Systematic, explicit, intentional: Scaling up effective practices in school mental health

20th Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health

New Orleans, 2015

Session Outline

1. Context

2. Aspirational Vision

3. Enablers and Barriers to uptake

4. Focus on Organizational Conditions and Capacity

5. Closing Thoughts

Our Setting and Scope

ONTARIO, CANADA

- 72 school districts
  - 31 English Public
  - 29 English Catholic
  - 4 French Public
  - 8 French Catholic
- 5000 schools
- Approximately 2 million students
- Approximately 117,000 teachers
- Approximately 7400 principals/VPs

Historical Context

Range of Support for SMH in Ontario School Districts
- Some districts had full departments for psychology or social work
- Others had no in-house school mental health staff
- Others have paraprofessionals providing service

Variable participation in the wider system of care
- Some boards were actively engaged in community partnership in support of child and youth mental health
- Others very insular

SMH initiatives not integrated within wider Education priorities

Ontario's Opportunity

Open Minds, Healthy Minds
Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy

Cross-Ministerial, 10 Year Commitment
Years 1-3, Focus on Children and Youth

Provincial Leadership in School Mental Health
- Systematic, collaborative, intentional, explicit, nuanced, creative, evidence-based (SCIENCE!)

Implementation Coaching
- Province, Region, Board

Resource Development
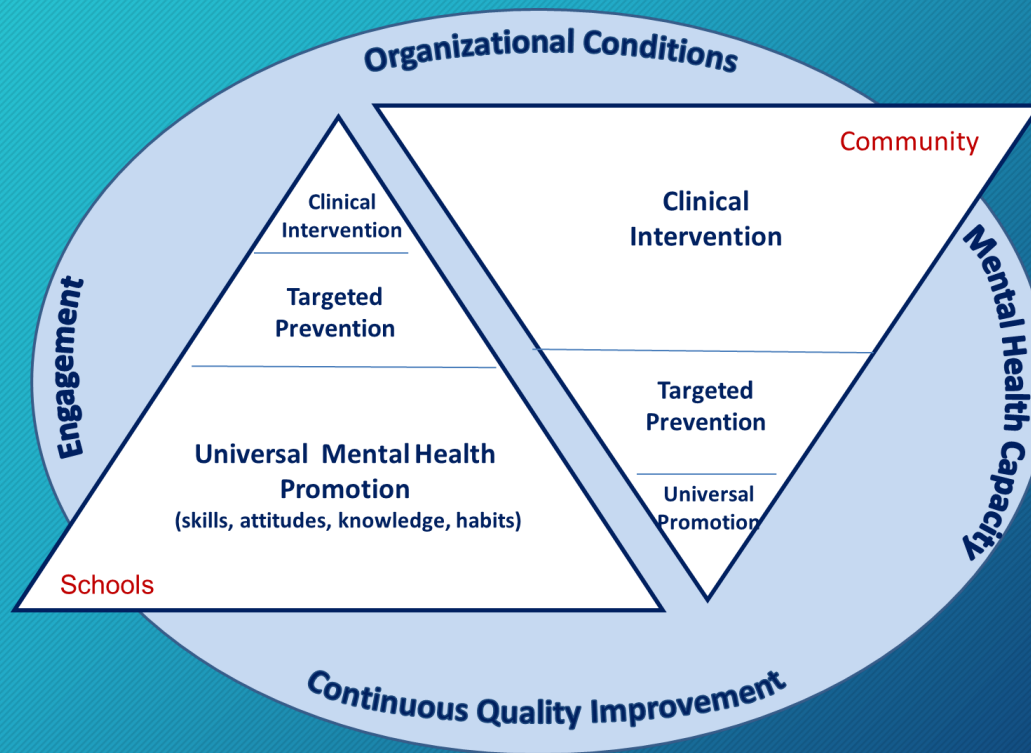- Awareness, Literacy, Expertise

