



Behavioral Health Academy

Student Wellness Voice Report

Developmentally Grounded Wellness
Signals from Authentic Student Voice



1,390

Students Participated



6,296

Responses Submitted



388,944

Words Shared



468,163

Data Points Analyzed



ABSTRACT

In February 2026, Behavioral Health Academy implemented a universal Behavioral Health Voice Screener, capturing 696 open-ended responses from 139 students and generating **38,889 words** of analyzable student voice. Rather than relying on perception-based surveys, this assessment examines how students actually describe stress, coping, relationships, and growth—providing a developmentally grounded view of wellness across the school.

Results indicate a strong behavioral health baseline. Students scored highest in **Reflective Growth (539/800)** and **Emotional Resilience (534/800)**, demonstrating an ability to make meaning from challenges and articulate adaptive responses. Protective language, particularly references to peer connection and trusted adults, appears consistently across the dataset, signaling a stable relational foundation.

Two strategic priorities emerge. First, strengthening **Self-Insight (455/800)**. Second, addressing gender differences in expressive behavioral health indicators. Importantly, most identified risk signals align with developmentally typical middle school patterns. These findings suggest that reinforcing Tier 1 systems, alongside targeted supports, can continue to strengthen school-wide wellness as students mature.



Student Voice Highlight:

"I recently applied to go to this BST school and it's a really hard thing to get into—only like 100 people get in every year. And so I was applying and it was really, really hard. I had to write a bunch of essays, do a bunch of tests, write a bunch of papers, do a video about why I want to go in, and it was really hard. At one point it was just too much. I didn't know who to ask, so I was just trying to do it by myself, but I knew deep down that I needed help. So once I finally got the courage to, I asked my mom to help me and then my dad helped me. And now, after everything, I got into the program, and asking for help was probably one of the best things I've done."

— J.H., 8th grader



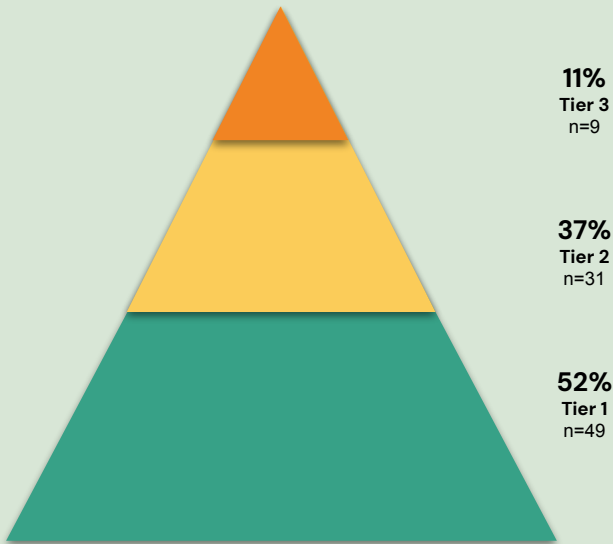
"Yesterday, I came back from some practice and I looked in the mirror and I realized just how much I've changed—how much healthier and happier I am than who I was before."

—S.C., 6th grader



FROM STUDENT VOICE TO MTSS INSIGHT

Behavioral Health voice insights provide an additional lens within Behavioral Health Academy’s MTSS framework. Rather than focusing solely on external conduct, this view incorporates how students describe their internal experiences: how they cope, where they hesitate, and when they begin to withdraw. When examined alongside existing MTSS systems, these patterns offer developmentally grounded indicators to guide universal supports and targeted intervention.



11%
Tier 3
n=9

37%
Tier 2
n=31

52%
Tier 1
n=49

	Male	Female
Tier 1	43%	60%
Tier 2	36%	24%
Tier 3	8%	16%

Universal Supports are Evident

Student reflections reveal strong engagement and emotional health. Most students describe supportive relationships, growth, and perseverance. Many credit adults who helped, listened, and showed care, reinforcing meaningful teacher connection as a protective factor.

Most risk language reflects developmentally typical middle school patterns, such as conflict-related emotion labeling rather than loss-of-control or hopelessness. This suggests a healthy baseline in which Tier 1 systems are broadly supporting student wellness.

