School Mental Health Quality Guide

Mental Health Promotion Services & Supports (Tier 1)

SH▲PE School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation System

UNIVERSITY *of* MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

NCSMH
NATIONAL CENTER FOR
SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH

School Mental Health Quality Guide: Mental Health Promotion Services and Supports (Tier 1) is part of a collection of resources developed by the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. The Quality Guides provide information to help school mental health systems advance the quality of their services and supports. This guide contains background information on mental health promotion services, best practices, possible action steps, examples from the field, and resources.

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The mission of the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) is to strengthen policies and programs in school mental health to improve learning and promote success for America's youth.

What is Mental Health Promotion for All (Tier 1)?

Mental health promotion (Tier 1) services and supports are mental health-related activities that are designed to meet the needs of all students regardless of their level of risk for mental health problems.

Tier 1 activities promote positive social, emotional, and behavioral skills and well-being. These activities also include efforts to support staff well-being, improve school climate, and promote positive behavior. These activities can be implemented schoolwide, at the grade level, and/or at the classroom level, and can be provided by both school-employed and community-employed school-based professionals.

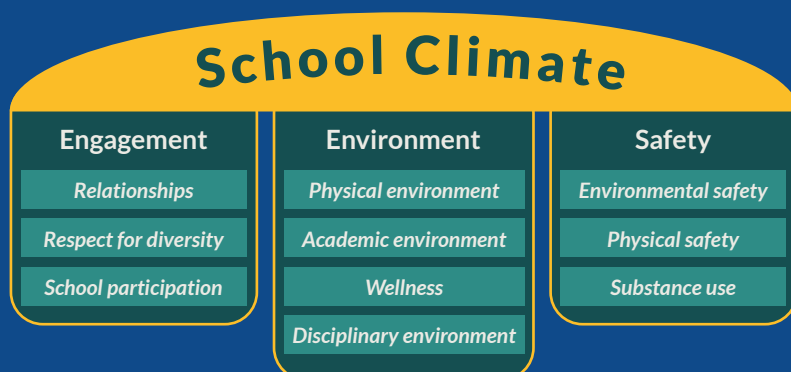## The Value of Mental Health Promotion in Schools

- Promotes well-being and educational success for all students
- Serves as foundation for Tiers 2 & 3 mental health services and supports
- Produces cost savings by investing in mental health promotion and early intervention *(versus treatment)*
- Raises awareness and decreases stigma about mental health and illness
- Promotes school staff well-being
- Contributes to overall health; students must be healthy enough to learn, and teachers healthy enough to teach

Common Examples of Tier 1 Services & Supports

- Mental health literacy
- Social emotional learning
- Positive discipline practices
- Positive behaviors and relationships
- Teacher and school staff well-being
- Activities that support a positive and inclusive school climate

What is School Climate?

According to the **Safe and Supportive Schools Model**, developed by a national panel of researchers and other experts, positive school climate involves the following:

School Climate

Engagement	Environment	Safety
Relationships	*Physical environment*	*Environmental safety*
Respect for diversity	*Academic environment*	*Physical safety*
School participation	*Wellness*	*Substance use*
	Disciplinary environment	

- **Engagement:** Strong relationships between students, teachers, families, and schools and strong connections between schools and the broader community.
- **Environment:** Appropriate facilities, well-managed classrooms, available school-based health supports, and a clear, fair disciplinary policy.
- **Safety:** Schools and school-related activities where students are safe from violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use.

Assess school climate

Best Practices

- **Develop a clear plan for how data will be collected, stored, analyzed, and shared.**
- **Assess multiple dimensions of school climate including:**
  - Student engagement
  - Racial/cultural climate
  - Inclusiveness
  - Student-staff/student-student/staff-staff/family-staff/community-staff relationships
- **Disaggregate school climate data based on demographics** *(e.g., age, sex, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability status, language, socioeconomic status)* **to identify differences by demographic group.**
- **Obtain input from representative individuals across a variety of groups including:**
  - Students
  - Caregivers
  - Administrators
  - Instructional staff
  - Non-instructional staff
  - Community stakeholders *(including school mental health and health providers)*
- **Assess school climate using more than one modality for input** *(e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, school administrative data).*
- **Allow anonymous input on surveys and other data collection.**
- **Align the data collected with school vision of school climate and improvement strategies.**
- **Select evidence-informed, culturally relevant tools.**

