

School Social Workers: Operating at the Intersection of Education and Mental Health





Welcome

Who we are:

Jennifer Polizotto, MSW, LCSW

NJ School Social Worker

DSW Candidate, May 2020

Rutgers University

Kelly Zinn, MSW, LSW

NJ School Social Worker

DSW Candidate, May 2020

Rutgers University

Presentation Overview:

1. Overview of Topics
 2. Variations of Mental Health Needs Based on Age/Grade Level
 3. School Social Work Interventions & Strategies
 4. Resources for School-Based Mental Health Providers
 5. Questions/Comment
- Feel free to ask questions as we go along
 - If a topic is not covered, we will try to address it as time permits



The background is black with a large white circle in the center. To the left of the white circle, there are several overlapping circles in shades of gray. To the right, there are several concentric white circles of varying diameters.

**Prevalence of mental
health concerns in
school-aged children**

*What are we facing at
school?*



In an article published in the *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, CDC researchers found that, as of 2011-2012, more than **1 in 20**, or **2.6 million**, U.S. children aged **6-17** years had current anxiety or depression that had previously been diagnosed by a healthcare provider.

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>

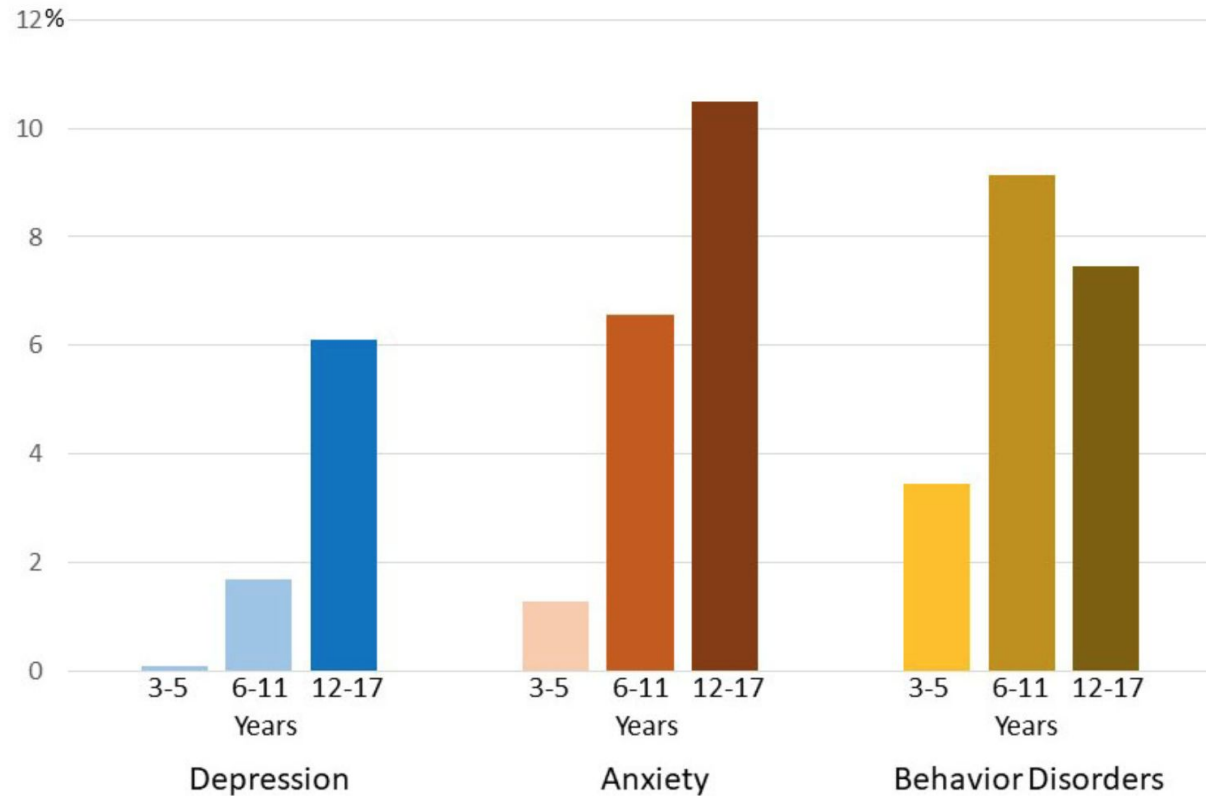


These parent report data showed slightly more boys than girls had a diagnosis of anxiety or depression. *About 1 in 5 children with current anxiety and depression did not receive mental health treatment in the past year.*

