Becoming a School Mental Health Champion

Facilitation Guide

Hosting Dialogue on Comprehensive Systems
of School Mental Health

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1. Introduction to the Dialogue Guides

Dialogue Guides are tools that promote an exchange of perspectives that is critical to building understanding and support for an idea or a practice change. The Dialogue Guides in this resource were co-created by an array of stakeholders with different perspectives who engage with school mental health at different levels of our systems.

Co-creating Dialogue Guides is a practical way to bring stakeholders into the conversation and actively into the work. In complex issues, everybody is a learner and co-creation is an important new skill for leaders at every level.

Dialogue Guides address the most pressing practical issues in a simpler, more inclusive way by posing questions. Reaction questions allow participants to share their perspectives. Then, Application questions take these stakeholders into deeper critical conversations that help them take individual or collective action.

These **Dialogue Guides** use a format developed by stakeholders through the IDEA Partnership at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). They have been developed to do the following:

- Introduce "**Advancing Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems: Guidance from the Field**", a document that summarizes the insights of three expert panels around the core features of comprehensive school mental health systems. These expert panels were hosted by the National Workgroup on Comprehensive School Mental Health in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and were supported by the Bainum Foundation.
- Translate recommendations by experts in cross-sector systems into conversations that reflect the realities of state and local practice around school mental health.

- Invite agencies, organizations and individuals to contribute to a co-created set of guides to foster conversations at the practice level.
- Mobilize agencies, organizations and individuals to use the guides in face-to-face and virtual settings that engage their networks.
- Contribute to a national conversation about school-based mental health that respects current initiatives and frameworks in use while finding commonalities that will unite decision-makers, administrators, practitioners, families and students in building more comprehensive systems.
- Understand the value of co-creation in building support among diverse stakeholders.
- Model co-creation and the dialogue process and encourage groups to customize the guides presented in this resource to co-create their own.

The Dialogue Process

Our model for co-creating dialogue was developed by 50 national organizations and their members, who worked together over 15 years around the issues they shared. These stakeholders knew that we needed tools to bring people together regularly enough to appreciate issues, challenges and opportunities. They developed Dialogue Guides to encourage diverse stakeholders to interact through focused conversation that helps them discover commonalities and respect differences.

Using that model, every Dialogue Guide in this tool has been co-created by individuals who have experienced the topic from several perspectives. To benefit fully from their work, this Guide explores dialogue as a tool for meeting your needs for outreach, communication and understanding.

Table 1: What Do We Mean by Dialogue?

What Do We Mean by Dialogue?		
Debate	**Discussion**	**Dialogue**
Accepts assumptions as truth	Surfaces various assumptions	Examines / questions assumptions
Point - counterpoint	Majority rules; agree to disagree	Seeks common ground; consensus
Persuasive	Informative	Reflective

Source: IDEA Partnership (2005). Dialogue Guide: Facilitator Handbook. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE).

What Do We Mean by Dialogue?

Dialogue is very different from the ways we often enter conversations with those who do not know our perspectives or whose perspectives differ from ours. In far too many situations, we focus on making our points instead of seeking to learn what others know and feel. Sometimes those interactions feel like a debate, where everyone makes their claim and readies for the response. In other situations, individuals discuss matters openly, but with little intent to move the conversation toward greater understanding. Dialogue is a purposeful exchange. The exchange is open and respectful of differing perspectives. In a dialogue, individuals seek to understand and to use that understanding to bridge their differences.

Dialogue starters are questions that shape the interaction. Two kinds of questions are intentionally shaped to start the exchange:

Reaction Questions

Reaction questions help stakeholders express their perspectives.

- They are designed to help people see that there are multiple perspectives that need to be bridged to make progress in practice.

- Reaction questions should help participants appreciate the differences in perspective across roles and provide insight into the shared interests that could unite them.

Application Questions

Application questions help people think about the future state of practice.

- Application questions should generate ideas about how to find out what is currently in progress, become more knowledgeable and/or move forward.

- Application questions should move the participants toward individual or shared action.

Inviting Dialogue

In bringing diverse stakeholders together and helping them talk to each other about a common concern, the vision of the host is an important factor. This guide is developed to help you envision yourself as a host of dialogue and help you develop the skills to be more comfortable in that role.

