

Episode 153: Mental Health Goes Back to School (Transcript)

[00:00:00] Speaker A: Into the Fold is part of the Texas Podcast Network, the Conversations Changing the World, brought to you by the University of Texas at Austin. The opinions expressed in this podcast represent the views of the hosts and guests and not of the University of Texas at Austin.

Hi, welcome to into the Fold, the Mental health Podcast. I am your host, Ike Evans and today we are delighted to bring you episode 153, mental health goes Back to School.

But first, today's Mental Health Trust for America's Health is one of 200 organizations to co sign the Hawk Foundation's declaration of Racism as a Mental Health Crisis. And now they are featured on our blog in what is going to be a recurring series, the Cosigner Spotlights.

I'll have more to say about this in a little while, but for now let's get on to our main story. August is Back to School month. Kids in 2023 are going back to school at a particularly fraught moment for schools, teachers and parents in Texas.

[00:01:13] Speaker B: If there's anything that Covid taught us is that you cannot serve a student alone, that they are rooted in their family culture. And so it is important to bring families alongside of us and for families to bring us alongside of them because it really is a collaborative effort. So what excites me is the potential that parents are going to be fully invited, embedded into the school culture and campus. That student voice is going to energize an entire school community. And so I think that those are things that I'm really hopeful for.

[00:01:54] Speaker C: Joining us today is Maria Arabo of the Amala Foundation, a grantee partner of the Hogg foundation, and Sharon Vigil, Executive Director of Communities and Schools of Central Texas. Welcome to both of you.

[00:02:08] Speaker D: Thank you. Thank you for having us.

[00:02:10] Speaker B: Thanks for having me.

[00:02:12] Speaker C: So I was wondering if either of you could just say some things about the relationship between Amla foundation and Cisco.

Sharon, why don't we start with you?

[00:02:25] Speaker B: Sure.

You know, the word community is in our name, communities in schools. And we really pride ourselves in connecting with partners who have similar missions. Are their missions aligned to the work that we do? And so, you know, the Amala foundation is one of our dearest partners. We've been in partnership since since 2015.

And we just appreciate their focus not just on students, but also on teachers. They've been providing a program called Circle up to Students on behalf of CIS and the community.

And we just really appreciate their partnership and how they care for the whole child and the whole school alongside of us.

[00:03:13] Speaker D: I want to say that our partnership with communities And Schools is one of our strongest, most important collaborators that we have at the Amala Foundation. And we've really been working together with TIS since 2015, mostly running our Circle up program that focuses on community building and wellness using a holistic approach with students as young

as pre k4, all the way to adults and their teachers and administrators. And really, the value of Communities in Schools is that we have so much to learn from each other in terms of having their support and their warm handoff when they're bringing us into campuses. They are exceptionally good at building relationships with the folks that they work with, with the schools that they serve. And by inviting us in as one of their trusted partners, we've really found a very open and inviting culture, which has really been deeply impacted by not just our collaboration, but also CIS's understanding of what's happening at the schools at that particular time. So their pulse on the context of the campus is also just really key. We work closely with their program managers, closely with the kind of administrative team at cis. They help us a lot with our grant reporting. It's a beautiful symbiotic relationship where we get to serve the community through the relationship. But also we offer programming for the program managers where they can experience what we do with the adults, but directly and explicitly for them. So we also do professional development opportunities for the CIS program managers just as a thank you to the wonderful relationship that we've fostered over the years. So we're really lucky to have this beautiful partnership and are really excited about even expanding to two more campuses this coming year.

[00:05:19] Speaker B: So are we. I was going to say we're coming at you for more. This part works. And I want to give you all a shout out for during COVID how quickly you pivoted.

It was so hard to make these heartfelt relationships with students, but your team just did it so naturally, and you all raised your hand immediately and said, let us, Adam, and thank you so much for continuing to provide the services and support students needed in such a tough time.

