UR-SOS CARES Participation Information Packet

UR-Supporting Our Students:
Connecting Adolescents to Resources and Evidence-Based Supports

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UR-SOS CARES Overview

Welcome

UR-SOS CARES is a three-year, SAMHSA-funded school-based workforce development package for the Finger Lakes Region. It gives schools practical training, expert consultation, and connections to care so that adults and teens are better prepared to recognize and respond to adolescent mental health needs.

This packet explains what the project offers and what your school or district team is committing to in each part of the project.

Participating schools commit to a shared core (Project ECHO and the school-based referral stream) and may then choose one or more tracks. You can apply to a single track or to several.

Key Dates at a Glance

What	When
Application deadline	**December 17, 2026**
UR-SOS CARES activities begin	Mid-January 2027
Mental Health in Schools Project ECHO	Third Thursday of the month at 12:00-1:00 PM
Training dates	TBD

Why This Project

- Roughly 15–20% of youth have moderate to significant mental health difficulties.
- Nationally, only about 20% of youth access the care they need.
- School-employed staff provide an estimated 70–80% of necessary behavioral health supports.
- In the Finger Lakes, schools are the most common point of entry for child mental health services, and educators are increasingly recognized as “frontline” providers of child and adolescent mental health support.

What UR-SOS CARES Offers

The project is built on a tiered, public-health model that supports adolescents at every level of need:

- **Training adolescents** to recognize and respond to mental health signs and symptoms
- **Enhancing adults’ abilities** to recognize and respond to mental health signs and symptoms
- **Specialty suicide planning, prevention, and response training** for frontline school-based staff
- **Enhancement of cross-sector collaboration and communication** to support youths’ connection to care
- **Referral pathways and connections to care**, so that students who need more support are linked to services

Participation is organized into **core components for all participants** and **three optional tracks**:

Core for ALL participants	Track 1	Track 2	Track 3
Project ECHO learning and case consultation; school-based referral stream to short-term interventions; adolescent mental health tools and community resources	Adult and Youth Mental Health Literacy	Suicide Prevention and Crisis Response	Connecting for Kids: Cross-Sector Collaboration

Commitments at a Glance

The table below summarizes what each component asks of your team. Details for each are in the following sections. Time estimates are approximate.

ALL PARTICIPANTS

Component	Who from your team	Your commitment	Approximate time
Project ECHO	2–6 team members	Attend monthly virtual sessions; offer at least one de-identified case presentation per team; give peer feedback and share resources	One 60-minute session per month
School-based referral stream and UR-SOS resources	At least 2 team members designated as referrers	Attend referral stream training; optionally attend office hours; use and share resources	One 60-minute training + optional office hours

TRACK 1: Adult and Youth Mental Health Literacy

Component	Who from your team	Your commitment	Approximate time
Teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA)	At least 1 tMHFA trainer	Attend 3-day instructor training; deliver 3+ trainings in your school in Year 1; attend monthly implementation meetings **Note instructors will also need to complete Youth Mental Health First Aid training if not already certified (see below)	**Instructor Training:** 2–4 hrs pre-work, 3 days live training, 1 hr post-work **tMHFA courses:** At least 13.5 hrs of instruction time **Implementation support:** 30 min/month

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)	At least 5% of your school staff + tMHFA instructor	Ensure at least 5% of staff are trained (UR-SOS can provide the trainings)	2 hrs pre-work plus a 1-day live training per person

TRACK 2: Suicide Prevention and Crisis Response

Component	Who from your team	Your commitment	Approximate time
Suicide Prevention Instructor Training	At least 1 suicide prevention instructor	Attend 1-day instructor training; host 3+ trainings in your school in Year 1; attend monthly implementation meetings	**Instructor training:** 1 day live training **Suicide prevention trainings:** at least 3-4.5 hrs of instruction **Implementation support:** 30 min/month
SPCNY workshops	2-3 representatives from your team for each	Attend Creating Suicide Safety in Schools and Helping Students at Risk for Suicide	Two 1-day workshops