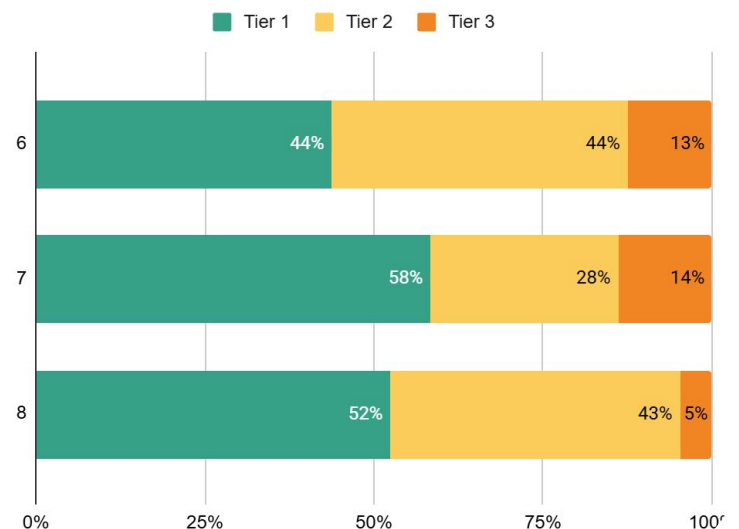
"I finally built up the courage to ask my teacher for help. And he did not belittle me, but instead he helped me...and I was actually learning something." -D.T., 6th grader

Note: Tier designations are based on students who completed all six prompts (n = 89). Students who completed partial datasets were included in linguistic and domain-level analysis but not assigned tier designations.

Tier 2 & 3 Insights

- Sixth grade shows the highest combined Tier 2 and Tier 3 prevalence (57% vs. 48% school average), suggesting early middle school as a key developmental leverage point.
- Female students show higher representation in both Tier 1 and Tier 3 categories. Greater emotional specificity and disclosure contribute to increased high-intensity emotional language (*"I felt really overwhelmed," "I thought it was my fault"*).
- Hispanic students show slightly higher Tier 3 prevalence (15% vs. 11% school average). Tier 3 signals are primarily associated with relational stress language rather than internalized distress markers.

Tier Distribution by Grade Level



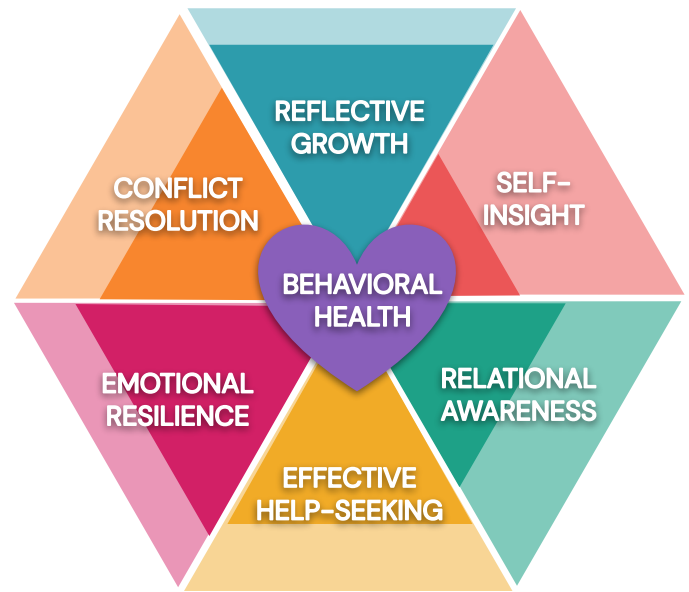
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INSIGHTS: BASELINE FOR GROWTH

Across Behavioral Health, students demonstrate a strong behavioral health baseline. Average scores across six Behavioral Health Voice domains indicate that most students can reflect on experiences, regulate emotions during challenge, and describe growth over time. Variation across domains highlights both strengths and clear developmental opportunities.

