



EDUCATOR MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY TO SCALE: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE.

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OVERVIEW

❖ **Setting the Stage**

- Mind the Gap
- Mind the Sequence

❖ **Case Example @ TVDSB**

- Recognizing the Needs
- Building Capacity
- Overcoming Challenges
- Evaluating Efforts

❖ **Lessons Learned and Next Steps**



BUT FIRST...
WHERE WE ARE FROM
AND
WHO WE ARE.

OUR SETTING

ONTARIO, CANADA

- **Population roughly 13.7 million (of Canada's 35.5 million)**
- **72 school districts**
 - 31 English Public (secular or non-religious: open to all)
 - 29 English Catholic
 - 4 French Public
 - 8 French Catholic
- **5000 schools**
- **Approximately 2 million students**
- **Approximately 117,000 teachers**
- **Approximately 7400 principals/vice principals**



OUR SETTING

LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA

- **Geographical area**
 - Stretches over 7000 square kilometers
- **159 schools**
 - 132 Elementary
 - 27 Secondary
- **Approximately 74 000 students**
- **Approximately 7400 staff**



School Mental Health ASSIST

is a provincial implementation support team designed to help Ontario school boards to promote student mental health and well-being



Areas of Focus:

1. Organizational Conditions and Leadership
2. Capacity Building in SMH
3. Implementation Support for Evidence-Based Promotion and Prevention Practices (EBP's)
4. Special Populations
5. System Coordination
6. Youth Engagement



OUR ASPIRATIONAL VISION

All students are flourishing, with a strong sense of belonging at school confident in themselves and with skills for managing academic and social/emotional challenges, and surrounded by caring adults and communities equipped to identify and intervene early with students struggling with mental health problems.



SMH ASSIST SERVICES



- **Provincial Leadership in School Mental Health**
 - Systematic, collaborative, intentional, explicit, nuanced, creative, evidence-based
- **Implementation Coaching**
 - Province, Region, Board
- **Resource Development**
 - Awareness, Literacy, Expertise
- **Community of Practice**
 - Meetings, on-line forums

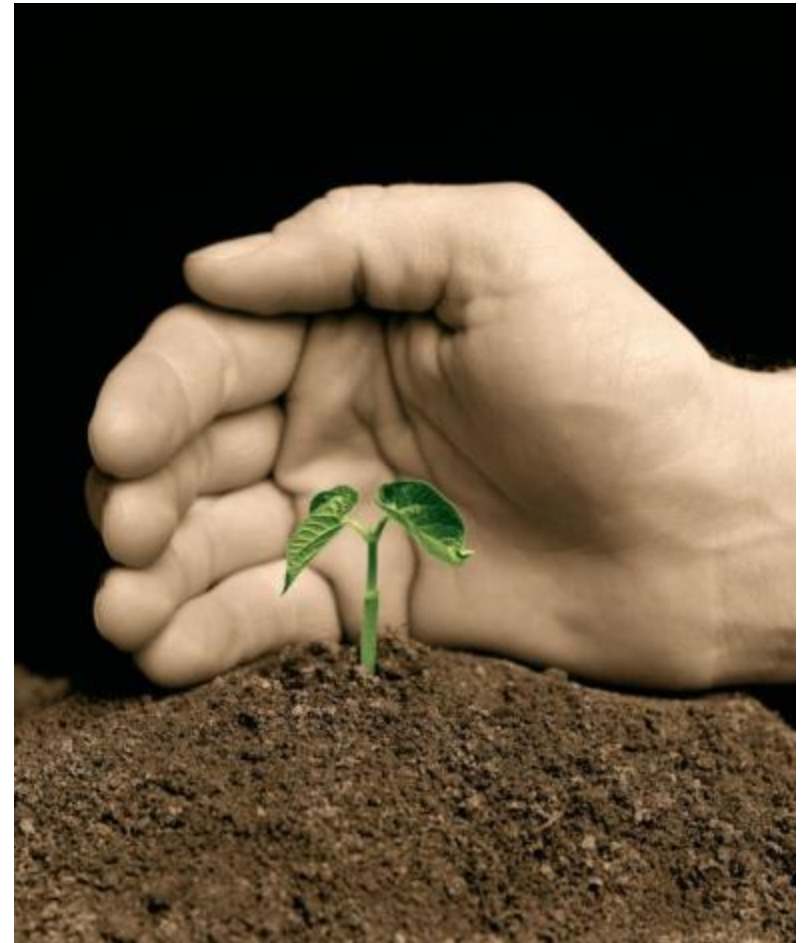


SETTING THE STAGE

Mind the Gap & Mind the Sequence

PROMOTING POSITIVE MH: AN OPPORTUNITY

- **Building social-emotional growth:**
 - explicitly through instruction in the classroom
 - through a whole school approach
- **Welcoming environments:**
 - enhance student well-being
 - better outcomes for vulnerable students
- **Educators are well positioned to:**
 - notice when their students are struggling
 - to support them towards access to care



SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH: A FEW CHALLENGES

Generally, school districts:

1. Lack the foundational commitment, infrastructure and processes for sustainable implementation of MH promotion programming (*Organizational Conditions*)
2. Lack of access to evidence-based information and programming and insufficient funding and uptake to bring the latter to scale (*EBP's*)
3. Lack of knowledge and comfort in supporting student MH (*Capacity Building*)





BRIDGING THE GAP

Intentionally addressing these known challenges in order to support effective educator capacity building towards MH promotion in the classroom

CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT CAPACITY BUILDING

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE:

Differentiate

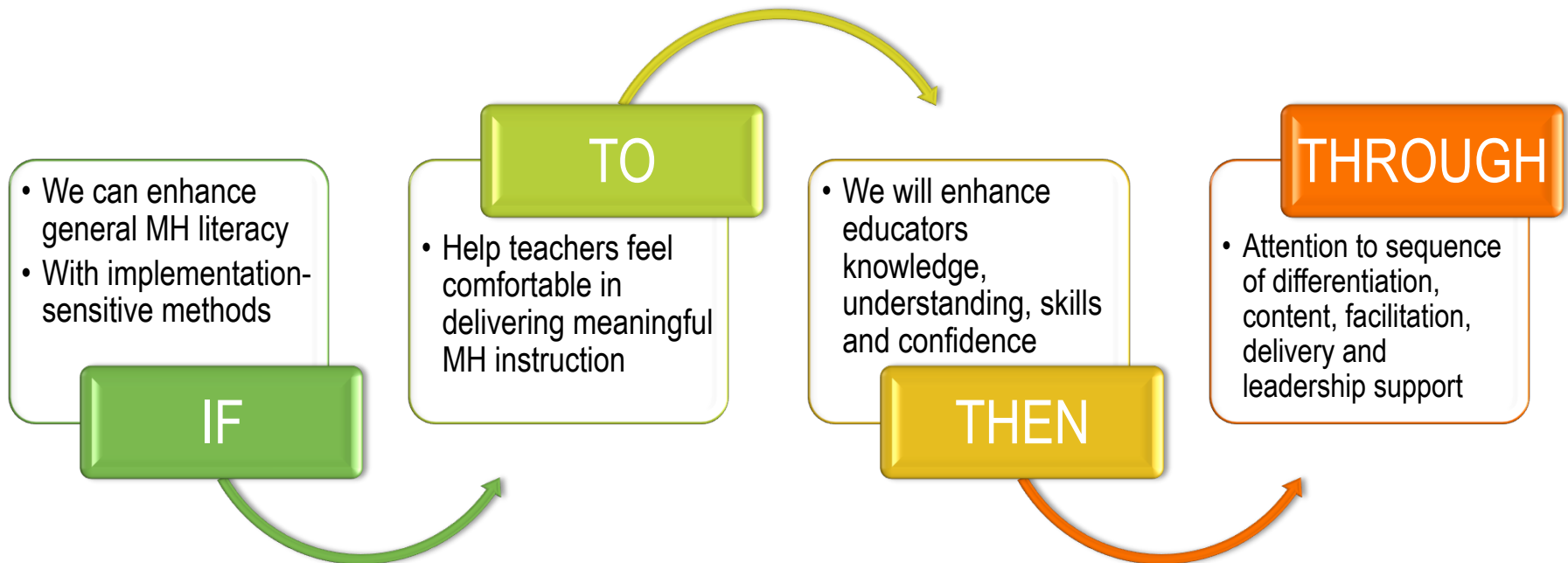
- **Learning needs**
 - Awareness, Literacy & Expertise
- **Delivery preference**
 - In person with small group dialogue
 - Iteratively over time
 - Content expert
 - Practice and review skills with mentor/coach
- **Role expectations** i.e. translate how the new or known knowledge will be applied in context

ENGAGE IN MH RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Information is delivered by an expert
- Initiative is supported by colleagues/supervisor/union
- New practices are aligned with current methods

THEORY OF ACTION:

EDUCATOR MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY IS THE KEY INGREDIENT
TO DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY MENTAL HEALTH INSTRUCTION





