

Addressing Students' Immediate Mental Health Needs on Re-Engaging for the 2020-21 School Year

Bringing Into Focus Summer Webinar Series

August 18, 2020



Presenters

Sandy Williamson, Director
*National Center on Safe Supportive
Learning Environments (NCSSLE)*

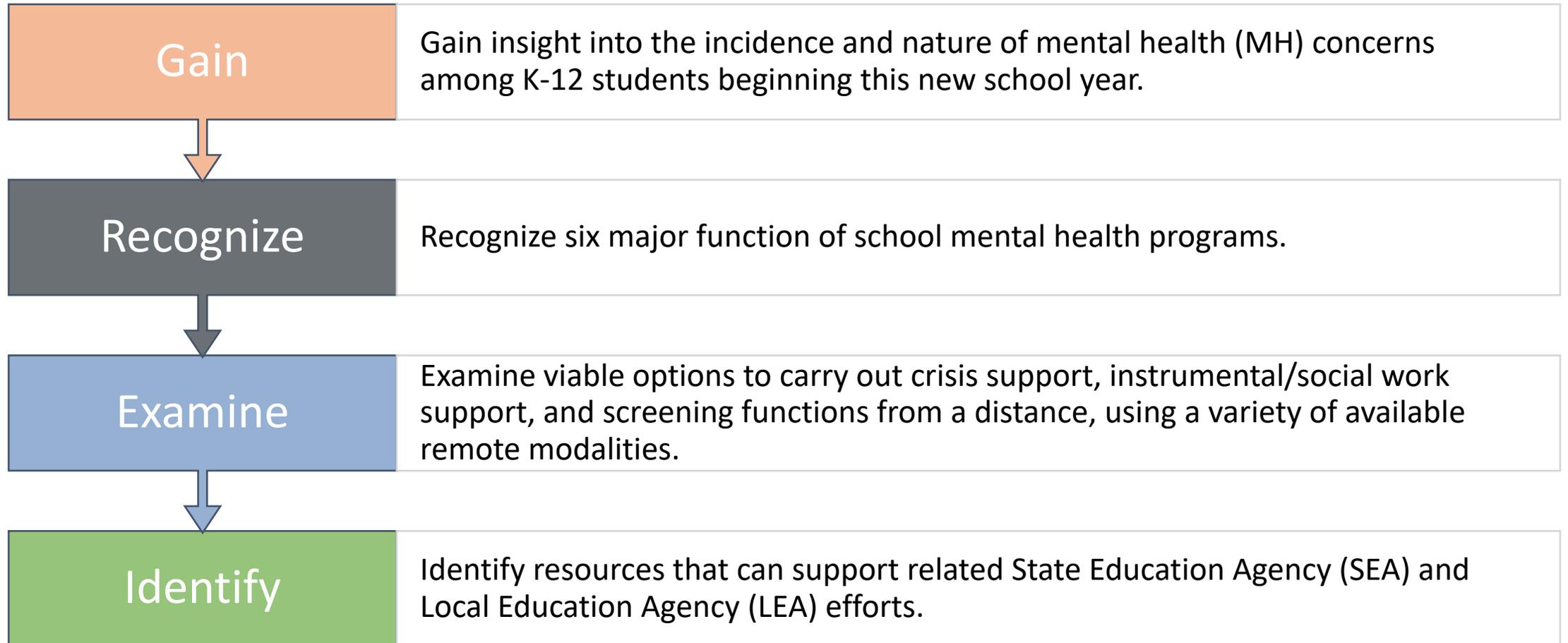
Sharon Hoover and Nancy Lever,
Co-Directors
*National Center for School Mental
Health*



How can we identify and respond to students' most concerning and urgent mental health needs as they begin the 2020-2021 school year?

What would success in this endeavor during the fall semester look like?