[00:05:51] Speaker D: I want to piggyback on what Sharon just said. I am a huge fan of Sharon and her work. I've actually known about Sharon prior to her role at cis. I know we also kind of run in similar circles, and I have a mentor of mine who's really connected to her as well. But I'm just really excited because I really have seen Sharon's influence at communities and schools, especially around equity and diversity, and really wanting to strengthen the variety and diverse voices that exist at CIS over her years there. And so I'm just really excited to connect. I hope actually that we can connect even more after this. And I hope that if Sharon gets anything from this is how thankful we are also to have their support and that we are huge fans of the work that they do and how they do the work and are so appreciative to be one of their trusted partners.

[00:06:54] Speaker C: So I was wondering if you could also just say some things about the history and the mission of your two organizations.

Why don't we go in reverse order? So, Maria, let's start with the Amala foundation, because I think maybe it doesn't have quite the profile that CIS does.

[00:07:12] Speaker D: Amala has been around since 2001. Technically, we were a nonprofit since 2004. And we do social, emotional learning, mindfulness, restorative based, circle sharing programming. We also use movement and art and play. And we really try to encourage a sense of belonging, resiliency, and a deeper understanding of self and others. The best way I can describe it is almost like an informal approach to mental health, which I think has been deeply needed, certainly pre pandemic, during the pandemic, and post pandemic to really start to support and buttress the needs that are arising in our educational systems across the nation. And, you know, most importantly, try to find ways to support and encourage resiliency that already exists, you know, within our communities that we serve.

[00:08:01] Speaker B: Yeah, I say that you are a mighty, mighty organization and we're just so proud to partner with you all. But CIS has been serving the community for nearly four decades. So we are approximately 38 years young and our work is centered directly on campuses. And so

we practice relationship driven approach. We also wrap students around holistically with the services that they need. And we do that through our special staff that we call site coordinators or program managers. And these individuals show up on campus 100% of the time.

They have a room on campus where we're able to practice mindful moments where we're able to set goals with students. And we are really providing services for students.

Social, emotional support, mental health support, basic needs, really the wide spectrum of supports that students need in order to achieve in school and to be successful. Part of the work that we do is we really bring the community on campus. We know that many times our students have barriers like transportation. And so if you tell a student, hey, let me connect you, or hey, why don't you go here, We've already created a barrier for them to get the services, the needs, the support that would truly make them successful. And so we Bring partners like Amala foundation on campus so that students don't have to go away from a place that they can already call their own and get services. I say the key takeaway about CIS is relationships matter. Every child is an opportunity away from, you know, being successful. And we make sure that students are surrounded with holistic relationships so that they can thrive on campus.

[00:09:58] Speaker C: So the theme for this episode is Mental health goes back to school and looking ahead to the new school year.

What challenges and opportunities do y'all see?

[00:10:15] Speaker D: Absolutely. That's a great question. And I'm really very excited at the beginning of every school year. I think a lot of educators are. And what I'm seeing this year in particular that excites me is that there's a clear messaging and understanding around what's needed to support not just students, not just teachers, but the whole school community. I'm seeing a lot of conversations around mental health and the need for added support. I know, as Sharon has mentioned earlier, there's the notion that we've started this year with some pretty difficult and tragic circumstances and that has very much brought to the forelight the support that's needed and the lack of resources and how to build up what resources exist. And so even though, you know, there's a newness and an excitement, I'm also really excited about the pivoting that I'm seeing around the focus on everyone's wellness, everyone's health, and their well being as a holistic group. I mean, I think schools are really great at understanding, you know, metrics when it comes to testing and metrics when it comes to even, you know, attendance or access to resources like food, for example. But the notion that a healthy and well rested and well regulated student who's maybe, you know, learned some techniques along the way that have taught him to breathe deeply when he's facing a stressful test will actually improve that student's test score. And I feel like we're starting to see much more intentionality behind how we really care for our students and our families and our whole school community. So I'm really excited about that. I'm also, of course, really cognizant of the challenges that exist in education.