TRACK 3: Connecting for Kids (C4K)

Component	Who from your team	Your commitment	Approximate time
C4K facilitator training	1 C4K facilitator	Attend 1-day facilitator training; host at least 1 C4K dialogue in your community; attend monthly implementation meetings	**Facilitator training:** 1 day live training **C4K dialogue:** 1–1.5 hrs facilitation **Implementation support:** 30 min/month
C4K Community of Practice Quarterly Meetings	At least 1 representative	Attend quarterly C4K Regional Community of Practice meetings with optional workgroups	1 hr/quarter
School & Brighter Days Pediatric Mental Health Urgent Care C4K Dialogues	At least 1 representative	Attend C4K Collaborative Dialogues with other school teams and Brighter Days Pediatric Mental Health Urgent Care	Approximately 4.5 hours (approximately 3 dialogues last 1–1.5 hrs each)

Core Components for All Participants

1. Project ECHO: Expert Training and Case Consultation

Project ECHO: Mental Health in Schools

Project ECHO is a tele-mentoring model that supports case-based learning and specialty training for professionals who support teens' mental health. It follows a "Teach All, Learn All" approach: regional teen mental health experts, dedicated mental health practitioners, and local schools all contribute and learn from each other.

How it works

- Virtual sessions run monthly
- Each team presents at least one de-identified case during the ECHO cycle and receives feedback and recommendations
- Example session topics include school avoidance; mental health services and access for rural schools and students; eating disorders in adolescents; executive functioning and mental health; supporting anxious avoiders in school; the impact of social media and technology addiction; supporting students with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and partnering effectively and empathetically with parents and caregivers

Your commitment

- Attend monthly UR-SOS ECHO meetings (2–6 members of your team)
- Offer at least one case presentation
- Provide peer feedback and share resources
- **Time:** one 60-minute session per month

What you get:

- Access to communities of peers
- Free continuing education
- Reduced isolation and improved connection to colleagues
- Increased professional knowledge

2. School-Based Referral Stream to Short-Term Intervention Services

School mental health professionals gain access to a referral stream with two short-term service options through UR Medicine's Pediatric Behavioral Health & Wellness (PBH&W). Referral information is available at https://ursos.org/referralhub/.

START: Short Term Assessment and Response Team

- Short-term crisis interventions (1–6 sessions) to help with current stressors in a family, usually available within 5–10 business days
- Balances evaluation and intervention to identify immediate challenges and how to manage them better
- **Eligible:** youth and families experiencing significant distress related to an identifiable stressor
- **Not appropriate for** youth who have immediate safety concerns (call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room), need same-day evaluation (consider the Mobile Crisis Team at 2-1-1), or are already receiving mental health services in the community

READY for Short-Term Treatment

- Outpatient, short-term, evidence-based intervention (8–12 sessions) for lower-risk youth who are ready to engage in building skills
- Focuses on rapidly building skills, insight, and support for the child and family, then returning to community-based care
- Includes initial assessment and goal identification; parent and child psychoeducation; child and parent skill development; and discharge planning focused on future skills, safety, and development
- Optional components: medication consultation (with PCP agreement to prescribe) and a trauma narrative component

Your commitment

- Attend referral stream training (at least 2 team members designated as referrers)
- (Optional) attend referral stream office hours
- **Time:** one 60-minute referral stream training

3. Adolescent Mental Health Tools and Community Resources

All participants have access to best practice tools, community resources, and regional exemplars through the UR-SOS Resources Hub: https://ursos.org/resources-hub/. Participants also gain access to the UR-SOS School Mental Health Toolkit.

Your commitment

- Use and share the resources as needed

Track 1: Adult and Youth Mental Health Literacy

Track 1 builds mental health awareness among both students and the adults who support them.