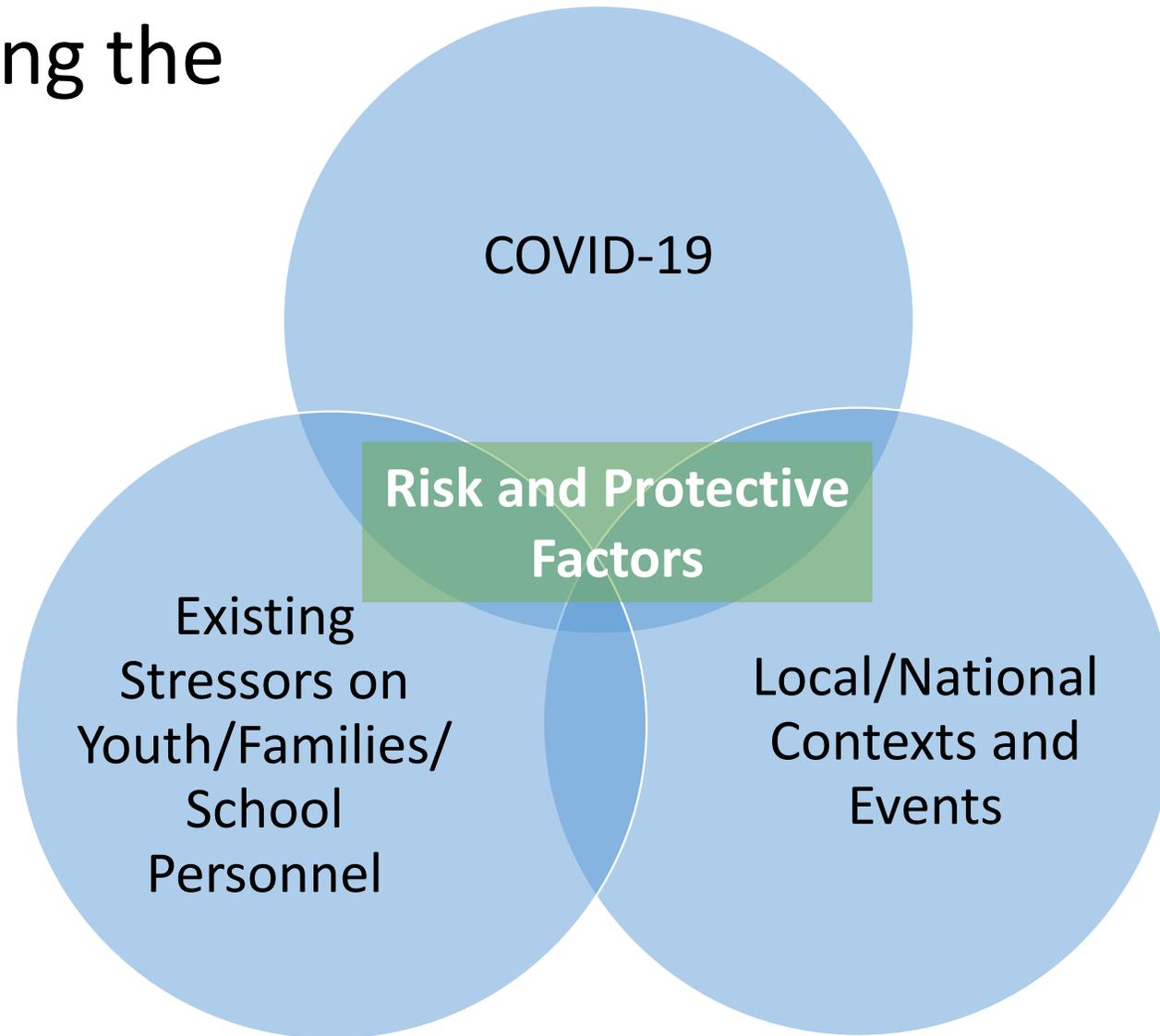
Objectives



Agenda

- 1 Understand the context
- 2 Understand the nature and scope of students' MH needs as they begin the 2020-21 school year
- 3 Apply acquired expertise to inform adaptations and options for MH surveillance, crisis support, instrumental support, and screening
- 4 Reflections
- 5 Resources
- 6 Closing and next steps

Understanding the Context



Stressors Related to COVID-19

ANXIETY/FEARS

- Increased challenges with mental health issues (*e.g. anxiety, depression*)
- Confusion and uncertainty about what will happen next
- Worry and fear for the safety of self and others (*for teachers, worry about their students*)
- Anxiety related to unknowns, new ways of operating as the 2020-21 school year begins
- Fears associated with re-opening schools and COVID-19 transmission
- Unsafe situations at home (*e.g., abuse, neglect, domestic violence*)

Stressors Related to COVID-19

LOSS

- Loss of resources (*e.g., extended family support, job loss, access to mental health services and health care*)
- Loss of family members, community members, teachers, and students
- Students and staff missing out on important rituals and transitions (*e.g., prom, graduation, end-of-year celebrations and goodbyes, losses*)
- Sudden disruption of normal routines, relationships, structures, and predictability
- Food insecurity

Stressors Related to COVID-19

EQUITY

- The disproportionate effects of COVID-19 in communities of color and increased risk for these and other stressors
- Disproportionate access to virtual education for students
(e.g., technology, learning challenges)
- Learning new technology, adapting to different ways of teaching and learning, maintaining student engagement, balancing work and home life, with multiple stressors

National Trends: Students

In a nationally representative survey of **young people aged 13-19**:

- Approximately **25%** felt disconnected from peers and adults.
- Over **50%** were more concerned than usual about their family's physical and emotional health (including health, finances, and basic needs).
- More than **1 in 4** reported an increase in sleep loss due to worry, feeling unhappy or depressed, feeling constantly under strain, and loss of confidence in themselves.
- **40%** of youth reported that they had not been offered social and emotional support by an adult from their school.

National Trends: Students' Mental Health Status

- **76%** percent of students and **66%** percent of teachers are in lower spirits than they were before the crisis.
- **21%** percent of students are absent during coronavirus closures (*e.g., not logging in, not making contact, dropping out of class, etc.*).
- Nearly **33%** of students in communities of poverty are not participating in online classes.
- Past pandemics were associated with increases in depression, anxiety, stigma, and shaming.
- Longitudinal negative impacts of other large-scale community crises (*e.g., natural disasters*) on children's behavioral health and academic functioning.

Citations: <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/04/10/national-survey-tracks-impact-of-coronavirus-on.html>

- Moukaddam, N. Fears, outbreaks, and pandemics: Lessons learned. *Psychiatric Times*. November 15, 2019. Epub ahead of print.
- Osofsky, J. Kronenberg, M. Bocknek, E., Hansel, T.C. (2015, August). Longitudinal impact of attachment-related risk and exposure to trauma among young children after hurricane Katrina. *In Child & Youth Care Forum*. 44(44), 493-510. Springer US.
- Ward, M.E. Shelley, K. & Pane, J.F. (2008). Hurricane Katrina: A longitudinal study of the achievement and behavior of displaced students. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*. 13(2-3), 297-317.

Survey of Teachers in New Orleans June 2020

Most Difficult Aspects of Teaching during the Pandemic



Responses from 453 Teachers from 45 schools in Orleans Parish

Key Components of Comprehensive School Mental Health Support



**Awareness/
Surveillance**



**Crisis Support and
Early Intervention**



**Screening/Early
Detection**



Treatment



**Support
*(including family)***



Follow-up/Aftercare

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**Support
*(including family)***



Follow-up/Aftercare



Perhaps the most potent element of all, in an effective crisis service system, is relationships.

To be human. To be compassionate.

We know from experience that immediate access to help, hope and healing saves lives.

