

FIGURE 1. Students' Responses to How Teachers Can Support their Mental Health

To support student mental health, teachers should . . .

KNOW

- Learn students' interests and information about their home life that they are comfortable sharing
- You never know everything about your students' lives
- There is time to be serious *and* chill
- Every student prefers to be approached differently
- What triggers students and how they're feeling
- Different students benefit from different advice
- Teachers aren't always right—admit when you've made a mistake or are wrong
- Not everyone works or learns at the same pace or in the same way

BELIEVE

- Mental health is real
- Students can't learn if they are struggling with their mental health
- Mental health is more important than academics
- Students' experiences are important
- Students' emotions are valid
- Trust that students know what they need
- Students' ideas are worth listening to and implementing

**Supporting
Student
Mental Health**

SAY

- How are you feeling today?
- How are you doing?
- Do you need time and/or space?
- Where are you with this assignment, what do you need help with, and how can I help?
- What kind of support do you need?
- How do you learn best?
- Are you comfortable sharing this or do you want to keep it private?
- Let me know if you want to talk.
- Is there someone else you want to talk to right now?

DO

- Validate feelings that students express
- Create a comfortable learning environment (soft music, dim lights, quiet) that doesn't cause sensory overload
- Talk about mental health with your students
- Form connections and build trust with students
- Empathize with students
- Check in with each student daily, 1-on-1
- Have a stash of snacks so that students aren't working on empty stomachs
- Provide students with fidgets and stuffed animals
- Practice meditation and breathing exercises
- Implement occasional fun/break days
- Incorporate fun incentives (like stickers)
- Communicate with your students and seek feedback
- Communicate about physical/emotional boundaries