MIND THE SEQUENCE

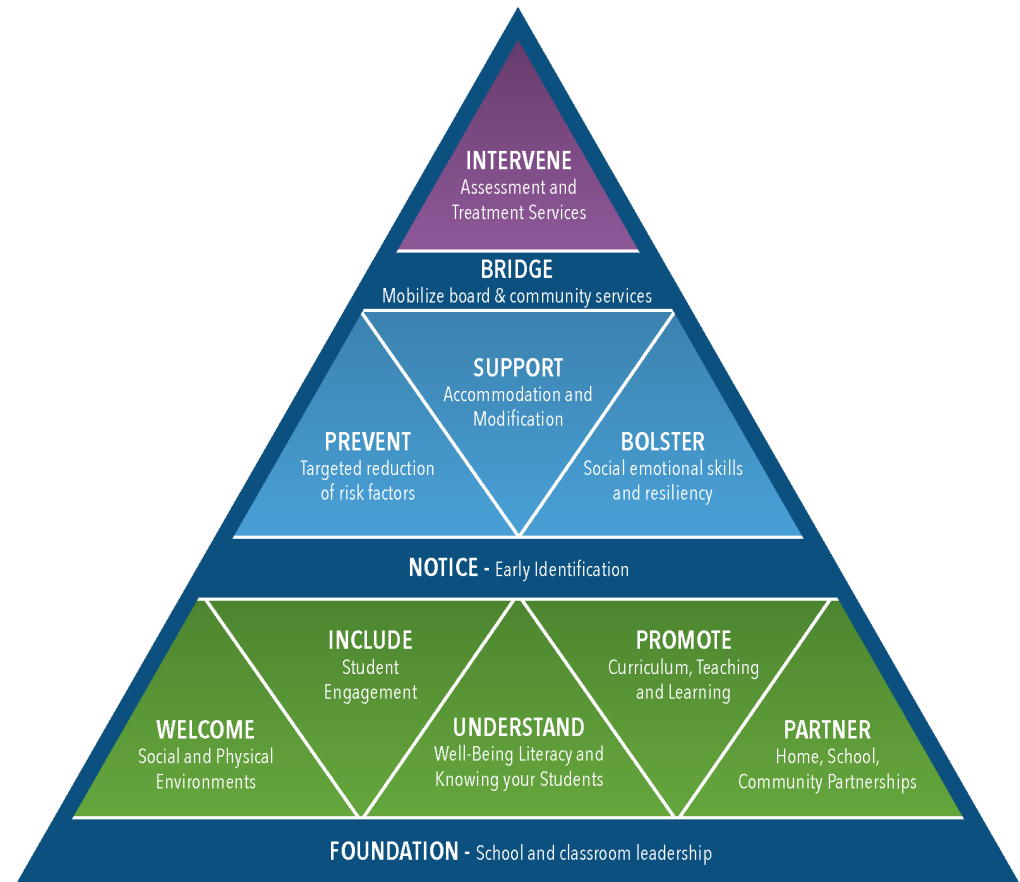
Content, Facilitation, Delivery & Facilitation support

CONTENT

MH literacy skill development:

1. General knowledge and skill for student MH and well-being at school
2. Specific knowledge and skills to aid teachers in the delivery of their MH related instruction

Aligned and Integration Model (AIM) for School Mental Health and Well-Being



FACILITATION

Ministry of Education funded MH leaders in each school district in the province of Ontario.

Purpose:

- To address, through internal influence, the previously mentioned challenges
- To develop and enact a mental health and additions strategy
- Capacity building efforts are an essential component of their work



DELIVERY

While we both recommend and endeavour to offer professional development that align with the following principles:

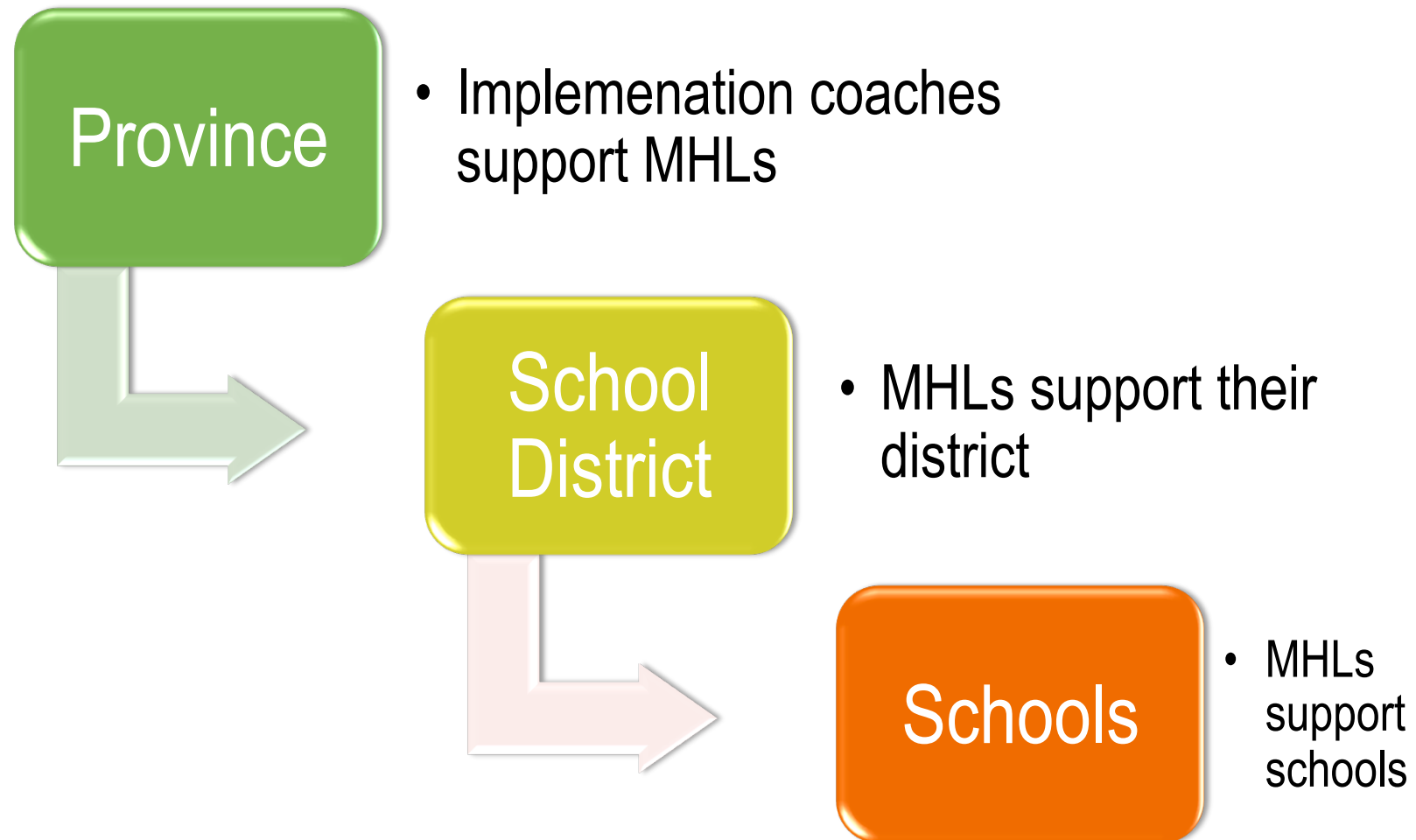
- small groups,
- job embedded ways,
- delivered by an expert,
- with the option of ongoing coaching

We recognize existing limitations:

- Large geographical area and related costs
- Access to teachers (PD days) and release time costs

Thus we developed complementary tactics to support the capacity building efforts (on-line tutorials, webinars, e-publications and info-sheets)

FACILITATION SUPPORT: COACHING CASCADE





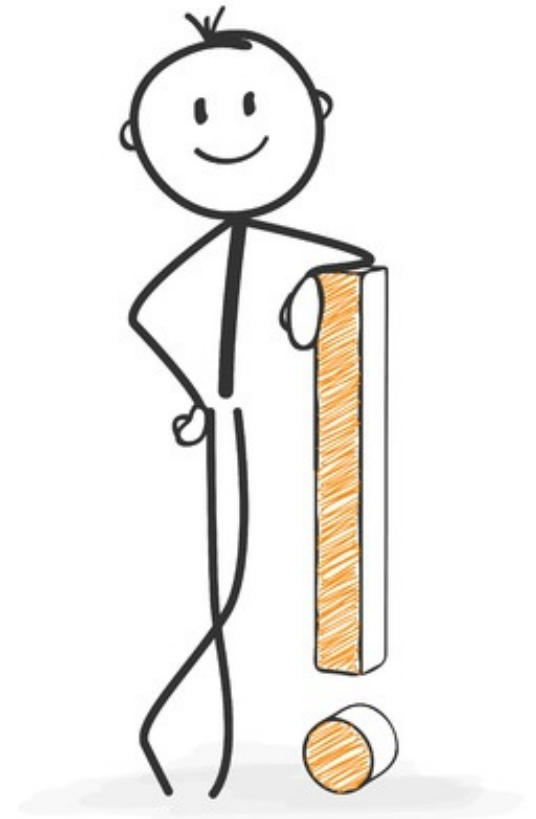
CASE EXAMPLE @ TVDSB

Recognizing the Needs, Building Capacity, Overcoming Challenges & Evaluating Efforts