What your school gains from Track 1: The ability to disseminate tMHFA throughout your district and to increase youth and adult mental health awareness, so that teens and adults are prepared to recognize symptoms, support students who might otherwise suffer alone, and connect them to care.

1. Teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA)

tMHFA develops a trainer in your school who can teach teens in grades 9-12 to recognize and respond to mental health challenges among their peers through three 90-minute or six 45-minute sessions.

tMHFA can be used to meet mental health or substance use education requirements.

What the training covers

- Recognize signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges
- Determine what they can and can't do to support a peer during and after a mental health or substance use crisis
- Use the MHFA Action Plan
- Connect a peer with a parent, guardian or trusted adult
- Promote resilience in one's school or community

Your commitment

1. Identify a tMHFA trainer from your team
2. The trainer attends a 3-day tMHFA instructor training
3. The trainer delivers 3 or more trainings in your school within the first year
4. The trainer attends monthly 30-minute implementation meetings during the first year

tMHFA Implementation Requirements

- Adult staff certification: At least 5% of your school's staff must be certified in Youth Mental Health First Aid (see below for support in meeting this requirement)
- Target age: Teens in grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)
- Entire grade coverage: tMHFA curriculum must be taught to the entire grade level
- Adult support: At least two adults must be present during tMHFA delivery (at least 1 instructor)
- Professional support: A mental health professional must be available if needed during tMHFA delivery
- Materials: all participating teens must receive a copy of the participant manual, which costs $14; UR-SOS CARES is able to provide some manuals to help you get started and can help connect you with other organizations (e.g., MHANYS) who may be able to provide additional support

Approximate time

- Instructor training: 2–4 hours of pre-work, 3 days of live training, 1 hour of post-work
- Delivering trainings: at least 13.5 hours of instruction time (4.5 hours per course)
- Monthly implementation meetings: 30 minutes per month

2. Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)

YMHFA teaches adults who work with youth the skills to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. Adults learn how to reach out and provide initial support to youth ages 12–18 who may have a mental health or substance use problem, and how to connect them with appropriate care.

UR-SOS CARES can provide YMHFA trainings within your school or district to help you prepare to implement tMHFA.

What the training covers

- Recognize common signs of mental health challenges in teens
- Recognize common signs of substance use challenges
- Use the MHFA Action Plan (ALGEE)
- How to interact with a child or adolescent in crisis
- How to connect the youth with help
- How to address stigma and explain recovery is possible
- How to encourage young people to practice self-care

Your commitment

- Ensure at least **5% of your school staff** are trained in YMHFA
    - Have staff attend YMHFA trainings to meet 5% requirement
    - UR-SOS can provide these trainings
- **Time per person trained:** 2 hours of pre-work and a 4–6 hour live training

Track 2: Suicide Prevention and Crisis Response

Track 2 prepares your school community and your frontline staff to prevent, prepare for, and respond to suicide-related crises.

What your school gains from Track 2: The ability to disseminate suicide prevention training throughout your district and community to increase suicide prevention awareness and knowledge, and to strengthen your team's suicide prevention and response readiness and plan.

1. Suicide Prevention Instructor Training

Suicide prevention trainings teach adults how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and respond to connect students to support and care and to help save a life from suicide. Evidence-based suicide prevention trainings can be delivered in as little as one hour. Your suicide prevention trainer can train adults who work with youth, including teachers and administrators, paraprofessionals, coaches, school security and resource officers, school nurses, and school staff.

What the training covers:

- Recognize the warning signs of suicide
- Know how to offer support and hope
- Know how to get help to save a life

Your commitment

1. Identify at least one suicide prevention trainer from your team
2. The trainer attends a 1-day suicide prevention instructor training
3. The trainer hosts 3 or more trainings in your school within the first year
4. The trainer attends monthly 30-minute implementation meetings during the first year

Approximate time

- Instructor training: 1 day of live training
- Hosting trainings: at least 3-4.5 hours of instruction time (1–1.5 hours per course)
- Monthly implementation meetings: 30 minutes per month

2. SPCNY Suicide Planning, Prevention and Response Workshops

The Suicide Prevention Center of New York State (SPCNY) offers evidence-based suicide prevention trainings and workshops designed for school staff.