2. Dialogue: Reasons to Choose Dialogue and How to Proceed

Recognizing a concern that is also shared by others is an important first step in addressing the issue. However, just seeing the issue has little impact.

In far too many cases, important stakeholders do not have the opportunity to interact with those who have a shared concern. Bringing people together in a setting that encourages sharing is an important next step in learning what others know and need to know. Dialogue Guides are the tool to help you take that step!

Convening People

The person who brings people together to explore an issue is called a convener. Conveners are individuals or groups who are steeped in the issue but don't try to own the issue. Conveners understand that many people know the issue from varied and important perspectives. Conveners bring people together to understand the issue from many viewpoints.

The convener asks:

- Who cares about this issue?
- Why do they care?
- Who is already doing work on the issue?
- What are they doing?

These questions help a person who is passionate about an issue think like a convener. It helps them acknowledge others who care about the issue and invite the right mix of people and perspectives into a conversation.

Conveners cultivate the relationships that allow them to inquire and invite. Anyone can learn, think and act like a convener!

- Individuals can begin to unite their friends or associates around a shared issue.
- Organizations can begin to invite other organizations into dialogue about a shared challenge or opportunity.
- Schools can more regularly convene the school community around important data or upcoming changes.
- Communities can organize dialogue to learn what it will take to make a change they envision.
- Agencies can begin to hold regular exchanges with those who deliver services and those who are the intended beneficiaries of their work.

Let's take a look at some ways Dialogue Guides can help us solve some predictable problems of practice. As you read these examples, ask yourself:

- Is the issue described in the example a realistic portrayal of interaction in the field?
- Is the description of the Dialogue Guide (DG) strategy realistic and doable?
- Can you envision yourself in one of these scenarios?

Using Dialogue Guides Among Families With Lived Experience

Increasingly, families who receive or have received services are asked to serve on local, regional or state planning groups. While their participation is valued and their voice is heard, families sometimes report that systems "compartmentalize" their participation

by engaging them during meetings but not turning to them naturally in more daily practice.

Some longtime advocates who serve on state committees decide to coalesce families around more authentic family leadership. They invite family members on county leadership teams to join them. Together, they begin to define their purpose and the ways in which they could begin to help others understand what authentic engagement looks like in practice.

To introduce the issue in a way that invites thinking and avoids conflict, they review the reaction and application questions in Dialogue Guide #2 (DG#2). One key question catches their attention: *"Is leadership a title or a role?"* They decide to bring the DG strategy to a committee meeting and describe some of the questions that were co-created in DG#2. They suggest holding a dialogue at one of the committee meetings.

As the families introduce DG at the meeting, they stress that the questions about authentic engagement were co-created by stakeholders from across the country. They share their perspective on the value of beginning conversation about this issue among the state team members.

At the meeting, a well-respected advocate facilitates the dialogue. System leaders and families share perspectives and sensitivities in an honest and respectful way. After the dialogue, the state team reflects on their new awareness.

- They share what they have learned and commit to hold the lessons learned.
- Collectively, they decide to use the dialogue process to hold important conversations at each meeting.
- Over time, they decide to offer the strategy to county leadership teams.

Potential Impact: As the family leaders look back on the experience, they see that the dialogue process has created a way to invite conversations that have been difficult to start without the nationally developed tool as a "starter." They also see that because they were co-created by stakeholders, DG#2 has given them dialogue starters that tap into the real experience of families and family leadership.

Hosting Dialogue in a School Setting

The staff of a local high school broadly supports a renewed focus on mental health, especially with all the focus on isolation and trauma during the pandemic. In conversations among staff, some seem to know about the range of supports that are in place or being planned. Others want to know whether the new services replace or add to existing programs. Still others want to know about how decisions are being made, but they do not know how to ask without seeming to be negative.

The school mental health team suggests convening the faculty in a new kind of training. They suggest openly talking together about the issues, the proposed interventions and the new partners who have expertise in addressing their shared goals.

Once everyone has a basic understanding of the challenges, the approaches and the roles, they break up into mixed staff Dialogue Groups co-led by staff members and the new mental health provider partners. The groups include professional staff and support staff.