TVDSB: RECOGNIZING THE NEEDS

Mental Health and Addictions Strategy

- *Mental Health Literacy and Capacity Survey for Educators*
 - *Measured: educators' knowledge, comfort and awareness of MH issues related to supporting their students in the classroom*
- *Goals:*
 - *Building staff capacity in regards to understanding mental health and well-being*
 - *Fostering stigma-free learning environments at classroom and school levels*
 - *Promoting mental health and wellness for all students*



TVDSB'S EVALUATING EFFORTS PROCESS

Self developed survey:

Mental Health Literacy and Capacity Survey for Educators

Administered on a PD day to:

- 3913 educators respondents (2010)
- 3965 educators respondents (2015)

Evaluation of:

Awareness, knowledge and comfort on a 5 point likert scale

Purpose:

- Set a baseline
- Help set priorities
- Support the development of the districts MH strategic plan



AWARENESS

Participants were asked: “How would you rate your awareness of each of the following” ranging from not at all aware to very aware.

- 1.The range of mental health issues that children and youth experience during the school years.**
- 2.The risk factors and causes of student mental health issues.**
- 3.The types of treatments available to help students with mental health issues (e.g., counselling).**
- 4.The local community services for treating students with mental health issues (e.g., do you know who to call?).**
- 5.The steps necessary to access local community services for mental health issues.**

KNOWLEDGE

Participants were asked: “How would you rate your knowledge of each of the following” ranging from not knowledgeable to very knowledgeable

- 1.About the signs and symptoms of student mental health issues.**
- 2.About appropriate actions to take to support student mental health at school.**
- 3.About legislation related to mental health issues (confidentiality, consent to treatment, etc.).**
- 4.About school system services and resources for helping students with mental health issues**

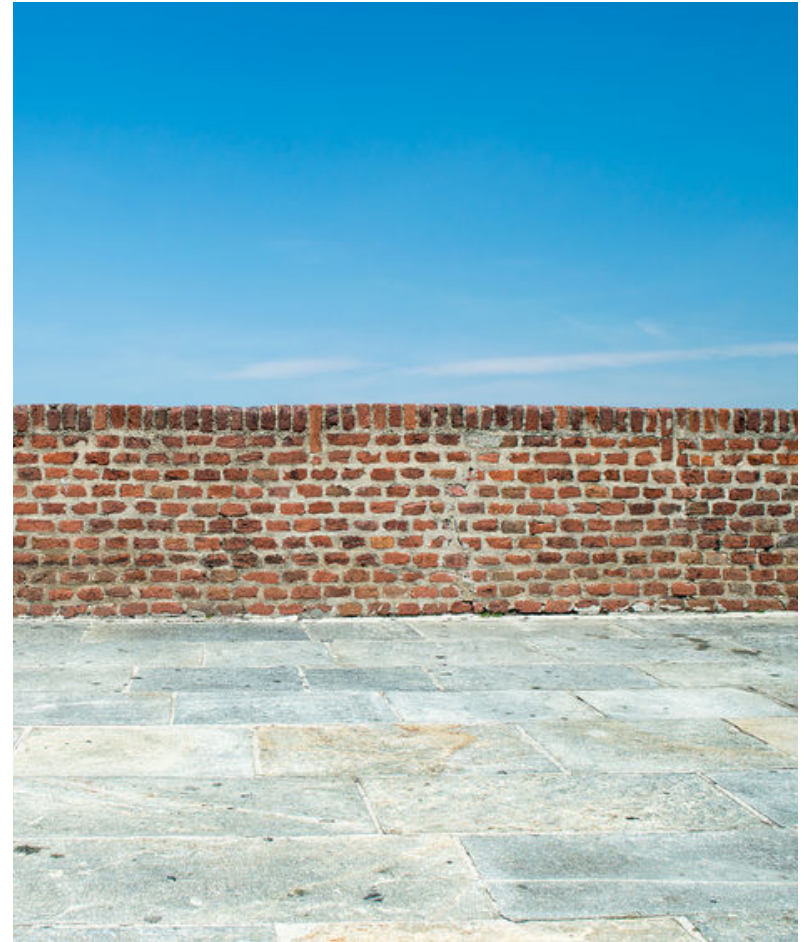
COMFORT

Participants were asked: “How would you rate your knowledge of each of the following” ranging from not comfortable to very comfortable.

