

# THRIVER INSTITUTE

Live to THRIVE!

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All young people deserve the right to have the types of positive childhood experiences that are vital for optimal human development and mental health. Research shows that our communities are a fundamental and uniquely positioned resource available to create the types of experiences that forge the authentic relationships needed to support healing and growth. This is why I am writing to express my support for bill HF 2930 Article 2, Section 68 ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION.

Since 2009, Minnesota's adolescent population has reported increased rates of mental health concerns, including increased rates of stress, anxiety, depression, hopelessness, and suicide. Reports of psychological distress doubled during the pandemic and inequities intensified among Minnesota's Black, Indigenous, populations of color, LGBTQ+, and rural populations. Our youth today are facing multiple mental health crises that our systems alone cannot effectively manage. Investing in our community-based resources is our responsibility to each other as well as our children.

I come into this work as a person in long term recovery from PTSD caused by adverse childhood experiences. I first dealt with suicidal ideation when I was 11. It was the relationships with certain adults in my community that gave me the support I needed to not just survive but also seek to thrive. I write this to show that I understand firsthand how important community is for young people.

I have dedicated my life's work to understanding what we can do as a culture to change our view of mental health and mental illness so we can foster the positive childhood experiences research is showing our youth need for optimal development. It is clear to me that communities are a highly under-utilized resource that holds the key to creating a more neurodiverse and supportive culture for our youth. HF 2930 Article 2, Section 68 ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION is a very solid start in building up the support systems that our young people need and deserve.

For these reasons, I urge you to support HF 2930.

Thank you,

*Tyler Reitzner*

Tyler Reitzner

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