Addressing Children's Mental and Behavioral Health Needs in the Schools

SAANYS Summer Camp 2018

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What is Mental Health?

- Mental health is not simply the absence of mental illness but also encompasses social, emotional, and behavioral wellness and the ability to cope with life's challenges.

Why Mental Health in Schools?

- Students are substantially **more likely to seek help** when school mental health services are available

- Schools are already the **major providers of mental health** services to children

- The Carnegie Council Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents concluded that, while school systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students, *schools must meet the challenge when the need directly affects learning.*

The unmet mental health needs of students may be an important and largely unrecognized influence on broader indices of student achievement in school districts and statewide educational systems
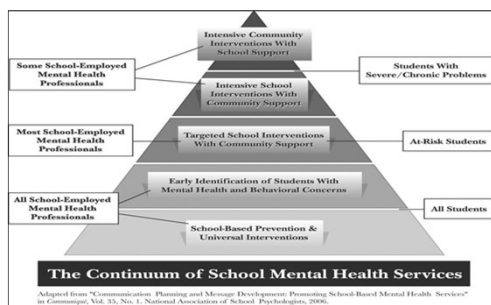
The Good News!

- School mental health programs **improve student mental wellness, behavioral functioning, and academic achievement.**
- School mental health programs improve educational outcomes by **decreasing absences, discipline referrals and improving test scores**.
- Expanded school mental health services in elementary schools have been found to:
  - **reduce special education** referrals
  - improve aspects of the **school climate**
  - **produce declines** in disciplinary referrals, suspension, grade retention, and special education referrals and placement among at-risk students

Despite the enhanced array of community-based and in-home mental health care options, children receive mental health services in schools more frequently than any other setting
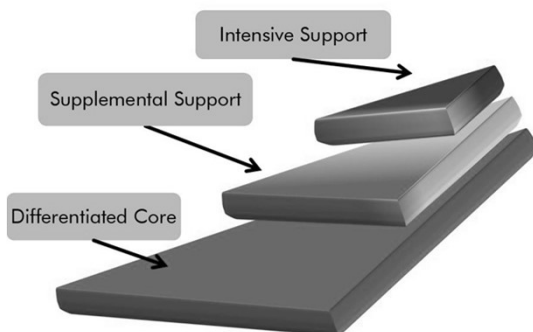
Multi-Tiered System of Supports

- Mental and behavioral health services fall on a continuum and are increasingly provided within a multi-tiered system of supports
  - Tier I: promotion of mental and behavioral wellness and prevention of mental and behavioral health problems
  - Tier II: direct and indirect services to address emerging mental and behavioral health problems and prevent risky behaviors
  - Tier III: direct and indirect services to address identified mental and behavioral health problems
- **services provided by at all three levels are considered mental and behavioral health services**

Model of School Mental Health Services

The Continuum of School Mental Health Services

Adapted from "Communication Planning and Message Development: Promoting School-Based Mental Health Services" in Communiqué, Vol. 35, No. 1. National Association of School Psychologists, 2006.

Layering of Support

Tier 1 - Universal

- Interventions that target the entire population of a school to promote and enhance wellness by increasing pro-social behaviors, emotional wellbeing, skill development, and mental health.

- This includes school-wide programs that foster safe and caring learning environments that, engage students, are culturally aware, promote social and emotional learning and develop a connection between school, home, and community.

- The content of Tier 1/Universal approaches should reflect the specific needs of the school population.

Tier 2 - Secondary

- Interventions at Tier 2 are scaled-up versions of Tier 1 supports for particular targeted approaches to meet the needs of the roughly 10-15% of students who require more than Tier 1 supports.

- Typically, this would include interventions that occur early after the onset of an identified concern, as well as target individual students or subgroups of students whose risk of developing mental health concerns is higher than average.

- Risk factors do not necessarily indicate poor outcomes, but rather refer to statistical predictors that have a theoretical and empirical base, and may solidify a pathway that becomes increasingly difficult to shape towards positive outcomes.

Tier 3 - Tertiary

- Interventions for the roughly 1-5% of individuals who are identified as having the most severe, chronic, or pervasive concerns that may or may not meet diagnostic criteria.