- 1. Talking with students about mental health.**
- 2. Talking with parents about their child’s mental health.**
- 3. Providing support to students with mental health issues.**
- 4. Accessing school and system services for students with mental health issues.**

LIMITATIONS

1. **Limitations of self-report survey**
2. **Lack of standardized tool**
3. **Non-identifying (no individual comparison from 2010 to 2015)**



TVDSB'S CAPACITY BUILDING: BRIDGING THE KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION GAP

Differentiated Professional Learning

Awareness level

- Mental Health Speaker Series
- Common Slides

Literacy level

- Topic Specific PD
- ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)



TVDSB'S CAPACITY BUILDING: BRIDGING THE KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION GAP

Common Capacity Building and Reference Resources

- Mental Health & High School Curriculum Guide: Understanding Mental Health and Mental Illness (CMHA, 2010)
- Resilient Classrooms: Creating Healthy Environments for Learning (Doll, Zucker & Brehm, 2004)
- Bounce Back Resources
- Making a Difference: An Educator's Guide to Child and Youth Mental Health Problems (2011)
- Supporting Minds: An Educator's Guide to Promoting Students' Mental Health and Well-being (2013)



TVDSB'S CAPACITY BUILDING: BRIDGING THE KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION GAP

Organizational Structure

- Superintendent with responsibility of portfolio (executive support – system level)
- Mental Health Lead (system level implementation lead)
- Mental Health Teacher on special assignment (TOSA) (system/school level coaching)
- Mental Health Champions (school level implementation support)



Another key element:

- MH taken out of Special Education portfolio to help support the positive MH frame



EARLY EXAMPLES OF COMMON SLIDES

What is mental health?

What is mental illness?

What is Mental Health?

Mental health “is a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community”

World Health Organization

MENTAL ILLNESS OR PSYCHIATRIC DISORDER

Mental illnesses are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood or behaviour associated with significant distress and impaired functioning.

Examples include:

- Mood disorders (depression and bipolar disorder)
- Schizophrenia
- Anxiety disorders
- Personality disorders
- Eating disorders
- Problem gambling
- Substance dependency