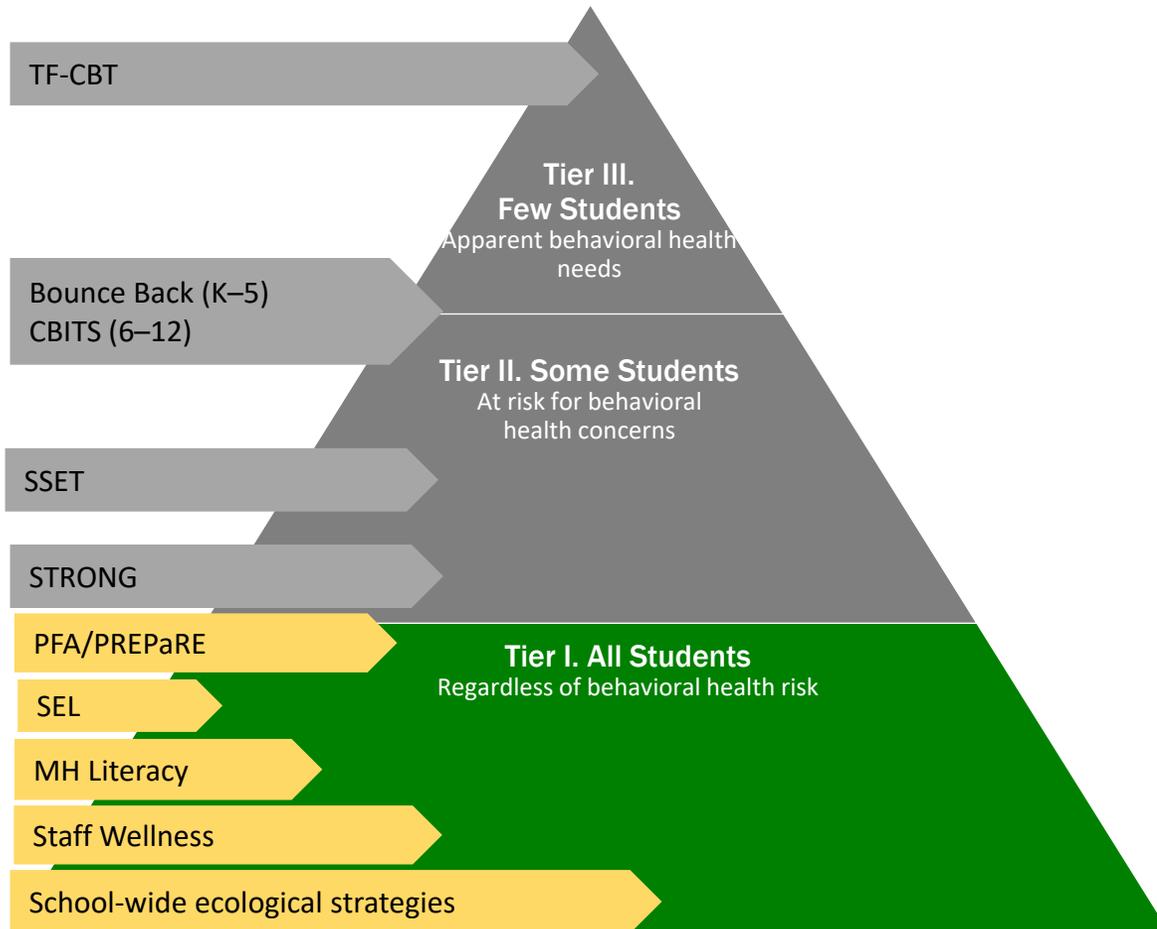
~ SAMHSA 2020,

National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care

Best Practice Toolkit



UNIVERSAL Strategies



ALWAYS

- Promote supportive, **positive school climate**
- **Staff wellness**
- **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**
- **Crisis preparedness**
- **Trauma-responsive** school policies
- **Mental health literacy** for school staff and students

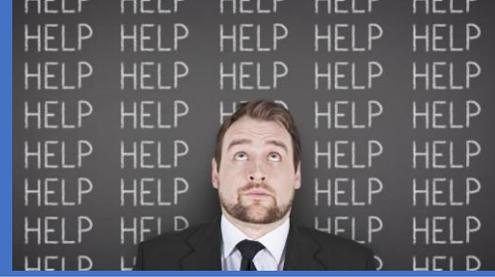
Key
Components of
Comprehensive
School Mental
Health Support



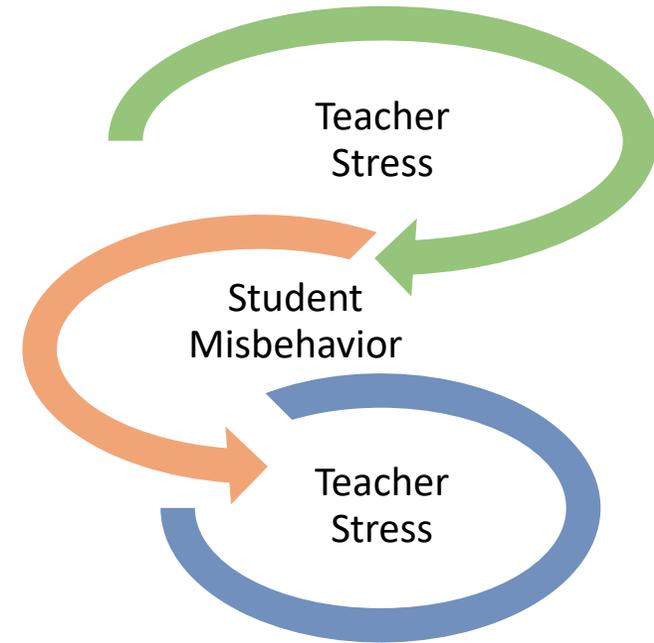
**Awareness /
Surveillance**



Teacher Stress Impacts Students



- Teachers who are stressed demonstrate greater negative interactions with students:
 - Sarcasm
 - Aggression
 - Responding negatively to mistakes
- *Classrooms led by a teacher who reported feeling overwhelmed (high burnout) had students with much higher cortisol levels*



Citations:

- www.schoolmentalhealth.org
- Oberle & Schonert-Reichl (2016).

Please don't
just tell me
to do more
yoga!





When we accept that an unhealthy level of stress is inherent to teaching and place the burden of stress reduction on the individual teacher, we limit our ability to improve overall school wellness. We can better shape healthy schools for teachers and students by addressing the underlying causes of chronic stress and cultivating environments that promote teacher wellness.