Resource: School Climate Assessment Tool

Several states and districts have independently developed their own school climate assessments. At the federal level, the *U.S. Department of Education (ED)* developed the **ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)**. The assessment is free and includes a web-based administration platform with school climate surveys for middle and high school students, families/caregivers, and instructional and non-instructional staff. English and Spanish versions of the surveys are available for students and caregivers. The platform processes school climate data and provides free, customized reports in real-time. The data can be stored in a district's data system, and the Department of Education will not have access to the data.

Example from the Field

A large, urban school district implemented an annual district-wide school climate survey that collected information from teachers, students, and parents. A summary of results was provided to principals within 2 months. To interpret the information and generate data-informed school climate improvement plans, **the district hosted listening sessions over the summer at each school.** Students, teachers, and families provided feedback and suggested school climate improvements for the upcoming school year. **An informational flyer was posted in schools, sent home to parents, and placed in staff mailboxes** to thank respondents for participating, share survey findings, and announce the listening session date/time.

Improve school climate

Best Practices

- **Designate or form a core school climate planning team that include a broad representation of:**
  - Educators
  - Administrators
  - Mental health and health staff
  - Youth
  - Family members
  - Community partners

- **Align and integrate school climate efforts with other school improvement efforts, including academic improvement efforts.**

- **Ensure that data from school climate measures are used to select priority areas of focus and activities to promote school climate improvement.**

- **Share and discuss results from school climate assessment with diverse stakeholders** (*e.g., students, families, educators, community partners, administrators, mental health and health professionals*) **in a manner that is engaging, easy to understand, and invites feedback.**

- **Embed school climate improvement into policies, practices, and systems in the school with transparency.**

- **Use data to assess the impact of school climate improvement activities.**

- **Use disaggregated data to identify and address inequities and disparities in school climate for student groups across relevant demographics** (*e.g., age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, sex, socioeconomic status*)**.**

- **Involve groups who reported worse school climate in school climate improvement planning and implementation.**

- **Implement school climate initiatives with an explicit focus on equity and reducing disparities.**

Resource

To help schools and districts improve school climate, *the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments* developed the **School Climate Improvement Resource Package (SCIRP).** The SCIRP includes a variety of resources to support various groups in school climate improvement efforts.

Tip

Before implementing school climate interventions, districts and schools should determine what initiatives, programs, or interventions are most likely to improve the specific type of school climate needs identified through a school climate assessment.

Frequently implemented school climate interventions include:

- Character Education
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- Positive Youth Development
- Restorative Practices
- School Mental Health Services
- School Development Program
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Trauma-Informed Approaches

QUALITY INDICATOR 3

Assess teacher and staff well-being

Best Practices

- Select evidence-informed, culturally relevant assessment tools and processes.
- Establish a clear process and system for collecting, analyzing, and storing data.
- Facilitate well-being assessment with teachers and all school staff using multiple methods of data collection *(e.g., paper/pencil and electronic assessments, affinity groups, focus groups)*.
- Assess staff well-being regularly *(at least annually)*.
- Assess for strengths and needs for both individual and collective well-being.
- Ensure privacy of information and anonymity when assessing staff well-being using surveys, interviews, focus groups, or other means.
- Assess a range of well-being components, such as:
  - Physical
  - Occupational
  - Emotional
  - Racial
  - Cultural
  - Environmental
  - Intellectual
  - Social
  - Mental
  - Spiritual
- Assess for secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, and burnout.
- Check for any disparities in self-reported well-being among subgroups of educators *(e.g., BIPOC teachers, special education teachers, first year teachers)*.

Why focus on school staff well-being?

- Teachers are stressed.
- Teachers leave the profession in high numbers.
  - 10% leave after 1 year
  - In urban districts, up to 70% leave within 1 year
  - 17% leave within 5 years
- Teacher stress, burnout, and turnover negatively impact student learning and well-being.