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>



Depression, Anxiety, Behavior Disorders, by Age





***Why are
school-based mental
health services
important?***



The benefits of school-based mental health services:

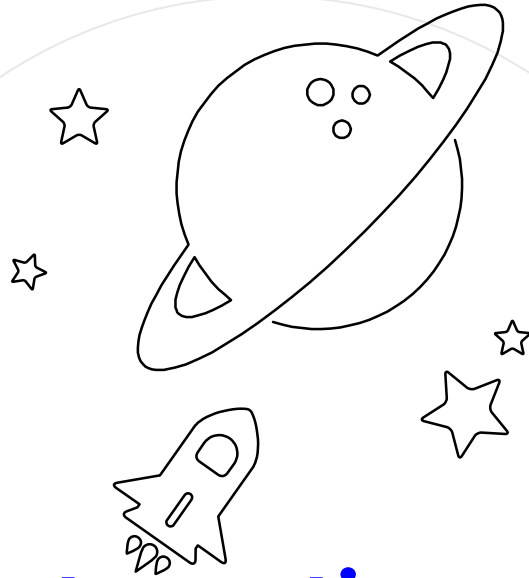
Cost effective

Remove access barriers for marginalized populations

Destigmatizing

Provides opportunity for resource sharing among students, families, teachers, and community mental health providers





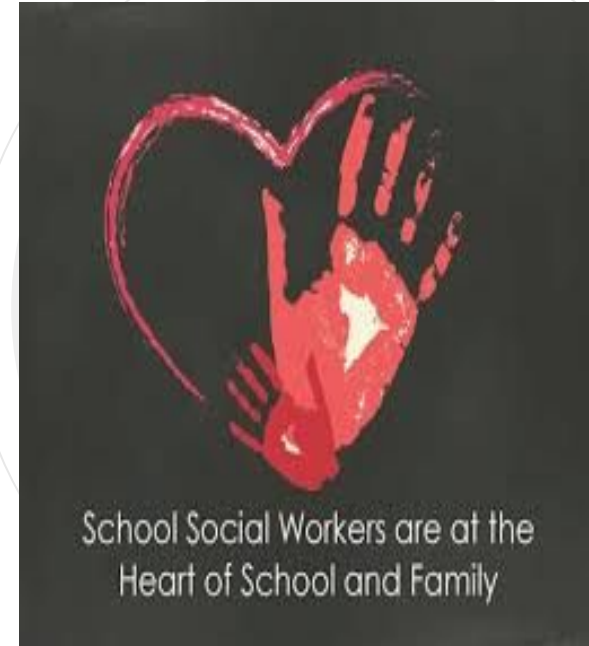
Intersection of education and school social work

*Addressing the needs of students
through school-based mental health*

Role of School Social Worker (NASW)

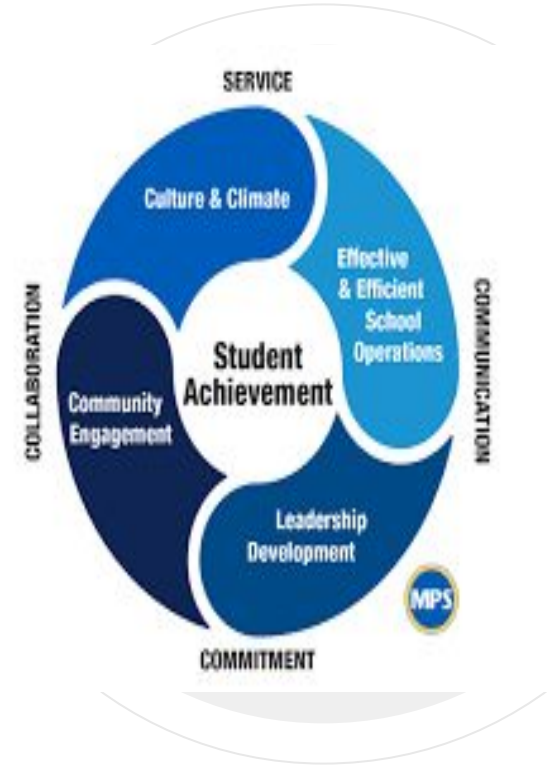
School Social Workers:

*The link between school, home, and community in helping students achieve academic success.



School Social Workers:

*Work directly with school administrations as well as students and families, providing leadership in forming school discipline policies, mental health intervention, crisis management, and support services.



School Social Workers:

*Part of an interdisciplinary team to help students succeed, school social workers also facilitate community involvement in the schools while advocating for student success.