Pre pandemic, during the pandemic, post pandemic. I do think that even though we aren't operating in the same ways as we were just a few years ago, we need to recognize that the stressors that are on teachers and administrators shoulders are huge. And there is more just acute need for support and for space to process. One of the things that we do at Amala is create safe places, safe, safe conversations practices for having safe conversations so that folks can actually share what they're going through. I think our culture is very much about, you know, pulling yourself up by your bootstraps and, you know, putting on a tough face in the face of adversity. And that's, you know, helpful at times and also really challenging and can make us really sick in the long term. And so I feel like I'm seeing some true movement in our education system, certainly in the schools we're working with, to really take care of their folks. So I'm

excited and, you know, cautious and really looking forward to supporting in the best way that we can.

[00:13:20] Speaker B: Yeah, you know, I am living the new school year as a mom. My son is 6 years old, and he goes to a public school here. And so I'm going to bring in a little bit of the parent perspective and what I'm hopeful for. And I also think, you know, as the CEO of a. Of an organization that works directly on campus, I can. I can share some of that perspective as well.

Although school is a time for new beginnings and new backpacks and potentially new shoes, you know, this newness and change can bring some anxiety to our students. And so I say that I've seen it firsthand as a parent. And so some of the recommendations that I give parents about when your child is anxious about going to school or getting into a routine is just talking to your child. And so I say that that is the opportunity, is that we can build stronger relationships with our children, that we can engage parents even deeper on school campus and school life. If there's anything that Covid taught us is that you cannot serve a student alone, that they are rooted in their family culture. And so it is important to bring families alongside of us and for families to bring us alongside of them, because it really is a collaborative effort. So what excites me is the potential that parents are going to be fully invited, embedded into the school culture and campus. That student voice is going to energize an entire school community. And so I think that those are things that I'm really hopeful for, some of the things that I want to make sure that students have. Are listening years. We've had some pretty devastating news here in Austin, with two incidents that happened at two high schools that tells me that we need to engage and come and surround students holistically to make sure that they know that adults and that people care for them.

I say I want us to continue to look at and talk about mental health, talk about wellness, because, you know, wellness is also a big part of being able to achieve academically for students. And I want this community to own that we can play a big part on campus by showing up for students.

[00:16:00] Speaker C: So I always frame for this podcast, Mental Health, against the backdrop of Texas. And so at least one time per interview, I have to ask the Texas question.

And it assumes different forms depending on who it is that I'm interviewing. I think that for y'all, I am curious about the challenges of serving kids in the current political climate here in Texas, where you have things such as bans on books and Maria in particular, anti social emotional learning sentiment.

And that's without even getting into school violence and, and the impact that that has been having on the whole discourse around kids and mental health.

And so just with Texas being such a, I guess, I don't know, just such a tinderbox of different hot button issues, how challenging does that make just having a mental health conversation from your perspective? I know that was a, that was a convoluted way to put all of.

[00:17:29] Speaker B: That, but I will share that. I think your question is, how hard is it to serve in this environment? And I like to tell adults, can you imagine how hard it is to be a child and, and be at the center of so many discussions in our community?

No matter where you lie, you know on which side of the issue, ultimately it's students that are being centered. And so I say that it's our kids are having a tough time, and rightfully so, because there is a lot of questions about what it looks like to be a child and what children can and cannot do here in Central Texas. And so I share that. What that does for CIS is it empowers us to continue to want to be in more schools. We want to be in more communities, because one of the

things that we offer in every campus. And I'm going to take you on a journey with our CIS classroom. A student walks into a CIS classroom and if you look to the right, you'll probably see a peace corner where a child can come if they are feeling unsafe or if they're feeling that they are going to do something to cause someone harm. If you walk into our rooms, the lights are a little dimmed and we have lamps. And to really help students self regulate so that they can go back to the classroom ready to learn. If you keep on walking into one of our CIS classrooms, you're also going to see some kinetic sand where students can express themselves and so, because of what's happening in Texas and because of the impact that it's having on children, it's so vital for students to have a space where they can fully be seen. And so for us, what is happening in Texas just gives us strength and encourages us to continue to do more work so that more students have access to the services they need and for most students to have access to a CIS classroom.