Together, they explore Dialogue Guide #1 and focus on what "real partnerships" look like. In this way, they are making it acceptable — even welcome — to learn how staff see the issues, what staff believe about approaches and what staff know about the daily challenges of addressing mental health in school settings.

Potential Impact: As they reflect together on the experience, they agree to meet regularly to talk about other questions that have been proposed in the dialogue starters … and develop some of their own.

Hosting Dialogue in the Community

The local United Way has set a priority for mental health following the release of some regional self-reported data on depression and anxiety in teens and young adults. The organization is aware of the broad range of community agencies that provide services that impact mental health in youth, young adults and their families. The committee knows that across counties and school districts, services vary. They ask:

- "Can we bring a wider group of stakeholders into this conversation?"
- "With new federal funding on the horizon, where are the overlaps and the gaps?"

They decide to hold local conversations to inform their work and their funding. They focus on Dialogue Guide #8 to help counties and school districts learn what people know about current offerings and what ideas they have for reshaping services to address current needs. They believe that they might be able to help local programs step back, see overlaps and envision new ways to use new funding.

The committee knows that an intermediary organization like the United Way can facilitate a new kind of conversation and hold a broad stakeholder dialogue. They commit to learning from and with the providers and the intended beneficiaries.

Potential Impact: With current providers and new voices in the conversation, they quickly learn that aligning the plethora of disconnected programs is as important as new funding in developing a comprehensive approach.

Clarity Through Dialogue in an Organization

The statewide association of elementary principals recognizes the important role that mental health plays in student well-being and achievement. The organization has sessions in their state conference related to these topics, including social-emotional learning, trauma, restorative practice, positive behavioral interventions and supports, and many more local initiatives with an aligned focus.

Some of the members ask, "How do these separate initiatives work together for a comprehensive approach to mental health in schools?" At the upcoming conference, they schedule an open dialogue session co-led by principals. They break into groups that include principals from urban and rural schools. They mix principals from well-resourced and under-resourced schools.

Together, they focus on Dialogue Guide #4 and talk about what a multitiered system of support looks like … or should look like. They share the points of clarity and the points of confusion. They begin to identify ways their organization can help them learn from and with each other on these issues.

The organization sees the role they can play in addressing shared challenges on this important statewide issue. They suggest more DG sessions at state and regional events. They discuss virtual dialogue using the dialogue starters in website postings … and maybe developing their own.

Potential Impact: When the organization is invited into planning sessions with the state agencies, they now speak knowledgeably about the issues, informed by the authentic participation of principals in a variety of settings.

Dialogue to Inform Action in a State Agency

The state mental health agencies adopted and is actively implementing multitiered systems of support (MTSS) as an evidence-based practice in school-based mental health. Despite the training investments, the data shows that school and agency/provider collaboration is not changing practice at the scale they imagined. They know that to understand the issue, they must include system partners, practitioners, families and youth.

They decide to convene key mental health and education stakeholders with their technical assistance investments. They use Dialogue Guide #4 to shape the conversation. In the meeting, they build support for an active and ongoing process of learning with the front-line staff about the challenges in moving training into practice.

Potential Impact: The state agencies train their technical assistance investments in hosting dialogue and in communicating the findings in ways that will facilitate learning, planning and decision-making. They expect their investments to hold virtual sharing and problem-solving sessions regularly. They encourage them to seek out natural collaborators within the stakeholder networks to support the work and create ways for many people to participate. Most important, they communicate by word and action that they value *both* expert knowledge *and* practitioner and family knowledge as the means to close the gap between knowing and doing. They make shared learning a reality!

What do you think?

- Did the examples offer a realistic portrayal of issues and interactions?
- Was the description of Dialogue Guide strategy realistic and doable?
- Could you envision yourself in one of these scenarios?
- Do you see the value of dialogue and the usefulness of the Dialogue Guides?

If so, let's learn how you can become a champion for dialogue.

Understanding Participation and Engagement

In stakeholder work, participation and engagement are often used as interchangeable terms although they differ significantly in depth of interaction. Participation refers to the act of joining an activity. Engagement suggests that the participation is purposeful and based on experience and/or ability to contribute meaningfully to discussion, activity or project.