A Community of Practice
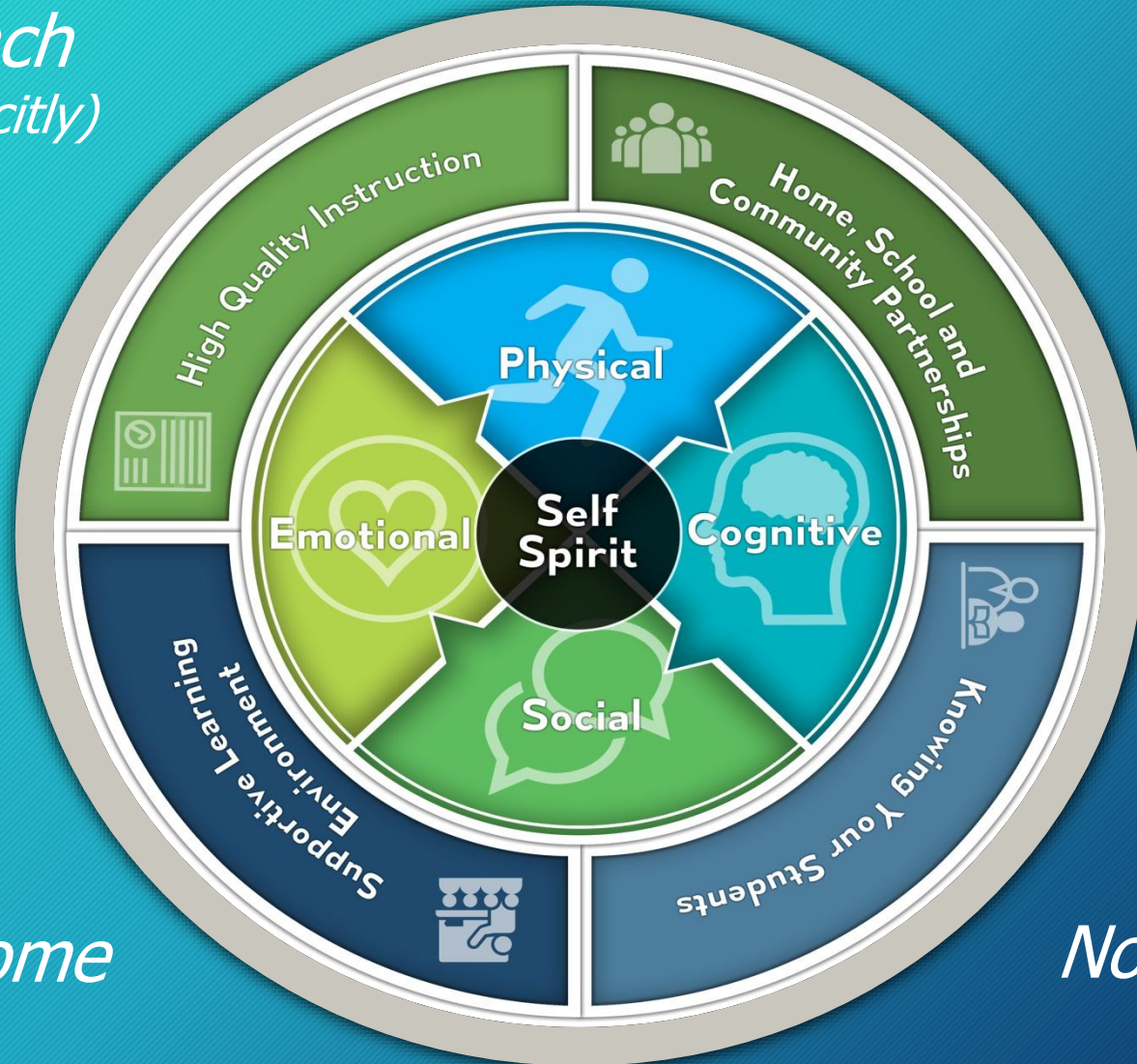- Meetings, on-line forums

Our Aspiration

- Services across the tiers of intervention, coordinated with community partners to create a system of care