[00:19:40] Speaker D: That's beautiful. Yeah. Another great question. And absolutely, I mean, I want to say we're certainly aware of the perceptions and the shifting perceptions around work like social emotional learning. I will say that we do work in spaces where we're invited. We're never forced onto any school or any participant.

Administrators who participate in our healing centered principal cohort that we run for nine months, they all self, self assign self, kind of raise their hand to participate. And so we almost in some ways are doing the work where there's already a certain level of receptivity. But of course, we engage in schools and in school districts that are, you know, not all folks in these systems are in the same potentially political spectrum or even have the same ideas about what SEL is or isn't. And we welcome, very much welcome the resistance. I think there's a lot of learning that can be done from hearing other perspectives and other voices that don't necessarily mirror our own or certain facilitators. And we are trained to have really intentional, healing centered conversations, even when there's disagreement at the table. So for us, I think we've one been really fortunate that the work speaks for itself and we are invited, usually by word of mouth, because of how impactful the work has been for so many years. But we are also moving into spaces where we've certainly welcomed some of the resistance, had conversations openly about it, done our best to explain our work, and also said, hey, if this isn't for you, that's okay. So I think as long as you approached different or varying perspectives, political or otherwise, with a certain level of curiosity and openness, the chances for some kind of a breakthrough in either direction or no direction is still going to be a more positive outcome just because you're doing it, I think with more compassion and empathy. And we approach all of our work that way. And so being in a political climate that may or may not support self is just a part of that dance that we do.

[00:22:00] Speaker C: Okay, great.

So another question that I have, and this may be more of a question for Maria, but Sharon, feel free to chime in if you feel like it.

Just about General wellness approaches for parents, for teachers and kids who are apprehensive.

[00:22:20] Speaker A: About the school year.

[00:22:23] Speaker C: What things have you found to be effective for people who are just stressing out about it right now?

[00:22:33] Speaker B: Yeah, you know, the only thing that I would add is it's okay to acknowledge that you're stressed.

It's okay to say, ooh, I'm stressed. It's okay to share with others.

I think that sometimes that's hard. People expect us to be able to manage it all as parents, and actually we can't. And so I would say add that. Give yourself permission to say that you're stressed, that you're overwhelmed.

And then the other thing is that ask thoughtful questions to your child, and then you take an opportunity to answer those thoughtful questions as well, because your child will flourish when you are sharing about who you are and about your intentions with them as well. You know, as a mom, I try to make time where I'm showing my child that I'm human, too, and that I'm not just mom.

And that has just really bonded us together.

When I'm stressed, I can say, oof, I had a really tough day. I'm a little stressed, so I'm going to need some help in this way. And he's able to then repeat that when he's stressed or when he's feeling. So when he's feeling a little different. And so I say, as parents, I encourage you to acknowledge when things aren't just right and it's important to share with your children, they get to learn and they get to then model being human, which is what we all are, ultimately.

[00:24:08] Speaker D: Yeah, absolutely. I also remember being a child and some of the beauty of doing this work is looking back and going, I wish I had known this as a child. I wish somebody had taught me this.

You know, we talk a lot about attaching mindful practices to activities that folks are already doing. So parents, one can model a lot of these behaviors that show how they're taking care of themselves by doing it alongside with their children in a really subtle way. You know, one of the examples we often will talk about with teachers and then they then do this with their kids is, you know, when you get to school, you obviously are driving to school every day, and when the moment where you park your car and have to walk into the classroom, and a lot of times it's exciting. A lot of times there's dread, there's anxiety. You're not quite sure. Taking that walk from your car into the school or into the classroom and just being very intentional about your breath and the steps you're taking and only focusing on that in itself can really regulate and calm your nervous system.