Optimal Mental Health

Optimal mental health
with mental illness

Optimal mental health
without mental illness

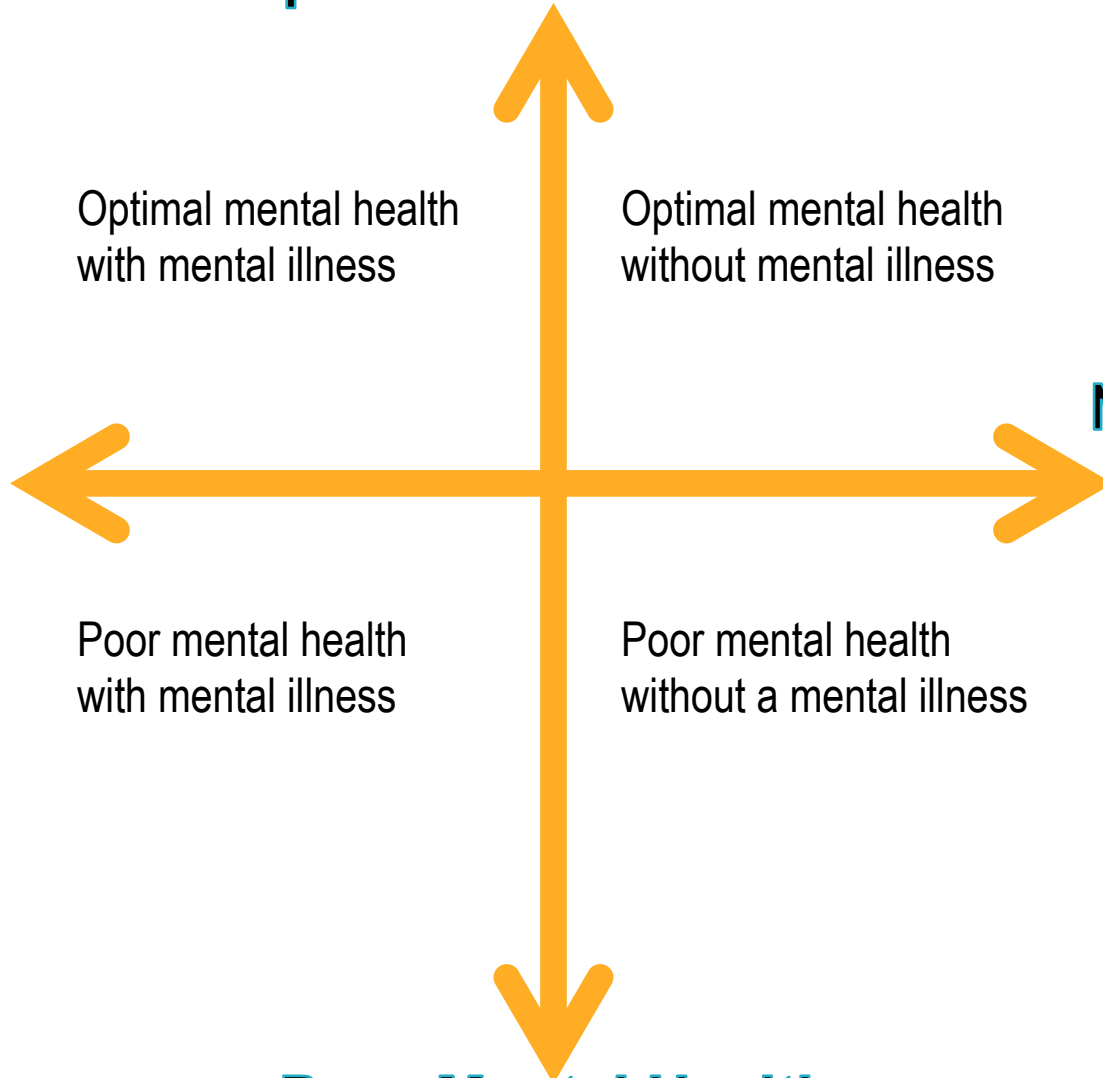
**Serious Mental
Illness**

**No Symptoms
of Mental
Illness**

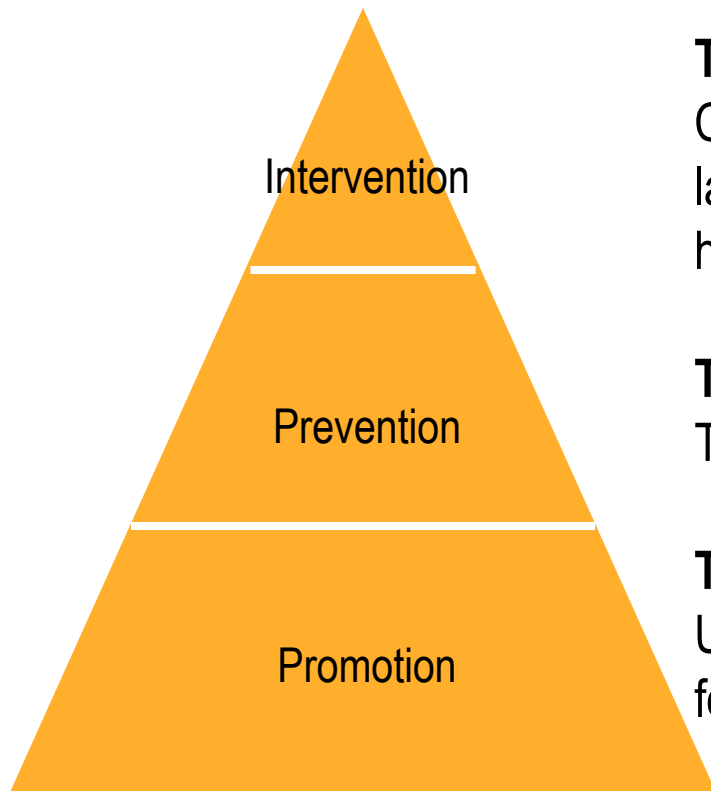
Poor mental health
with mental illness

Poor mental health
without a mental illness

Poor Mental Health



TIERED SUPPORT MODEL



Tier 3 (2-5%)

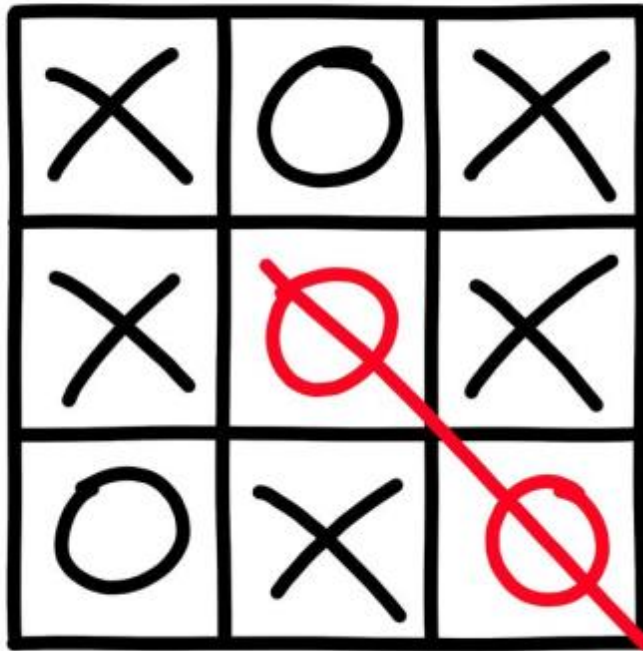
Clinical interventions for students occurring largely in collaboration with community mental health supports

