

## 5 Tips for Creating a Culture of Caring in Our High Schools

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Participants in high school sports and performing arts are under tremendous pressure these days – from parents, teachers, coaches and peers. Their days are consumed with school, sports and activities. They are trying to figure out who they are and who they want to be – all while having to compare themselves to everyone else on social media. It's easy to see why high school students have a lot on their plates ... and their minds.

It is time for all of us to turn our attention to these students, including the activity participants at schools in Idaho. Empathy is so important. No matter who you are—a parent, teacher, coach, athletic administrator, performing arts director or anyone else who interacts with teens—we can all play a part in looking out for them.

That's why the IHSAA and the NFHS are launching the **#WeSeeYou** Campaign. Together, we want to create a culture of caring in our school communities – one where everyone feels seen and supported, *especially* our students.

**Our message: No matter what challenges you're facing, we see you. We support you. And we're here for you.**

It's not about having all the answers. It's about empathizing with our students and offering the support they need. So where do you start?

**Here are a few tips for supporting the mental well-being of the teens in your life:**

**1. Focus on the meaning of mental health.**

The World Health Organization suggests that “mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community.”

**2. Acknowledge and connect with *all* students.**

Every teenager—not just the honor roll student or star athlete—wants to feel seen by someone who matters to them, like a parent, teacher, coach or director.

**3. Keep in mind that teens are seeing life through a highlight reel.**

Teenagers are “seen” a lot on social media, but are they seen for who they truly are? Be the person who wants to know and support the *real* them.

**4. Create a culture where *everyone* is looking out for each other.**

It is not one person's responsibility to check in on every student's mental well-being. We can *all* play a part in noticing, acknowledging and offering support to one another.

**5. Remember your influence is greater than you often realize.**

Far beyond students' academic or athletic potential, you can make a difference in their lives by paying attention to their behavior and who they are as people.

Creating a culture of caring isn't just good for teenagers. It's good for *all* of us.

When we demonstrate empathy through listening, connecting and caring, we let young people know that they are not alone.

Ready to join us? Visit our website, **WeSeeYou.Community**, to learn more and get free resources like social media posts, graphics, printables and more to promote the #WeSeeYou culture in your school community. Together, we can offer support, empathy and encouragement to every teenager in Idaho and across the country!