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Period 6

English

Should IHS Allow Mental Health Days As Excused Absences?

Mental health among teens is a topic that has finally started to be talked about in recent years. Many individuals who attend school struggle with mental health issues. Because of all the stress surrounding school, it is crucial that Ithaca High School does something to help their students with their health. One way to assist is to allow students to have mental health days as excused absences. Although certain people believe that having mental health days as an excused absence will allow students to have too much freedom and abuse the power, it is clear that Ithaca High School should allow students an excused absence for their mental needs, based on the statistics of mental health among teens, and positive benefits that mental health days might offer.

Many politicians believe that having mental health days as excused absences will not be beneficial towards students and their grades. While in a debate on whether school should allow mental health days as excused absences State Senator Dallas Heard stated, "If we simply just start saying . . . that there really is no consequence for ramping up this idea that we should not have to come to work or practice or to school because we're having a bad day . . . I'm concerned that's going to continue to start eroding our society to the point where we have much,

much bigger issues" (Wan). Heard thinks that students should toughen up and just go to school, but he does not take into consideration that mental health issues are world-renowned world-renound and in some cases are caused by school. In the same debate a high school senior brought up the point that, "there will be students that will abuse the system (Wan)." Although there will be students that abuse the system and take advantage of these mental health days, this will help more students than hurt them. There have been statistics that have proven this statement.

Although some believe that mental health days should not be an excused absence, statistics show that many teens have mental health issues, some being caused by school. An article by Kim Krisberg states that, "teen ages 13 to 17, found that 7 in 10 consider depression and anxiety a major problem among them." Because a lot of teens have mental illnesses, it would be beneficial for them to have days off so they could worry about themselves and their mental health. As seen in the quote, more than half of teens experience mental health problems. Specifically, "61 percent said they feel a lot of pressure to do well in school..." (Krisberg). This shows why mental health days as excused absences are so crucial to school systems today. There is even further evidence provided by the CDC that agrees agree.

Allowing students to have mental health days as an excused absence will hopefully improve the health of many. According to research done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "nearly a third of all high school students had experienced significant periods of sadness and hopelessness within the previous year, and 17 percent had contemplated

suicide—both percentages represented a significant increase in the last decade.” This issue is more than just a student having a bad day, its about them contemplating suicide. Having these mental health days could save students lives. Even mental health advocates believe that changing the policies surrounding mental will result in” big steps in reducing the stigma around youth mental health and suicide...” (Fleming). In order to help students who suffer from mental illnesses, there needs to be some sort of change in the way we treat students with mental illnesses.

Despite the fact that some politicians do not support the idea of teenagers being allowed to take mental health days as excused absences, most agree that teens need these mental health days and it will benefit their health immensely. This idea is supported by statistics about mental health relating to teens and the positives of permitting teens to have mental health days. This is a conversation that needs to continue to be talked about, so we can change the way we look at mental health among teenagers.

Works Cited

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