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How does staff well-being fit into mental health promotion for all?

Staff well-being is an important area of focus for mental health promotion for several reasons. First, many teachers experience high levels of stress and burnout. Large class size, often including many students with significant social, emotional, and behavioral needs, may contribute to this stress. In addition, many teachers report limited resources, poor physical space, high workload, low pay, mounting paperwork, and a high level of responsibility for student success. Teachers who are stressed demonstrate more negative interactions with students, including greater sarcasm and aggression, and responding negatively to mistakes. Fortunately, there are several best practices and strategies to assess and promote teacher and staff well-being.

Resources: Staff Well-Being Assessment Tools

- **The Organizational Well-Being Inventory for Schools (OWBI-S)** on the *School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation (SHAPE) System* offers a quality assessment and improvement process for schools to create and improve organizational conditions that promote school staff well-being.

- **Resilience at Work Scale** is a 20-item scale that measures individual workplace resilience based on seven components that interrelate and contribute to overall resilience.

- **Professional Quality of Life (PROQOL)** is a free measure that includes 30 items to assess compassion satisfaction and fatigue.

- **Health Related Quality of Life**, developed by *The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*, has 4 questions in the Healthy Days Core Module and 10 additional questions about activity limitations and healthy days symptoms.

- **Teacher Subjective Well-Being Questionnaire** includes 8 items and two subscales: school connectedness and teaching efficacy.

Improve teacher and staff well-being

Best Practices

- **Align staff well-being improvement efforts with needs identified by staff well-being assessments.**
- **Address both organizational and individual factors that contribute to stress and well-being, including:**
  - Compassion fatigue
  - Secondary traumatic stress
  - Racism and other marginalizing systems
  - Staff control and input
  - Supervision and support
  - Safe, supportive social and physical environment
- **Offer an array of well-being education resources and activities related to:**
  - Self-care, resilience
  - Onsite mental health screening
  - Stress management and mindfulness
  - Health promotion (*e.g., sleep hygiene, nutrition*)
  - Staff burnout
  - Trauma, including racial trauma
  - Secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue
  - Employee assistance programs/community mental health services
- **Make well-being resources and activities optional and readily available at no-cost and accessible both during and outside of school hours.**

Resource

Classroom WISE (Well-being Information and Strategies for Educators) is a free 3-part training package for K-12 educators and school personnel on mental health literacy. The package includes six modules:

1. **Creating Safe and Supportive Classrooms**
2. **Teaching Mental Health Literacy and Reducing Stigma**
3. **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**
4. **Understanding and Supporting Students Experiencing Adversity and Distress**
5. **The Impact of Trauma and Adversity on Learning and Behavior**
6. **Classroom Strategies to Support Students Experiencing Distress**

Example School Staff Well-Being Programs

TeacherWISE

A research-informed program that helps teachers and school staff manage five areas of their well-being: physical health, occupational health, intellectual health, social health, and emotional health.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Demonstrated reductions in psychological symptoms and burnout, improvements in classroom organization, and increases in self-compassion, self-regulation, mindfulness, and sleep quality.
(Flook et al., 2013; Frank et al., 2015)

Community Approach to Learning Mindfully (CALM)

Demonstrated improvements in mindfulness, emotional functioning, positive affect, distress tolerance, blood pressure, cortisol, efficacy in classroom management.
(Harris, et al., 2016)

Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE)

Demonstrated improvements in well-being, efficacy, mindfulness, and burnout.
(Jennings et al., 2013)

Set schoolwide expectations about positive behaviors

👍 Best Practices

- **Settings: The physical layout of the school is designed to support optimal functioning and safety of all staff and students based on needs and ability** *(including those with disabilities, emotional and behavioral health difficulties, learning disorders).*

- **Routines: Predictable schoolwide routines are developed and taught.**
  - Collaborate with students and families representative of diverse cultural groups and identities to develop rules that are relevant and appropriate for diverse students and that do not inadvertently reinforce systems of oppression.