Average Domain Scores (Scale: 200–800)	
Reflective Growth	539
Emotional Resilience	534
Effective Help-Seeking	501
Conflict Resolution	480
Relational Awareness	466
Self-Insight	455

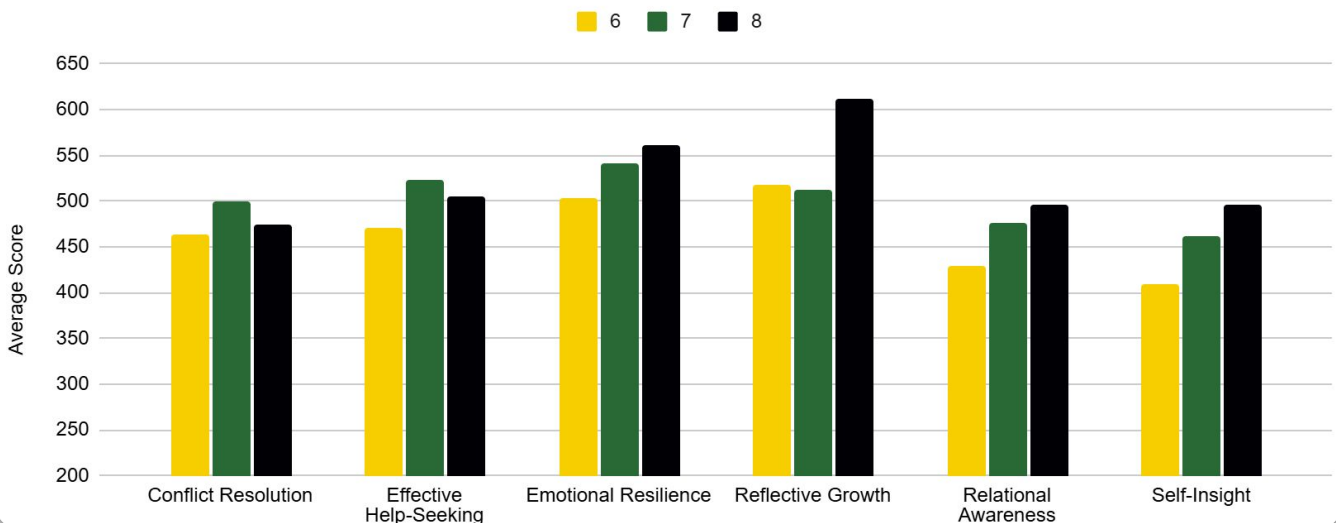
Key Insights

- **Reflective Growth and Emotional Resilience anchor the school’s behavioral health baseline.** Students frequently use temporal framing (“I used to... now I...”) and adaptive response language (“I tried again,” “I talked to...”) to make meaning from challenges.
- **Self-Insight represents the most strategic instructional lever.** While students effectively name emotions, fewer identify triggers or internal patterns. Deepening metacognitive reflection presents a clear opportunity for growth.
- **Behavioral health competencies tend to strengthen as students mature.** Eighth graders demonstrate stronger growth framing and emotional regulation language, suggesting natural developmental progression.



Average Behavioral Health Domain Scores by Grade Level

Competencies vary by grade level, but show natural progression as students mature.

