



The Dibble Institute®

Resources for Teaching Relationship Skills
to Teens and Young Adults

County Extension Agents Build Mental Wellness in Rural Youth

Organization:

[New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service](#)

Funding:

USDA [Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network Grant](#) and
Extension Operations Budget

Check out this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Eg6aqwHdo8>

What Problem is Being Solved?

Due to suicide rates in New Mexico being higher than the national average for youth and for Agricultural communities, the Cooperative Extension Service realized the need to support youth and family mental health by increasing wellbeing in their communities.

Curricula Used:

[Mind Matters: Overcoming Adversity and Building Resilience](#)

Curricula Benefits:

- Content includes coping with trauma, resiliency-building, goal setting, mentorship.
- Easy to facilitate and students like it.
- Instructors report they are using it in their own personal lives.

Location of Instruction:

Schools, 4-H clubs, and virtually.

**Length of Instruction
(# of Sessions and
Hours per Session)**

- Classroom delivers: 12 lessons in 50 minutes in 12 sessions.
- 4-H delivers 4-8 lessons.
- Teachers Professional Development: 10-12 lessons in 14 hours over 2 days.
- Virtual: 12 lessons in 60 minutes in 12 sessions.

Class Size:

25-30 in the classroom
Smaller groups in 4-H

Target Audience:	Middle and high school adolescents and adults who serve them.
Audience Demographics:	50% Hispanic; 11% Native American; 36% White; 3% Other.
Challenges:	Some teachers reported that if a student felt uncomfortable during discussion of feelings or trauma, they might turn their backs on the teacher. The student was then given the space to feel comfortable to stay in the class and hear the lesson, while avoiding eye contact. Once the student felt comfortable, they returned to their front facing position.
Instructors:	New Mexico has 33 counties. 21 County Extension Agents and community partners have received the Instructor's Materials and are trained or in the process of being trained.
Instructor Training:	All instructors receive 16 hours of training.
Student Journals:	All participants in Mind Matters use the student journals.
Observable Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal is to be able to offer Mind Matters throughout the entire state of New Mexico. • Teachers wished that every 8th grade student could get Mind Matters. • Students' favorite lesson was the coloring lesson. Teachers incorporated coloring exercise at beginning of each class as ice breaker. • Gifted students appreciated opportunity to talk about feelings vs only focused on academics.