

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Your child's emotional and physical health is a key factor of how well they function in school and engage in relationships with others. Penn Manor High School is fully dedicated to supporting your child in being healthy and successful in their lives inside and outside of school. We are partnering with Samaritan Counseling Center to offer the voluntary TeenHope Emotional-Wellness screening. TeenHope will use the PHQ-9 and GAD screening tools to identify risk factors related to depression, anxiety, and thoughts of self-harm. These screenings and the questions included are easily available to view online. The screening is voluntary, confidential, and of no cost to families.

Not every screening will indicate a problem. In fact, it is likely that the screening will confirm that your child is experiencing normal teenage transitions. If there are problems that your child is facing that he or she needs support to deal with, TeenHope will assist in identifying those issues. The program then works with identified teens and their parents to link them with resources in the community, where they can obtain a complete mental health evaluation. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity for your child. Again, it is absolutely confidential.

The screening will be done on January 8 and 11th for 9th grade students who have Health and PE this semester. It is done in a manner that assures that only your child and the mental health professional see your child's response. All screening results are kept confidential.

ALL Social Distancing and Health and Safety protocols will be followed during the screening process

These steps are followed as part of the screening process.

1. Students complete a five-minute questionnaire about symptoms of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thinking and behavior.
2. Teens, whose answers reveal a potential problem or ask for help, meet with a trained mental health professional in private to determine if further evaluation would be helpful.
3. Teens, whose answers show they probably do not need help, meet briefly with other program staff to ask any questions they may have about the program or ask for help with any other concerns the screening did not cover. These students are encouraged to identify and reach-out to supportive adults in their life whenever they have concerns.
4. A recent survey of young people throughout Lancaster County schools found that about one out of six reported seriously considering attempting suicide at one point in the last year. With this in mind, TeenHope gives every student they see the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number, **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**. We encourage you to put this in your contacts and use it if you suspect that a teenager you know is suicidal.
5. Parents are contacted by program staff only if your teen is recommended for further evaluation. If this is the case, Samaritan staff will discuss ways you can get your teen help. Contact is made the day of the screening, and one week and one month following the screening. Parents are not contacted if your teen is not found to need additional mental health services.

Although the school district provides this screening at no cost, it does not provide further evaluation or treatment services. It is up to families to decide if they want to obtain any additional services for their teen. Samaritan Counseling Center provides referral information directly to parents. In addition, Samaritan Counseling Center is available to provide assistance and financial support to parents interested in pursuing mental health services for their child.

We believe this screening opportunity is valuable for our students, so we plan to make this available this year to all ninth grade students. However, if for any reason you do not wish your student to participate, you may opt out by completing and returning the form below.

Please do not hesitate to call the school at 717-872-9520 ext. 1821 or Samaritan Counseling Center at 717-560-9969 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Baron H. Jones
Principal

Request for my student to be excused from the TeenHope Screening Program

Administered by the Samaritan Counseling Center, Lancaster, PA

I understand that my child is invited to participate in the TeenHope Emotional-Wellness screening as described in the letter from the school. However, I do not want my child to participate in this wellness screening. My signature below certifies that I **do not** give permission.

I understand that the screening involves the completion of a short questionnaire about symptoms of depression, anxiety, and thoughts of self-harm. I also understand that all screening results are kept confidential.

I realize that I have the right to inquire about the results of this screening program by contacting the Samaritan Counseling Center 717-560-9969.

_____ NO, I do NOT give my child permission to participate in the TeenHope screening.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Student Name (please print)

Student Grade

Date

RETURN TO your student's PE/Health teacher before January 5th TO OPT your student out of mental health screening or email Melissa.ostrowski@pennmanor.net to OPT OUT.