keep student on task
- Post rules, schedules, and assignments and review daily schedule
- Teach student to use assignment book to organize their work
- Allow for time to organize locker and backpack during the day
- Provide a check in time at the end of the day with a teacher to make sure student has assignments down correctly and has the materials they need

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ADHD Accommodations

- Allow student to keep one set of materials at school and one set at home
- Use color-coded folders – different folders represent different subjects
- Use graphic organizers to help structure student's work
- Teach study and time management skills and learning strategies
- Teacher directed tasks are more effective than independent seat-work activities. Be sure to teach student strategies for waiting their turn and what to do when they are finished with their work and others are not

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ADHD Accommodations

- Provide extra support during unstructured and transition times
- Allow testing accommodations (extended time, alternate location)
- Give a lot of encouragement and praise as students with ADHD are easily discouraged
- Rewards will lose their reinforcing power quickly so change and rotate them frequently
- Monitor student's level of stimulation – sensory issues
- Ask parents what works at home

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Anxiety Symptoms

What it could look like in school:

- Excessive worry about homework or grades, feeling nervous, restless or on edge, easily frustrated, crying, difficulty concentrating, fear of new situations, refusing to join in social activities, physical complaints, frequent absences or tardiness, getting behind in work and falling grades, sleepy in class, repetitive actions, constant need for reassurance

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Anxiety Accommodations

School Accommodations:

- Allow student to negotiate a flexible deadline for worrisome projects
- Have student keep track of assignments in a planner and then check in with a teacher at the end of the day to make sure the assignments have been written down correctly and that the student has all the necessary materials
- Reduce schoolwork load and homework when necessary

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Anxiety Accommodations

- Consider modifying or adapting curriculum to better suit student's learning style and lessen anxiety
- Do a Check-In Check-Out with the student at the beginning and end of the day (maybe even in the middle)
- Modify student's class schedule so that first period is less stressful
- Post daily schedule and expectations

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Anxiety Accommodations

- Teach relaxation and calm-down techniques (take deep breaths, tensing muscles then relaxing, use stress ball, silent reading, listen to music)
- Use a predetermined signal when the student is experiencing frustration or restless behavior
- Allow student to self time-out to regroup
- Allow student to take a movement break (run an errand, take book to library, do some sort of classroom job)
- Ask parents what works at home

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Depression Symptoms

What it could look like in school:

- Pretends to be sick, engages in negative self-talk, is sad, crying, seem accident prone, refuses to participate in school and social activities, appears restless, grouchy, irritable, or aggressive, becomes isolated and quiet, changes in eating and sleeping habits, might develop eating disorder or cut themselves, shows persistent boredom, low energy, or poor concentration, shows lack of interest and motivation, drop in grades and not turning in homework, frequent absences, sleeping in class, stops paying attention to appearance, feeling hopeless or worthless, has thoughts of death or suicide

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Depression Accommodations

School Accommodations:

- Reduce some classroom pressures by offering flexible deadlines for work completion
- Break tasks into smaller parts and help student organize work
- Provide student with written copy of notes and/or assignments
- Use checklist to show task completion

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Depression Accommodations

- Allow student more time to respond when asking questions or making requests
- Help student use realistic and positive statements about their performance and outlook for the future
- Model that it's okay to make mistakes, point out and make light of your own
- Identify a check-in person or trusted person for the student to go talk to when needed

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Depression Accommodations

- Encourage gradual social interaction (small group work)
- Provide student with sensory-stimulating tools (stress ball)
- Allow frequent breaks
- Help student develop short term goals
- Provide student with extra set of books for home
- Identify student's interests and preferred activities and try to incorporate those into the student's day

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Depression Accommodations

- Allow student to take self time-out to regroup
- Provide student with meaningful responsibilities
- Teach socio-emotional skills to help student identify their feelings and emotions and appropriate ways to communicate them
- Ask parents what would be helpful in the classroom to reduce pressure or motivate the student
- Ask parents what works at home

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ODD Symptoms

What it could look like in school:

- Defiance or refusal to comply with adults' rules or requests, sudden unprovoked outbursts of anger or resentment, arguing with adults, deliberately annoying others, has little insight into how they impact others, blaming others for their misbehavior, instigating negative behaviors and power struggles, temper tantrums, revenge seeking, easily annoyed and frustrated by others, questions authority, self-sabotage, low self-esteem, possess a strong need for control, difficulties with peer relationships, says mean, hateful things when upset (might swear)

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ODD Accommodations

School Accommodations:

- State your position clearly and concisely, avoid power struggles
- Give two choices when decisions are made
- Engage student positively-avoid making comments or bringing up situations that may be a source of argument
- Increase positive interactions between student and adults and follow through with reinforcements of appropriate behaviors
- Post a daily schedule so students know what to expect
- Post classroom rules, make sure the expectations are clear

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ODD Accommodations

- Teach social skills – anger management, conflict resolution, calming strategies
- Minimize downtime and plan transitions carefully – keep them busy with highly stimulating activities throughout their day
- Make sure academic work is an appropriate level
- Give students a safe place to de-escalate, students need time to cool down and regain perspective
- Use consistent behavior management techniques
- Ask parents what works at home

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Specially Designed Instruction

- Individualized instruction
- Adaptations made to content, methods, and/or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the student
- Address academic and functional deficits including behaviors, social skills, and socio-emotional challenges
- Teach specific skills identified as learning barriers
- Help close academic gaps between a student with a disability and his/her peers

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Important Question Shift

- How do we get this student to stop misbehaving?

Changes to:

- Why is it so difficult for this student and what skills do we need to teach to help this student succeed?

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Important Factors to Consider

What students need:

- Sense of belonging
- Positive recognition
- To know they can make a difference
- Positive self-esteem
- Resiliency and accomplishment (self-determination)
(Whelley, Cash, Bryson, 2004)
- Social skills instruction
- Socio-emotional learning
- Appropriate behavior supports
- Appropriate academic supports

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Important Factors to Consider

What students don't need:

- Punishment such as suspensions and reduced school hours. This means:
 - Less instruction time and exposure to curriculum in core classes
 - Less structure and routine in their day
 - Less time to work on behavior and social skills
 - Less time to work on their IEP goals
 - Less time being involved and participating with peers
 - Less time building trust and rapport with staff and peers
 - Less access to their education

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What We Know

- Exclusion and punishment are the most common responses to conduct disorders in schools.
 - Lane & Murakami, (1987)
 - Rose, (1988)
 - Nieto, (1999)
 - Sprick, Borgmeier, & Nolet, (2002)
- Exclusion and punishment are ineffective at producing long-term reduction in problem behavior
 - Costenbader & Markson (1998)

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Who is Suspended?

- Researchers have consistently found that minority males are suspended at rates disproportional to their population. These differences are also evident in female minority students, and can be detected as early as preschool.
- There is also a disproportionately high percentage of students with special education needs including those with emotional and behavior disorders, and learning disabilities
- Research also indicates high rates of suspension among students who exhibit behavior, who have transferred schools, who come from disadvantaged communities, and are in urban schools

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What Should Schools Do?

- Develop a more sophisticated system of responding to different types of inappropriate, challenging behavior with an expanded array of disciplinary alternatives

Resource: <http://k12engagement.unl.edu>

What you will find there:

- Strategy Briefs
- Program Briefs
- Resource Briefs

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A Positive Solution

- Use evidence-based systems of responding to different types of inappropriate, challenging behavior while promoting a positive school culture...

One place to start is with
PBIS-based interventions

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The End and Thank You

- Thank you so much for attending this training. I really appreciated your time.
- Please complete the evaluation form as we appreciate your feedback.
- If you any questions or would like to talk to someone at PTI Nebraska, our main line is 402-346-0525 and our toll-free number is 1-800-284-8520.
- Have a wonderful rest of the day!

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THANK YOU

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**For More Information
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Evaluation



- Please complete the evaluation when it arrives in your email tomorrow
- You will receive handouts and the presentation by email
- Future funding and support of PTI Nebraska programs benefit from your honest evaluations
- Changes to programs come through comments on evaluations
- <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PTIwebinar>

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