Universal Mental Well-Being Promotion
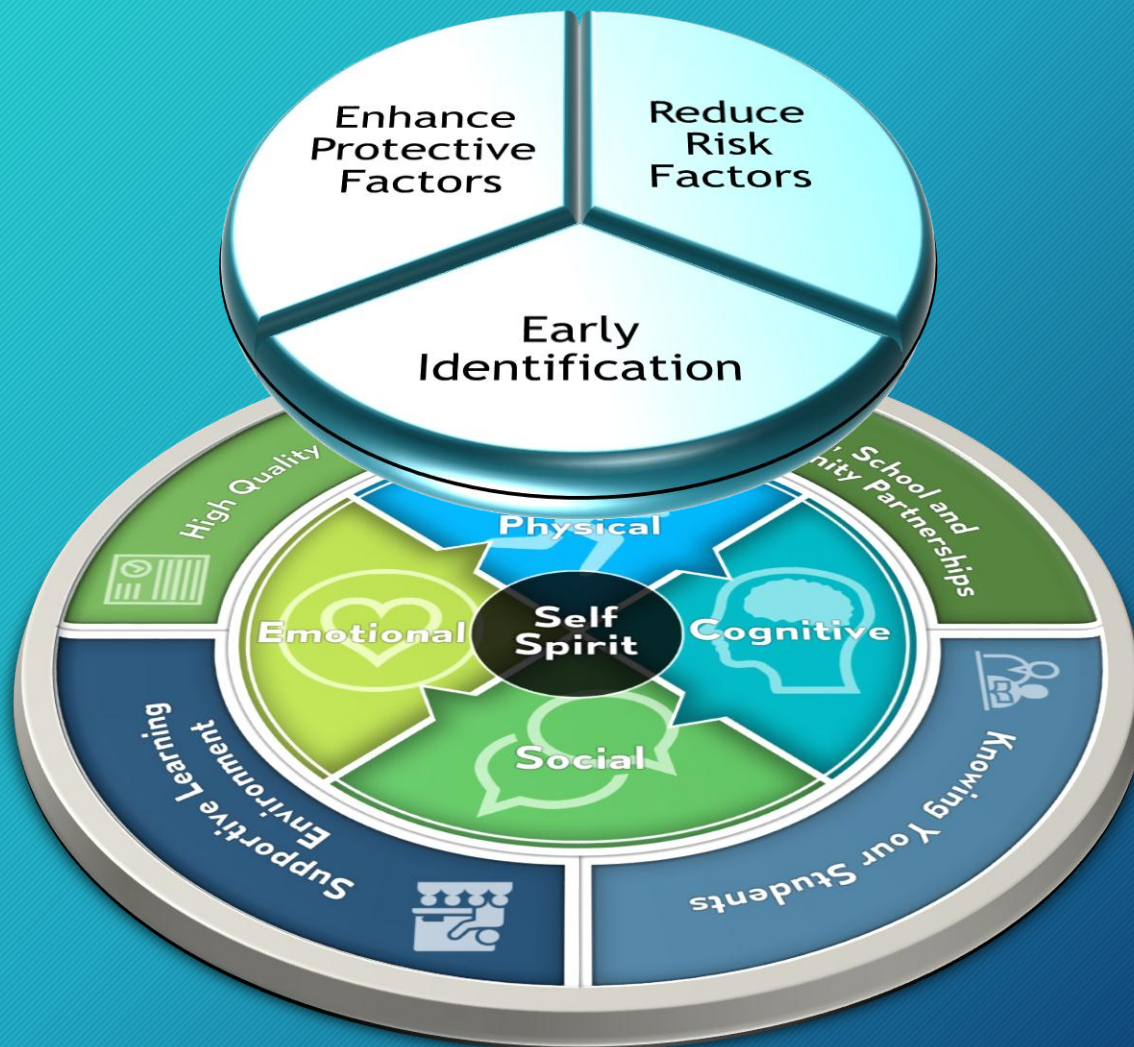