School Social Workers:

Are trained professionals who have the opportunity to provide school-based mental health services for students struggling with mental health issues that impede their academic progress and social-emotional growth.





School Social Workers:

- Several Functions:
 - **Member of CST**
 - **General Education SW**
 - **Related Service Provider**
 - **Contracted Services**






***Relevance of the school
building as a mental health
provider:***



shutterstock.com • 553127521



The first signs of mental health issues often arise at school. School social workers are typically the first access point to mental health care.



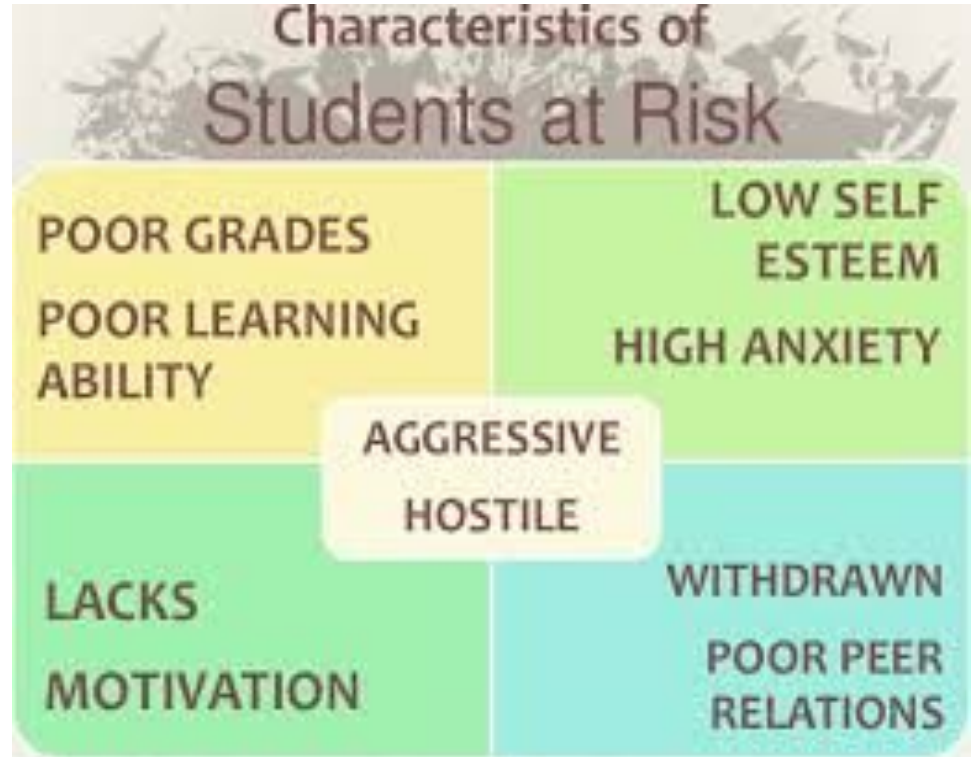
Schools are viewed as the place where school administration, families, and mental health providers can collaborate to create a safe space to meet academic and emotional needs.



Schools can help to alleviate potential vulnerability and establish a network of support around the student and families.

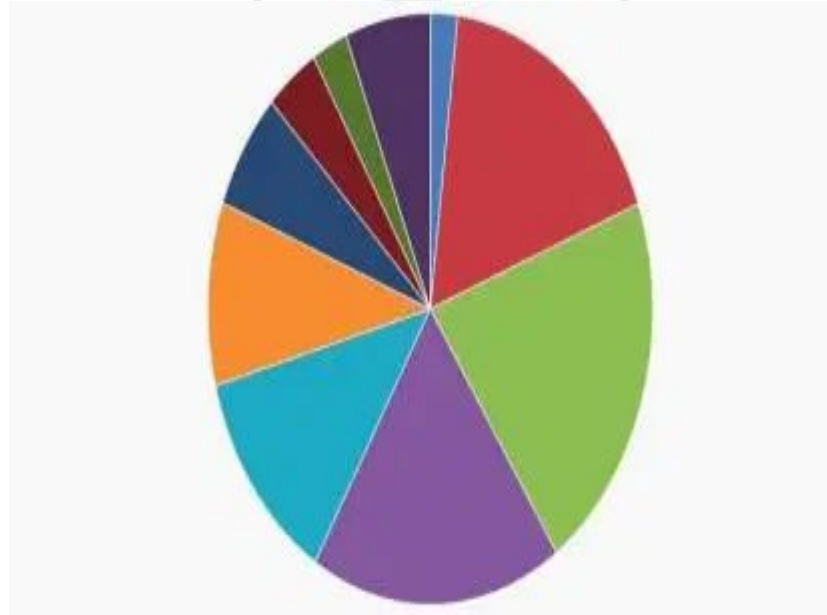


Student Profile



Students who do not receive early detection, assessment, and linkage to proper mental health treatment are at an increased risk for:

- School drop-out
- Incarceration
- Early death such as by suicide
- Increased risk for substance use



A circular frame containing a photograph of a desk. In the center is a large, black, three-dimensional letter 'A'. To its right is a wooden block with the letter 'S' carved into it. To the left of the 'A' is a potted plant in a white pot with a lace-like top. In the foreground, a book is lying flat on the desk. The background shows a window with light coming through. The entire scene is framed by a dark circular border with two white concentric circles.

School Social Work Interventions

Viewing School Social Work through a clinical lens:



Ecological Systems Theory-

Views clients as part of a larger system of interactions and relationships beyond themselves

SSW's can intervene at micro-meso-macro systems within the school to support academic, social, and emotional progress

Types of School Social Work Interventions

1

Tier 1 Interventions

- Primary Prevention
- Applied to all students supporting academic/behavior issues

2

Tier 2 Interventions

- Students require more academic and behavioral interventions
- Seek to prevent repeated failures

3

Tier 3 Interventions

- Students who have significant academic/behavioral concerns
- Individual counseling

Elementary Interventions

Identification

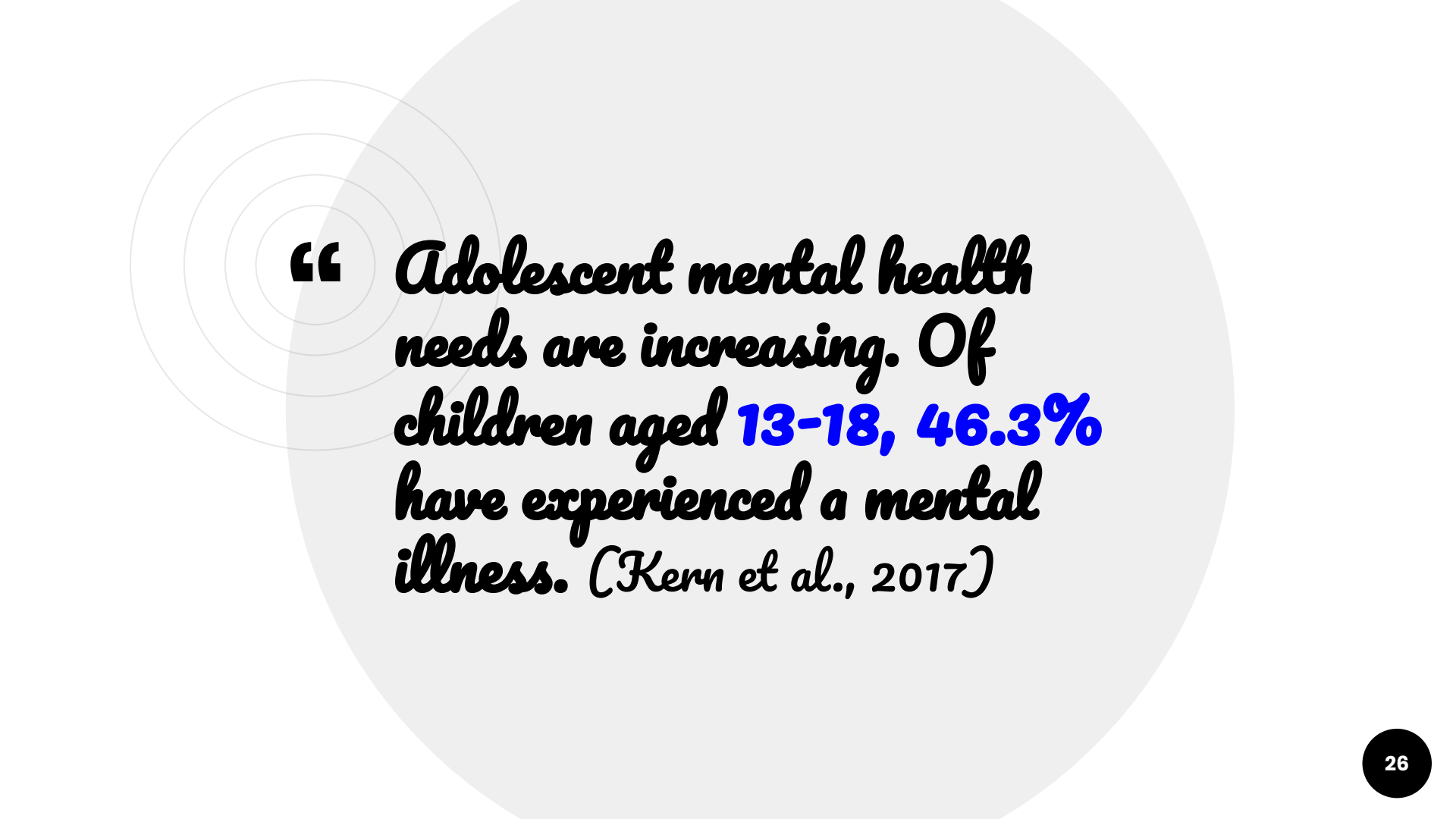
- School wide screening
- Observation - throughout the building and across the day
- Awareness of ACEs and how these may impact children
- Social History Evaluations
- Participation in CST, I&RS, and other team meetings

