

# School-based Mental Health Services

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Safe Supportive Learning  
Engagement | Safety | Environment



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Wrap-Up



## ■ What is your role in your school/community?

- School-employed mental health staff (e.g., school psychologist, social worker, counselor, nurse)
- School administrator (e.g., principal, dean of students)
- Grant Project Coordinator or Director
- Community-employed clinician working in a community agency
- Community-employed clinician working in the schools
- Community mental health administrator
- Other



- **What are your plans around setting up school-based mental health services?**
  - We are currently using school-based mental health services.
  - We are planning to set up and use school-based mental health services.
  - School-based mental health services are not in our plans.

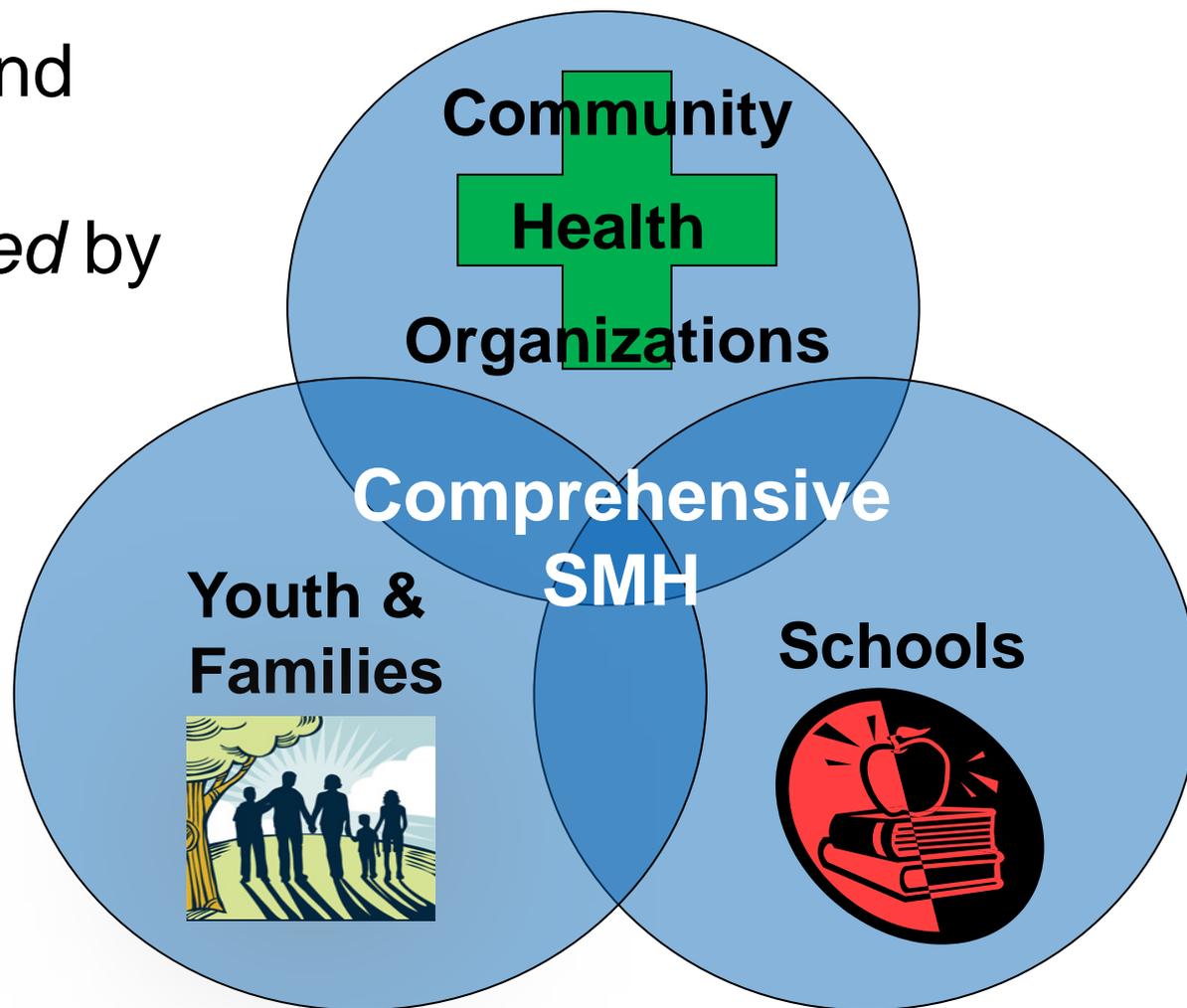


# Components of Comprehensive, Community-Partnered School Mental Health

# What is Comprehensive, Community-Partnered School Mental Health?



It is a *partnership* between schools and community health organizations *guided* by families and youth.