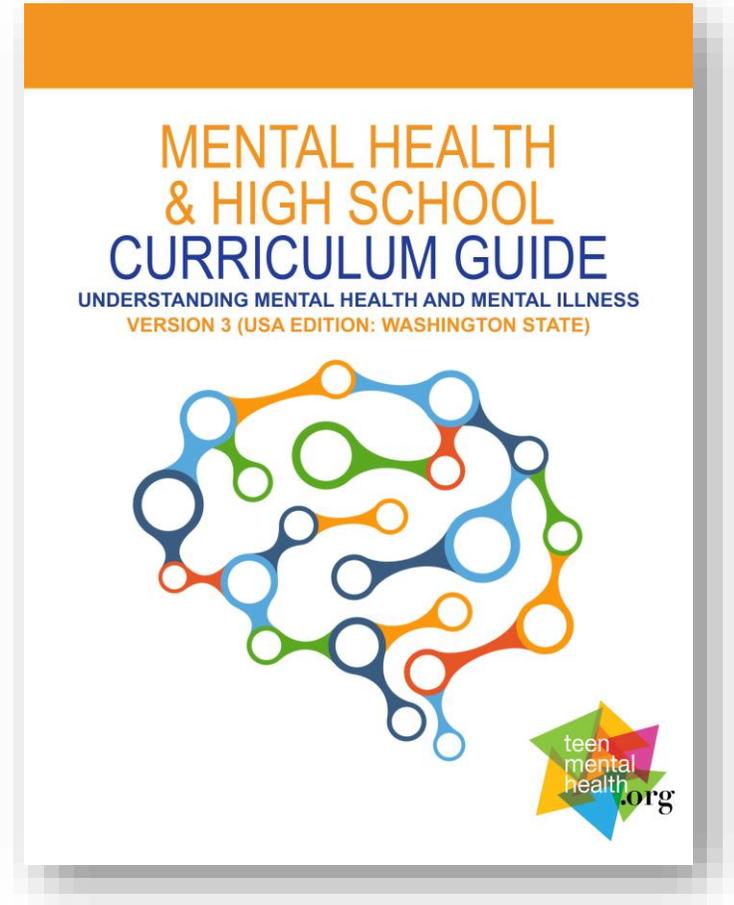
Citation: **ALEXANDRA COX, BONNIE SOLOMON, DOMINIQUE PARRIS**
<https://www.childtrends.org/teacher-well-being-is-a-critical-and-often-overlooked-part-of-school-health>

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments



Mental Health Literacy

- Understand **how to obtain and maintain good mental health.**
- Understand and identify mental disorders and their treatments.
- **Decrease stigma.**
- Enhance **help-seeking efficacy**: know where to go; know when to go; know what to expect when you get there; know how to increase likelihood of “best available care” (skills and tools).





MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



**Supporting Student Mental Health:
Resources to Prepare Educators**

<https://mhttcnetwork.org/group/38/content/3124>

MH Literacy Components: Reviewed Categories, and Icon Key

Icon Key

Cost	Modality (length)	Target Grade Level	CEUs Available	Mental Health Literacy Components	
Free	In-person	Elementary	Yes	Knowledge	Promotion
		K-5th			
Cost associated	Online	Secondary	No	Stigma	Support
		6th-12th			

MH Literacy Components: Program Details

Program Name	Description	Cost	Modality (length)	Target Grade Level	CEUs Available	Mental Health Literacy Components
At-Risk for Educators	Role-play simulations developed for elementary, middle, and high school educators that aim to increase knowledge about children's mental health. The platform is customizable to include a local list of mental health resources. Research suggests significant increases in teacher mental health skills and the number of students that educators connect with following training with <i>At-Risk for Educators</i> . (https://kognito.com/products/at-risk-for-elementary-schools)	\$ Varies	 1 hour	K-12th	✓	
Classroom Mental Health	A website that aims to be a guide for teachers starting from when they notice mental health concerns or are approached by a student for support. The site addresses common concerns (e.g., Can I help? Should I help?), and provides resources for improving classroom atmosphere and exercises for teachers. (https://classroommentalhealth.org)		 Varies	K-12th	✗	
Community-Partnered School Behavioral Health Modules	Webinar modules that provide a range of strategies, resources, and tools for behavioral health clinicians, educators, and student support staff. The modules focus on supporting student social, emotional, behavioral, and academic progress through a community-partnered approach to school behavioral health. (https://mdbehavioralhealth.com/training)		 Varies	K-12th	✓	

Training Educators about Mental Health – Coming Fall 2020!

www.mhttcnetwork.org

Promoting the Mental Health and Well-being of Students

- Creating safe and supportive classrooms
- Teaching mental health literacy and reducing stigma
- Fostering social emotional competencies

Understanding and Supporting Students Experiencing Adversity and Distress

- Impact of trauma and adversity on learning and behavior
- Understanding and identifying student distress and linking students to support
- Classroom strategies to support students with mental health concerns

Cultural Responsiveness and Equity
(Danya Institute, Central East MHTTC)

NOW – Tier 1 Strategies



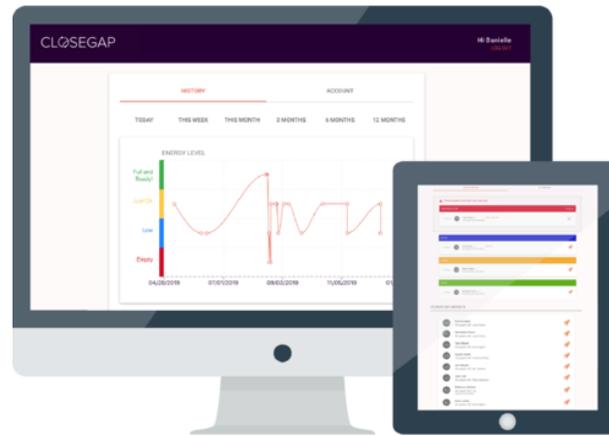
- “Encourage reassurance, routines, regulation”
- Translation of existing Tier 1 strategies
 - ✓ SEL in virtual classes/home
- Daily-weekly check-ins

Close gap: Daily Check-Ins (Closegap.org)