When we invite people to participate, we learn about them and how to engage them in more or deeper work. We find out how potential partners want to receive information and how to customize activities and tools to meet their needs.

By accepting the invitation, individuals learn how their experience and perspective can contribute. They build content knowledge that prepares them to engage more deeply.

People regularly participate in events and activities. Conveners look to meaningfully engage them. They learn to see them as potential partners who have a role in the work we want to do. Likewise, when participants find meaning in their participation, they are more open to sharing insights and assuming leadership roles.

Dialogue starters are created to support both participation and engagement.

Some questions are designed to share perspectives, and others are designed to open opportunities for action. Every dialogue holds the potential to bring people together in new learning and deeper connection.

3. Hosting and Facilitating Dialogue

You as a Convener of Dialogue

Dialogue Guides are the tools for talking. But how do we invite the right mix of people into these conversations? What would make people want to participate? How do we reach individuals who will engage on the issue beyond participation?

Individuals are drawn to a dialogue because of "the pull of the issue." Too often, important conversations that set the stage for decisions do not include the full range of stakeholders. Many stakeholders believe that they have perspectives that need to be acknowledged.

> **Individuals are drawn to a dialogue because of "the pull of the issue."**

When an individual or group has credibility in bringing attention to the issue, individuals respond. If individuals believe that they will be heard, they participate. When they are safe and secure in expressing perspectives, they contribute. When they believe the dialogue may produce action, they connect.

> **If individuals believe that they will be heard, they participate. When they are safe and secure in expressing perspectives, they contribute. When they believe the dialogue may produce action, they connect.**

The role of the convener is important in building engagement. Conveners are, or are connected to, known sources of knowledge, influence or authority related to the issue. Some of the most powerful dialogues combine these elements and create a space where decision-makers reach out to practitioners, where researchers engage the implementers, and where the interaction across groups is valued.

Convening is a new leadership competency that anyone can learn. In convening dialogue, we begin to reshape our ideas about people and how they learn. Convening is more than a meeting or event. It is the seed for building a relationship, and the convener sets the stage.

As a convener, you will use these stakeholder-created Dialogue Guides as the basis for inviting people to talk together.

- You will prepare yourself on the issue using some of the resources provided. Each Dialogue Guide includes a resource section that will help you understand the work that has been undertaken by various groups.
- You will think about the venues where you might convene people to hold a useful dialogue and help the participants understand how they can act on the issue after the dialogue. Consider conferences, meetings and virtual opportunities you and others can create.

Conveners and Facilitators

Facilitation is the set of skills used in supporting dialogue. A convener may often be the facilitator as well, but the expectations are different in each role. While the convener focuses on creating the right mix of people, the facilitator focuses on the skills that keep the mix of people operating in a productive way.

> **While the convener focuses on creating the right mix of people, the facilitator focuses on the skills that keep the mix of people operating in a productive way.**