Tier 1
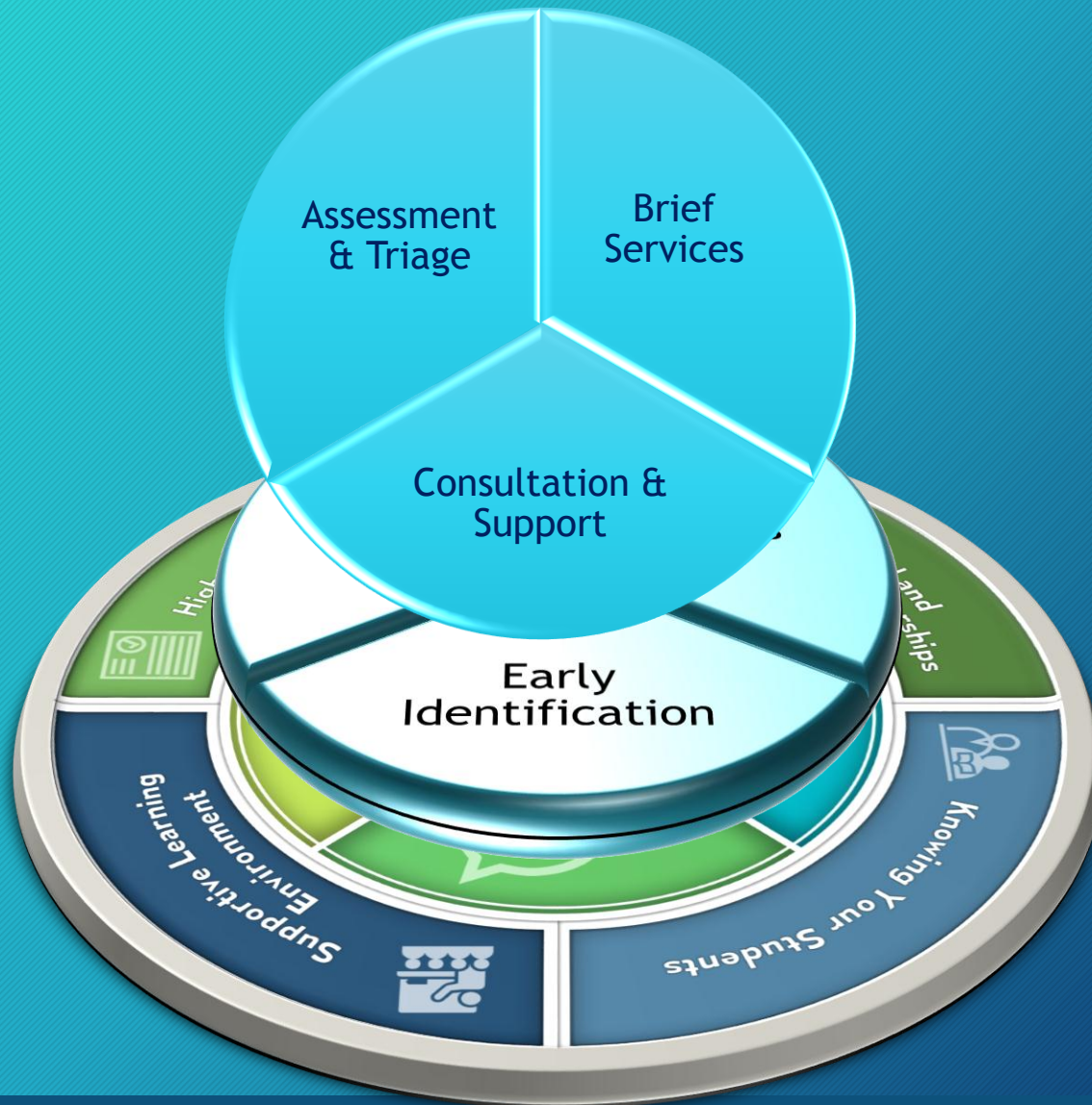
Teach
(Explicitly)