Those practices are even easier when you're showing that to your children. So for example, many of us drive children to school in that drive that you're doing, saying, let's take a few breaths together. If it's a practice that they've been maybe learning already, or if it's something that you're wanting to implement at home and then you do it in the car or you do it when you're in the grocery store. There are these little tiny moments in our life that we have to do by the sheer fact that we're living. And so finding these moments to calm our state of mind and modeling that to children, I mean, children can often sense our anxiety. And really one of the most powerful things I've learned about the work that we do, and I've seen it in practice in schools when I worked with refugees and immigrants and now is that our nervous system has the power to co regulate so to regulate other nervous systems. So if you've ever been in a tricky situation and there's an argument, you might just be on the listening end of that argument, but you can feel your heart beating quickly. Well, that is co regulation. And inversely, if we are noticing and finding these calm ways to just ground ourselves, put our feet on the floor and just take a few moments, it could be a few seconds only. Immediately our bodies and our nervous system start to co regulate those in the room. And it can be a really powerful tool as an educator, as a parent, and there are things that we often forget. And I think one of the beautiful things about Amala is that we're not here to teach anything new. We're here to remind folks of the skills that are already

embedded within that maybe we just haven't been using for some time or aren't even aware that we have them. But they're there. They're these embedded resiliency skills. The other thing that, you know, we, we often talk about is that we try to normalize the ups and downs of life through gentle, you know, conversations through when we do our circle up program with youth, we will have prompts that talk about, you know, highlights and low lights and what are those conversations and what are those moments that you're having and is it okay to talk about them? I think as adults, when folks ask you, hey, how are you doing? We've kind of been trained to not answer with the assumption that no one wants to hear the truth, if we're doing great or not great. And in reality, when we do that with our kids, I think we're not modeling what we're hoping for, which is open communication and validation that life has its ups and downs, but that we have the skills to deal with the ups and downs. And I find that the ways in which adults take care of themselves first and fill their own cup can make a huge impact on how their children are receiving them, how their partners are receiving them, how even their coworkers would feel them. And so just some little basic skills, these can be 5 minute practices even less. Another practice that we like to do is just talk about either something you're grateful for, you know, maybe during bedtime, just one thing you're grateful for.

When kids are off to school, a really beautiful thing to ask is, what's your intention for today? What are you hoping for today? It can, it can really just set the tone for the day in a way that's, you know, positive, but also shows that you're really interested in how they're doing and how they're, how they're living their life and how they're communicating about their experiences. So those are just some really simple pieces, but I think the biggest piece is just normalize having conversations. I know Sharon mentioned this as well. It's okay if you're not having a great day. It's okay to talk about it and it's okay to lean on resources or even ask for support.

I'm really truly a believer that the community can rise up, but sometimes the community doesn't know that they need to be there for others because we are fairly good at masking that. So just modeling that as well is an important piece for going into the new year.

[00:29:17] Speaker C: Okay, so I really want to talk about a little bit more specifically about the Circle up program and Amala's Pathways for Success grant from the Haag Foundation. So Maria, just like, what are your goals with this grant and how will you evaluate, you know, whether, whether you have succeeded or not?

[00:29:44] Speaker D: Absolutely. And we are super thankful to have this, this grant. We're starting in our second year at Hayes High School as a result of the grant. And that has been kind of a game changer for us. So what we're doing is we're doing our Circle up program that I've mentioned. So it's a nine month program where we work with communities and schools to support 8 to 10 youth, usually, you know, students of color. And what we're doing is working with students Once a week, for an hour a week, teaching basic skills around conversation, belonging, ways to support each other, ways to handle stress. There's some oftentimes grounding activities. There's a lot of play depending on the ages. At the high school level, it's more conversational. We always have two facilitators that are leading the work. And these two facilitators are generally, you know, both culturally relevant to the students in terms of the community that they're serving. They're often from the community. So in this particular case, we have folks actually who live in the community working with the youth. And they over time, the goal is to help them, of course, you know, build skills around self regulation, around, you know, how to deal with stress, around how to have conversations, around emotions and even emotional granularity, and really understanding what the variety of ways in which we're experiencing our emotions and learning how to name them. But we also are really focused on belonging.