Workshop	Length	Who attends	What it covers
Creating Suicide Safety in Schools (CS3)	Full day (6 hours)	A team of 2–3 per school, including an administrator and mental health staff (also suited to school-based	Designed for school planning teams to assess, plan, and strengthen suicide prevention efforts across their schools; deepen understanding of suicide and effective school-based prevention; evaluate current prevention and response

Workshop	Length	Who attends	What it covers
		health professionals, school safety staff, and counselors)	readiness; explore evidence-based best practices; develop a tailored, action-oriented implementation plan
Helping Students at Risk for Suicide (HSAR)	Full day (6 hours)	2–3 mental health staff per school (suitable for school-based health, mental health, pupil services, school safety, administrators, and special education staff)	Build practical knowledge and tools to assist students experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviors; understand the importance of pre-planning and standardized intervention procedures; recognize the value of collaboration and shared decision-making; reviews best-practice documentation return to school procedures; prepares schools to implement consistent, effective intervention protocols

Your commitment

1. 2-3 members of your team (administration & mental health team) attend full-day Creating Suicide Safety in Schools
2. 2-3 members of your mental health team attend full-day Helping Students at Risk for Suicide

Optional

- If interested, we will provide a warm handoff to SPCNY for additional trainings

Track 3: Connecting for Kids (C4K): Cross-Sector Collaboration

Connecting for Kids promotes collaboration within and across systems to support youth physical health, behavioral health, and academic wellbeing. It is a collaborative, interdisciplinary effort informed by parents, education, behavioral health, pediatrics, and community-based organizations, including UR Medicine Golisano Children's Hospital, Monroe County BOCES, Rochester Regional Health, the Children's Institute, Accountable Health Partners, Greater Rochester Independent Practice Association, Monroe County Office of Mental Health, Mental Health Association of Rochester, and many others.

C4K Collaborative Dialogues are guided 1–2 hour virtual conversations among primary care, schools, behavioral health, community organizations and providers, and families. Participants identify a shared mission across systems, reflect on strengths and gaps in current communication and partnership, and commit to actionable next steps.

C4K Impact

- More than 350 participants across multiple New York counties
- Improved attitudes, knowledge, confidence, trust, and connection
- Increased frequency and improved quality of communication with other systems
- Impact examples:
    - Identification of and outreach to triage point people to enhance communication across systems
    - Utilization of standardized communication forms
    - Changes in primary care/school templates and workflow related to CSE referral process
    - Preventive outreach, not just in times of crisis
    - Improvements to parent/caregiver HIPAA/FERPA forms
- "C4K started a ripple effect that continues to impact our district"

Track 3 Components

1. C4K Facilitator Training and Implementation

- Identify a member of your team to be trained in C4K facilitation
- Your C4K facilitator can then host C4K collaborative dialogues within your community
- Examples might include cross-sector C4K dialogues (e.g., between school district and primary care provides in your community), district- or school-wide C4K dialogues, or dialogues focusing on a specific topic (e.g., concussions, school attendance)

2. Quarterly C4K Cross-County Regional Community of Practice

- Participate in quarterly C4K regional community of practice meetings to exchange resources and information across counties
- Optionally take part in targeted workgroups (for example: extreme behaviors and suspension, chronic absenteeism, early childhood, concussions, Handle with Care, and HIPAA/FERPA)
- Virtual meetings are held on Thursdays from 8:00–9:00 AM
    - Next meeting: December 3
    - Open to all – please feel free to invite others
    - Registration link: https://urmc.zoom.us/j/91703658257