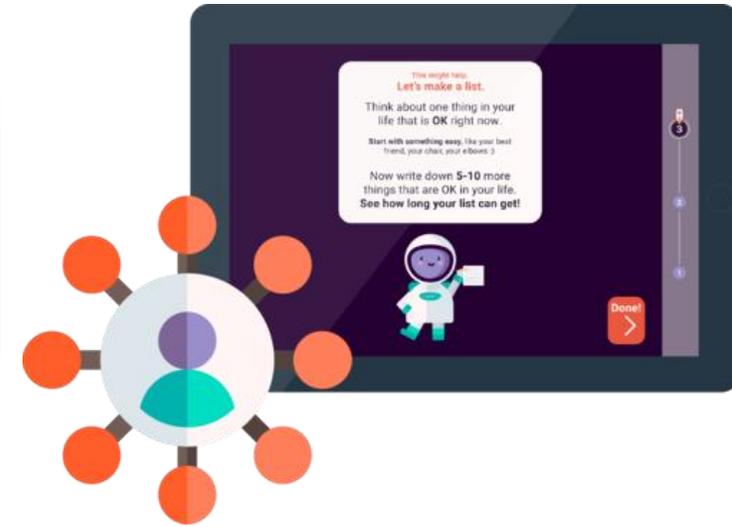
Students do a daily emotional check-in



Teachers and parents get information in real time



Students connect with an adult or participate in self-guided activities



Key
Components of
Comprehensive
School Mental
Health Support



Crisis Support and Early Intervention



Key School MH Function #2

Crisis Intervention, Stabilization and Support

Polling Question: How is your SEA supporting schools/districts to provide crisis intervention, stabilization, and support to students?

- Offer, publicize community hotline
- Provide, manage school-based MH support line
- Refer to community MH or hospital for clinical evaluation
- Arrange, provide peer support
- Arrange post-crisis support to prevent future crises

PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID: Listen Protect Connect/Model and Teach



Sharon Hoover, 2018

<https://traumaawareschools.org/pfa>

Copyright M. Schreiber, R.H. Gurwitch, & M. Wong, 2006

Adapted, M. Wong, 2012

Crisis Considerations During COVID-19

Health

Suicide prevention/
postvention

Responding to death

Find COVID-19 specific resources on the [NCSSE](#) and [NCSMH](#) Website!

Key
Components of
Comprehensive
School Mental
Health Support



Screening/Early Detection



Key School MH Function #3

Screening to Identify MH Needs, Risk Factors

Polling Question: How is your SEA supporting schools/districts to conduct screening to identify students who are at risk for MH concerns?

- Online surveys, questionnaires (students, parents)
- Outreach to students by designated personnel (school counselors, nurses)
- Partnerships with community health departments
- Partnerships with faith-based/community organizations
- Teacher nomination process to identify student MH needs



Six-Step Process for School Mental Health Screening

1. Build A Foundation

- School Mental Health Screening Leadership Team
 - School administration and staff
 - Family-school-community members
- Stakeholder Input and Engagement
 - Focus groups
 - Agenda item at staff and parent meetings
 - Anonymous student and family feedback cards
- Cultural Considerations



2. Clarify Goals

“One of the primary duties of the screening team is to carefully consider the principal objectives for the screening. For example, the team determines whether results will be used to plan schoolwide support efforts and to select students for various interventions. Additionally, the team can discuss the benefits of gathering complete mental health data across time to monitor the effectiveness of schoolwide programs designed to foster the well-being of students.”

(Moore et al., 2015)

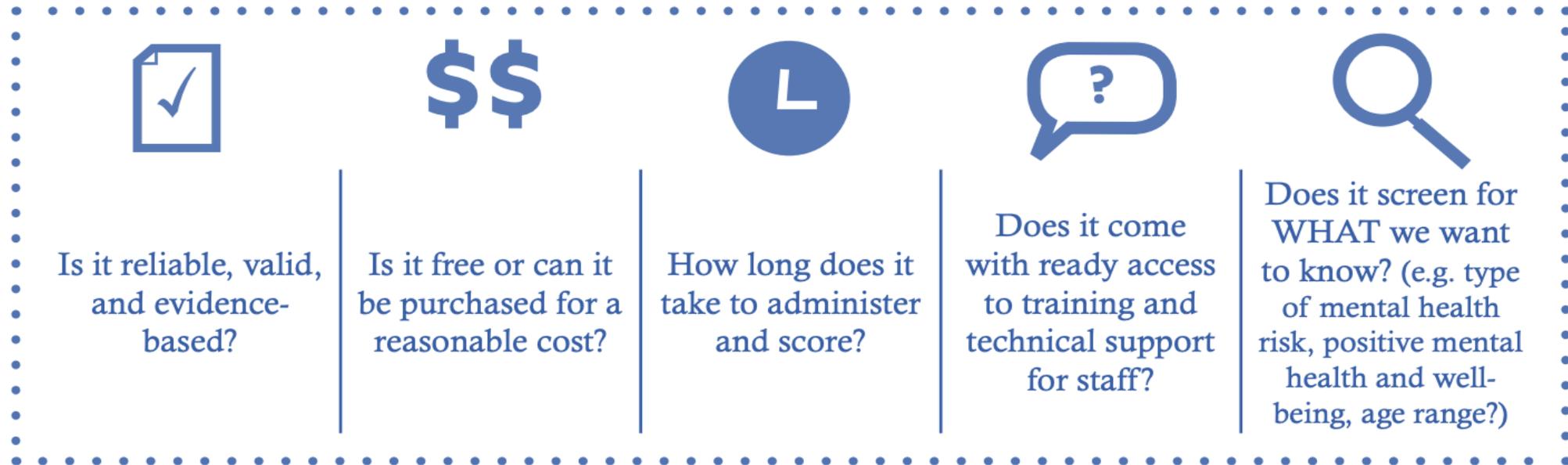
3. Identify Resources and Logistics

Staffing and Resource Capacity

- Who is available to support screening?
- What is our data infrastructure?
- Should we start small and scale up?