Many of the kiddos we work with are kiddos that don't often feel like the school can be a safe

place or don't have a safe space in general in their home or school environment. And so circle up. For many of the students, they feel safe, they feel seen, and they feel that their voice matters. And we really try to foster the sense of community. We also do two family wellness workshops. So we work with the CIS program managers in this particular case at Hayes High School, and we will create parent programming. What's really beautiful about our work through this grant is that we're also working in McCormick Middle School. And because the two campuses are connected to each other, we are able to do concurrent programming where we're making a larger impact. So we've been really thankful. Even this last year, we had our first parent night and we shared a simple mindfulness experience with 10 parents. Again, they decided they wanted to stay with us while their kids were working with CIS on child related activities. And so many of the feedback there that we heard was, wow, I'm impressed that I have time for myself. I haven't had a chance to sit with myself for 10 minutes. And I'm really thankful for this opportunity.

So that's something that we're really excited about. And then we'll do three to five professional development workshops for teachers and administrators. And the way we do that is we're very intentional in understanding that schools have an ebb and flow throughout the year. The beginning of the year, even October come, you know, January after the break, all of it has a very different feel and pulse and so what we like to do is to really survey the clients that we work with. So we'll survey Hayes High School once again and get a really good sense of what is it that you're hoping for? What are you interested in? What are you not interested in? What should we avoid? We're going to be meeting with administrators to make sure that we tailor our programming to their specific campus needs. And the way we measure it is really sense of belonging, students feeling successful. Students feel like they have a voice that matters. And with adults, we really focus on whether or not the information we share can help improve their mental, social, emotional functioning. And this last year, we really had some outstanding results. At Hayes High School, 84% of students felt an increased sense of belonging and 95% of them felt that their voice mattered. And these are students that are generally, you know, not operating in that way on a day to day basis. So it feels wonderful and validating to know that we're, you know, making an impact.

[00:33:58] Speaker C: Okay, so last question.

[00:34:02] Speaker A: Where can people go to learn more.

[00:34:04] Speaker C: About your organizations and what they can do to support?

[00:34:10] Speaker B: Yeah, I will, you know, I'll start off, I want to go back to what I said earlier, that relationships matter. So first, you can find out more about CIS by visiting our website at ciscentraltexas.org you will find information about our programs and in what communities we're serving and information about all the hundred campuses that we're at. But I will say that we need volunteers, we need mentors, we need the community to step up and say, hey, put me in, coach. And so on our website, you will also find information about how you can become a reading buddy or become a mentor or come and support one of our affordable housing sites where we provide after school care and we provide meals for students. And so I'll leave you with this is that, you know, I think everyone thinks it's cliché where it takes a, you know, a village to raise a child, but we really do need a village. And I will say this, that I've been sharing the story about the Maasai tribe. They are a tribe in Africa and they have a traditional greeting which is how are the children? So they do not ask themselves, how are you? What's up? But instead they say, how are the children? And the response is the children are well. Because they really acknowledge that when children are well, that the community is going to be healthy. And so I say that if all the adults could start thinking about how our actions and how our interactions and how we are supporting Children, I think that we would be happy to have as many volunteers come

out, be reading buddies, be mentors.

[00:36:04] Speaker D: That's beautiful. I totally agree with what Sharon just shared. We love our community, love the support. We are always looking for Circle up facilitators. So the program I've been speaking most about, we like to bring in folks from a broad range of experiences and backgrounds. It's a paid position. We are, you know, almost on a rolling basis hiring folks to come and join us. And what we ask really is somebody who's interested in working with youth, who has, you know, ideally some experience working with youth. We are, you know, hoping that it's somebody even with multiple identities, linguistic abilities, the idea that, you know, it can be somebody that's from the neighborhoods that we're working in or the schools that we're working in.

Anyone who's interested can certainly go to our website or even you can of course let me know directly.