- **Expectations: 3-5 positively stated schoolwide and clearly defined expectations are posted around school in the primary languages of students.**
  - Expectations apply to both students and staff.
  - Rules are linked to expectations.
  - Rules are clearly posted, defined, and explicitly taught.
  - Rules are enforced consistently across staff and equitably toward students.

- **Train staff to teach students expectations/rules and how rewards are developed, scheduled, and delivered.**

- **Teach students how expectations/rules/rewards are developed, scheduled, and delivered, using multiple modes of communication** *(e.g., visual aids and cues, written/ verbal aides using clear and plain language and the primary languages of students in school community).*

- **Involve families and community members to develop and implement expectations about positive behaviors.**

📄 Resource

Supporting and Responding to Students' Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs: Evidence-Based Practices for Educators from *the National Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Center* includes strategies related to building positive relationships, setting expectations, and developing positive behaviors.

Implement schoolwide positive reinforcement systems that promote positive behaviors

Best Practices

- **Rewards:**
  - A system of rewards is implemented consistently across campus.
  - A variety of methods are used to reward students.
- **Supervision: School staff provide reminders and actively scan, move, and interact with students.**
- **Opportunity: School staff provide high rates, varied and equitable opportunities for all students to respond.**
- **Acknowledgement: School staff use specific praise and other strategies to let students know when they meet expectations.**
- **Prompts and Pre-corrections: School staff provide consistent reminders that clearly describe the expectation.**
- **Error Corrections: School staff use brief, contingent, and specific statements when misbehavior occurs and consider voice tone, posture, and physical distance when responding, including students' potential trauma triggers.**
- **Discipline:**
  - Discipline process described in narrative format or depicted graphically.
  - Discipline process includes documentation procedures.
  - Problem behaviors are clearly defined.
  - Suggested, graduated array of appropriate responses to problem behaviors are clearly defined.
- **Staff receive training and support to understand how individual and system biases impact how perceptions of and responses to student behaviors and how to counteract those biases.**
- **School staff use trauma-informed, culturally responsive strategies that:**
  - Preempt escalation.
  - Minimize inadvertent reward of a problem behavior.
  - Create a learning opportunity for emphasizing desired behavior.
  - Support and strengthen relationships.
  - Maintain optimal instructional time.

Resource

Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports describes efforts to interconnect Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and School Mental Health (SMH) systems to improve educational outcomes for all children and youth, especially those with or at risk of developing mental health challenges.

Use classroom and school-based strategies to proactively build healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing*

* These classroom and school-based strategies are often referred to as restorative practices.

Best Practices

- Use informal and formal processes that are trauma-informed, healing-centered, culturally responsive, anti-racist, and equitable, and that *precede* wrongdoing, to proactively build relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict and wrongdoing.

- Consider whether traumatic exposure plays a role in student behavior.

- Use circles, groups, and other trauma-informed, healing-centered, culturally responsive processes to provide opportunities for students to share their feelings, build relationships and solve problems, and when there is wrongdoing, to play an active role in addressing the wrong and making things right.

- Teach and model healing and restorative problem solving and conflict resolution skills in the classroom.

What are **restorative practices**?

Restorative practices...

- Prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing by proactively building healthy relationships and a sense of community.
- Improve relationships between students, students and educators, and even between educators, whose behavior often serves as a model for students.
- Promote inclusiveness, relationship building, and problem solving.
- Promote a sense of safety and mutual respect on campuses by strengthening relationships, reducing bullying and violence, and repairing harm whenever possible.
- Build social capital among school communities by engaging all students and school staff in the delivery and receipt of practices that facilitate shared decision making and communication.

Restorative practice **strategies** include:

A **restorative circle** is a practice that can be used proactively to develop relationships and build community, or reactively to respond to a wrongdoing or conflict. Circles can be used to teach social skills such as listening, respect, and problem solving. They also provide a safe atmosphere for educators and students to speak, offer their own perspectives, listen to one another, and be heard. Circles can also be used to celebrate student accomplishments, begin and end the day, and discuss difficult issues.

Community service allows individuals to restore a harm to the school community by providing a meaningful service that contributes to their individual improvement.

