

## **4 CORNERS**

### **Part of the Whole or the Whole Part?: Advocating for Mental Health in Our School Community**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The 4 corners activity is designed to ask a question and promote conversation within small groups as well as the larger group regarding mental health awareness and advocacy within the school community. Although there are only 4 answers to each question, some may find that they agree with multiple answers and would like to stay in the middle, which is fine. Those in the middle will have an opportunity to speak after the other 4 groups have gone.

#### **MATERIALS:**

Question Boards (4 for each question)

Leader copy

Post it notes

Writing instruments

Tape

**TIME:** 4-5 minutes per question

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Hang up the question and answer boards. The question should be in a central location, answers hung in 4 different corners of the room.
2. Much like the game "4 corners", after the question is read, participants will find a statement that most resonates with them and go to that corner
3. Provide everyone with a post-it note and have them write down why they chose their answer; place it on the board
4. Give a few minutes for the groups to discuss why they chose that answer
5. Ask one representative from each group to share common threads from their corner group.
6. Repeat with each question you do.

#### **ACCOMMODATIONS TO CONSIDER:**

Providing participants time to move to their preferred corner

Ensuring that the posters are located in visible areas

Removing physical obstacles from the area



## Leader Copy

Question: Why should awareness of student mental health concerns be a priority in our District?

- Mental illnesses impact student achievement
- Prevalence of mental health disorders within our society
- Mental illness deserves to be taken seriously like any disease
- It is the right thing to do

Question: What are the major barriers to addressing mental health issues within our school community?

- It's not a high priority/not enough time
- Not enough money and resources to support it well
- Parents/students in the school or district are not ready for these types of discussions
- Students with mental health issues are better served in mental health clinics

Question: What is the most impactful thing I can do to promote awareness of mental health concerns to students, teachers, and parents?

- Distribute a list of general resources for students and caregivers to reference
- Collaborate with school counselors and social workers on awareness campaigns for students, teachers, and caregivers/parents
- Encourage the creation of student support groups to promote positive mental health at school
- Connect with local mental health clinics and resources to encourage connection with schools and students.

Question: Students with mental health illnesses should be viewed as...

- Capable
- A person just like me
- Not their illness (it does not define them)
- Someone who needs constant help

\*This activity has been adapted by Nadiya Rosen for mental health advocacy use from the Greater Atlanta Jewish Abilities Alliance's 4 Corners activity. Please ask for permission ([nadiyaellen@icloud.com](mailto:nadiyaellen@icloud.com)) and credit source if you would like to use this exercise.









