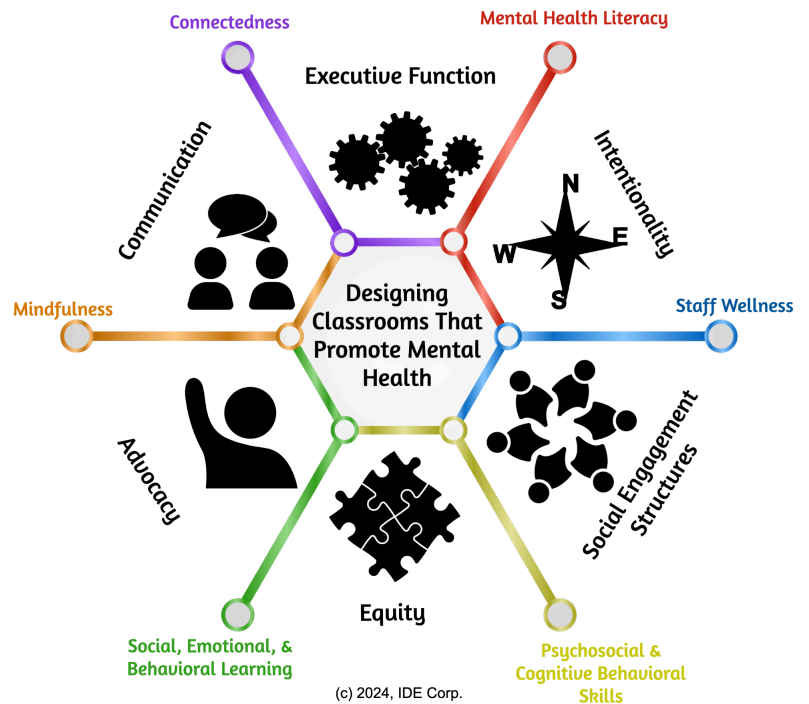


Designing Classrooms That Promote Mental Health: A Reflective Practice

The CDC has identified 6 areas schools should address for promoting mental health: mental health literacy; connectedness; mindfulness; social, emotional, & behavioral learning; psychosocial & cognitive behavioral skills; and staff wellness. These are the outer ring of the image to the right.

The inner spokes represent what IDE Corp. has identified as instructional skills we can actually build in classrooms and schools to support those areas:

- Building students' executive function for inhibitory control and self-awareness
- Building students' communication skills for positive engagement with others
- Promoting student advocacy for themselves and for others
- Ensuring equitable learning environments through IDE Corp.'s 7 Lenses of Instructional Equity: opportunity, access, identity, representation, empowerment, relationships, and authenticity
- Supporting students' social engagement through structures (e.g., norms, discussion protocols, *If . . . Then Cards*, *Persistence Cards*, consensus-building tools, etc.) and strategies (empathy questions, efficacy questions, tiered support, intentional teaming, etc.)
- Embracing intentionality in all decisions, words, and actions in the classroom



Discussion Activity

Part I: Personal Reflection (5 minutes)

Take a few quiet minutes to look at the diagram and reflect on the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers; this is simply an opportunity to be honest with yourself about where you are right now:

- When you look at the instructional skills in the inner spokes, which one or two do you feel your classroom already addresses well? What does that actually look like in practice for your students?
- Looking at the six CDC mental health areas in the outer ring, which one do you feel least confident your classroom currently supports? What makes it harder to address? Is it time, resources, training, or something else?

Hold onto your reflections. You'll bring them into the group conversation in Part II.

Part II: Building Our Collective Blueprint (15 minutes)

Now that you've had a moment to reflect individually, it's time to build something together.

Step 1: Find Your Group (2 minutes) Group yourselves by the CDC mental health area you identified as your *least confident* in Part I. If you're the only one in your group, join the area closest to yours; the goal is conversation, not isolation.

Step 2: Map the Connection (5 minutes) As a group, look at the inner spokes of the IDE Corp. diagram and discuss:

- Which of our instructional skills most directly connects to your CDC area?
- Are we already doing anything in our classrooms that supports this, even if we didn't realize it?
- What's one small, concrete shift we could make *tomorrow* to better address this area?

Step 3: Share & Commit (5 minutes) Each group shares their CDC area, their identified instructional connection, and their one actionable shift with the whole room. (A facilitator can capture responses on a shared chart or whiteboard.)

Facilitator Note

This activity is designed to open doors, not close them. You do not need to solve everything in 20 minutes, and you shouldn't try to. What matters is that your educators leave feeling seen, heard, and equipped with at least one concrete next step. Consider revisiting this diagram at a future faculty meeting to check in on progress and celebrate the shifts you've made together. Contact Nik Koch ([nkoach@idecorp.com](mailto:nkoch@idecorp.com)) to learn more or brainstorm the next step.