Community conferencing is a practice that provides effective ways for students and educators to prevent and respond to school conflicts. Community conferencing involves the participation of all stakeholders affected by the behavior and allows everyone to contribute to the conflict resolution process.

Peer juries allow students who have broken a school rule and trained student jurors to discuss why the rule was broken, who was affected, and how the referred student can repair the harm caused.

A **conflict resolution program** is a skill-based practice that provides students with instruction in problem solving and self-control skills. These programs teach students how to manage potential conflict, defuse situations, assuage hurt feelings, and reduce inclination to retaliate after a conflict.

Peer mediation trains students to help other students resolve differences.

Informal practices are small ways educators and other school personnel can influence a positive environment. These practices include using affective statements, which communicate people's feelings (*e.g., I feel happy when you complete your homework because it shows me how well you understand the topic*), and affective questions, which cause people to reflect on how their behavior has affected others (*e.g., what were you telling yourself at the time?*); other examples include proactive engagement with students and families, mentor relationships, and lunch time table talks.

Outcomes:

Improvements in...
Parent & community engagement
Student connectedness
Academic achievement
School climate

Decreases in...
Discipline disparities
Suspensions
Fighting
Bullying

Resources

- **Restorative Practices: Approaches at the Intervention of School Discipline and School Mental Health**, an issue brief developed by *Now is the Time Technical Assistance Center*, describes the rise in use of restorative practices in schools, introduces different types, and provides a universal start-up guide for implementation.

- **Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools: A Guide for Educators** provides an introduction to restorative practices and aims to support and enhance the work of teachers already implementing these practices in their classrooms. The toolkit includes digestible models, frameworks, and action steps for schoolwide implementation, accompanied by guiding questions to support reflection for practitioners looking to make restorative methods part of the fabric of daily life in schools.

Use discipline policies and practices aimed at reducing exclusionary responses (*e.g., suspensions, expulsions*)

Best Practices

- Collaborate with students and families representative of diverse cultural groups and identities to define problem behaviors and appropriate strategies to address them.
- Implement discipline policies and procedures that are trauma informed and healing centered.
- Implement discipline policies and procedures that are culturally responsive, anti-racist, and promote equity.
- Describe discipline process in narrative format or depict graphically.
- Include documentation procedures in discipline protocol.
- Train and support school staff in evidence-informed, culturally-responsive crisis de-escalation strategies and techniques.
- Train and support staff in equitable implementation of disciplinary practices in ways that reduce racial/ethnic disproportionality in discipline responses.
- Develop a multi-tiered system of culturally-responsive, anti-racist emotional and behavioral health services and supports for students at risk for disruptive behavior related to mental health concerns or trauma exposure.
- Use restorative practices that encourage student disciplinary practices that focus on repairing the harm caused by an incident and allowing the people most affected by the incident to participate in its resolution.
- Use a process of graduated responses that are clearly defined, do not re-traumatize youth, limit involvement of law enforcement (*e.g., School Resource Officers, community police*), and eliminate exclusionary disciplinary practices when possible.
- Examine number of suspensions/expulsions by demographic group to better understand any differences in policies or practices contributing to disproportionality and disparity.

Increase mental health literacy for all students and staff

Best Practices

- Develop a clear plan for assessing current mental health literacy of students and school staff, as baseline data and to inform further improvement goals.

- Work with students, caregivers, and school staff of various cultural identities and groups to determine the most meaningful, feasible ways to promote mental health literacy.

- Deliver and evaluate culturally responsive professional learning opportunities, from pre-K-12, to:
  1. Understand how to optimize and maintain good mental health for themselves and others.
  2. Understand stress and trauma and mental health conditions and their treatment.
  3. Reduce stigma about mental health needs and supports and understand the ways that culture and oppression influence mental health, stigma, and help-seeking behaviors.
  4. Increase skills to link students to mental health prevention or intervention supports when needed.

- Ensure mental health literacy activities and skills taught are culturally relevant and build on cultural strengths and assets of diverse cultural groups and identities.

- Ensure mental health literacy activities are developed with and communicated by students, caregivers, and members of the school community who represent diverse cultural groups and identities.