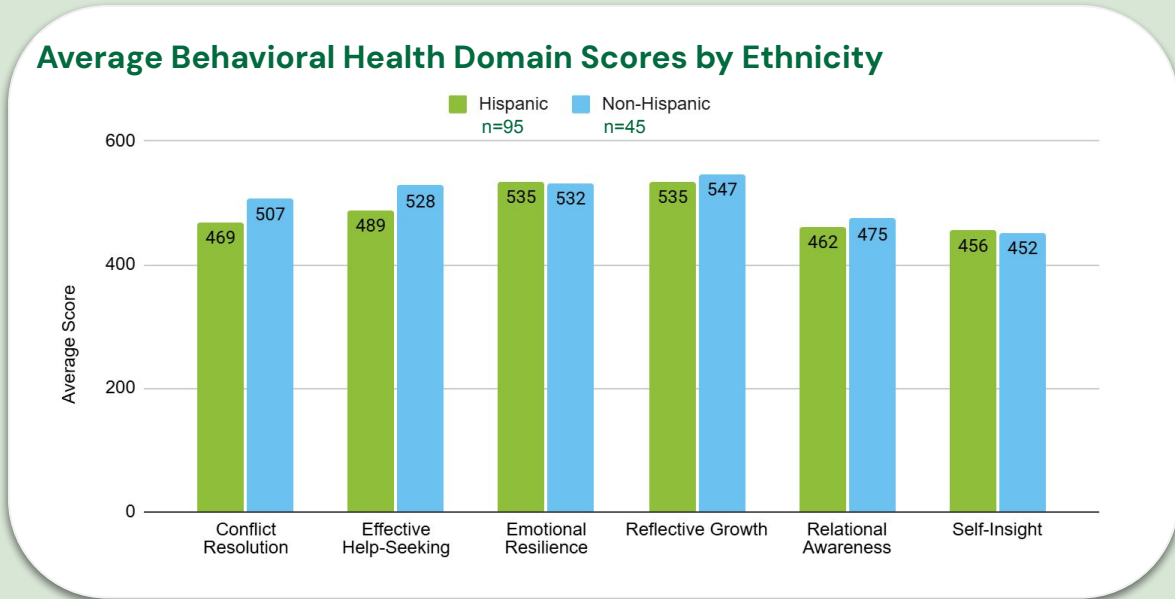


“I was like ‘It’s okay, Mama. I took deep breaths,’ and she said ‘Good job!’ That’s something that changed me—me taking deep breaths and forgetting about it.” -O.M., 7th grader

EQUITY INSIGHTS: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INDICATORS ACROSS STUDENT GROUPS

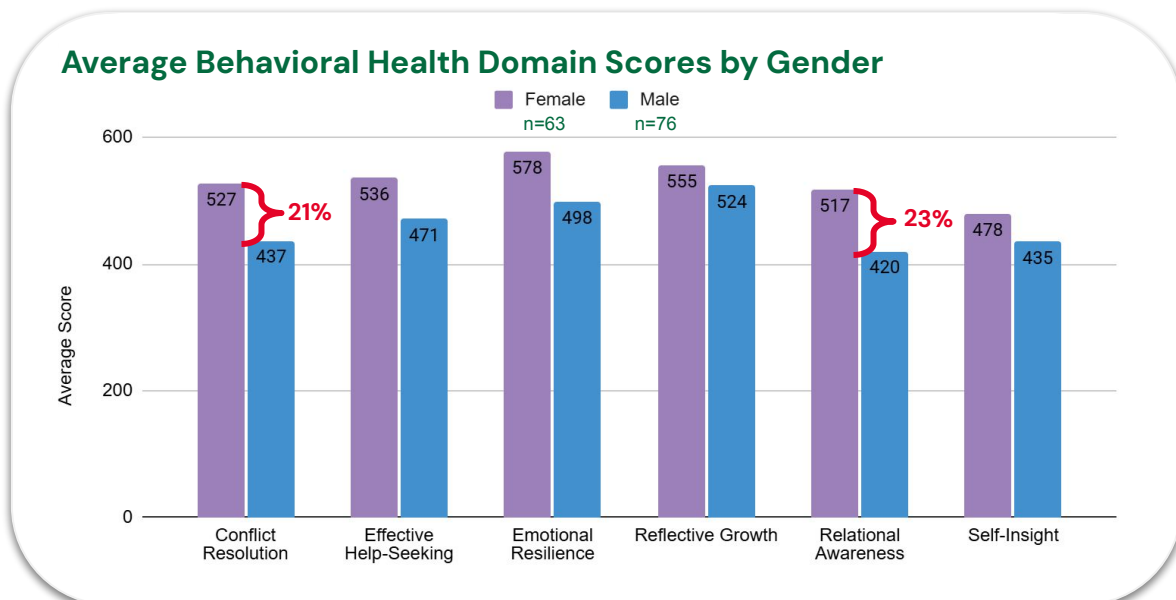
This Behavioral Health Voice Screener provides a comparative view of how wellness competencies are expressed across demographic groups. The data show strong parity across ethnic groups and meaningful differences by gender, offering insight into how reflective processing and relational competencies vary among students.

