

Grade 8

Mental and Emotional Health: Functional knowledge about mental and emotional health enables students to recognize the importance of mental well-being, manage emotions effectively, build resilience, and address challenges. All instruction related to mental and emotional health should come with a content warning for students and include instruction on how to seek help for mental and emotional health support. Mental and emotional health education helps students cultivate positive relationships, reduce stigma, and foster a sense of safety in schools and communities. Grounded in trauma-informed practices and public health approaches, this standard aligns with Maryland Education Articles §§7-401, 7-443, and 7-501—7-506, which emphasize student well-being and behavioral health supports. MD1A

Wellness

- 1 Evaluate one's personal wellness. MD1A.8.1
- 2 Analyze how practices and behaviors support a variety of dimensions of wellness. MD1A.8.2

Emotions, Feelings, and Relationships

- 3 Explain how the expression of emotions and social isolation can impact the health of self and others. MD1A.8.3
- 4 Demonstrate empathy to others who have different feelings, thoughts, and experiences. MD1A.8.4

Self and Social Awareness

- 5 Analyze the connection between growth mindset and overcoming setbacks/challenges. MD1A.8.5

Body Image

- 6 Analyze strategies to cultivate a positive body image, including self-compassion, body appreciation, and resilience against appearance pressures. MD1A.8.6

Digital and Social Media

- 7 Evaluate how sharing or posting personal information electronically about self or others on digital and social media sites can impact one's mental and emotional health. MD1A.8.7

Seeking Help

- 8 Demonstrate strategies to seek help with a trusted adult about your overall mental and overall emotional health. MD1A.8.8
- 9 Analyze practices and behaviors that support mental and emotional health, including how to communicate with a trusted adult. MD1A.8.9

Mental Health Challenges

- 10 Explain how individual, interpersonal, community, and environmental factors impact feelings of stress and anxiety. MD1A.8.10
- 11 Describe health-promoting practices and behaviors that are personally effective for stress management. MD1A.8.11

- 12 Justify feelings and emotions associated with loss and grief as a normal part of development. [MD1A.8.12](#)
- 13 Recognize disordered eating behaviors in oneself and others in order to seek help. [MD1A.8.13](#)
- 14 Discuss common barriers to seeking help for disordered eating. [MD1A.8.14](#)
- 15 Identify factors that contribute to addiction. [MD1A.8.15](#)
- 16 Summarize the impact of positive and adverse childhood experiences on health outcomes. [MD1A.8.16](#)

Nonsuicidal Self-Injury (NSSI)

- 17 Explain the warning signs and behaviors of people who may be experiencing NSSI. [MD1A.8.17](#)
- 18 Demonstrate how to tell a trusted adult that someone is experiencing NSSI. [MD1A.8.18](#)

Suicide Prevention

- 19 Describe the contributors to suicidal ideation and suicidality. [MD1A.8.19](#)

Substance Use and Misuse: Functional knowledge around substance use and misuse empowers students to understand the short-and long-term impacts of substance use on the brain and body and to be able to take health-promoting actions related to substance use prevention. This standard supports prevention and early intervention efforts outlined in Maryland Education Article §§7-411 and 7-413, which require instruction on drug addiction and controlled dangerous substances. By addressing risk and protective factors, including media influences, community norms, and access to

Other Drugs

- 1 Analyze how individual, interpersonal, community, and environmental factors impact heroin and opioid use. [MD1B.8.1](#)
- 2 Explain connections between mental health and substance use. [MD1B.8.2](#)
- 3 Explain the effects, consequences, and impact of heroin and opioid use and misuse on the dimensions of wellness, including the lethal effects of fentanyl. [MD1B.8.3](#)
- 4 Identify how substance use can be a negative coping strategy for social isolation and positive alternatives to connect with others. [MD1B.8.4](#)
- 5 Analyze practices and behaviors that support substance nonuse, including how to manage health conditions in safe ways. [MD1B.8.5](#)
- 6 Describe the health risks of using performance-enhancing or weight-loss drugs. [MD1B.8.6](#)