- Ensure mental health literacy activities are ongoing throughout the school year (i.e., activities go beyond a one-time training or educational materials posted in the building).

- Reassess mental health literacy on a routine basis to monitor progress and inform team planning for ongoing activities.

What is mental health literacy?

Mental health literacy refers to knowledge and beliefs about mental health which promote recognition, management, and prevention.

Mental health literacy encompasses...

- Understanding how to foster and maintain positive mental health.

- Understanding mental health disorders and their treatments.

- Enhancing help-seeking efficacy.

- Decreasing stigma.

Action Steps

1. Invite your local *National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)* to give a presentation to students and teachers. <u>NAMI's Ending the Silence presentation</u> covers the warning signs of mental health conditions and what steps to take if a loved one is showing symptoms of a mental illness. These talks are tailored for different audiences including, students, school staff, and families.

2. Participate in a mental health awareness campaign (*e.g., Children's Mental Health Awareness*).

3. Collaborate with organizations to help implement specific mental health literacy training and support in your school or district, such as <u>*Mental Health First Aid*</u> or <u>*Youth Mental Health First Aid*</u>, which provide training on how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

4. Use teacher-delivered mental health curricula, such as <u>Mental Health Essentials for Educators</u>, an adaptation of the Mental Health & High School Curriculum Guide (*Kutcher et al., 2012*). This program consists of educator and student modules focused on understanding mental health, reducing stigma, and seeking help.

Example from the Field

In Maryland, <u>Children's Mental Health Matters (CMHM)</u> is a statewide education campaign to raise awareness of children's mental health needs. It is coordinated and supported by *the Mental Health Association of Maryland, the Maryland Coalition of Families, and Maryland Department of Health – Behavioral Health Administration.*

Resources: Mental Health Literacy Tools

- <u>**Mental Health Essentials for Educators (Parts 1 and 2)**</u> delivers content in obtaining and maintaining positive mental health, understanding mental disorders and their treatments, decreasing stigma related to mental disorders, and enhancing help-seeking efficacy.

- <u>**Youth Mental Health First Aid**</u> provides training in how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

Increase social and emotional learning (SEL) skills for all students

Best Practices

- Develop a clear plan for assessing current SEL skills among staff and students, as baseline data and to inform further improvement goals.

- Incorporate SEL skills that promote anti-racism and equity, including:
  - Recognizing and making sense of oppressive social forces
  - Effecting societal/system change
  - Challenging injustice
  - Affirming diverse ways of being *(e.g., diverse ways of expressing emotion)*

- As a team with school staff, community partners, caregivers, and students *(who represent diverse cultural groups and identities)*, identify current activities or programs that support SEL skill development in the school and assess to what degree they are being implemented with fidelity and achieving desired outcomes.

- As a team with school staff, school mental health and health providers, caregivers, and students *(who represent diverse cultural groups and identities)*, identify, select and/or adapt SEL skill development practices or programs that meet the needs and strengths of all students.

- Ensure SEL skill development activities are developed with and communicated by students, caregivers, and members of the school community who represent diverse cultural groups and identities.

- Monitor implementation of SEL skill development activities for fidelity, feasibility, cultural responsiveness, and acceptability to school staff, students, and families.

