

New Perspectives and ALEC

New Perspectives is an original mental health curriculum, developed by TMHA staff and local High School teachers for presentation in 9th grade Health Classes—usually over two 60-80 minute periods. The curriculum provides each student with an overview of the four most common mental health diagnoses for adolescents, self-care options, the ability to recognize when peers are in distress, and how to make a simple plan of action. A modified, age-appropriate version of *New Perspectives* is available for Middle School students as well.

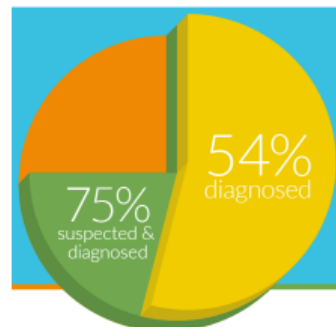
An essential aspect of this classroom presentation is that our presenters are men and women with lived experience of mental illness. The greatest challenge in presenting information to adolescents is establishing credibility and engagement immediately, and our presenters—by weaving their stories into the lesson—do exactly that.



A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON EATING DISORDERS...

- **What they are:**
 - *Serious mental illnesses*
 - Highest mortality rate of all psychiatric conditions
 - Highest suicide rate of all mental illnesses
- **What they're not:**
 - A fad diet
 - About food
 - Weight
 - Vanity

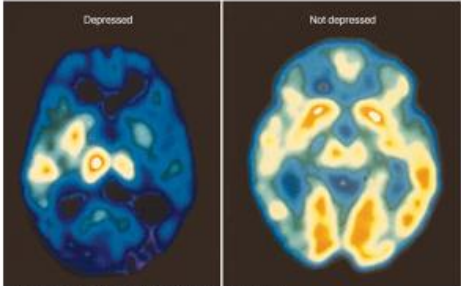
Over Half of the LGBTQ Youth Surveyed Have Been Diagnosed with an Eating Disorder



A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON DEPRESSION...

Depression, often known as major depressive disorder, is a common but serious mood disorder.

- Affects how we feel, think and handle daily activities.



25% of 7th graders Said **YES** to chronic sadness and hopelessness in the last 12 months

SOURCE: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

WHO TO TURN TO FOR HELP

At School

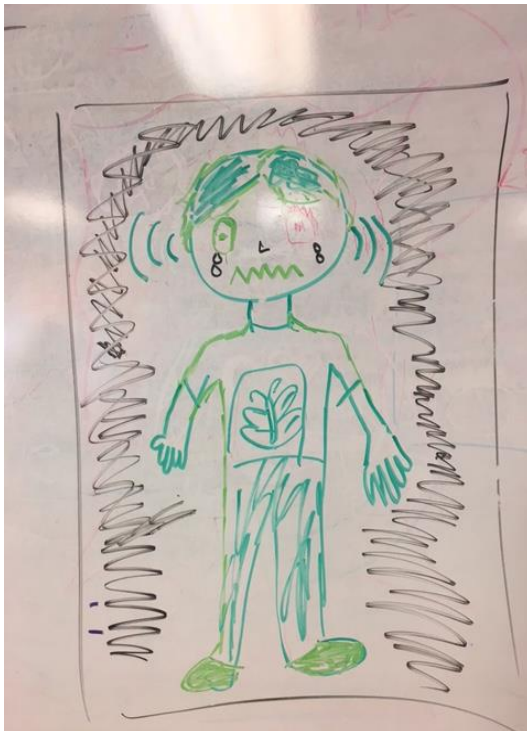
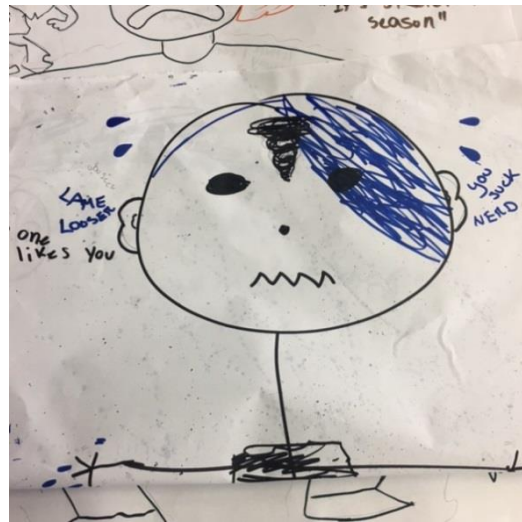
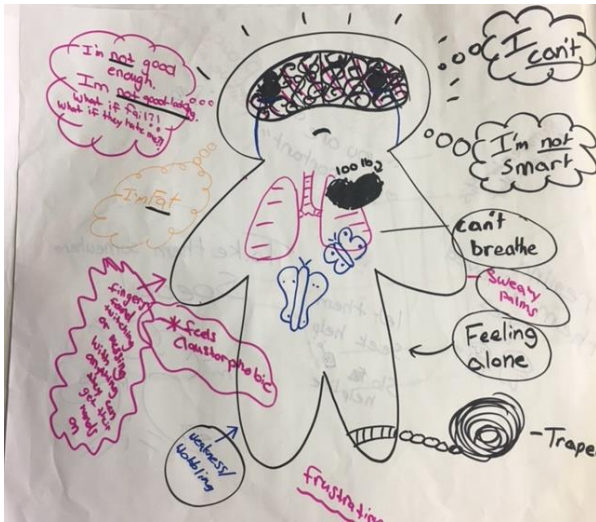
- Friend
- Teacher
- Guidance Counselor
- Other trusted adult