Support Services

- 7 Explain how to access community resources for treatment and support for substance use and misuse. [MD1B.8.7](#)

support services, students develop the health literacy necessary to navigate their environments and reduce the likelihood of use and misuse. MD1B

Family Life and Human Sexuality: Family life and human sexuality instruction provide students with age-appropriate, scientifically based, and medically accurate information about relationships, consent, treating others with dignity and respect, and sexual and reproductive health. It also helps students gain the functional knowledge that they need to apply health-related skills to their sexual and reproductive health. It supports bodily autonomy and the ability to delay pregnancy and reduce the likelihood of sexually transmitted infections. In Maryland, this component is governed by Education Article §7-445, which mandates instruction that reflects the values of equity, inclusivity, and informed choice. Furthermore, the Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.04.18.01 requires local education agencies to establish policies, guidelines, and/or procedures for student opt-out regarding instruction

Dignity and Respect

- 1 Explain sex assigned at birth and gender identity, and explain how they may or may not differ. MD1C.8.1
- 2 Explain how culture, media, and life experiences impact perceptions of gender roles, gender identity, and gender expression. MD1C.8.2

Boundaries and Consent

- 3 Identify the elements and importance of consent. MD1C.8.3

Anatomy and Physiology

- 4 Describe the interrelated roles of menstruation, ejaculation, fertilization, and implantation. MD1C.8.4

Sexual and Reproductive Health

- 5 Identify medically accurate sources of information about sexual health. MD1C.8.5
- 6 Assess the availability of various contraceptive methods, including barrier methods, to reduce pregnancy and STIs. MD1C.8.6
- 7 Demonstrate knowledge of steps to correctly use external and internal condoms and other barrier methods. MD1C.8.7
- 8 Describe the factors that contribute to engaging in sexual behaviors, including substance use. MD1C.8.8
- 9 Describe how systems of inequality affect individual and community sexual health. MD1C.8.9
- 10 Identify the importance of preventive care to maintain sexual and reproductive health. MD1C.8.10
- 11 Explain laws and policies that support minors' access to sexual healthcare services, including testing, prevention, and treatment. MD1C.8.11

related to family life and human sexuality objectives. Additionally, the indicators related to puberty must be taught, beginning in grade four, by a licensed teacher with a health education endorsement or one who has received specialized training. MD1C

Safety and Violence Prevention: This component develops students' capacity to recognize, prevent, and respond to unsafe situations, including bullying, harassment, violence, and abuse. Students learn to apply functional knowledge related to physical safety, technology safety, safety around others, discrimination and violence prevention, and upstander intervention. Aligned with Maryland Education Articles §§7-411.1, 7-439, 7-445, and 7-501—7-506, this area supports the creation of safe and supportive school environments. By combining the functional knowledge of safety and violence prevention with health-related skills, students are empowered to foster a culture of nonviolence and mutual respect in their communities. MD1D

Technology Safety

- 1 Differentiate between health-promoting and unsafe use of technology, including social media and messaging, as it relates to harassment and intimidating behaviors. MD1D.8.1
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Trusted Adults

- 2 Identify sources of support that a student can go to if they or someone they know is being abused or assaulted. MD1D.8.2
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Safety around People

- 3 Identify situations, including domestic violence, where physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse occurs in a person's family. MD1D.8.3
 - 4 Describe situations and behaviors that constitute sexual mistreatment, coercion, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and boundary violations. MD1D.8.4
 - 5 Respond to situations that threaten the personal safety of self and others. MD1D.8.5
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Relationships, Boundaries, and Consent