- Interventions are implemented through the use of a highly individualized, comprehensive and developmental approach that uses a collaborative teaming process in the implementation of culturally aware interventions that reduce risk factors and increase the protective factors of students.

Advantages of MTSS

- Provides instructional and behavioral assistance in a timely fashion (e.g., not a wait to fail model)
- Helps to ensure a student's poor academic performance is not due to:
  - poor instruction
  - inappropriate curriculum
  - lack of expectations
- Informs teachers and improves behavior and/or instruction because data are collected and closely linked to interventions.

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WISCONSIN SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT
http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/mhneedsassessmentfill.pdf

- This 58-question survey allows an individual or a school team to **assess their school's needs and priorities** for strengthening a comprehensive school mental health system.
- Teams will use a needs assessment, reflect on the results to **identify strengths and needs**, and develop a plan for professional development and action to support growth in the identified area(s)
- Planning tool is located in "Framework" Guide

Programs delivered to all students are proactive, preventive,
and reduce the risk of stigma for students who are served
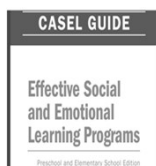
Prevention and Universal Interventions
• Prevention and wellness promotion through -

- Trauma sensitive practices
- Classroom guidance lessons
- Social Emotional Learning
- Positive behavior interventions and supports
- Effective discipline policies and practices

- Bullying/Violence Prevention
- Crisis prevention and intervention teams
- Fostering positive relationships among students and staff

All School-Employed Mental Health Professionals

All Students

School-Based Prevention & Universal Interventions
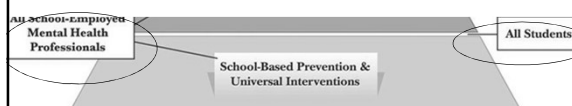
Trauma Sensitive Schools promote

- feelings of physical, social, and emotional safety in students
- a shared understanding among staff about the impact of trauma and adversity on students
- positive and culturally responsive discipline policies and practices
- access to comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services
- effective community collaboration

Collaborative for Academic, Social, & Emotional Learning Guides

CASEL GUIDE

Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs

Preschool and Elementary School Edition

2015
CASEL Guide

Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs

Middle and High School Edition

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2013-casel-guide-1.pdf
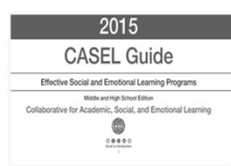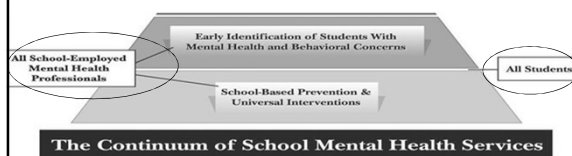
casel.org/middle-and-high-school-edition-casel-guide/

Early Identification, Screening, and Progress Monitoring

- To avoid a reactive approach to addressing unmet student needs, an *early identification system* must be established
- The school must establish procedures to identify students early on who may need additional mental health supports
- *Teacher identification* can be used to determine students with the greatest challenges
- *Existing school data* on these students can be used to help determine what additional supports might benefit them

Early Identification

- Connectedness Surveys
- Teacher surveys/screeners
- Behavioral Data
- Attendance Data
- Staff development/Mental Health First Aid

- Suicide Risk/Threat Universal Screening
- Protocols for Responding to Bullying
- Self-Reporting
- Anonymous Reporting

Early Identification of Students With Mental Health and Behavioral Concerns

All School-Employed Mental Health Professionals

All Students

School-Based Prevention & Universal Interventions

The Continuum of School Mental Health Services

Screening for Mental & Behavioral Health

- Mental health screening is the assessment of students to determine whether they may be at *risk* for a mental health concern.