4. Select Appropriate Screening Tool(s)



Possible Constructs to Include in Screening

- Impact of COVID-19
 - COVID-19 Adolescent Symptom & Psychological Experience Questionnaire (CASPE)
 - Epidemic Pandemic Impacts Inventory (EPII)
 - DERS for Coronavirus Pandemic
 - Coronavirus Impact Scale
- Life Satisfaction/Subjective Well-being
- Psychological distress/Symptomatology
- Positive Functioning
- School Factors
- Social Determinants of Health

School Mental Health System Certificate Report Update

System Performance My Schools Trauma Responsiveness **Screening and Assessment** Team Members

Welcome to the School Mental Health Screening and Assessment Library. Use the filters below to locate a measure that is appropriate for your needs. Each measure includes a one page information sheet, scoring details, and access to the measure.

Clear All 0 filters selected Search:

Focus Area	Instrument Name	Purpose	Focus Area	Reporter for (Student Age)
Assessment Purpose	Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist (ATEC)	Screening/Initial Evaluation Progress Monitoring	Autism	Caregiver (2+) Educator (2+)
Student Age	Brief Problem Checklist (BPC)	Screening/Initial Evaluation Progress Monitoring	Anxiety Depression Disruptive Behavior	Student (7-18) Caregiver (7-18)
Language	CAGE	Screening/Initial Evaluation	Substance Use	Student (16+) Clinician (16+)
Reporter	Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC)	Screening/Initial Evaluation Progress Monitoring	Depression/Mood	Student (6-23)
Cost	Child Mania Rating Scale, Parent (CMRS-P)	Screening/Initial Evaluation Progress Monitoring	Depression/Mood	Caregiver (5-17) Educator (5-17)
	Conditions for Learning (CFL)	Screening/Initial Evaluation Progress Monitoring	Academic School Climate	Student (grade 2-12)

5. Determine Consent and Assent Procedures

Consent Procedures

- Legal and Ethical Considerations
- Passive vs. Active Consent
- Student Assent
- Communication with Consent
- Cultural Considerations with Consent

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This school year, [REDACTED] will be participating in a brief, universal screening system for measuring behavioral and emotional strengths and weaknesses in adolescents. All students who agree to participate will complete brief screening forms during one class period on one occasion during regularly scheduled school activities. This screening has been approved by [REDACTED] in collaboration with researchers from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Assessing the behavioral and emotional functioning of children and adolescents can be an effective tool in promoting student success. Academic problems, along with problems associated with developing and maintaining positive relationships with others, can be the result of underlying behavioral and emotional difficulties. When caught early, the difficulties can be addressed before negatively affecting an adolescent.

Your child does not have to participate. Participation in the screening is voluntary. Participation or refusal to participate will not affect your child's grades. All information collected will be kept confidential. Additionally, participation will in no way impact immigration status.

The school psychologist at your child's school will receive the results of the screening. If your child is demonstrating risk for behavioral or emotional challenges that impact school performance, he or she will receive an additional assessment to better understand the nature of the difficulties reported. The school psychologist will notify you of the intent to provide this additional assessment and you can choose to not have your child involved at this point. You will be informed before any further assessments or interventions are conducted, developed or implemented.

Researchers would like to use your child's screening results for research purposes to better understand how to identify emotional and behavioral risk in youth in support of early intervention. Screening results may be correlated with school records. The researchers would receive this information without your child's name attached.

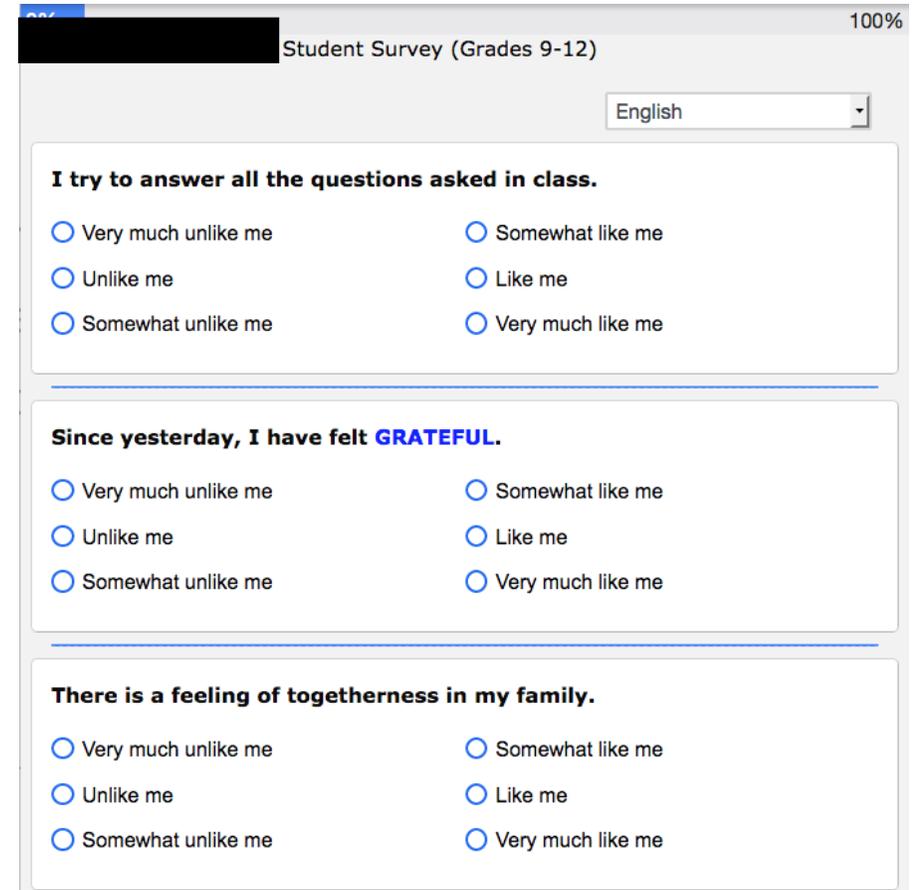
If you do not want your child to be screened or to participate in the research, please send the bottom portion of this letter back to the school or contact [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. Please note that you can choose to have your child screened but not to be involved in the research. You will receive a phone call confirming exclusion from the screening and/or research. You may also withdraw your participation at any time. If you have additional questions regarding the screening program, please contact [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

6. Determine Data Collection, Administration, and Follow-Up Procedures

Data Collection

- Online platform vs. paper and pencil
- Score and analyze the data based on identified purpose
- Data management and privacy (FERPA, state and local guidelines)



The screenshot shows a web-based survey interface titled "Student Survey (Grades 9-12)" with a progress indicator of "100%". A language dropdown menu is set to "English". The survey contains three questions, each with a five-point Likert scale response options:

I try to answer all the questions asked in class.

