

Issaquah High School Based Mental Health Program FAQ

The school based mental health program was established to meet the mental health needs of students in a nurturing environment. The hope is to foster the well-being of the Issaquah, Skyline and Liberty High School Communities, so students are safe, healthy and ready to learn.

Why School Based Mental Health?

Studies show that school based mental health programs help to eliminate barriers to accessing traditional mental-health services for students. Students who utilize School Based Health Centers can have fewer discipline problems, course failures and school absences.

What services do the Teen Health Counselors provide?

The counselors offer confidential counseling and skill building on many topics including depression, anxiety, relationship problems, family concerns, grief and loss. They also have referrals for other community resources if needed.

Who can see the Teen Health Counselor?

Any high school student attending Liberty, Skyline or Issaquah High School has access to the counselors. The staff will prioritize students with the highest need. Students in crisis, who do not have access to mental-health services elsewhere due to insurance, family or transportation barriers, will be high priority.

Do students need parent permission for the counseling?

No, parent permission is not required. Adolescents can seek mental-health care without parental consent in Washington state.

Are the Teen Health Counselors certified?

All the Teen Health Counselors are Licensed Independent Clinical Social Workers (LICSW). Their licensure allows them to diagnose and treat mental-health conditions. All staff have prior experience in mental-health assessment and counseling. As Swedish employees they also have access to other professionals for consultation, like a child psychologist and psychiatrist through Children's Hospital and our other Teen Health Center in Ballard.

How are they funded?

The Teen Health Counselors are Swedish employees contracted by the Issaquah School District. Management of staff and continued education is provided by Swedish.

Is counseling available in the summer?

No. The Teen Health Counselors follow the school's calendars. Counselors will recommend transitions to other resources during the summer months.

How are parents involved?

The service is designed for students, but parents play an integral role in continuing the safety planning. Family counseling needs should be managed in an outpatient setting.

What if we want to refer a student?

The counselors will make an attempt to reach out to the student and investigate concerns. However, the service is voluntary and students are not required to utilize our services. Teen health counselors are bound by HIPAA laws and will not divulge any confidential information without student written consent. In the event we feel a student is at serious risk for harming themselves or others, or in a case of child abuse or neglect, school staff, parents and authorities as appropriate will be involved.

What about Swedish?

Swedish is one of the largest providers of health-care services in the region. We are invested in the health of the Issaquah community and very excited about this opportunity to partner with the Issaquah school district. We also have a Teen Health Center at Ballard High School in Seattle. For more information about Swedish, please visit www.swedish.org/issaquah.