EQUITABLE OUTCOMES ACROSS HISPANIC & NON-HISPANIC STUDENTS



Behavioral Health averages are closely aligned across Hispanic and non-Hispanic students, with differences under 3% across domains. Protective and risk language appear at comparable rates, suggesting minimal systemic disparity in expressive behavioral health indicators.

FEMALE STUDENTS LEAD ACROSS ALL DOMAINS



Across all six domains, male students' reflections scored 15% lower on average than female students' responses. The largest gaps in *Conflict Resolution* and *Relational Awareness* suggest a focused opportunity to strengthen relational skill development.

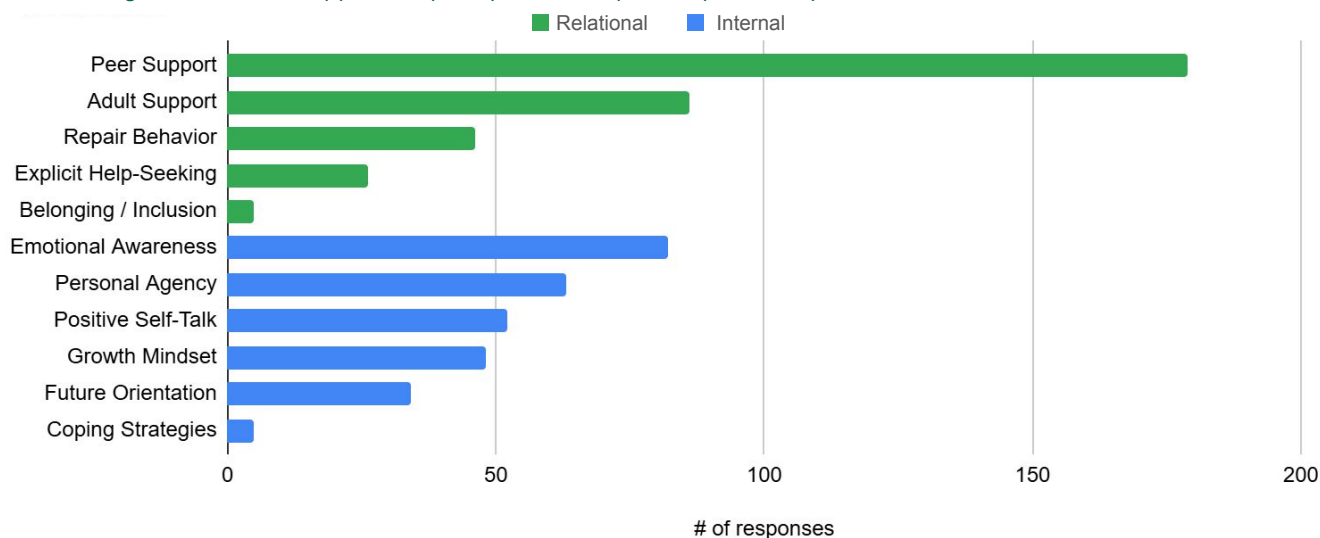
PROTECTIVE LANGUAGE PATTERNS

In addition to rubric-aligned domain scoring, student responses were analyzed for the presence of protective linguistic markers. Using structured pattern detection aligned to behavioral health constructs, responses were coded for relational and internal protective signals.

This secondary analysis provides a complementary lens to scaled scores, revealing not just how students perform across domains, but how protective capacity is articulated in their own language.

Frequency of Protective Linguistic Indicators in Student Responses

Protective linguistic indicators appear frequently across responses, particularly in relational domains.



Key Insights

- **Protective language appears at nearly four times the rate of risk language.**
- **Relational protective signals are most prominent (49.1% of responses),** reinforcing connection as a central protective structure.
- **Internal protective language is present but less developed.** Emotional awareness (11.8%) and agency language (9.1%) appear consistently, while explicit coping strategy naming remains limited (0.7%).