- 6 Identify signs of unhealthy relationships. MD1D.8.6
- 7 Evaluate how peers, family, media, culture, and intersecting identities shape personal values and expectations about relationships. MD1D.8.7
- 8 Identify the elements of consent. MD1D.8.8
- 9 Explain effective ways to reject or prevent unwanted sexual advances. MD1D.8.9
- 10 Describe how power dynamics, influence, and coercion can affect someone's ability to give or receive consent. MD1D.8.10
- 11 Describe the state and federal laws that impact young people's sexual health and rights and engagement with sexually explicit media. MD1D.8.11
- 12 Analyze the negative potential consequences of sending sexually explicit pictures or messages or posting sexually explicit pictures on social media. MD1D.8.12
- 13 Analyze how alcohol and other substances can impair judgment and the ability to give or interpret consent. MD1D.8.13

- 14 Identify that individuals have the right to refuse sexual and nonsexual contact. MD1D.8.14

Teasing, Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, and Violence

- 15 Analyze how intolerance and bias-based behaviors affect individuals and communities. MD1D.8.15
- 16 Describe ways to foster empathy and inclusive school environments. MD1D.8.16
- 17 Describe ways to manage interpersonal conflict nonviolently. MD1D.8.17
- 18 Explain the connection between hate, prejudice, intolerance, bias, and discrimination against communities. MD1D.8.18

Upstanders and Compassion for Survivors of Abuse

- 19 Explain why a person who has been bullied, discriminated against, sexually mistreated, coerced, harassed, abused, assaulted, or exploited is not at fault. MD1D.8.19
- 20 Identify Maryland's Good Samaritan Law. MD1D.8.20

Nutrition:
Understanding the role of nutrition in overall health equips students with the knowledge and skills to support physical growth, cognitive development, and disease prevention. Instruction in this area promotes health literacy around nutrient density, eating patterns, food claims and marketing, and food access, and the social and environmental factors influencing nutrition. Maryland Education Article §7-501 emphasizes student wellness, including nutrition standards in schools. Functional knowledge of nutrition prepares students to evaluate food value, access nutrition-related resources, and advocate for equitable access to nutrient-dense foods in

Foods, Beverages, and Water

- 1 Describe how different nutrients help the body grow, maintain health, and prevent and manage disease and illness. MD1E.8.1
- 2 Analyze why certain substances in food are recommended to be limited. MD1E.8.2

Food Choices

- 3 Identify food preparation and production methods and their impact on nutrients in foods. MD1E.8.3

Nutrition Labels

- 4 Recognize that health claims don't always align with actual nutritional value and ingredients. MD1E.8.4

their homes, schools,
and communities. MD1E

Disease Prevention and Control: Knowledge of disease prevention and control enables students to adopt behaviors that minimize the risk of chronic and infectious diseases. Topics such as oral health, sun safety, chronic and infectious diseases, and public health strategies are foundational to lifelong health and community disease prevention and well-being. This component is supported by Maryland Education Articles §§7-413 and 7-501–7-506, which address school health services, health education, and student wellness policies. By understanding the functional knowledge around disease prevention, students become informed participants in public health efforts and responsible stewards of personal and collective health. MD1F

Chronic and Infectious Disease

- 1 Demonstrate how to seek help and treatment for common chronic and infectious diseases. MD1F.8.1
- 2 Explain the relationship between intravenous drug use and transmission of infections such as HIV and hepatitis. MD1F.8.2
- 3 Explain the transmission methods of common STIs. MD1F.8.3
- 4 Summarize ways to decrease the spread of STIs, including HIV. MD1F.8.4
- 5 Describe the signs, symptoms, consequences, and treatment of STIs, including HIV. MD1F.8.5
- 6 Explain Maryland’s laws related to minors’ abilities to consent to healthcare services. MD1F.8.6

Analyze Influences: Health and well-being are affected by many diverse influences within individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. This standard focuses on identifying and evaluating internal and external factors

- 2 **Analyze Influences: Health and well-being are affected by many diverse influences within individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. This standard focuses on identifying and evaluating internal and external factors influencing health practices and behaviors. Influences on health and well-being may include, but are not limited to, family, peers, communities, media, culture, technology, schools, personal values/beliefs, school-based policies, social determinants of health, perceived and social norms, and the environment. This standard recognizes that the factors affecting health behaviors and outcomes, such as social determinants of health, are complex and impact people and communities differently. It also supports the individual’s ability to identify and use skills to recognize the types of influences, analyze the role of influences across various wellness dimensions, and manage influences on health**