You as Facilitator of the Dialogue Guides

Facilitation is a special role, but one that you can learn. Facilitators have a mix of content knowledge and a level of comfort with people who have differing perspectives. Facilitators are individuals who are grounded in the issue enough to know when the conversation is going off course, and they have developed the interaction skills to bring it back into focus.
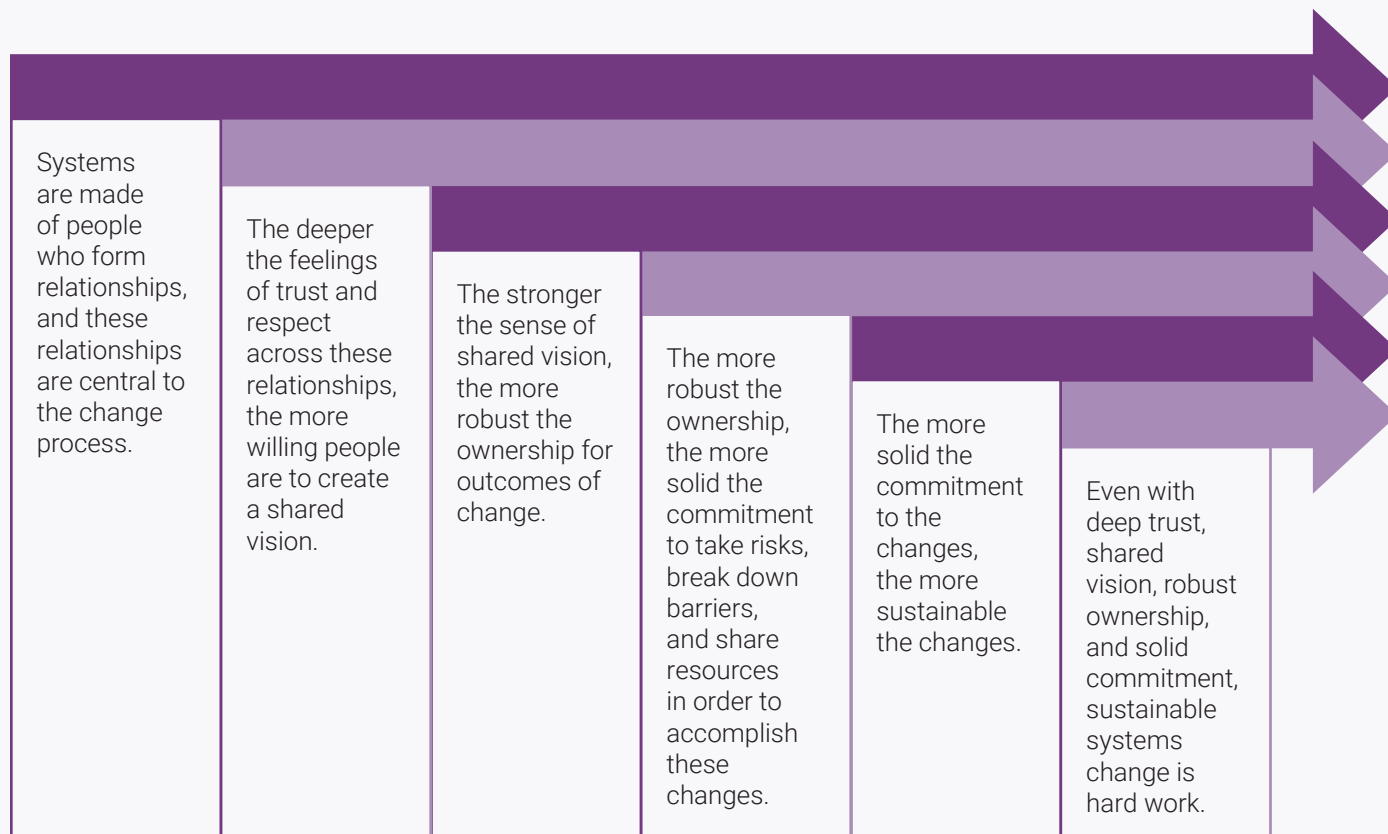
Facilitators Know the Context for the Issue

Issues can look different when individuals experience them from different roles. Decision-makers know their intent in developing policies and initiatives. Practitioners know about these efforts as they are being implemented. The intended beneficiaries know them in terms of impact and outcomes.

Facilitators understand how context colors perception and help others recognize this. They help participants understand what is intended and help them share what they know about the effort in practice. Facilitators acknowledge that individuals at every level know something about the issue, and they help individuals generate productive conversations.

Facilitators want participants to have a meaningful experience. They know that regular dialogue is a path toward more authentic engagement. Facilitators lead conversations that help people understand systems, the people working in systems and the people served by those systems.

The IDEA Partnership expressed this understanding in the following graphic:

Systems are made of people who form relationships, and these relationships are central to the change process.

The deeper the feelings of trust and respect across these relationships, the more willing people are to create a shared vision.

The stronger the sense of shared vision, the more robust the ownership for outcomes of change.

The more robust the ownership, the more solid the commitment to take risks, break down barriers, and share resources in order to accomplish these changes.

The more solid the commitment to the changes, the more sustainable the changes.

Even with deep trust, shared vision, robust ownership, and solid commitment, sustainable systems change is hard work.

Source: IDEA Partnership @ NASDSE 2016

Spend a little time thinking about the messages these stakeholders tried to convey in the chart.

- To what extent do you agree with the assertions in the chart?
- How might the chart guide you as a facilitator?