- ACEs

Questionnaire

Connecticut Child Trauma Screening

http://www.chdi.org/our-work/mental-health/trauma-informed-initiatives/ct-trauma-
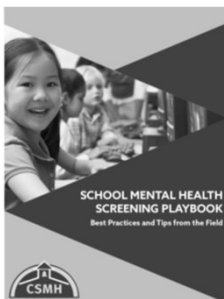screen-cts/

Child Trauma Screener

Academic Difficulties
- ❑ Drop in academic performance
- ❑ School tardiness
- ❑ School truancy

Aggressive (or Threats of) Behaviors
- ❑ Toward animals
- ❑ Toward others (e.g. physical, verbal, or relational bullying)
- ❑ Toward self (e.g., cutting, burning, scratching)
- ❑ Toward the property of another person

Avoidance Behaviors, such as avoiding:
- ❑ Activities the student once found enjoyable
- ❑ School, in general
- ❑ *Social situations*
- ❑ Specific objects, situations, or places

Irregular/Consuming Thoughts, such as:
- ❑ Anger/irritability
- ❑ Death or dying
- ❑ Extreme perfectionism
- ❑ Fear of gaining weight
- ❑ Flight of ideas (racing thoughts)
- ❑ Grandiosity (inflated sense of self-importance)
- ❑ Guilt

Eccentric behaviors, such as:
- ❑ Engaging in high-risk behaviors
- ❑ Excessive engagement in pleasurable behaviors
- ❑ Excessive talkativeness

Excessive Sadness, such as:
- ❑ Excessive crying
- ❑ Feelings of hopelessness/helplessness
- ❑ Loss of interest

Excessive Worrying, such as:
- ❑ Worrying about everything and anything most of the time
- ❑ Worrying surrounding a specific object, place, event, or situation

Inattentive Behaviors, such as:
- ❑ Being easily distracted
- ❑ Being fidgety
- ❑ Difficulty with concentration or keeping attention for long periods of time
- ❑ Not being able to remain seated
- ❑ Not following directions or completing assigned tasks (like homework)
- ❑ Not listening or responding
- ❑ Speaking out of turn/interrupting others

University of Nebraska

School SBIRT

- SBIRT stands for Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment
- SBIRT offers an efficient, evidence-based, and comprehensive service to address selected behavioral health concerns among adolescents
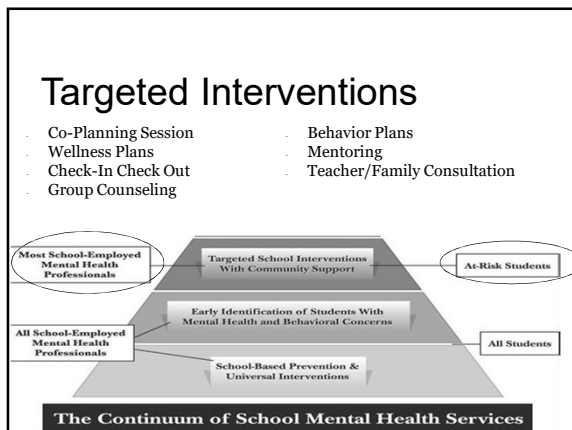- http://www.wishschools.org/resources/schoolsbirt.cfm

Center for School Mental Health

SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH
SCREENING PLAYBOOK
Best Practices and Tips from the Field

Targeted Interventions

- Co-Planning Session
- Wellness Plans
- Check-In Check Out
- Group Counseling

- Behavior Plans
- Mentoring
- Teacher/Family Consultation

Most School-Employed Mental Health Professionals — Targeted School Interventions With Community Support — At-Risk Students

All School-Employed Mental Health Professionals — Early Identification of Students With Mental Health and Behavioral Concerns — All Students

School-Based Prevention & Universal Interventions

The Continuum of School Mental Health Services

Intensive Level of Supports for a FEW Students

- When prevention and early interventions do not meet students' needs, other interventions should be used. Intensive and individualized interventions should be linked with the system of care principles

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Intensive School and Community Supports

Some School-Employed Mental Health Professionals — Intensive Community Interventions With School Support / Intensive School Interventions With Community Support — Students With Severe/Chronic Problems

Intensive School Interventions	Intensive Community Interventions
Individual Counseling	Long Term Therapy
Functional Behavioral Assessment	Family Counseling
Special Education Consideration	Involvement with Social Services
Individualized Behavior Plan	Community Mentoring
More restrictive environment	

Examples of Ineffective Secondary/Tertiary Structures

- Referrals to Special Education seen as the "intervention"

- FBA seen as required "paperwork" vs. a needed part of designing an intervention

- Interventions the system is familiar with vs. ones likely to produce an effect

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We Know the Practices that Work at Tier 3…

