

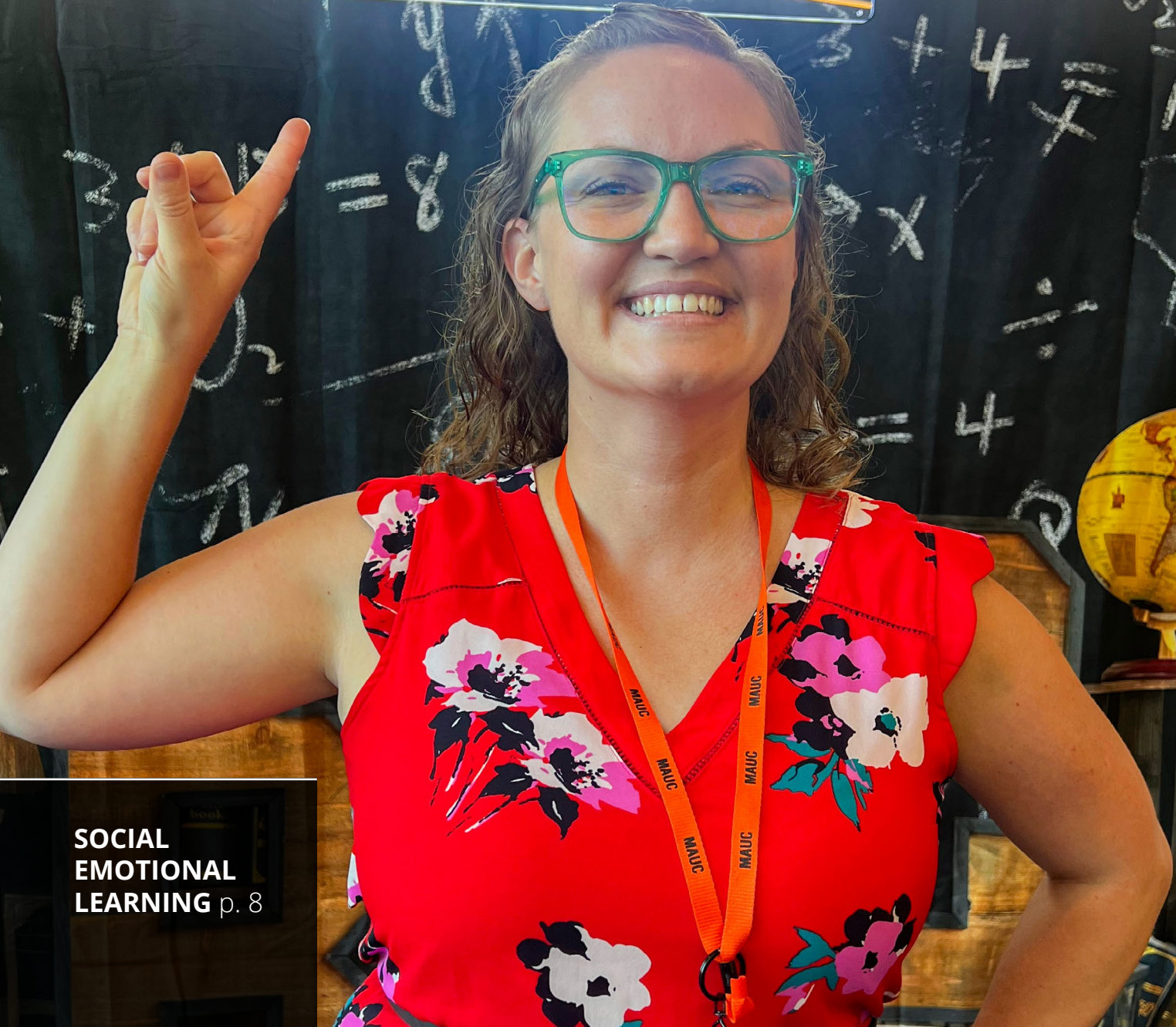
MID-AMERICA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST NEWS & INSPIRATION

OUTLOOK

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SOCIAL
EMOTIONAL
LEARNING p. 8



Support Grows

for social emotional learning

According to the Center for Disease Control, between 5.5 and 6 million children aged 3-17 years were diagnosed with ADHD, anxiety and/or behavior problems between 2016-2019. Often, these conditions occur together; for example, about one in three children with anxiety also had behavior problems, and one in three also had depression.*

“The children’s mental health crisis is increasing by the day,” says Mindy Salyers, licensed school counselor and founder of Counselation, a nonprofit combining school counseling with an on-demand consultation model.

For eight years, starting in 2013, Salyers partnered with Versacare through La Sierra University Center for Conflict Resolution to bring counseling services to Adventist schools. In 2021 she founded Counselation, and now partners with conferences across the North American Division to bring mental healthcare to schools.

“We have partnered with 19 conferences so far,” Salyers shares. “Versacare, which has a history of being very supportive of Adventist education, has funded many of those.”

Versacare grants are not a silver bullet; they are a starting place. The grants provide seed money, and each subsequent year for up to three years the schools are expected to provide an increasing amount of the necessary funds to utilize Counselation’s services.

And the need for those services is great.

“There’s not one school that doesn’t need support for social emotional learning, and that’s just 10 percent of it,” says Diane Harris, superintendent of education for Rocky Mountain Conference, and a licensed professional clinical counselor. “The rest is helping our students navigate and gain tools for how to deal with stress, anxiety, peer pressure and social media.”

Counselation provides services and resources for teachers, students and families. This includes not only regular newsletters with helpful tips and links related to mental and emotional well-being, but also one-on-one counseling with principals, teachers and students. In addition, Counselation helps schools create academic accommodation plans, presents seminars and workshops and helps

teachers handle specific situations with greater understanding and skill.

“It’s such a vast need to know how to manage crises,” Salyers says. “Everything from how to deal with panic attacks in kids, to kids who are a safety risk to themselves and others. You don’t get this in your elementary education degree.”

It’s not just before and during a crisis that Counselation helps teachers; they assist with the aftermath, as well.

“Teachers often question themselves,” Salyers says. “They wonder if they did the right thing, if they did the student a disservice, and what will happen to the student if the teacher isn’t providing stability for them. We help teachers process all those doubts so they come to trust themselves more.”

Through Counselation, teachers have access to grade-specific classroom worksheets on topics such as blurting, tattling vs. reporting, managing feelings, conflict vs. bullying, peer pressure, social connection, consent and more.

“We’ve just started virtual weekly social emotional learning lessons with Mindy,” says Marsha Bartulec, principal of Vista Ridge Academy in Erie, Colorado. “She

presents an interactive topic and gets the students engaged so they can learn how to take care of themselves and how to help others.”

A unique aspect of what Counselation provides is a spreadsheet of social emotional learning scope and sequence, which ties the various worksheets and topics they provide to specific Bible verses, matching Bible course units, and relevant educational requirements from the NAD.

“We’re helping kids gain skills and gain understanding about their bodies and brains and hearts,” Salyers says. “Being able to contextualize this in a biblical way is the fun part.” **O**

Becky St. Clair is a freelance writer.

*<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmen-talhealth/data.html>

Read the full story at outlookmag.org/social-emotional-learning

For more information

on how you can create a culture of mental health and wellness for your own school, contact Counselation at mindysalyers@counselation.com.

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