Facilitators Have a Base of Knowledge

The facilitator role demands content knowledge. Engaging participants who are passionate about an issue requires that the facilitator has enough depth to understand the points being made and enough breadth to see the relationship between issues that are being expressed.

In the DG resource, facilitators provide support in several ways:

- The source document, "**Advancing Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems: Guidance from the Field**", has an orienting section for each Core Feature. This brief overview provides enough information for the facilitator to know whether they are sufficiently grounded in the issue and enough direction for them to seek additional information.
- Each Dialogue Guide is developed around a Core Feature described in the source document. For each, a listing of additional relevant material is provided. This material often helps facilitators understand important perspectives that may surface during dialogue.
  - Facilitators are encouraged to prepare themselves further by scanning websites and documents prepared by groups that may be important to potential participants.
  - A good basic reference that facilitators should explore is the **SHAPE System**. The SHAPE System is a guide to implementing evidence-based practices in school-based mental health.
  - Facilitators should be aware of frameworks that share common purposes even though they may differ in implementation strategies. Facilitators respect the frameworks in use but help people to see the range of available frameworks and their commonalities.

Using Response Strategies to Encourage Participation

During the co-creation process, participants voiced a concern that inexperienced facilitators could have difficulty generating responses. This understanding helped us develop a set of **Response Strategies** that will be useful for both new and experienced facilitators.

- Download the **Response Strategies** and familiarize yourself with them.
  - Which are you most likely to use? Why?
  - Think about challenging yourself to try more than one strategy.
  - Create some strategies of your own.
- You may want to print the **Response Strategies** as a poster that you can display and use as you prepare your participants to respond.

The Human Side of Facilitation

"Dialogue Guide activities are designed to provide a way for stakeholders to interact and contribute ideas in a safe environment — one that is not characterized by power struggles or distrust. The success of Dialogue Guide activities depends, in large part, on the ability of group members to build trust and create a safe place…."

IDEA PARTNERSHIP, 2009

Sometimes the facilitator is holding dialogue among participants who know each other. At other times, participants do not know each other and may be meeting for the first time. Regardless, offering a trust-building environment is essential. Deep trust takes more than one interaction, but facilitators can learn to invite participants into a conversation where they feel respected, valued and safe.

One way to do this is to propose some guidelines and values for participation and ask all the participants to commit to them:

- State that people are ready to share more openly on their own timetable and should not be rushed.

- Let them know they are welcome to join another dialogue if they cannot commit to the values of the current group.
- Help them, and the other participants, to accept that participants may leave the group if they cannot commit to the values right now.
- Stress that leaving is an act of respect to the group values and should occur without judgment.

As a facilitator, understand that dialogue draws people because of the "pull of the issue" and that "pull" often comes with deep feelings. Shared values and guidelines help facilitators manage those feelings in a group.

Setting Values and Guidelines

Facilitators can customize the value statements and group guidelines to fit the situation and/or the makeup of the group, but some foundational principles are reflected in the set of values promoted by restorative practices.

- **Speak from the heart:** your truth, your experiences, your perspectives.
- **Listen from the heart:** Let go of stories that make it hard to hear each other.
- **Trust that you will know what to say:** no need to rehearse.
- **Say just enough:** Without feeling rushed, be concise and considerate of the time of others.
- *Source: Biyes-Watson, C. & Pranis, K. (2015). Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community. Sheridan Books, Inc.: Ann Arbor, MI.*

Some users of Dialogue Guides have created additional guidelines to keep the conversation on track.

- In the **Georgia Department of Education's GraduateFIRST Initiative**, the state agency held statewide dialogue to engage a wide range of stakeholders.
- The dialogue facilitators created a guideline that worked well and has been adopted by others.

- They established a *No Cross-Talk Rule.*
- In each dialogue, participants actively listened to each participant respond, and they could add their own response or ask questions of others.

As you begin to facilitate, think about practices that will increase equitable participation among your stakeholders.

Strategies such as the *No Cross-Talk Rule* are very useful, but the most important factor is the neutral behavior conveyed by the facilitator.