RISK LANGUAGE PATTERNS

Student responses were analyzed for risk-aligned linguistic markers using a tiered detection framework. Rather than treating all negative emotion as equivalent, language was separated into:

- Tier 1: Developmentally typical affect labeling (“I was mad,” “We always argue”)
- Tier 2: Escalation, avoidance, or relational strain language
- Tier 3: High-signal internal distress markers (e.g., loss of control, isolation, hopelessness)

This structure allows the school to distinguish normative middle school stress from signals that warrant closer monitoring.

Risk Factor	Category	Tier	Total Count	School	6th	7th	8th
Absolutist Framing	Internal	Tier 1	99	14.20%	14.10%	12.10%	17.50%
Anger	Relational	Tier 1	51	7.30%	9.40%	6.60%	5.80%
Avoidance	Internal	Tier 1	26	3.70%	2.10%	5.90%	2.60%
Peer Conflict	Relational	Tier 2	23	3.30%	3.00%	3.30%	3.70%
Overwhelm	Internal	Tier 2	20	2.90%	2.10%	2.20%	4.80%
Fear of Judgement	Relational	Tier 2	18	2.60%	3.00%	2.90%	1.60%
Escalation	Relational	Tier 2	7	1.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.70%
Exclusion	Relational	Tier 2	7	1.00%	0.90%	1.80%	0.00%
Loss / Grief	Relational	Tier 2	7	1.00%	1.30%	0.70%	1.10%
Withdrawal	Internal	Tier 2	2	0.30%	0.40%	0.00%	0.50%
Isolation	Internal	Tier 3	2	0.30%	0.90%	0.00%	0.00%
Self-Doubt	Internal	Tier 3	1	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.50%



*“I didn’t understand a lot of the things I was being taught...And **my mental state started getting really bad** due to that, and I just didn’t know how to ask for help...I asked my family for help and now I’m doing way better.” –G.E., 7th grader*

Key Insights

Risk language is present but largely developmentally typical.

- **Absolutist language (14.2%)** and **basic anger labeling (7.3%)** are common, reflecting cognitive exaggeration and conflict narration typical in early adolescence.
- **Tier 2 signals** most frequently include relational conflict and avoidance phrasing, particularly in 6th grade.
- **Tier 3 markers are rare.** True hopelessness language (“no point,” “won’t get better”) was not detected, and loss-of-control phrasing appears in fewer than 1% of responses.

Interpretation

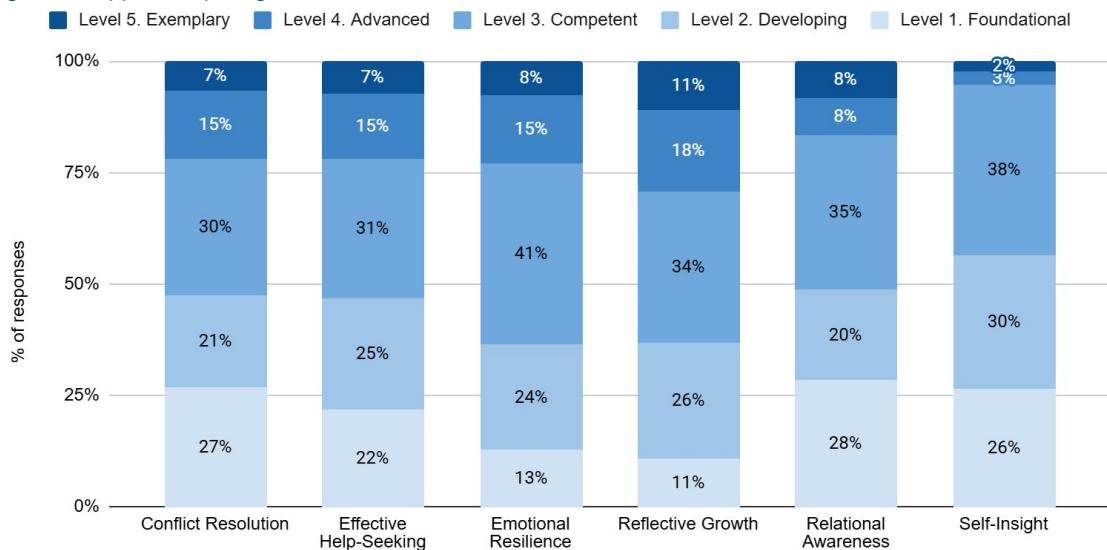
The overall risk profile is driven primarily by relational stress and affect intensity rather than internalized despair. These findings suggest targeted strengthening of relational regulation and self-insight routines, rather than expansion of intensive intervention systems.

CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

Behavioral HealthAcademy is demonstrating what it means to center student voice in behavioral health practice. Students are not only participating in the screening process—they are articulating wellness, challenge, growth, and connection in their own words. The volume and depth of reflective language captured in this cycle position the school at the forefront of voice-based wellness measurement. Building on this strong foundation, the following strategies are designed to deepen internal awareness and strengthen developmental transitions across grade levels.

Distribution of Student Scores by Behavioral Health Domain

Most students demonstrate Level 3 (Competent) or higher across domains, with Self-Insight showing the greatest opportunity for growth.



Data-Driven Strategic Recommendations

1. Embed Structured Self-Insight Routines

Integrate brief reflection protocols that ask students to identify emotional triggers, patterns, and alternative responses. Move beyond “*what happened*” to “*why I reacted*” and “*what I’ll try next.*”

2. Strengthen Relational Competencies Among Male Students

Provide explicit modeling and guided practice in conflict navigation, perspective-taking, and repair language, particularly in settings where relational scaffolds may be beneficial.

3. Normalize Help-Seeking in 6th Grade

Use classroom routines to explicitly model when and how to seek support, positioning help-seeking as a strength during this transitional developmental period into middle school.

4. Leverage 8th Grade Reflective Growth as Peer Leadership

Create structured opportunities for eighth graders to model growth narratives and adaptive coping strategies, reinforcing strengths while cultivating school-wide behavioral health norms.

APPENDIX: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

CLICK OR SCAN THE QR CODES TO LISTEN

Nothing captures learner competencies more authentically than the voices of students themselves. Explore a sample of their reflections across each domain.



"I had tons of missing assignments and there were only a few days left before the trimester ended... It was really difficult because I didn't have any motivation, but I got through it by just letting my steam off, and talking to friends helped a lot. I was able to get it done." -Z.B., 7th grader



"Every time when I would get back home, I would just cry and say 'I don't want to continue soccer,' but as the season progressed, I started to get better at holding my breath and being able to run faster miles...The way I powered through it was by not giving up." -G.E., 7th grader

"I realized afterwards, I'm like, 'Hey that's not the right way. I could have done something much more different than that.' I could have just had a conversation with her or at least told a parent." - Z.R., 7th grader

"It really taught me a lesson because the more quiet you are, the more you hear and the more you listen." -A.L., 8th grader



"My team, they're all proud of me. My coach helped me, and my friends helped me. And that's a success." -O.M., 7th grader



"I just put my mindset into making good memories instead of worrying about the future and worrying about what would happen next." -M.M., 7th grader



"Before I hit eighth grade, I would honestly never care about my grades. Today, I make sure that my GPA stays above at least 3.0 to maintain that type of standard. I believe I grew as a person and matured enough to care about who I would become in the future by maintaining those good grades." -L.D., 8th grader



"What I did to get through it is just I just took some time... sometimes if you don't feel the sadness, you won't be able to get through it." -A.M., 8th grader



"I never liked talking about my feelings because it made me feel vulnerable. It made me feel like I was weak. But now I have grown on a journey where I can talk about my feelings and I can go to people and reach out for help or support, instead of bashing myself or bringing myself down." -K.R., 8th grader

"I don't need to be cool. I can just be myself and then maybe people will respect me... I'm trying to become a good person. I'm trying to become nice, like a leader." -H.E., 8th grader

"I'm starting to change now—I'm starting to go back to 'It's okay, you'll get it next time.'" -X.S., 7th grader