Partner

Welcome

Notice

High Quality Instruction

Home, School and Community Partnerships

Supportive Learning Environment

Knowing Your Students

Physical

Cognitive

Social

Emotional

Self Spirit

Targeted Prevention

Tier 2

Enhance Protective Factors

Reduce Risk Factors

Early Identification

Intervention for Vulnerable Students

Tier 3

Assessment & Triage

Brief Services

Consultation & Support

Early Identification

High...

...and ...ships

Supportive Learning Environment

Knowing Your Students
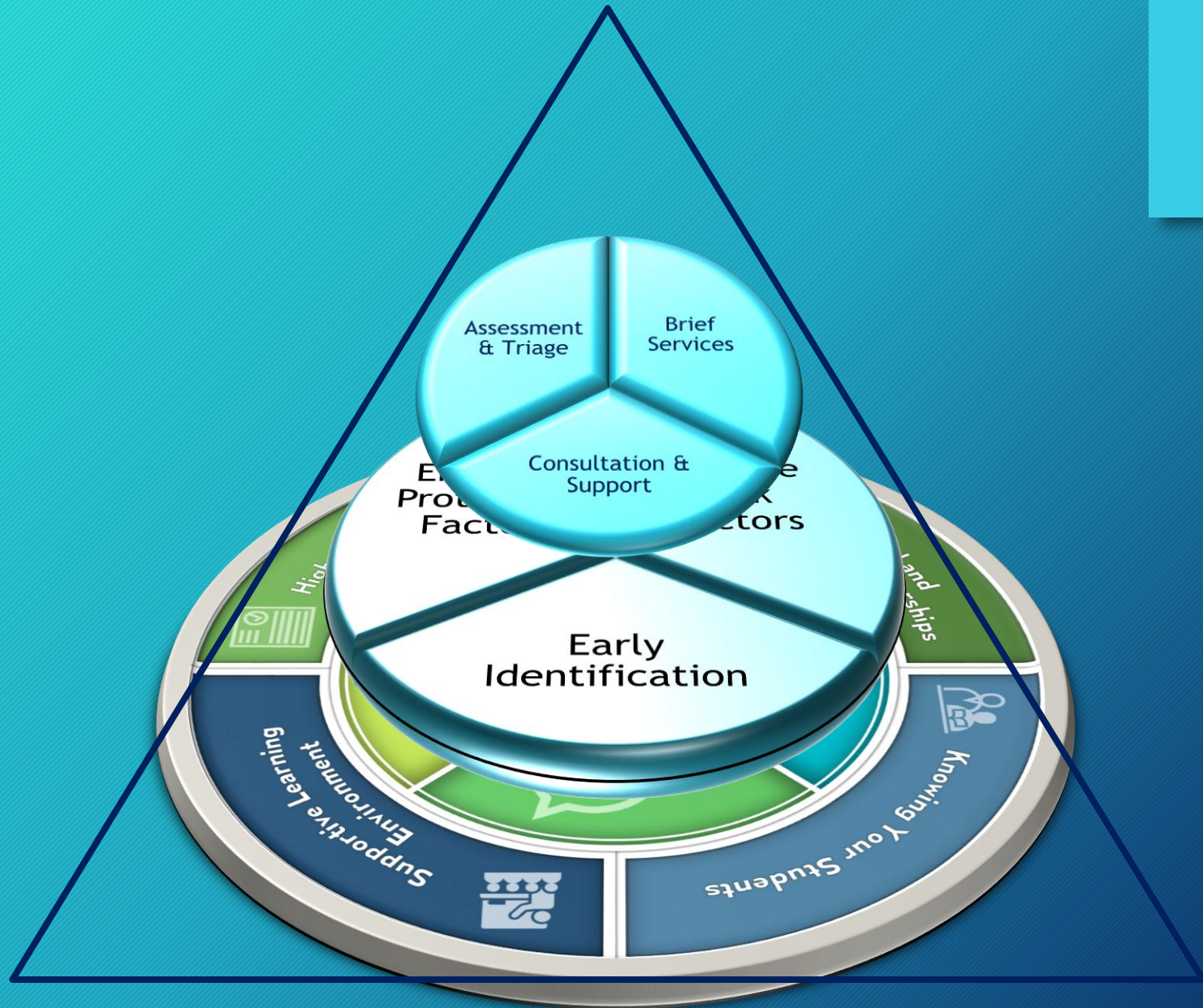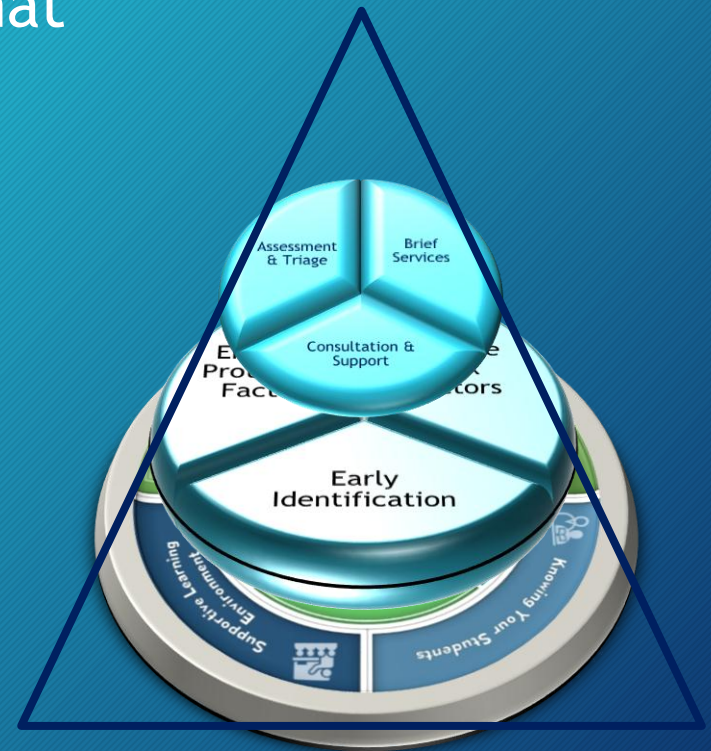
IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL!