- Reassess SEL skill development on a routine basis to monitor progress and inform feedback to school staff and team planning for ongoing activities.
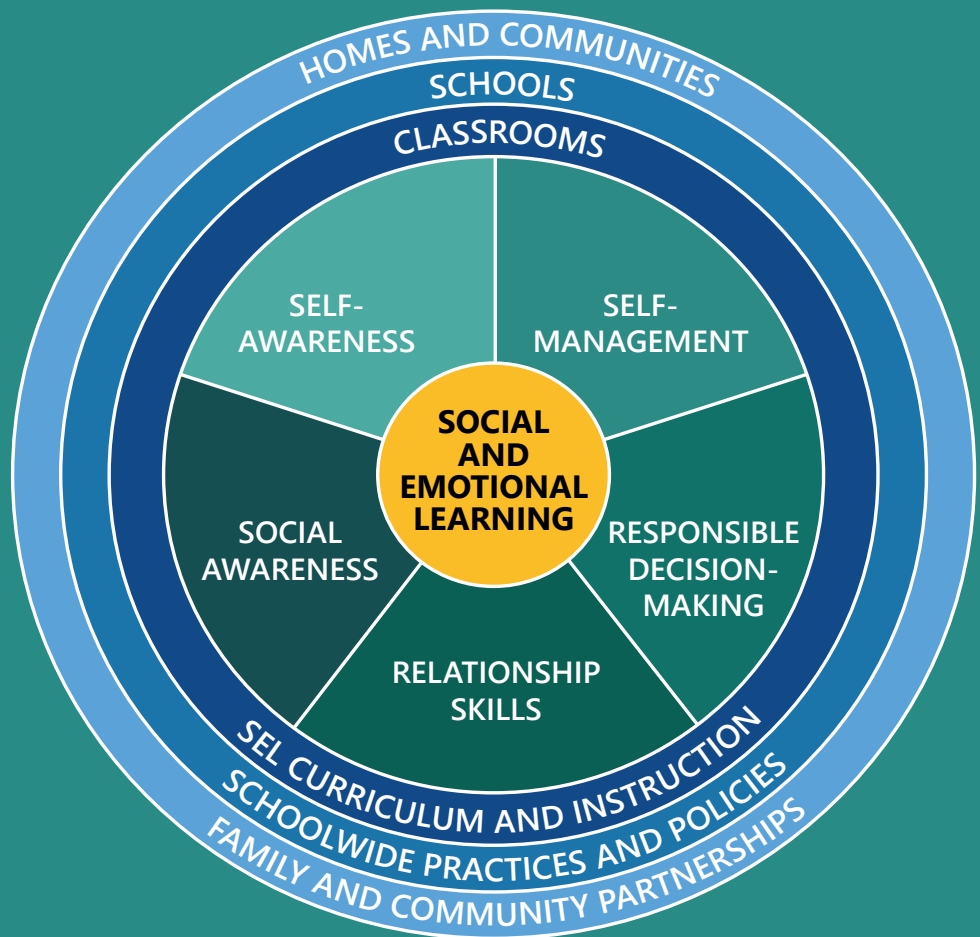
What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)?

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as "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."

Improvements in SEL skills are associated with academic achievement, prosocial behavior, social emotional skills, and positive self-image, as well as decreases in conduct problems, emotional distress, and substance use.

SEL competencies include:

- **Self-awareness**
  Know personal strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

- **Self-management**
  Effectively manage stress, control impulses, and feel motivated to set and achieve goals.

- **Social awareness**
  Understand the perspectives of others and empathize with them, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

- **Relationship skills**
  Communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- **Responsible decision-making**
  Make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety, and social norms.

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES
SCHOOLS
CLASSROOMS

SELF-AWARENESS
SELF-MANAGEMENT
SOCIAL AWARENESS
RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING
RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

SEL CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
SCHOOLWIDE PRACTICES AND POLICIES
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Adapted from the **Interactive CASEL Wheel**

Research demonstrates:

Increases in...
Academic achievement
Prosocial behavior
Social emotional skills
Positive self-image

Decreases in...
Conduct problems
Emotional distress
Substance use

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Resource

CASEL Program Guides provide guidance for educators about specific programs to choose and implement. *The CASEL District Resource Center* also has a **team self-assessment** for districts to gauge their capacity and readiness for SEL implementation.

Example from the Field

Austin Independent School District scaled up their implementation of SEL to all 129 schools in their district. This process started with a **steering committee** that worked for 12 months to clarify the SEL vision and developed five priorities related to district-wide SEL integration. An SEL specialist worked on each campus to provide professional development, observe SEL lessons, and provide feedback on instruction and integration of SEL skills and concepts in the classroom. Campus administrators and teams worked with these specialists to develop SEL goals and action plans.