# What is Comprehensive, Community-Partnered School Mental Health?



It builds on *existing* school programs, services, and strategies.



# What is Comprehensive, Community-Partnered School Mental Health?



It focuses on *all* students...

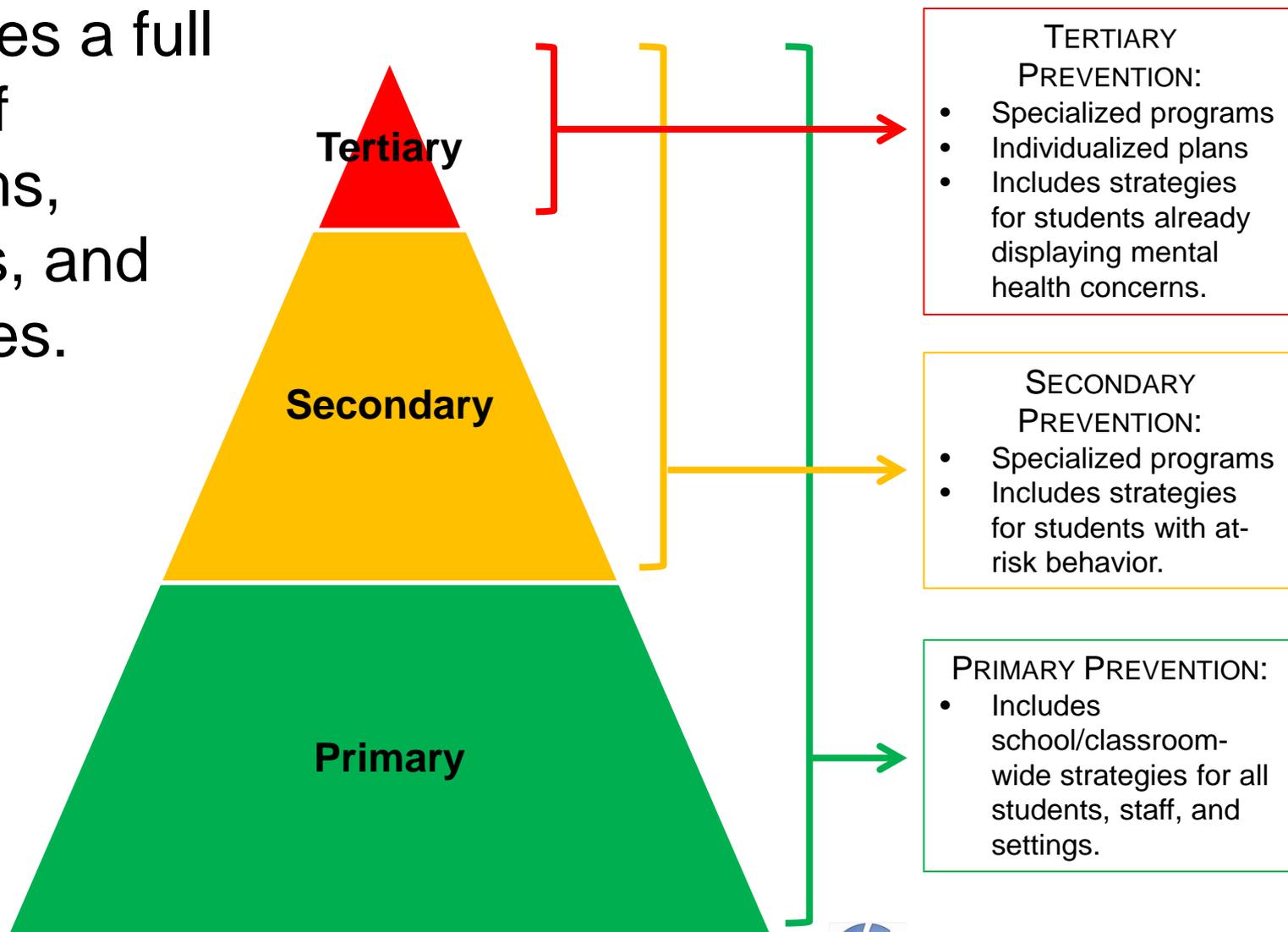


...in both general *and* special education.