- Very much unlike me
- Unlike me
- Somewhat unlike me
- Somewhat like me
- Like me
- Very much like me

Since yesterday, I have felt GRATEFUL.

- Very much unlike me
- Unlike me
- Somewhat unlike me
- Somewhat like me
- Like me
- Very much like me

There is a feeling of togetherness in my family.

- Very much unlike me
- Unlike me
- Somewhat unlike me
- Somewhat like me
- Like me
- Very much like me

Recommendations for Data Management and Privacy

Store mental health screening data separately from other educational records.

Possible storage locations include a school counselor's locked file or password protected online folder/location.

Ensure that data are not used in any manner to impact educational activities.

This can include decisions about educational placements or writing college recommendation letters.

Define "legitimate educational interest."

There is only a need if one cannot fulfill a professional responsibility without it.

Store data in a secure spreadsheet with limited access.

Only the school mental health team or leader of the team can access to make decisions.

Use a secure data storage platform.

Possible platform could include Salesforce linked to Tableau.

6. Determine Data Collection, Administration, and Follow-Up/Intervention Procedures

Administration

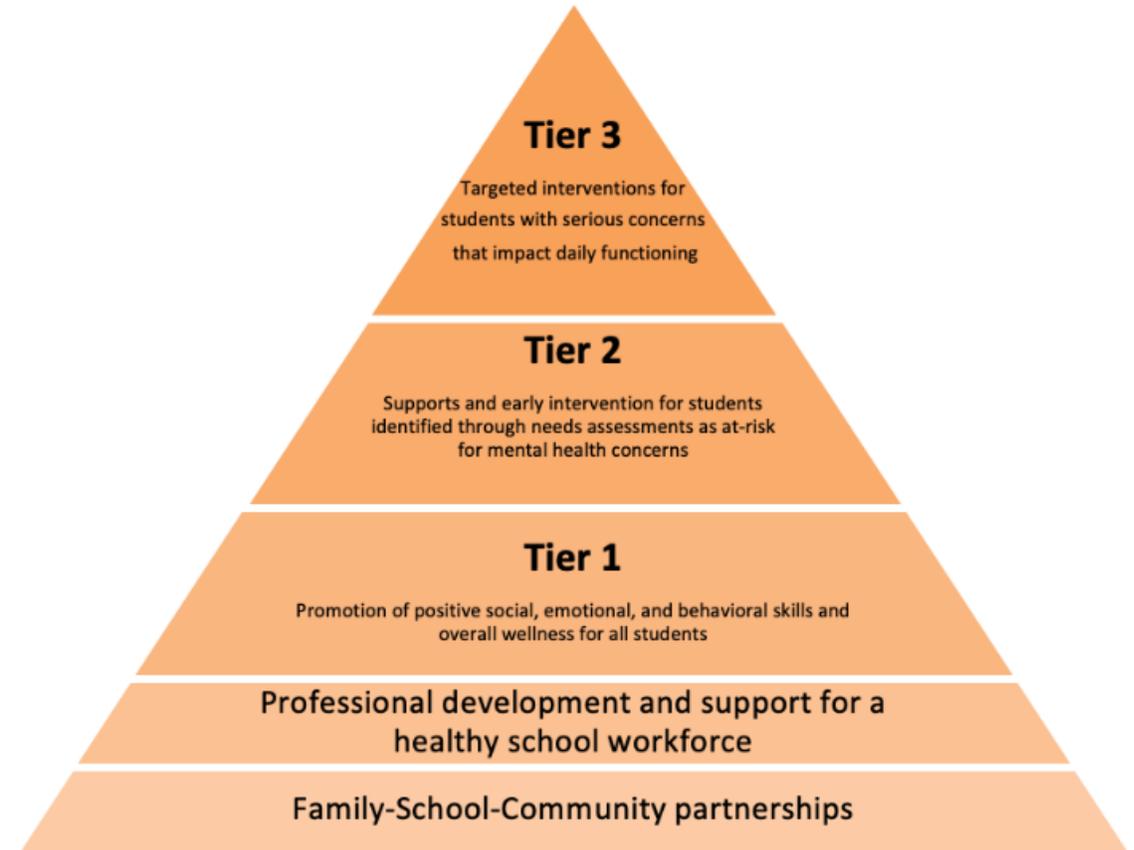
- Training school staff
- Scripts
- Schedule of administration and rooms needed
- Procedure for follow up with students who were absent



6. Determine Data Collection, Administration, and Follow-Up/Intervention Procedures

Follow Up and Intervention

- Consider how many students can be seen for follow up
- Follow-up schedule
- Necessary supports in place
- Community partnerships for follow up and referrals
- Tiered approach to intervention
- Presentation of findings



Frequent Concerns and Strategies to Address

Inadequate staffing/resources

- Start small.
- Leverage school and community resources and staffing.
- Use no-cost/low-cost tools.
- Explore cost benefits of early identification/intervention.

Mental health is a family/personal concern, not a school concern

- Focus on how mental health impacts academic success
- Student and family input will shape implementation.

Measurement error – e.g., “false positives”

- Utilize psychometrically sound measures to identify problems early.
- Use multi-gated procedure to produce more accurate findings.

Privacy of information and data

- Develop consent/assent process that allows students and families to opt in or out.
- Address concerns about data privacy (e.g., FERPA).

Disagreement among reporters

- Collect information from multiple reporters.
- Resolve discrepancies.

