

Teen Mental Health First Aid Project

Anaya Lakhani



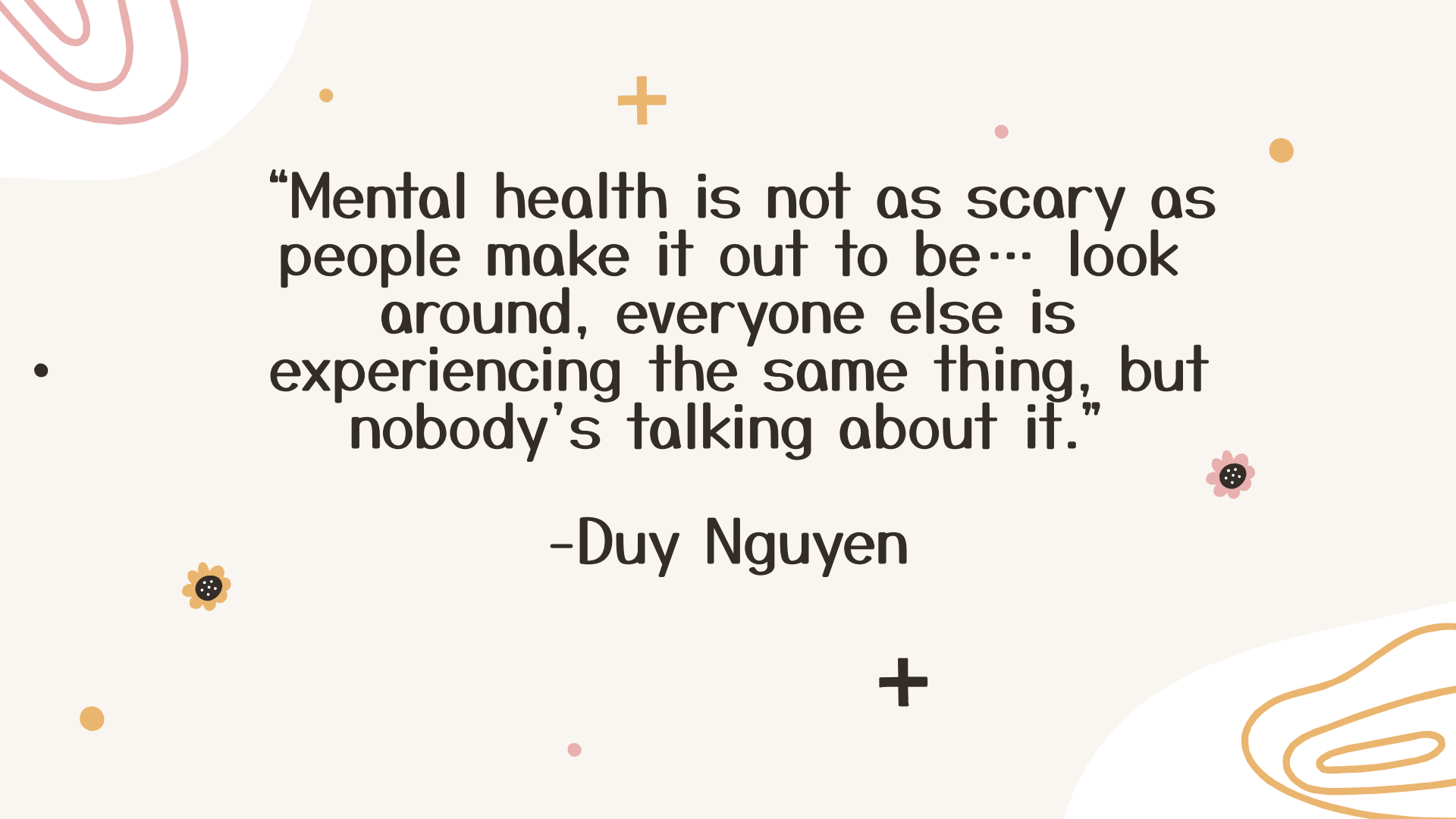
What is mental health?

- Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

It affects how we think, feel, and act, and helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.

Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood





“Mental health is not as scary as people make it out to be... look around, everyone else is experiencing the same thing, but nobody’s talking about it.”

-Duy Nguyen



40%

of teens face mental illnesses by the age of 17

75%

of teens lack anyone to confide in



34%

of teens feel comfortable going to their parents for help

My Project

Goals:

- Reduce stigma around teen mental health
- Equip students with peer support and response skills
- Promote open communication between youth and adults
- Create safe spaces for mental health conversations



My Project

Steps I Took:

1. **Researched** mental health efforts in my community
2. **Interviewed** high schoolers, therapists, and wellness coordinators
3. **Identified** a gap in peer-to-peer support and youth-parent communication
4. Partnered with Joey Ordonez and **doubled** course sign-ups through outreach
5. **Coordinated** with Karen Castillo to complete CTA training and plan **May 19** workshop



The prototype

- Prototype in February with 33 high school students
- Students reviewed three sample class materials

What I learned:

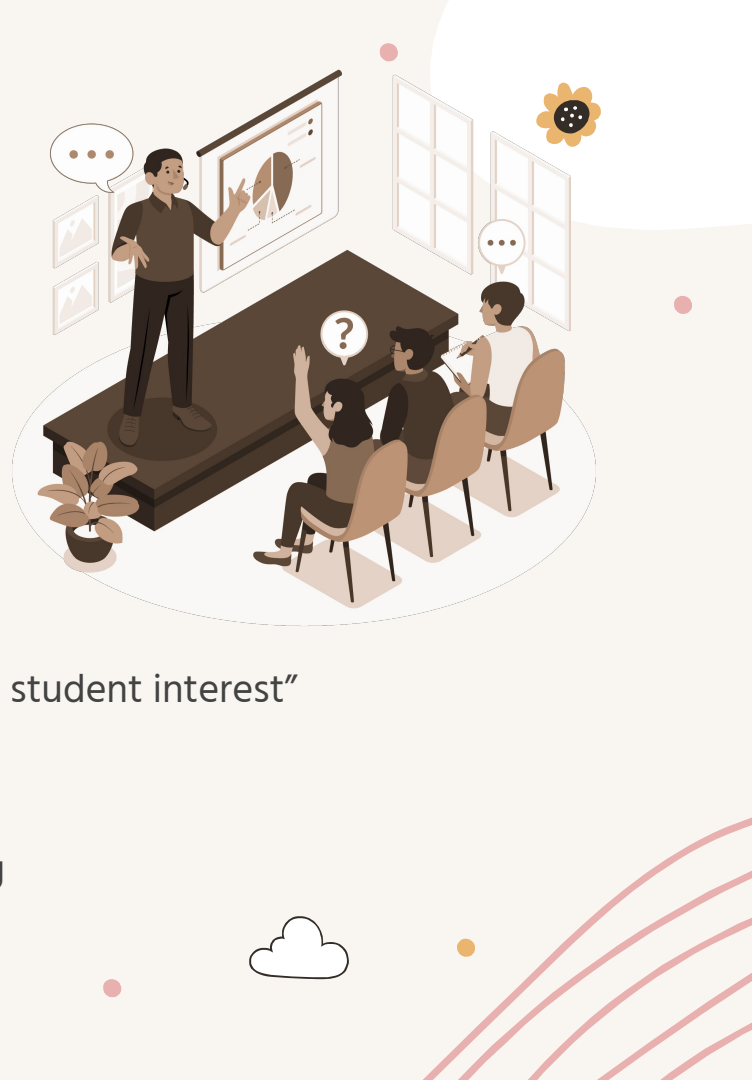
- Materials were clear but not engaging

What the experts say:

- Gloria Li (Allcove): “lecture-style teaching often loses student interest”

What I changed:

