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On Behalf Of:
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As a mental health professional (LMFT), I believe these surveys, when given in a school environment, invade children's emotional boundaries by asking inappropriate, intimate, personal questions. They are inappropriate for children's psychosocial development, and a poor use of time and resources that should be focused on academic achievement, especially when so many children are already far behind academically after years of pandemic life.

These surveys confuse children as to the nature of what is supposed to happen in an academic environment by asking personal questions about intimate topics, many of which violate parents' rights to navigate these matters within the home and according to the guidance of their own cultural values. This does not set them up for appropriate expectations of how they should conduct themselves, and expect to be treated, in the professional world. If an adult's employer were to ask them personal questions about their sexuality, that adult would have a case for filing a sexual harassment claim against their employer. So why is it acceptable to ask children about their intimate emotional experiences and private sexual thoughts and feelings?

Teachers are already mandated reporters. If they have reason to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, they are required to take appropriate action and report that to the authorities, who must then investigate the matter thoroughly and follow due process. If they do not suspect abuse or neglect, but notice that a child seems mentally unwell, they have a responsibility to discuss their concerns with the child's parents, who know them best and are their most devoted advocates. The existing structures in place are adequate to ensure that children who need additional eyes on them will receive the appropriate care.

As a mental health professional, I can also attest that therapy can only be effective when patients choose therapy out of their own free will. Patients' emotional boundaries need to be respected in order to support them maintaining a healthy sense of self, emotion regulation, and safety. Only in the right environment should patients choose to disclose personal matters to someone qualified to help them, and dedicated to the job. When children are exposed to invasive, personal questions as a mandatory part of their academic experience, it can have the opposite of desired effect, making them associate anything psychotherapy-related with things that feel forced and unwanted. This can lead to distrust and avoidance of mental health professionals, having negative consequences for people's ability to seek therapy during those times, circumstances, and developmental stages that such treatment would truly be beneficial to them.

Today's children are already growing up in a time that they have less privacy than ever before, and are exposed to an abundance of inappropriate content via social media and pornography. Their parents have thousands of photographs of them, and youth who are on social media have shared many personal things they will likely feel "cringeworthy" in the future. Let's not make this situation any worse by adding surveys that reek of data mining operations. Allow children privacy. Respect their emotional boundaries. Keep school academic.