But other than that, I would say we are a nonprofit organization. So funding is always key. We have great donors who really support our work and so that's also an excellent way to support Amala Foundation.

[00:37:14] Speaker C: All right, well, Maria Arabo, Sharon Vihil, it was so awesome to be able to take this time to talk about the important work that you're doing. It's a fraught time to be going back to school.

That much I know. And yeah. And if only that all hands on approach were a reality for everyone around our state.

So just thanks for serving as an example. We appreciate it.

[00:37:50] Speaker B: Well, thank you for having us. I really appreciate it.

[00:37:52] Speaker D: Yeah, you too. You too. Bye. Bye.

[00:37:54] Speaker A: Getting back to our mental health headline, Trust for America's Health is a Washington D.C. based public health policy research and advocacy organization and they are now the first organization to be featured in our co signer Spotlights.

This is our way of bringing attention and recognition to the 200 organizations who have co signed the Hawk Foundation's declaration of racism as a mental health crisis. In co signing, Trust for America's Health, or TIFA, is signaling their commitment to greater mental health by working to create a world where race based inequality equity is a thing of the past. Long time listeners might recognize TIFA's CEO Dr. J. Nadine Gracia as a past guest on the podcast. Here she is from back in 2021 talking about her vision for a more equitable world.

[00:38:55] Speaker E: When I think about health equity, I think about really ensuring how do we ensure that where there are these Systems that, as Dr. Fernandez Pena said, it's not just by luck but really that the systems themselves actually promote equity and opportunity for everyone. How do you create those kinds of systems? It translated into me pursuing initially in my career, pursuing medicine as a desire to serve others and seeing in my training where we were serving communities, where getting to our clinic was difficult because of a lack of transportation or being food insecure and trying to assist the patients and families that we were caring for and just remembering the opportunities that I had had as being the daughter of immigrants, to know that what we have to do is really ensure that it's not solely saying it's an individual's responsibility, but it's also it's society's responsibility to ensure that the conditions are there that actually promote

opportunity, equity, health and well being. And so every time that I think about the types of work that we do, whether it's in policy or programs or advocacy, I always consider those really who are marginalized and excluded and how do we actually ensure that they have a voice at the table? How do we ensure that their needs are being met so that we can truly reach the full potential, I think for not only our nation, but our world?

[00:40:24] Speaker A: That was from episode 109, declaring racism a Mental health crisis. I've included a link to the full episode in the show notes, so check it out.

Before we close, I just wanted to remind you all that Mind of Texas, the podcast that is a joint production of the Hogg foundation and kut, has been out since July and I'm thrilled by the positive response that it's gotten. Our third episode, which will explore the youth suicide crisis, is dropping on September 13th. You can find the podcast@kut.org or wherever you get your podcasts. Please listen, subscribe, Leave Reviews we need your support. So final takeaways.

I think a good one for this episode, you know, based on the wonderful dialogue between Maria and Sharon, is that mental health is deeply relational and that this is especially so for the mental health of children and youth. What our two guests today talked about was an entire relationship structure, one that folds in individuals, programs and organizations, all of it built around the mental health needs of kids in school.

As much as it takes a village, it takes a structure. And so much of the burnout that teachers describe dealing with is a direct result of our failing to create the kind of support, supportive structure that would lead to a better outcome. So hats off to communities and schools and Amala foundation for showing that another way is possible.

And that does it for this episode. We're glad that you could join us. Production assistants by Kate Rooney, Darrell Wiggins and Anna Harris. Music provided courtesy of Anna Harris and Steven Siebert.

Just as taking care of ourselves enhances our ability to help others, so it is as well that by helping others we enhance our own resilience. Please leave us a review. Subscribe to us on the podcast app of your choice. We can be found at Apple Podcasts, Google Play Music, Tunein, and Spotify, among others.

Taking us out now is Anna's Good Vibes by our friend Anna Harris. And thanks as always to the Hogg foundation for its support.

[00:43:05] Speaker C: Thanks so much for joining us.