Support

- For families: as they adjust to the presence of a mental health concern
- For students: in the form of individual and small group counseling
- For teachers and school staff: to build abilities and share interventions

Advocacy

- Social Emotional Learning Curriculum - preventative
- Building Resilience
- Use of Dr. Greene's Collaborative & Proactive Solutions approach
- Trauma-sensitive school initiatives



“ Adolescent mental health needs are increasing. Of children aged **13-18, 46.3%** have experienced a mental illness. (Kern et al., 2017)

Intervention in High School

How to:

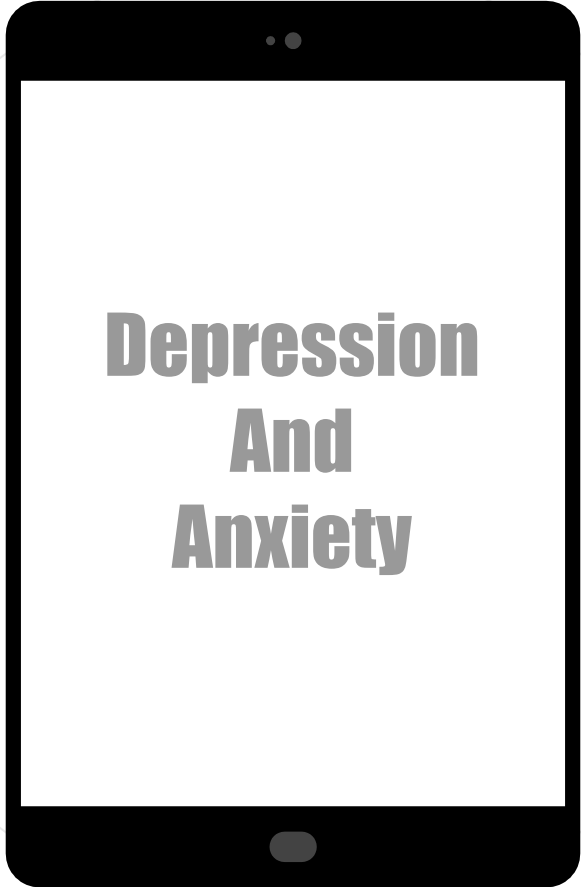
REACH

SCREEN

INTERVENE



*What
We
Know*



**Depression
And
Anxiety**

*Increase
In
Adolescence*

Who To Look For?

Students who are:

ABSENT

HOME-INSTRUCTION

TARDY

NURSES OFFICE

IN-HALLWAYS

DROPPED GRADES

SOCIALLY ISOLATED

REACH

Increase Visibility

Participate in Meetings

Speak with ALL staff

(Nurses, PE teachers, Guidance Counselors)

Consult with Administration

Meet with Families

**Promote
communication**

**Increase community
resources**

**Connect with the
building**



SCREEN

Assessing for Levels of Intervention

Social
Assessment
I&RS
(Intervention and
Referral Services)

Protocols
Crisis Intervention
CST & Staff Meetings



INTERVENE

TIER 1, 2, 3

Individual

Group

Family

Classroom strategies

Community

resources

Case management

Crisis Intervention

Specialty Programs

**Specific Groups based
on need**

Working with teachers


Family Collaboration

**Inclusion of Community
Resources**

Program Development



GOALS



Reach Marginalized
Students
Alleviate Stress
(Staff, Student, Family)
Promote Mental Health

**Create a
sense of
belonging**

School-Based Mental Health Resources

Local

State

National





THANK YOU

Any questions?

You can find us at:

jp1606@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

ktzinn318@gmail.com