

MONICA NEPOMUCENO

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BIO

Monica Nepomuceno is an Education Programs Consultant at the California Department of Education (CDE). In this capacity, Monica oversees the Mental Health Services Program, co-chairs the Student Mental Health Policy Workgroup (SMHPW), is the Project Cal-Well Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) Coordinator and a YMHFA Instructor, and represents the voice of K-12 students on several committees, including the California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC) and the California Advocates for Children and Youth (CMHACY).

Monica is passionate about creating a better public understanding of the mental health needs of California K-12 students. This includes helping all school staff, parents, and community members increase their knowledge and awareness of student mental health. She is highly committed to helping schools and districts build capacity to support student-centered mental health programs, which include the identification of students in need, improving school climate, providing direct services, staff training, student training, opportunities for youth engagement and a role for peer support.

She understands firsthand the effects that an undiagnosed and untreated mental health issue can have on a person's life. Her lived experience has helped her advocate for students' diverse needs and the ability for youth-serving adults to intervene timely, respectful, and culturally appropriate manner. Monica stresses the importance of recognizing symptoms early on and before they interfere with daily functioning or become debilitating.

Monica is most proud of her ability to build relationships with local, state, and national partners to increase awareness of and supports for student mental health. Her role at the CDE helps foster connections and leverage resources to engage non-traditional partners with schools and students.

