

## Letter 9: YRT2\_Y5.F.21

What is important to know about working to support young people's well-being? What do you think are three important messages for professionals - mental health professionals, educators, police officers - to know about supporting and working with children and youth? About supporting their mental health and well-being?

It is important for all of these professionals to know the signs of an individual going through a mental health crisis. Often times people misinterpret mental health crisis' for children acting out or going through a phase. Professionals that are around children everyday such as teachers should know how to identify the signs of a mental health disorder in children. I think it is extremely important for teachers to go through formal training in this prior to beginning their career. Especially in today's society young individuals are facing a decline in mental health because there are unable to lead a normal life due to covid. Teachers are who they interact with the most apart from their parents, and signs of mental health distress can be seen in children at school. Additionally, I believe that police officers need to be aware of when someone is going through a mental health crisis and needs help from a professional, and when the situation requires police intervention. As we have seen in the past couple of years, police do not have the proper training to de-escalate a situation involving a mental health crisis. There should be procedure in place to ensure that people are getting the help that they need and are not unnecessarily being aggravated by police presence. Additionally, these professionals should know how to treat individuals going through a mental health crisis, they should be able to understand and if necessary deescalate whatever situation the child is going through.

I think three important messages for mental health professionals, teachers and police officers are;

1. That they need to be more informed and knowledgeable about mental health and how a crisis can present itself in different individuals
2. Have patience when interacting with people suffering from a mental health crisis, or disorder.
3. It is not a "phase" they will not grow out of it. Mental health crisis, or problems are serious and may not always be visible or identifiable. However, that does not make them any less real. It is important to know and understand why someone may be doing something or before labelling their behaviour as just "acting out"