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and well-being in digital and in-person settings. This skill contributes to a better understanding of the connections between individual health, community health, and health disparities, which can strengthen the use of other health skills, such as accessing information and advocacy. MD2

Analyze the connections between various internal and external

1 Analyze the connections between various internal and external influences on health and well-being. MD2 . 8 . 1

influences on health and well-being. MD2.8.1

Analyze individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental factors that influence health behaviors, health outcomes, and health disparities. MD2.8.2

2 Analyze individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental factors that influence health behaviors, health outcomes, and health disparities. MD2.8.2

Analyze how various influences affect the health and well-being of people and communities in positive and negative ways. MD2.8.3

3 Analyze how various influences affect the health and well-being of people and communities in positive and negative ways. MD2.8.3

Apply strategies and resources to manage influences that impact health and well-being. MD2.8.4

4 Apply strategies and resources to manage influences that impact health and well-being. MD2.8.4

Analyze how the social determinants of health influence the health and well-being of individuals and communities. MD2.8.5

5 Analyze how the social determinants of health influence the health and well-being of individuals and communities. MD2.8.5

Access Valid and Reliable Resources: Access to valid and reliable health information, products, services, and other resources is essential to promoting health and well-being, and preventing, detecting, managing, and treating health issues and conditions. Access to valid and reliable information, products, services, and other resources promotes health and well-being in

3 Access Valid and Reliable Resources: Access to valid and reliable health information, products, services, and other resources is essential to promoting health and well-being, and preventing, detecting, managing, and treating health issues and conditions. Access to valid and reliable information, products, services, and other resources promotes health and well-being in individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. This standard focuses on identifying, accessing, and evaluating valid and reliable resources, including managing misinformation and disinformation, within digital and in-person settings. Media and technology play a significant and increasing role in the way individuals learn about and connect with themselves, others, and the world. This standard engages students in critical thinking around media messages and resources, including how they are accessed, evaluated, and used to support health and well-being. MD3

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Describe situations that may require support from people who demonstrate the qualities of trusted individuals. MD3.8.1

1 Describe situations that may require support from people who demonstrate the qualities of trusted individuals. MD3.8.1

Identify supports and barriers to accessing valid and reliable health information, products, services, and other resources. MD3.8.2

2 Identify supports and barriers to accessing valid and reliable health information, products, services, and other resources. MD3.8.2

Access valid and reliable sources of health information and resources. MD3.8.3

3 Access valid and reliable sources of health information and resources. MD3.8.3

Analyze the validity, reliability, and accessibility of health information, products, services, and other resources. MD3.8.4

4 Analyze the validity, reliability, and accessibility of health information, products, services, and other resources. MD3.8.4

Identify sources of misinformation and disinformation. MD3.8.5

5 Identify sources of misinformation and disinformation. MD3.8.5

Interpersonal Communication: Effective communication promotes health and well-being in individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. This standard focuses on expressive and receptive communication in digital and in-person settings. Combined with perspective-taking, communication skills help to recognize and strengthen interpersonal interactions, create and maintain relationships, express and interpret messages, and manage conflict. Developing communication skills helps individuals to see how they communicate and the ways in which their communication affects those around them. MD4

4 Interpersonal Communication: Effective communication promotes health and well-being in individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. This standard focuses on expressive and receptive communication in digital and in-person settings. Combined with perspective-taking, communication skills help to recognize and strengthen interpersonal interactions, create and maintain relationships, express and interpret messages, and manage conflict. Developing communication skills helps individuals to see how they communicate and the ways in which their communication affects those around them. MD4

Practice effective communication skills across various modes of communication to support the health and

1 Practice effective communication skills across various modes of communication to support the health and well-being of self and others. MD4.8.1

well-being of self and others. MD4.8.1

Practice active listening skills and strategies in a variety of interpersonal contexts. MD4.8.2

