

(Letter to School Administrator and Teacher introducing the series of Mental Health Classes and requesting school support for delivering the curriculum:

(Date)

Dear Mr/Ms \_\_\_\_\_

I am writing to provide information about a series of classes on mental health awareness that have been prepared for children, ages 10 to 12, and are designed to be delivered by the school nurse. I am requesting your support and permission to offer these health classes at \_\_\_\_\_ School during this term.

The purpose of this project is to increase student awareness and comfort in discussing mental health and mental illness: important areas affecting their health and school success. The Surgeon General's report on children's mental health (1999) identifies 1 in 5 children, ages 9 to 17, as having a mental health problem, and many receive no mental health services. My goal in offering these classes is to increase students' awareness of mental health and help them learn what to do if they experience a problem, or if they know other students who are having problems.

This mental health awareness curriculum has been piloted with over 400 elementary and middle students (2000 through 2005), and found to be effective in increasing student knowledge of mental health and mental illness, instilling positive attitudes and reducing stigma, and developing students' help-seeking skills and willingness to confide in adults about their mental health concerns and to seek help for friends experiencing problems.

The mental health awareness classes include topics such as: 1) What is Mental Health and Mental Illness?, 2) The Brain Connection in Mental Health, 3) Stress and Coping, 4) Common Mental Health Disorders: Anxiety and Depression, and 6) Common Mental Health Problems: ADHD. The materials and class outlines are manualized, and can be adapted to each classroom or student group.

If approved by the school, parents of students in the class will receive an introductory letter informing them of the focus of the classes and inviting them to call the school nurse for additional information. Each class is accompanied by a short letter to parents and the teacher summarizing the content of that week's class and inviting parents and teachers to explore topics further with the students.

Sincerely yours,

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Nurse signature