- Why does it never really look that way in real life?!

Mind the Gap in SMH

World of Evidence

- **What we KNOW**
- Conditions, Capacity, and Evidence-Based Programming across the Tiers of Intervention, within a comprehensive and coordinated system of care

MIND THE GAP

World of Practice

- **What we DO (usually)**
- Fragmented and uneven uptake of programs that are inconsistently aligned with evidence and without attention to elements of sustainability, like conditions and capacity building

Enablers and Barriers to Uptake

What are some enablers for uptake of high-quality evidence-based mental health promotion and prevention programming in schools?

What are some barriers to uptake?

Common Challenges

World of Evidence

- **What we KNOW**
- Conditions, Capacity, and Evidence-Based Programming across the Tiers of Intervention, within a comprehensive and coordinated system of care

Systemic challenges

Knowledge challenges

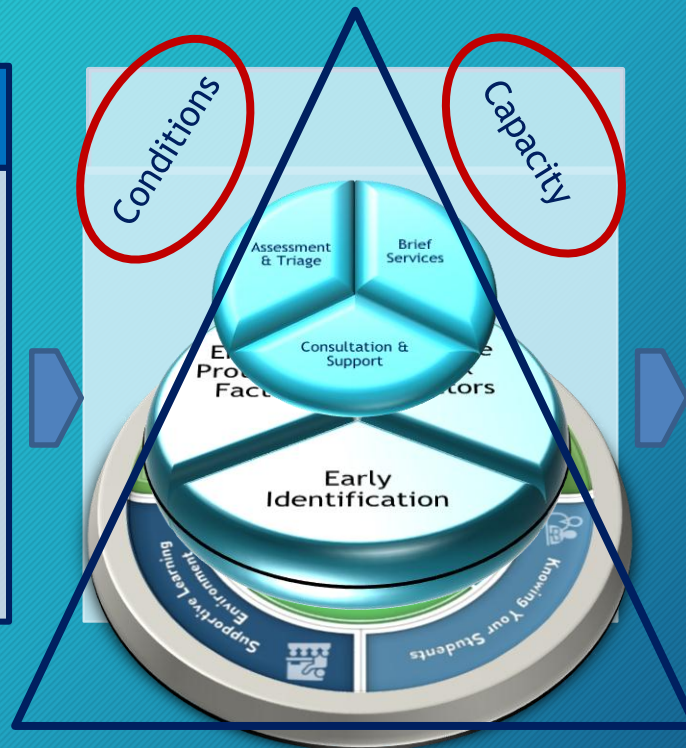**Implementation challenges**

World of Practice

- **What we DO (usually)**
- Fragmented and uneven uptake of programs that are inconsistently aligned with evidence and without attention to elements of sustainability, like conditions and capacity building