2 Practice active listening skills and strategies in a variety of interpersonal contexts. MD4.8.2

Practice various communication strategies to seek and offer support and assistance. MD4.8.3

3 Practice various communication strategies to seek and offer support and assistance. MD4.8.3

Demonstrate ways to communicate boundaries and consent for a variety of situations. MD4.8.4

4 Demonstrate ways to communicate boundaries and consent for a variety of situations. MD4.8.4

Practice refusal skills and strategies in a variety of situations. MD4.8.5

5 Practice refusal skills and strategies in a variety of situations. MD4.8.5

Apply skills and strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve conflict. MD4.8.6

6 Apply skills and strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve conflict. MD4.8.6

Explain how to collaborate with others in a variety of situations. MD4.8.7

7 Explain how to collaborate with others in a variety of situations. MD4.8.7

Identify negotiation skills in a variety of situations. MD4.8.8

8 Identify negotiation skills in a variety of situations. MD4.8.8

Practice strategies to communicate with others with different perspectives and values. MD4.8.9

9 Practice strategies to communicate with others with different perspectives and values. MD4.8.9

Demonstrate ways to communicate empathy

10 Demonstrate ways to communicate empathy and compassion. MD4.8.10

and
compassion. MD4.8.10

Decision-Making: Effective decision-making is needed to identify, adopt, and maintain health-promoting behaviors. This standard includes skills and steps integral to the process of effective decision-making to support health and well-being. The decision-making process enables collaboration to improve the quality of life within individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. MD5

5 Decision-Making: Effective decision-making is needed to identify, adopt, and maintain health-promoting behaviors. This standard includes skills and steps integral to the process of effective decision-making to support health and well-being. The decision-making process enables collaboration to improve the quality of life within individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. MD5

Explain how the use of a decision-making process affects the health and well-being of self and others. MD5.8.1

1 Explain how the use of a decision-making process affects the health and well-being of self and others. MD5.8.1

Determine when health-related situations require the application of a thoughtful decision-making process. MD5.8.2

2 Determine when health-related situations require the application of a thoughtful decision-making process. MD5.8.2

Apply an individual, supported, or collaborative decision-making process to maintain or improve the health and well-being of self and others. MD5.8.3

3 Apply an individual, supported, or collaborative decision-making process to maintain or improve the health and well-being of self and others. MD5.8.3

Explain how various options may affect health-related outcomes at individual,

4 Explain how various options may affect health-related outcomes at individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental levels. MD5.8.4

interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental levels. MD5.8.4

Identify supports and barriers that affect decision-making at individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental levels. MD5.8.5

5 Identify supports and barriers that affect decision-making at individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental levels. MD5.8.5

Evaluate the results of a health-related decision on self and others. MD5.8.6

6 Evaluate the results of a health-related decision on self and others. MD5.8.6

Goal-Setting: Goal setting is a process to support short- and long-term health and well-being goals. In addition to achieving a goal, goal setting includes using practices, habits, and routines in daily life. This standard includes the processes needed to plan, reach, and reflect on health goals. Setting goals is a flexible process and considers personal and social factors affecting health and well-being. Goal setting supports aspirations and future planning for health and well-being within individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. MD6

6 **Goal-Setting:** Goal setting is a process to support short- and long-term health and well-being goals. In addition to achieving a goal, goal setting includes using practices, habits, and routines in daily life. This standard includes the processes needed to plan, reach, and reflect on health goals. Setting goals is a flexible process and considers personal and social factors affecting health and well-being. Goal setting supports aspirations and future planning for health and well-being within individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. MD6

Evaluate personal health and well-being to

1 Evaluate personal health and well-being to identify focus areas for goal-setting. MD6.8.1

identify focus areas for goal-setting. MD6.8.1

Analyze when individual, supported, or collaborative goal-setting is appropriate. MD6.8.2