3. C4K Dialogues with Brighter Days

- Participate in C4K collaborative dialogues between school teams and the Brighter Days Pediatric Mental Health Urgent Care to enhance communication and collaboration strategies and strengthen students' connection to care
- Dates and times to be determined

What your school gains from Track 3: district capacity to host C4K dialogues and stronger communication and collaboration within your team and across sectors

Your commitment

1. Your team's C4K facilitator attends a 1-day C4K facilitator training course
2. The C4K facilitator hosts at least one C4K dialogue within the first year
3. The C4K facilitator attends monthly 30-minute implementation meetings during the first year
4. At least one representative from your team attends the Quarterly C4K Cross-County Regional Community of Practice meetings
5. At least one representative from your team attends the C4K Dialogues with Brighter Days

Approximate time

- C4K facilitator training: 1 day of live training
- Hosting at least one C4K dialogue: at least 1-2 hours of facilitation
- Monthly implementation meetings: 30 minutes per month
- Quarterly C4K Community of Practice meetings: 1 hour per quarter
- C4K Dialogues with Brighter Days: approximately 3-4.5 hours (1-1.5 hours each for approximately 3 dialogues)

Benefits of Participating

All participants

- Enhance your district's capacity to recognize, support, and refer youth with mental health challenges
- Access expert and peer consultation about teens with complex mental health challenges
- Access a short-term service referral stream for school mental health professionals
- Access best practice tools, community resources, and the UR-SOS School Mental Health Toolkit
- Reduced isolation, improved collegial support, and county-wide connections
- **Free continuing education units** for participating educators

Track 1: Disseminate Teen Mental Health First Aid throughout your district and increase youth and adult mental health awareness

Track 2: Disseminate suicide prevention training throughout your district and community and strengthen your suicide prevention and response readiness and plan

Track 3: Develop district capacity to host C4K collaborative dialogues and enhance communication and collaboration within your team and across sectors

How to Participate

Complete the UR-SOS CARES application by December 17, 2026: https://redcap.link/URSOSCARES

- Your team may choose a single track or multiple tracks
- If more teams apply than there are seats on a track, we will select based on readiness and share other opportunities whenever possible
- **Note to current Mental Health in Schools (MHIS) ECHO participants**:
    a. If you would like to participate in the new opportunities offered by UR-SOS CARES, please complete the application
    b. If you would like to continue with the MHIS ECHO series but are not interested in additional activities, you do not need to complete the application. No additional action is required
- UR-SOS CARES activities begin in mid-January

Questions Teams Commonly Ask

- **Who is eligible?** Any school team (individual school or district) within the nine-county Finger Lakes Region: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates. If you are located outside of these counties but interested in participating, please contact us!
- **Who should be on our team?** Ideally, teams should include members of the school health team (e.g., school counselors, social workers, psychologists, etc.) and at least one administrator. Other school faculty and staff (e.g., nurses, teachers) are also welcome and encouraged to participate. It is most important to include champions who are interested in promoting this work within your school community.
- **Is administrator sign-off required?** Please ensure that your school's administration is in support of your team participating.
- **What does it cost?** Participation in UR-SOS CARES is free. Additional costs may include purchasing additional supplies to implement trainings beyond those funded by this grant project.

Meet the UR-SOS Team

- **Melissa Heatly, Ph.D.**, Co-Director, UR-SOS
- **Allison Stiles, Ph.D.**, Co-Director, UR-SOS
- **Laura Perrone, Ph.D.**, Project Director
- **Bri Daniels, LMHC-D**, Clinical Coordinator
- **Kristine DiBitetto**, Project Coordinator
- **Linda Alpert-Gillis, Ph.D.**, Senior Advisor

Next Steps and Contact

To take part, submit your application by **December 17, 2026**.

Contact: For questions, please email UR_SOS@URMC.Rochester.edu

Website: https://ursos.org