- Facilitators give equal weight to all perspectives.
- They establish confidentiality.
  - If participants tell stories or relate events, they stress no names of organizations or agencies and give no personally identifiable references.
- Facilitators use and encourage the use of plain, jargon-free, people-first language.
- They acknowledge that some terms carry negative connotations, and some participants may not fully understand how they impact others.
  - They encourage participants to respectfully offer a preferred term if a word or phrase that feels inappropriate arises during dialogue.
  - Good facilitators cast this interaction as a shared learning that moves dialogue forward.
- Facilitators prepare for the groups they will facilitate.
  - They think about the potential mix of participants.
  - They take time to learn about the issues and the perspectives of the potential participants.
  - They are acquainted with the relevant resources provided and use them to be grounded in the issues that may arise.
  - They prepare for potentially tense interactions. One resource that is exceptionally useful for facilitators is *The Trust Tool* co-created by the IDEA Partnership and available in the resources provided. Spend some time with the tool and use it to "pre-think" your group and your facilitation approach.

- Facilitators ask thoughtful questions throughout the dialogue event.
  - Status questions help people regroup and reflect. *("How are we doing?" "Do we need more time to reflect?")*
  - Invitation questions encourage people to take responsibility for their participation. *("What do others think?" "What experiences do others have with …?")*
  - Questions that ask for a judgment are avoided. *("Don't you think that …?")*
- Facilitators are self-reflective. They regularly ask themselves:
  - How would I feel participating in the dialogues that I facilitate?
  - What else can I do to ensure comfort and safety?

Customizing Your Dialogue

The Dialogue Guide resource provides many Reaction and Application questions. These stakeholder-developed dialogue starters empower conveners and facilitators to use their best insights in selecting the starters that will engage and motivate their invitees.

- Some Dialogue Guide efforts are long term. In this case, organizers choose and arrange a series of questions that will be explored over several convenings.
- Other dialogues are meant to be a kickoff for action by a number of groups, organizations and networks. In this case, the organizers choose a question that will rally participation and encourage more dialogue within and across groups.
- Together, the convener and the facilitator can increase the impact of the dialogue session.
  - Revisit the purpose. Choose dialogue starters that have the greatest match to the goals. Don't be distracted by more intriguing questions; there will be time for more talking if the first session goes well.
  - Use what you know about the group, the setting and the time allotted to choose the right number and mix of questions.
- Some issues are not represented in the current collection of dialogue starters; in this case, the organizers should feel free to use our example to host their own co-creation activities.

4. Becoming a School Mental Health Champion

If you have downloaded this resource, you may have an interest in using the Dialogue Guides in promoting greater understanding and more collaboration. We invite you to join us and become a School Mental Health Champion!

School Mental Health Champions take this work into their own networks. This could be your organization, your school, your community or your state. Use the infographic below to help you think about bringing people together and building on their interest in school mental health. When many people begin having these conversations, we may see a tipping point. Together we can create change!

As a champion:

- You will have access to a recorded training about school mental health practices on how to invite and facilitate dialogue.
- You will join a committed community of champions who share their stories of dialogue

promotion on the Champions page on the National Center for School Mental Health website.

- You will help us document the spread of information on comprehensive school mental health systems through your participation and the work you will do with your contacts or within your networks.
- You will be invited into virtual conversations to share the insights gained through dialogue.
- You will be invited to share the perspectives of your network, organization or agency on issues of importance.
- And much more!

We are looking forward to working together in support of comprehensive school mental health systems.

Reaching a Tipping Point through Networks and Dialogue
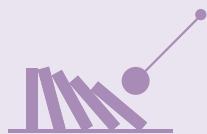
1 **Commit to reaching a tipping point**

To reach a 'Tipping Point' in providing Comprehensive Mental Health Systems, we must help individuals learn from and with each other. This new, shared work demands more than information. It demands interaction, relationships and collaboration. Join the effort. Bring your networks into this new, shared work!

2 **Recognize the reach and influence of your network**

Practitioners know the issues 'on the ground'. They know who must be in a conversation with them to make progress in practice. Likewise, families and youth know the realities of implementation. Together, practitioners and families networks can identify the important conversations and invite people into them.

3 **Invite your members to share their perspective**

The document, Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems: Guidance from the Field, is the beginning of a shared conversation. Expand your understanding and bring your networks into a new conversation that invites your networks to share what they know.