Tier 2 (15-20%)

Targeted supports for at-risk students

Tier 1 (All)

Universal supports necessary for some, good for all



THINK
OUTSIDE
THE BOX

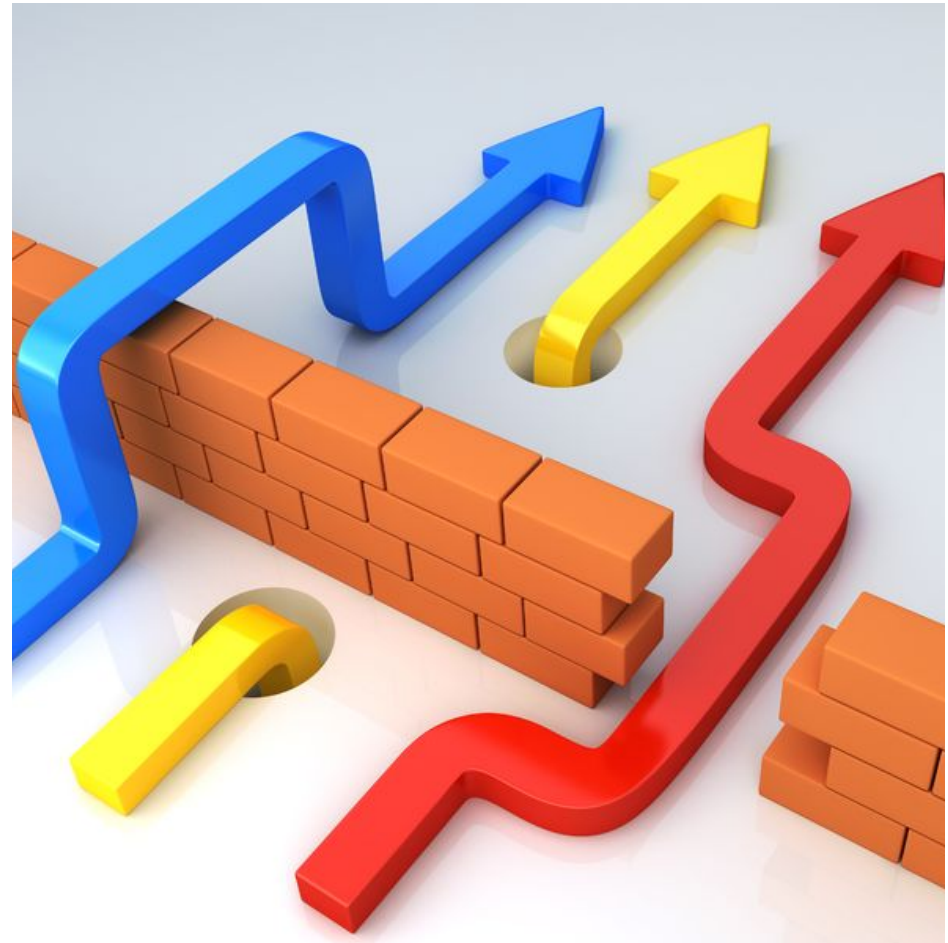


LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

Overcoming challenges, Summary and Future directions

TVDSB: OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

- Use of **consistent content** of PD (common slides and resources)
- **Shared leadership** approach (co-facilitation between clinician and educator)
- Use of **technology** (to bridge the geographical issues)
- Parallel PD at all levels (**consistent** information, **but differentiated**)
- **Curriculum links**



SUMMARY:

NEEDS, PRIORITIES AND TRENDS @ TVDSB

- **Pathways with community partners**
- **Engaging with parents about mental health & well-being**
- **Adherence to scope of practice**
- **Utilizing a standardized tool**



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Systemic barriers

- Building capacity at a system level i.e. administrators, to ensure a supportive environment for educators

Practical implementation challenges

- Integrated daily practices, not being or viewed as an “add-on”

Knowledge challenges

- How to intentionally bridge the knowledge to action gap



FUTURE DIRECTIONS: RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Implementation

- **Scaling up and sustainability**
 - Is there an optimal sequencing to achieve educator MH literacy?

Educator uptake

- **Comfort and confidence**
 - How to effectively ensure that they utilize their knowledge related to MH

Reaching your audience

- Are there other methods of capacity building efforts that are as effective as in-person training to allow for maximum uptake





QUESTIONS?



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