Social Emotional Health Survey (SEHS) – Secondary

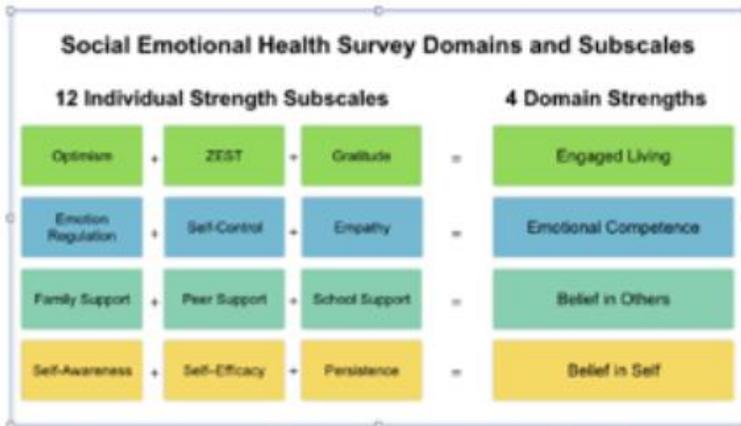
Project CoVitality* www.covitalityucsb.info (Twitter: UCSBCovitality)

The SEHS-Secondary is an assessment of key psychological mindsets associated with students' positive, thriving development.

Students With High Strengths Are...



What does the SEHS-Secondary Measure?



Self-Efficacy, Persistence, Self-Awareness, Peer Support, School Support, Family Support, Empathy, Emotional Regulation, Self-Control, Gratitude, Zest, Optimism

Focus on Student Strengths

Students with high versus low SEHS-Secondary strengths are more likely to:

- feel that their life has meaning and sense of direction (92% v. 27%)
- say they are happy to be at school (82% v. 34%)
- express gratitude for many people (99% v. 42%)

Efficient, yet Comprehensive

- Completed in less than 15 minutes
- Includes brief emotional distress scale
- Access to relevant student support resources
- UCSB, WestEd, CDE Partnership

Screen for strengths

<https://www.covitalityucsb.info/>

and consider trauma-informed assessment:

<https://csch.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2206/2020/06/CSCH-Report-Responding-to-COVID-19-Planning-for-Trauma-Informed-Assessment-in-Schools-Final-June-2020.pdf>

* Project CoVitality is supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant # R305A160157 to the

Strategies to Promote Emotional Safety & Connection

Brick and Mortar (in-person)

Build Community

- School wide: Welcome videos from teachers and staff incorporating pictures with/without masks.
- Classroom: Hold morning meeting, spaced out circle, emotional check in, gratitude go around.

Establish Classroom Safety – Create safety agreements together and make it fun!

- Explain why we wear a mask.
- Reminders that superheroes, doctors, and nurses wear masks!
- Establish touchless greetings: space bubbles, helicopter arms, bird wings.
- Discuss boundaries, not making fun of virus in play.

Create a Sense of Calm

- Add a safe place drawing to desks, coping skills box, classroom calm corner.

Offer Social & Emotional Student Support

- Focus on a mindfulness skill (relaxation, breathing, stretching) each day.

Provide Teacher Support

- Offer mindfulness skills to teachers, conduct teacher circles.
- Check in on their comfort levels and concerns.

Strategies to Promote Emotional Safety & Connection in Virtual Classrooms

Build Community

- School wide: Welcome videos, one-on-one check in prior to school starting.
- Classroom: Check in go around before content to share a feeling, a thought, a challenge, a coping tool, something positive, gratitude.
- Teacher can turn off video to let students connect.

Establish Classroom Safety

- Review online etiquette & set clear expectations about virtual classroom.
- Encourage the use of consistent, safe space at home for class.
- Encourage ear buds for virtual groups.

Create a Sense of Calm

- Consider virtual classroom rituals (song, prompts, joke of the day).
- Add mindfulness to every class.

Offer Social & Emotional Student Support

- Use bitmojis, on-line counseling resources.

Provide Teacher Support

- Online teacher lunches, drop-in time or other staff opportunities for connecting, virtual circles.
- Review the school policy on crisis intervention virtually.
- Communicate the teacher role if someone appears in crisis or discloses suicidality.

Suggested Resources

- Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network (2020). [Supporting Student Mental Health: Resources to Prepare Educators](#)
- National Center for School Mental Health (2020). [School Mental Health Quality Guide](#)
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2012). [Psychological First Aid for Schools](#)
- Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety (CISELSS) (2020). [Strategies for Trauma-Informed Distance Learning](#).
- [We Do Listen Foundation](#) includes lessons that can help young children become better listeners, learn important life lessons and feel good about themselves.
- [WISE Teacher Well-Being Workbook](#) includes exercises for teachers to assess and enhance their own well-being.
- Kaiser Permanente (2020). [When Learning Starts: Playbook for Healthy School Communities](#)

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments



Safe Supportive Learning

Engagement | Safety | Environment

More Suggested Resources

- [COVID-19 Resource Guide for High School Professionals](#)
(2020: JED Foundation)
- [Listen, Protect, Connect – Model and Teach: Psychological First Aid for Students and Teachers](#) (2006: Schreiber, Gurwitz & Wong)
- [The Two Pandemics Call for Commitment to Embedding Mental Health Concerns in All Forms of Schooling](#)
(June 2020: UCLA Center for MH in Schools)
- [UCLA Brief COVID-10 Screen for Child/Adolescent PTSD](#)
(2020: Regents of the University of California)
- [Universal Social, Emotional and Behavioral Screening for Monitoring and Early Intervention](#)
(April 2020: University of California/Santa Barbara)
- [Responding To COVID-19: Planning for Trauma-Informed Assessment in Schools](#) (June 2020: Collaboratory on School and Child Health, University of Connecticut)



Questions?

Please enter any questions
you may have in the
“Q&A” box, and our
presenters will respond.



Next Steps

1. Participants will receive a copy of today's slides and accompanying set of resources (hyperlinks) by email.
2. Second webinar: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 3:00-4:15 PM ET **Addressing Students' Identified Mental Health Needs During for the 2020-21 School Year.**
3. Please visit <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/responding-covid-19-pandemic> for extensive collection of vetted information resources to support re-opening of K-12 schools for 2020-21.



Closing

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCSSLEbif1>

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments



Safe Supportive Learning

Engagement | Safety | Environment