

CHERRY HILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As parents, you understand the physical and mental health of young people plays a key role in their ability to succeed in school, have rewarding relationships with family members and friends, and lead productive and happy lives. Cherry Hill High Schools are committed to working with you not only to educate your children, but also to ensure that they reach their full potential outside of the classroom. To that end, we are offering parents of grades 9 through 12 at East & West the opportunity to have their teens participate in a wellness check-up called Behavioral Health (BH) Works. BH-Works was developed by the Center for Family Intervention Science at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to address the need for comprehensive behavioral health screening. The program is free and completely voluntary and confidential.

The teen years are a time of tremendous change. BH-Works can help parents better understand the changes their teens are experiencing. No matter what the results of your teen's screening are, the program will provide you with important information. For most parents, this screening will reassure you that your teen is just experiencing typical "growing pains." For other parents, the screening can help you pinpoint a problem in its early stages, giving you the ability to secure needed help for your teen and reduce the chance that a more significant problem will develop in the future.

We hope you will take advantage of this confidential screening. Please read the information below and in the attached "Common Questions and Answers about BH-Works," and then go on your [Genesis Portal](#) sign the electronic Parent Consent Form to indicate whether you want your teen to participate. There will be an **option for Remote** students to take the screening in person during the morning hours when other students are not in the building. Transportation will not be provided. There is **not** a virtual option for the screening.

How Does BH-Works program work?

Jennifer DiStefano, Student Assistance Counselor, will oversee the program. The screening will take place during school hours in a private, social distanced setting at the school. Your teen will not be screened without your permission. All screening results will be kept confidential, stored separately from academic records.

There are three steps to the screening procedure:

Step One: Teens complete a computerized, 10-minute questionnaire about health and safety, symptoms of depression and anxiety, suicidal thinking and behavior, trauma among other issues.

Step Two: Teens whose answers reveal a potential problem and teens who ask for help then meet with a trained mental health professional in private to determine if further evaluation would be helpful. Teens whose answers show they probably do not need help meet briefly with other program staff to answer any questions they may have about the program and to give them the opportunity to ask for help with any other concerns the screening did not cover.

Step Three: You will be contacted by program staff only if your teen meets with a mental health professional and the professional recommends further evaluation for your teen. If this is the case, program staff will share the overall results with you and discuss ways you can get help for your teen. You will not be contacted if your teen is not found to need additional mental health services. This screen includes general health questions.

Cherry Hill school district provides this screening at no cost but does not provide further evaluation or treatment services. It is up to you to decide if you want to obtain any additional services for your teen. Please do not hesitate to call Jennifer DiStefano at (856) 424-2222 x2535 if you have any questions. You may also find information about the BH-Works at www.bh-works.com

Common Questions and Answers about BH- Works

Are BH-Works results confidential?

Yes, screening is confidential. In order to protect your child's privacy, his/her screening results and related files will be stored separately from his/her academic records. Teachers will not be involved in the screening procedure. If program staff believes that your child is in some danger or is a danger to others, they are mandated by law to take action and notify appropriate personnel and/or necessary authorities and abide by Cherry Hill Public Schools policies and procedures.

What information will be shared with my child following the screen?

All teens that complete a screening questionnaire will meet privately with program staff to: discuss any thoughts or concerns that came up for the teens while completing the screen that they would like to discuss; help the teens generate a list of people they could go to for help or to talk things over with when they have a problem; and to obtain their feedback about the screening experience.

Teens whose answers to the screening questionnaire reveal potential concerns about their emotional well-being will meet privately with a licensed mental health professional. The purpose of this meeting is to further explore symptoms that came to light through the questionnaire, find out if these symptoms are causing any significant difficulties in the teen's life and, if so, determine whether he/ she might benefit from a more complete evaluation by a mental health or medical professional at a later date. At the conclusion of the private meeting, if the health professional has determined that a teen might benefit from such an evaluation, the teen will be told that his/ her parent(s) will be contacted to discuss a recommendation for follow-up.

What if I provide consent, but my child doesn't want to participate?

Because we believe screening should be completely voluntary, your child may refuse to participate or refuse to answer any questions during the screening. We will notify you by phone call if your child chooses not to participate or is absent on the day of the screening.

Does BH-Works recommend treatment?

BH-Works screening Program and staff do not make any treatment recommendations. All possible treatment decisions are made by families in close consultation with a professional licensed health professional of your choice after the completion of the screen. Treatment recommendations are beyond the scope of the BH-Works program.

Can I see the questionnaire?

Yes. If you wish to review the BH-Works screening questionnaire, the assent form your child will be asked to sign prior to his/her participation in the program, or any instructional materials related to the screening, please submit a request to Jennifer DiStefano at 1750 Kresson Rd., Cherry Hill, NJ 08003 or (856) 424-2222 and you will be notified of the time and place where you may review these materials.

***Parental Permission form is on the Genesis portal. Please fill out and submit.**