

Interview psychologist, education expert, and author Dr. Deborah Offner on her new book:

Educators as First Responders: A Teacher's Guide to Adolescent Development and Mental Health, Grades 6 - 12

"Because they are "on the ground" with students on a daily basis, teachers are often the first to notice when a student is struggling emotionally. And students who reach out for guidance or support are more likely to seek a trusted teacher or coach than to confide in a parent or even the school counselor. With basic understanding and expert professional guidance, all educators can support students effectively, even in the face of today's students' increasingly serious and complex mental health needs."

–Deborah Offner, Ph.D.

MEET DR. DEBORAH OFFNER

DR. DEBORAH OFFNER brings more than two decades of experience in mental health, K-12, and higher education to her work with individuals, families, and institutions. She publishes and presents on wellness/emotional health and student affairs policy in private schools at regional and national conferences as well as on campus.

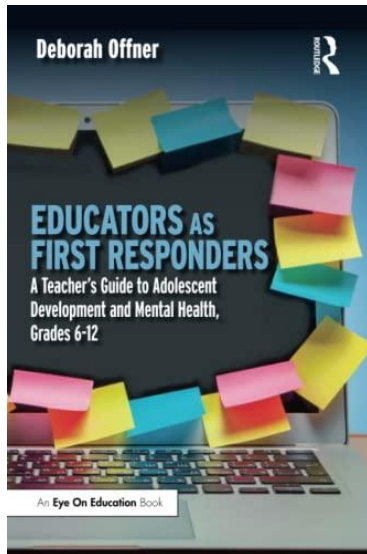
Currently, Dr. Offner is a Consulting Psychologist at Beacon Academy in Boston, a 14-month program between eighth and ninth grade that prepares students from under-resourced for entry into private day and boarding high schools. She also provides ongoing professional consultation to several middle and secondary schools in and around Boston.

From 2003-2017, Dr. Offner was the Consulting Psychologist and subsequently, Dean of Students, at The Commonwealth School, a co-educational college preparatory school in Boston. She has also taught both undergraduate and graduate psychology courses and served in the counseling centers of several Boston-area colleges.



Dr. Offner maintains an independent clinical and consulting practice in her home in Newton Centre, where she specializes in the treatment of adolescents, young adults, and their families.

ABOUT THE BOOK:



Educators as First Responders: A Teacher's Guide to Adolescent Development and Mental Health, Grades 6 – 12 is a comprehensive, hands-on guide for teachers and other educators of students in middle school and high school. Today's schools are at the forefront of supporting adolescents with increasingly complex, challenging psychosocial needs. Moreover, students are more likely to seek out a trusted teacher, advisor, or coach for support than to confide directly in a parent or even a school counselor.

Succinct and accessible, this book provides tips and strategies that teachers, coaches, nurses, counselors, and other school professionals can put into immediate use with students in varying degrees of distress. These evidence-based practices and real-world classroom examples will help you understand the “whole student,” a developing individual shaped not just by parental pressure or psychiatric diagnosis but by their school communities as well as broader cultural and systemic forces.

Drawing from her expertise and key themes in *Educators as First Responders*, Dr. Offner is available for interviews, articles, and immediate commentary to discuss:

- Schools are not mental health clinics - so why should they concern themselves with student mental health issues? If they are to do so, how can they equip themselves?
- How can teachers adopt a “First Responder” mindset when dealing with the mental health issues of their students?
- How the national mental health crisis in the U.S. is showing up in today's middle and high school students
- The Whole Child Approach: the importance of incorporating sociological and systemic perspectives on gender, race-ethnicity, and socioeconomic class into understanding and giving advice to students
- Unpacking Generation Z: what distinguishes their social, psychological, and educational experiences in the U.S. from those of previous generations
- Advice for dealing with burnout as a teacher

- Worried, sad, or something more? How can teachers identify potential mental health problems in their students, and what to do next? What is just normal development and what is cause for concern?
- How to encourage collaboration between parents and teachers in helping students' wellbeing
- Identifying students' innate strengths and sources of resilience as a teacher to help them succeed and thrive
- What can schools do to help adolescents express vulnerabilities and needs in constructive and appropriate ways?
- How parent stress impacts adolescents' wellbeing?
- How to make educational opportunities and mental health care more accessible to all students
- Resources schools can introduce to support students and student affairs
- Why do students turn to teachers more than psychologists, parents, or a physician, and how teachers can be equipped to help
- The Adolescent Danger Zones—identifying the major causes of teen suicide, and how teachers can be aware and fight back
- How can parents and teachers of middle school and high school students determine when to enlist professional help?

CONNECT

To learn more about Dr. Deborah Offner, please visit deborahoffnerphd.com and connect on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).