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Free documentary film and curriculum offered May 3rd to help educators address rising student mental health struggles and self-care for teachers

HOUSTON – Prior to the pandemic, suicide was the second leading cause of death among children and youth, and the rate has reached never-before-seen levels nationally and in Texas. COVID 19 has only made this worse: [according to the CDC](#), from mid-March through October 2020, the proportion of mental health-related ER visits nationally increased 24% among children age 5 to 11 and 31% among adolescents age 12 to 17.

Recognizing this, the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute and The Hackett Center for Mental Health are offering Texas educators and parents a free screening of the documentary “*A Trusted Space: Redirecting Grief to Growth*” along with curriculum designed to support their efforts to mitigate the effects of grief, trauma, anxiety and other emotional stressors experienced by students and teachers in their school community.

The online screening, followed by a panel discussion by distinguished Texas education leaders, will take place Monday, May 3, from 4:00 – 5:30 pm CT, with attendees joining through a virtual platform. Reservations will remain open through midnight on Sunday, May 2, 2021 at www.mmhpi.org/event/a-trusted-space-screening-panel.

The post-screening panel discussion will include Mike Morath, commissioner of education, Texas Education Agency; Charles Martinez, PhD, dean, College of Education, University of Texas at Austin; Pam Wells, EdD, executive director, Region 4 Education Service Center; and panel moderator Marcellina Melvin, senior director of Health Equity Strategy at Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute.

With commentary from leading experts in trauma-informed education, “A Trusted Space” is designed to help educators, counselors, school administrators and parents understand the complex issues and feelings that students and teachers are currently facing. The film provides

strategies to redirect grief into growth by building a safe and trusted emotional space – ultimately creating a better environment for learning and inspiring more resilient students.

“These unprecedented times have taken an emotional toll on many in our school communities,” said Jennifer Esterline, vice president of education policy and regional development at Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. “Our hope is that this program and curriculum will help to support and empower our educators in their efforts to support students and families.”

Esterline notes that the May 3, 2021 program coincides with both Teacher Appreciation Week and Children’s Mental Health Week.

“Providing information and tools to help educators understand and support the mental health of their school community is one way we can show our appreciation for the important work they do,” she adds.

The panel session will be recorded and available for later online viewing at www.mmhpi.org/event/a-trusted-space-screening-panel.

For more information about the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, visit mmhpi.org.

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