# What is Comprehensive, Community-Partnered School Mental Health?



It includes a full range of programs, services, and strategies.



# Summary of Components



All of these components make up school mental health.

## Partnerships

Involves **partnership** between schools and community health/mental health organizations, as guided by **families and youth**.

## Programs

Builds on **existing school programs**, services, and strategies.

## Students

Focuses on **all students**, in both general and special education.

## Continuum of Services

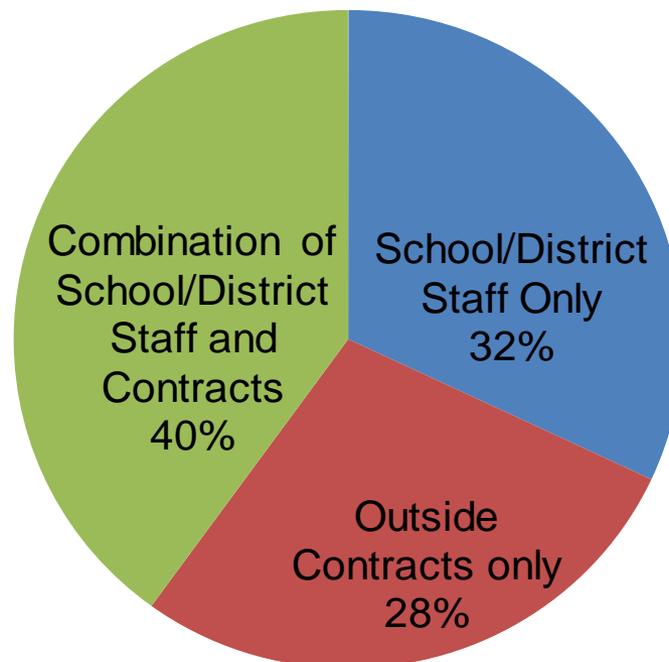
Involves a **full range** of programs, services, and strategies – mental health education and promotion through intensive intervention.

(Weist & Paternite, 2006)



## Who provides mental health services in schools?

Of the 98,000+ public schools in the United States, mental health services are provided by...



Foster et al. (2005)



## Role of community mental health professionals

- Provide a broad continuum of services to supplement school-employed staff services.
- Reduce unnecessary, expensive services (ER visits, crises, etc.) by:
  - **facilitating connections**/referral pathways to community providers.
  - **providing preventive care** (screening, identification, brief intervention).
  - **assisting with transition** back to school from more restrictive psychiatric placements.



## Common Presenting Problems

- Family and community violence
- Academic and/or attendance problems
- Bereavement and loss
- Abuse and neglect
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Trauma
- ADHD
- Disruptive behaviors
- Exposure to substance use and dealing
- Homelessness
- Family mental illness
- Bullying and the bullied
- School refusal



What questions  
do you have?



# Steps to Getting Started



**There are many steps to developing the four key components of school mental health. Some are listed below:**

- Establish and maintain effective partnerships.
- Integrate community-partnered school mental health (CP-SMH) into multi-tiered systems of support.
- Conduct needs assessment and resource mapping.
- Utilize empirically supported treatments.
- Advance family-school-community teaming.
- Collect, analyze, and utilize data.
- Obtain, sustain, and leverage diverse funding streams.

**Today we will focus on some initial steps to get started.**

# Steps to Getting Started



- 1 Hold school principal/community partner meeting.
- 2 Conduct resource mapping and needs assessment.
- 3 Understand your school-wide mental health team.
- 4 Define services and manage referrals.
- 5 Get the message out about school mental health and build relationships.
- 6 Set up office and build a caseload.