4 **Learn about other perspectives**

When we bring different perspectives into a joint conversation, we have the potential to really understand what it will take to build comprehensive school mental health systems. Do not let your networks miss out on that conversation!

5 **Co-create guides to dialogue**

Invite your members to join with others and build guides to help people talk about real issues in practice. Cross-stakeholder teams of volunteers will meet over two or three web meetings to select issue and generate the needed conversation starters. Invite your networks to volunteer!

6 **Host dialogues and share the learning**

Play a role in getting to the 'Tipping Point' by hosting dialogue sessions and using the tools your networks have helped to create. Share what you learn and convey the recommendations from your dialogue sessions on the national site highlighting the movement toward a 'Tipping Point'.

5. Glossary of Terms

Terms	Definitions
Comprehensive School Mental Health (CSMH) systems	CSMH systems: • Provide a full array of supports and services that promote positive school climate, social-emotional learning, mental health and well-being while reducing the prevalence and severity of mental illness. • Are built on a strong foundation of district and school professionals, including administrators, educators and specialized instructional support personnel (e.g., school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, school nurses, other school health professionals) in strategic partnership with students, families, and community health and mental health partners. • Assess and address the social and environmental factors that impact health and mental health *(source: National Center for School Mental Health).*
Community of Practice (CoP)	A CoP is a group of people who share expertise and passion about a topic and interact on a regular basis to further their learning *(source: Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002).*
Data-Based Decision-Making	Ongoing process of collecting and analyzing different types of data, including demographic, student-level, school-level, satisfaction and process data, to guide decisions toward improvement of intended outcomes.
Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)	A practice that is based on rigorous research that has demonstrated effectiveness in achieving the outcomes it is designed to achieve. EBP is a process that brings together the best available research, professional expertise, and input from youth and families to identify and deliver services that have been demonstrated to achieve positive outcomes for youth, families and communities *(source: SAMHSA).*
Mental Health Promotion	Activities to foster positive social, emotional, and behavioral skills and well-being of all students regardless of whether or not they are at risk for mental health problems *(source: National Center for School Mental Health).*

Mental Health Screening	Mental health screening is defined as the use of a systematic tool or process to identify the **strengths and needs** of students. Screening is conducted for all students, not just students identified as being at risk for or already displaying mental health concerns. This might involve screening an entire population, such as a school's student body, or a smaller subset of a population, such as a specific grade level *(source: National Center for School Mental Health)*.
Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)	A framework that includes evidence-based practices implemented across a system to meet the needs of all students but matched to student needs and organized along a continuum of supports across three tiers. • Tier 1 is focused on promoting mental health and preventing occurrences of problems. • Tier 2 is focused on preventing risk factors or early-onset problems from progressing. • Tier 3 is focused on individual student interventions that address more serious concerns and prevent the worsening of symptoms that can impact daily functioning *(source: National Center for School Mental Health)*.
Needs Assessment	A needs assessment is defined as a collaborative process used by a system such as a school, district or agency to identify strengths and gaps, clarify priorities, inform quality improvement, and advance action planning. A needs assessment should be a collaborative process that integrates available data and the perspectives of a wide range of individuals who are part of or impacted by the system *(source: National Center for School Mental Health)*.
Prepared Educators and Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP)	Specialized instructional support teams include school counselors, social workers, school psychologists, school nurses and occupational therapists.
Progress Monitoring	Progress monitoring is an evidence-based practice for improving student outcomes in early intervention and treatment services *(source: National Center for School Mental Health)*.
Resource Mapping	Resource mapping is defined as an active process to identify, visually represent and share information about internal and external supports and services to inform effective utilization of assets. In school mental health, resources in schools and the surrounding community can be mapped across a multitiered system of support to better address the needs of the whole child *(source: National Center for School Mental Health)*.

Risk and protective factors	Risk factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community or cultural level that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes. Protective factors are characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes or that reduce a risk factor's impact. Protective factors may be seen as positive countering events *(source: SAMHSA)*.
School Culture (Climate)	The quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures *(source: National School Climate Center)*.
School Mental Health Team	A team of school and community stakeholders at a school or district level that meets regularly, uses data-based decision-making, and relies on action planning to support student mental health *(source: National Center for School Mental Health)*.
Social and emotional skills	The process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions *(source: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL])*.