World of Evidence

- **What we KNOW**
- Conditions, Capacity, and Evidence-Based Programming across the Tiers of Intervention, within a comprehensive and coordinated system of care

World of Practice

- **What we DO (hopefully)**
- Systematic and coordinated uptake of evidence-based approaches in school mental health, with attention to conditions and capacity-building elements that enhance sustainability over time

72 school districts, 5000 schools, 117,000 teachers, 2 million students

Optimizing "The Space Between"

World of Evidence

- **What we KNOW**
- Conditions, Capacity, and Evidence-Based Programming across the Tiers of Intervention, within a comprehensive and coordinated system of care

Leadership and Implementation Support

CONDITIONS, CAPACITY, COORDINATED PROGRAMMING

SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH-ASSIST
ÉQUIPE D'APPUI POUR LA SANTÉ MENTALE DANS LES ÉCOLES

World of Practice

- **What we DO (hopefully)**
- Systematic and coordinated uptake of evidence-based approaches in school mental health, with attention to conditions and capacity-building elements that enhance sustainability over time

Organizational Conditions

1. Commitment	6. Standard Processes
2. Mental Health Leadership Team	7. Systematic Professional Learning
3. Clear & Focused Vision	8. Mental Health Strategy & Action Plan
4. Communication & Shared Language	9. Broad Collaboration
5. Assessment of Need & Capacity	10. Ongoing Quality Monitoring

Creating the Top 10 List

Influences

- Implementation Science (e.g., Fixsen et al.)

- Getting to Outcomes (e.g., Wandersman et al.)

- School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (e.g., Sugai et al.)

- Expanded School Mental Health (e.g., Weist et al.)

- REACh Framework (e.g., Kratochwill et al.)

- Knowledge Translation and Exchange (e.g., Barwick et al.)

Consultation with SMH Leaders from US and Canada

Co-Creation with Council for Ontario Directors of Education, Chief Psychologists Association, Chief SW Association, Ministry Leadership Branch
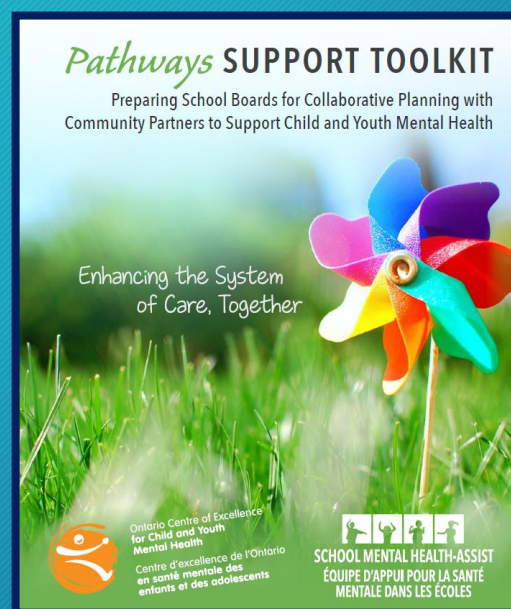
Capacity Building

MH Awareness	MH Literacy	MH Expertise
Strategies for providing basic mental health information, tailored for different school board audiences	*Strategies for ensuring deeper working knowledge for those who work directly with students*	*Strategies for ensuring that SMH professionals possess the skills and knowledge to effectively provide evidence-based SMH promotion, prevention, and intervention*
ALL	**SOME**	**FEW**