## School Principal – Community Partner Meeting

### Goals

- Ensure buy-in.
- Delineate basic services and consent/release policies.
- Agree on basic roles and expectations.
- Agree on referral and appointment process.
- Confirm that community provider has office space, file cabinet, internet, and phone access (and which supplies will be provided by whom).





## School Principal – Community Partner Meeting

### Points of Discussion

- School schedule and optimal appointment times
- Days/times of coverage (at school and offsite)
- School climate and culture
- Specific mental health-related needs
- Range of services provided to students (e.g., prevention, promotion, intervention, psychiatry/psychology/social work, teacher consultation) and by whom
- Management of behavioral health crises by community provider





## Marketing School Mental Health

*\$\$ Extremely cost-effective \$\$*

Associated with  
increases in...



- Opportunities to help child in natural environment
- Academic performance
- Attendance
- School climate
- Classroom management of behavioral issues

Associated with  
decreases in...



- School failure/dropout
- Suspensions/expulsions
- Inappropriate referrals to special education
- Parent burden related to getting child to appointments



## Resource Mapping and Needs Assessment

### Key Questions

- Who are the professionals? Support staff?
- What other programs/services are at the school?
- What other programs/services are available in the community?
- What services/programs fit within each of the three tiers of the public mental health triangle?
- What are the unique needs of the students, families, and community?

Professionals &  
Support Staff

School  
Services

Community  
Services

Public Mental  
Health

Needs



## Understanding Your School-Wide Mental Health Team

### Key Questions

- Who else is providing mental health services in the school?
- What services/resources are they providing?
- How can services be differentiated?
- To what students are they reaching out?
- Do all students have access?
- Is a full triangle of care offered?
- How are parents, guardians, and families involved and integrated into school-based mental health services?

Providers

Services

Outreach

Access

Degree  
of Care



# Understanding Your School-Wide Mental Health Team

## Bringing It All Together

- Where are the gaps?
- How can you avoid overlap?
- How can you collaborate?
- How can you best communicate?





## Defining Your Services

### Services

- What services are you offering?
- To whom are you offering them?
- When are they available?
- Who specifically is providing them?
- How are families, school staff, and others involved?



# Defining Your Services

## Processes

- What is your referral process?
- What are your consent/release procedures?
- How are appointments made (passes, scheduling, timing)?
- How often, for what length of time, and by whom can students be seen?
- What is your intake process?
- How are treatment decisions made?



## Getting The Message Out: Build Relationships

### Integrate Community Health Provider into School

- Invite partner to attend and present at teacher/staff meetings, professional development, PTO meetings, student meetings, etc.
- Visit classrooms to present about mental health services. (Note: Must have approval from administration.)
- Meet staff, students, and families at a personal level.
- Intentionally spend time in busy areas of the school.
- Partner should be aware of school procedures.
- Partner should have a process for accessing students.

### Introduce

- Develop an introduction letter to explain school mental health services to school staff, parents, and students.



## Getting The Message Out: Build Relationships

### Educate



- Educate staff about the program services and referral process.

### Community Mental Health Partner Office

- Put signs on the door.
- Provide envelopes with an introduction letter and referral form.
- Provide basic mental health information and brochures.
- Post *Notice of Privacy Practices*.





## Building A Caseload

### Strategies

- Carry over cases from previous clinician and previous school year.
- Set up prevention/treatment groups related to school's pressing needs.
- Plan for future capacity issues.
- Actively seek referrals from school staff/families/students. Do not rely on only one source. Share information about services with and open the referral process to school staff, families, and students.
- Develop screening and referral systems to help effectively identify students at high risk for more serious mental health concerns. Strategically plan prevention efforts to help improve the well-being and outcomes for these high risk students.



# Templates for School Mental Health Programming



- When to Refer a Student
- Referral Form
- Consent for Treatment
- Release of Information
  - *Release to/Receive from school*
  - *Release to/Receive from other providers/agencies*
- Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding (school/community partner example)
- MOA Components to Consider



What questions do you have about getting started with school mental health in your community?



## Thank you for participating in today's call!

- A link to a recording and a full list of questions and answers from today's webinar will be available on the NCCSLE website (<http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>) by next week.
- If you have any additional questions about school-based mental health services, please contact either of our presenters.

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