2 Analyze when individual, supported, or collaborative goal-setting is appropriate. MD6.8.2

Develop a goal and explain how it supports health and well-being. MD6.8.3

3 Develop a goal and explain how it supports health and well-being. MD6.8.3

Develop a plan that addresses supports and barriers to attaining a health-related goal. MD6.8.4

4 Develop a plan that addresses supports and barriers to attaining a health-related goal. MD6.8.4

Monitor progress to determine whether a health-related goal or plan should be maintained or adjusted. MD6.8.5

5 Monitor progress to determine whether a health-related goal or plan should be maintained or adjusted. MD6.8.5

Reflect on the goal-setting process and outcomes on health and well-being. MD6.8.6

6 Reflect on the goal-setting process and outcomes on health and well-being. MD6.8.6

Practices and Behaviors: Developing health practices and behaviors can promote health and well-being over the lifespan and reduce risk to self and others. Practicing health behaviors is critical to incorporating health-promoting habits and routines into all dimensions of wellness. Due to the increasing influence of technology, it is crucial to develop and apply practices and

7 Practices and Behaviors: Developing health practices and behaviors can promote health and well-being over the lifespan and reduce risk to self and others. Practicing health behaviors is critical to incorporating health-promoting habits and routines into all dimensions of wellness. Due to the increasing influence of technology, it is crucial to develop and apply practices and behaviors that support media balance and digital wellness. This standard promotes individual and collective responsibility by encouraging the exploration and practice of skills and processes that support health and well-being in individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. MD7

behaviors that support media balance and digital wellness. This standard promotes individual and collective responsibility by encouraging the exploration and practice of skills and processes that support health and well-being in individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. MD7

Examine supports and barriers to health-related practices and behaviors at the individual, interpersonal, and community levels. MD7.8.1

1 Examine supports and barriers to health-related practices and behaviors at the individual, interpersonal, and community levels. MD7.8.1

Analyze practices and behaviors that support personal and community health and well-being at the individual, interpersonal, and community levels. MD7.8.2

2 Analyze practices and behaviors that support personal and community health and well-being at the individual, interpersonal, and community levels. MD7.8.2

Demonstrate practices and behaviors that support personal and community health and well-being. MD7.8.3

3 Demonstrate practices and behaviors that support personal and community health and well-being. MD7.8.3

Explain practices and behaviors that support personal and community health and well-being. MD7.8.4

4 Explain practices and behaviors that support personal and community health and well-being. MD7.8.4

Advocacy: Advocacy skills are critical for

8 Advocacy: Advocacy skills are critical for promoting health and well-being within individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. This

promoting health and well-being within individual, interpersonal, community, societal, and environmental contexts. This standard helps learners develop and apply skills and strategies to increase agency and advocacy for themselves and others. Practicing advocacy helps students be informed, civic-minded members of their community who are inclusive of individual, cultural, historical, and other differences. **MD8**

standard helps learners develop and apply skills and strategies to increase agency and advocacy for themselves and others. Practicing advocacy helps students be informed, civic-minded members of their community who are inclusive of individual, cultural, historical, and other differences. **MD8**

Analyze opportunities to advocate for the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. **MD8.8.1**

1 Analyze opportunities to advocate for the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. **MD8.8.1**

Determine when individual or collaborative advocacy is appropriate to promote health and well-being. **MD8.8.2**

2 Determine when individual or collaborative advocacy is appropriate to promote health and well-being. **MD8.8.2**

Adapt advocacy skills and strategies for a variety of audiences and contexts. **MD8.8.3**

3 Adapt advocacy skills and strategies for a variety of audiences and contexts. **MD8.8.3**

Demonstrate advocacy skills and strategies to promote the health and well-being of self and others. **MD8.8.4**

4 Demonstrate advocacy skills and strategies to promote the health and well-being of self and others. **MD8.8.4**

Evaluate the effectiveness of advocacy efforts for

5 Evaluate the effectiveness of advocacy efforts for promoting health and well-being. **MD8.8.5**

**promoting health and
well-being.** MD8.8.5