- Proactive, strength-based; "set students up" to experience success

- High rates of consistent, supported instruction; teach/practice/reinforce

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We Know the Practices that Work (cont.)…

- Predictable and consistent environments

- Know unique "why?" for each student/problem

- Contextual fit: Strategic use of natural supports, and settings

We Know the Practices that Work (cont.)…

- Careful monitoring of data over time with ongoing revisions to guide incremental improvements in quality of life

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Center for School Mental Health – U of MD

- School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation(SHAPE) System
- free, private, web-based portal that offers a virtual work space for your school mental health team to document, track, and advance your quality and sustainability improvement goals
- comprehensive school mental health systems can access the census and performance measures, as well as obtain customized school and district level progress reports and useful resources to improve system quality and sustainability

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Strategic Team Planning

- **School Mental Health Quality Assessment** Tool is designed for your school to self-assess your system's quality
- **School Mental Health Sustainability Assessment** Tool is designed for your school to self-assess your system's sustainability

Customized Reporting

Additional SHAPE Features

- Access to a comprehensive repository with up-to-date, public access **resources**
- Use the repository to **generate ideas for action steps** related to your own improvement goals

- By engaging with The SHAPE System in any way, your school or district mental health system will become a part of the **National School Mental Health Census**

OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH ESSA

Funding

- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) authorizes various funding streams (e.g., Title I, Title II, and Title IV), including funds specifically reserved for schools identified for targeted support and improvement, to support state and district efforts to improve access to coordinated comprehensive school mental health services.

School Climate

- ESSA explicitly recognizes the strong relationship between positive school climate and student learning and success. In addition to requiring states to include data related to school climate and safety in annual school report cards, the law provides significant opportunity for school leaders to create learning environments that support the success of all students

A strong system of comprehensive social, emotional, and behavioral supports is equally as important as effective teaching in helping students achieve and exceed their academic potential

Key ESSA Definition:
*School Based Mental Health Services Provider*

- **School-based mental health services provider**: "..includes a State-licensed or State-certified school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, or other State licensed or certified mental health professional qualified under State law to provide mental health services to children and adolescents.

Key ESSA Definition: *Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP)*

Specialized Instructional Support Personnel means "(i)school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists; and "(ii) other qualified professional personnel... involved in providing assessment, diagnosis, counseling, educational, therapeutic, and other necessary services (including related services ...) as part of a comprehensive program to meet student needs."

- Replaces "pupil services personnel"
- Is intended to reflect the similarities between pupil services (as defined in ESEA) and 'related services' as defined by IDEA
- ESSA explicitly references (and in some cases mandates) specialized instructional support personnel and services <u>more than 40 times</u> in policies regarding state and district school improvement plans; identifying and supporting students most at risk of school failure; improving student literacy; addressing school climate and school safety; supporting the mental and behavioral health of students, among others.
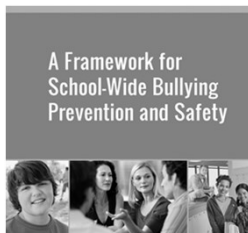
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http://www.nasponline.org/resources/framework-safe-and-successful-schools.aspx
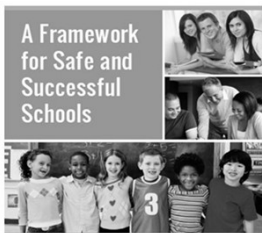
http://www.nasponline.org/resources/Bullying/Bullying_Brief_12.pdf
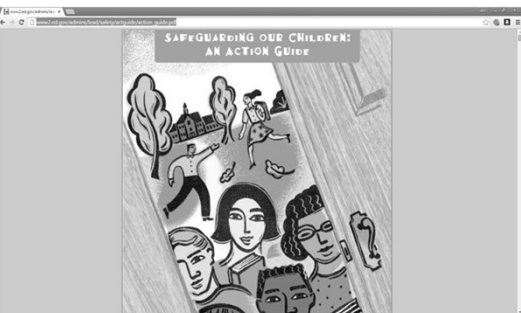
Early Warning, Timely Response
http://cecp.air.org/guide/

Safeguarding Our Children
http://cecp.air.org/guide/AIResearch01%28Frev%29Action_Guide_SP.pdf

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