- Course updated to be more interactive and engaging



My Project

Obstacles

1. Low initial sign-ups
2. Lack of time
 - a. Especially with the workshop



Impact



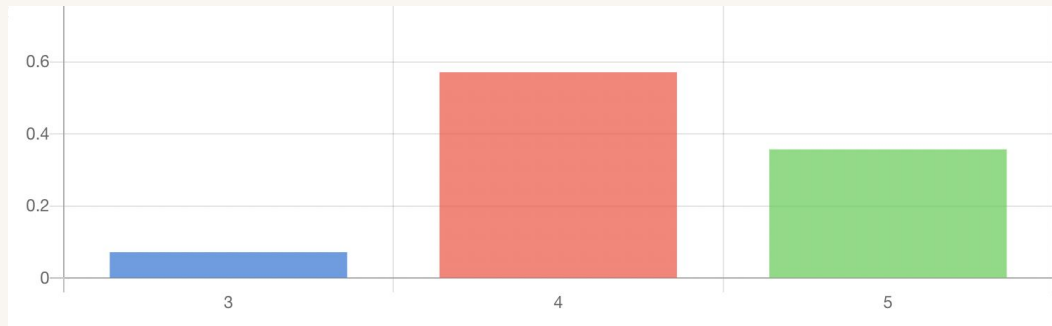
Who Benefited:

- 20+ high school students through the Teen Mental Health First Aid course
- Small group of Gunn High School staff through the CTA workshop

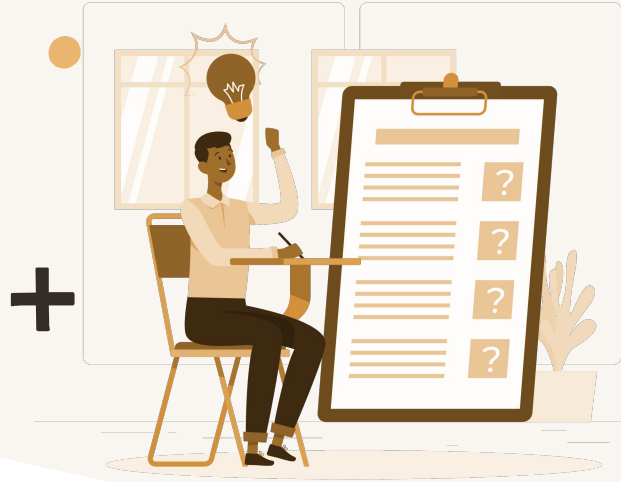
Impact:

- Teens gained confidence in ability to help others in crisis
- Ripple effect of understanding and communication

"On a scale of one to five, how confident do you feel in supporting someone experiencing a mental health crisis?"



Takeaways



- Talking about mental health is hard—but necessary
- Procrastination made planning tough; time management matters
- Building professional relationships takes effort, but it pays off
- Real change takes consistent outreach
- Communication is tricky

Continuing the effort

How Else Can People Help?

1. Raise Awareness
 - a. Spread the word about mental health resources and events.
 - b. Use word of mouth and social media to share important information.
2. Utilize Local Resources
 - a. Visit Allcove, the teen mental health center in Palo Alto.
 - b. neverabother.org



Get involved!

My Next Steps:

- Plan future CTA workshops
- Continue advocating for the Mental Health First Aid course next year.

Your Potential Next Steps:

Spread the word and attend events! A lot of effort goes into organizing these, and your participation really makes a difference.



Thank

Specifically..
you!

- ★ Family Symposium
- ★ Social Justice Pathway AAR program
- ★ Tara Firenzi
- ★ Joey Ordonez
- ★ YCS Coordinators: Aubrey Parke & Karen Castillo



Sources



Slide 2:

SAMHSA. "What Is Mental Health? ." SAMHSA, 24 Apr. 2023, www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/what-is-mental-health.

Slide 4:

NAMI. "Poll of Teen Mental Health from Teens Themselves (2022)." National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 12 Feb. 2024, www.nami.org/support-education/publications-reports/survey-reports/poll-of-teen-mental-health-from-teens-themselves-2022/.

Slide 12:



"You Are Never a Bother!" Never a Bother, 1 May 2025, neverabother.org/.

Find Service Opportunities and Events on our Do Service Calendar!, et al. Youth Community Service, 2024, www.youthcommunityservice.org/.

"Allcove Youth." Allcove, 14 Jan. 2025, allcove.org/.