The right information, to the right people, in the right way, at the right time

Resources for District Leadership

- Guidance documents
- Decision Support Tools
- Implementation Briefs
- Webinars
- Leadership Modules
- Reporting Templates
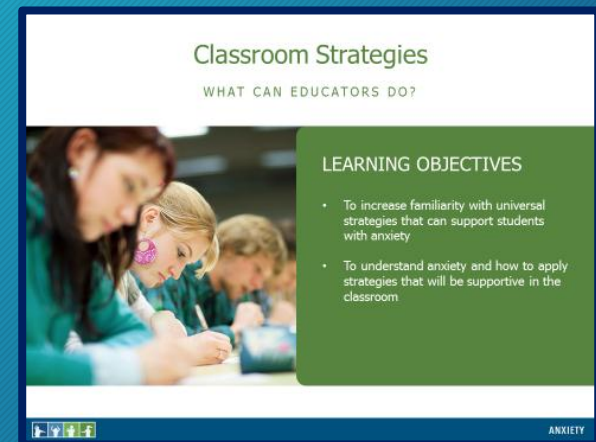
Resources for School Leadership

- Guidance documents

- Decision Support Tools

- Conferences and Workshops
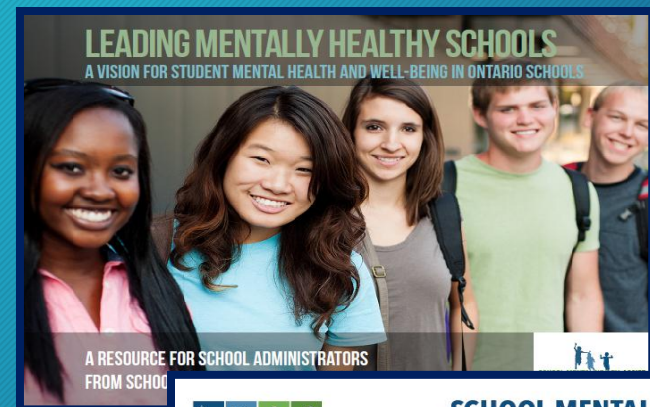
Resources for Educator Mental Health Literacy

- Differentiated
- Co-Created
- Iterative
- Favour relational learning
- On-line reinforcement
- Embedded and practical

Implementation Coaching

Helping School Districts with Conditions and Capacity in Real Life

Implementation Coaching

GOALS

- *Support the development and effective implementation of MH strategy systemically and across all schools across Ontario*

- *Bridging complex work in complex systems: creating the link between Vision and Action*

- *Modeling coaching framework that Districts can emulate on the ground*

- *Support all districts to implement the 3 priority areas (Organizational Conditions; Capacity building; Coordinated programming)*
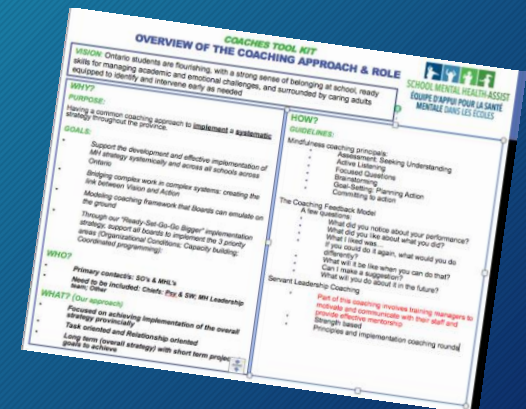
Implementation Coaching Approach

WHAT…

- *Focused on achieving Implementation of the overall strategy provincially*

- *Task oriented and Relationship oriented*

- *Long term (overall strategy) with short term projects/goals to achieve*

HOW… (guidelines)

1. Mindfulness coaching principals:

2. The Coaching Feedback Model

3. Servant Leadership Coaching

Closing Thoughts

- Introduce programming on fertile ground!
- Keep the big picture, and the aspirational vision in mind
- Create conditions so high quality programming will 'stick'
- Consider the needs and preferences of your knowledge audiences so you can build capacity effectively

Foundational readiness work is largely intuitive, and you are probably doing a lot of this already. We are being explicit, systematic, and intentional about implementation to promote effective scale up and sustainability of high quality evidence-based programming.

It is like implementation readiness fidelity!

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