Who to Talk to 24/7

Texting Line: text LISTEN 741741
 Teen Line Online: see card
 SLO Hotline: 800-783-0607



One of the features of *New Perspectives* is a class activity where student teams draw their *Emotional X-Ray*: their idea of what anxiety looks like. The results are not only quite revealing, but facilitate open, highly engaged discussion about these issues.




ALEC (Ask, Listen, Encourage, Connect) is a mental health action plan used to teach youth age 12-18 how to connect with someone who may be struggling with their mental health and/or in a mental health crisis. Participants learn a 4-step action plan integrating skills of communication, active listening, encouragement vs. advice, and best ways to connect a person in crisis to appropriate professional help.

The training focuses on shaping supportive conversations, discusses everyday situations a young person may experience, and addresses key questions like:

- “Why we are afraid to ask personal questions?”
- “How do I just listen without giving advice?”
- “How do I use empathy?”
- “What if they ask me not to tell?”

ALEC helps young people focus on the real problems, not just the symptoms, and increases the likelihood of them reaching out for support next time they are struggling mentally or emotionally.

ASK



- **It is okay to plan ahead!**
 - This conversation is about **them**.
 - Add hotline number to contacts.
- **Where is the best place to ask?**
 - Pick a place where they would feel most comfortable.
 - Have a friend or loved one there for added support, but **ONLY** if the person you're helping is okay with it.

LISTEN

- **Make frequent eye contact**
- **Do not give advice or try to fix.**
 - Put your cellphone away

“I can look directly at someone, nod when they're talking, maybe even throw in a “yeah”, and still not hear a single word they said...”

ENCOURAGE

- “I want you to know you mean a lot to me.”
- “I want you to know your feelings matter.”
- “You We are going to get through this.”
- “I want you to know you’re stronger than you realize.”

PLACES TO CONNECT

AT SCHOOL

- Friend
- Teacher
- Guidance Counselor
- Trusted adult

WHO TO TALK TO 24/7

- Parents/Guardians
- SLO Hotline Card- 800-783-0607
- Text HOME to 741741

Text line is also on your ALEC card

It has been our privilege to work with the schools and district administrators throughout San Luis Obispo and North Santa Barbara Counties. Transitions-Mental Health Association’s High School program is helping our young men and women recognize that they are not alone with anxiety, depression, and other challenges. Just as important, they are discovering they have the power to help one another. We look forward to strengthening our collaboration with regional schools in the 2019-20 academic year.