Determine whether Tier 1 mental health services and supports are evidence-informed

Best Practices

- **Create a program and practice selection committee with diverse representation, including:**
  - Teachers
  - Administrators
  - School mental health and health staff
  - Students
  - Caregivers
  - Community providers

- **Use national evidence-based practice registries** *(e.g., IES What Works Clearinghouse, Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, OJJDP Model Programs Guide, Society of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology Effective Child Therapies)* **and research literature.**

- **Use resources that center and affirm the identities of individuals from groups that have been historically marginalized to inform selection of evidence informed interventions.**

- **In selecting a program or intervention consider whether:**
  - Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) for the intervention demonstrate effectiveness and valued outcomes with the intended student population.
  - The settings *(e.g., urban/suburban/rural/frontier; school/outpatient/inpatient)* are comparable to the intended setting.
  - The outcomes are consistent with those valued and prioritized by members of the school community.
  - The intervention is culturally responsive, in that it reflects cultural norms and values of the diverse cultural groups of students.
  - The intervention is demonstrated to be effective with diverse cultural groups and identities.
  - The intervention is effective at reducing disparities.

- **Review evidence of success** *(e.g., process or outcome data from program evaluation or quality improvement efforts, fidelity data)* **in schools with similar characteristics and student populations.**

Sources of intervention evidence to consider

- **Published studies** describe how the program has been tested and the outcomes that it has influenced.

- **Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) developers** can describe available implementation supports, how to monitor fidelity of implementation, the feasibility of adaptation, and solutions to implementation challenges.

- **Other schools and communities implementing evidence-based practices** can describe their experience with implementation and, if relevant, adaptations to the EBP.

- **Evidence-Based Practice Registries** provide information about the EBP's evidence base, features, training requirements, and cost. Examples include:

  Model Programs Guide   IES What Works Clearinghouse   Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development   Society of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology

* *These sources of evidence are described in more detail in the **Evidence-Based Module Series** from the National Center for Healthy Safe Children.*

Ensure Tier 1 services and supports are equitable and fit the unique strengths, needs, and cultural/linguistic considerations of students and families in your school

QUALITY INDICATOR 12

Best Practices

- **Collect data on social and cultural demographics** *(e.g., age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, sex, socioeconomic status, etc.)* **and disaggregate data to ensure equitable engagement in Tier 1 supports.**

- **Create an intervention selection committee with diverse representation** *(e.g., school mental health and health staff, community providers, school administrators, teachers, students, caregivers).*

- **Consider intervention fit with unique school considerations through a review of:**
  - School's student body, inclusive of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, sex, socioeconomic status.
  - School's and community's mental health needs, and strengths.

- **Evaluate fit of existing or prospective interventions with respect to the strengths, needs, and cultural/linguistic consideration of students, families, and communities to inform adoption, adaptation, or abandonment of interventions.**

- **Pilot test new practices with school population to help inform fit.**

- **As appropriate, adapt the practice to fit school population's unique considerations, and evaluate impact of adaptations.**

Resource

The Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings webinar series and guide, developed by *The National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention*, in partnership with the *National Center for School Mental Health*, provides information about EBP selection, implementation, and preparation. The guide includes worksheets and tools to support teams to assess intended population, determine intervention target and tier of support, evaluate readiness to implement an EBP, prepare for intervention implementation, and measure impact.

Ensure adequate resource capacity to implement Tier 1 services and supports

Best Practices

- Evaluate staffing capacity needed to implement services and supports, including staff training requirements, qualifications, and time.
- Evaluate staffing capacity in terms of availability of staff with training and/or expertise in providing culturally responsive, anti-racist, and equitable Tier 1 supports.
- Evaluate implementation supports *(e.g., ongoing training, coaching, peer support, supplies)* needed to implement services and supports with fidelity.
- Evaluate costs associated with training and implementation.
- Determine whether staffing, implementation supports, and costs of services and supports are achievable within current school mental health system.

Resources

- **The Intervention Planning Form** helps team consider all the relevant details of the capacity needed for implementation prior to deciding to adopt a new practice or intervention. It supports the mapping of current or prospective programs and guides conversations about realistic capacity needed and available, as well as considers all interventions side-by-side to highlight any areas of duplication or overlap.

- **The Implementing Evidence-Based Practices in School Settings Checklist** supports planning and teaming processes by prompting teams to:
  - Develop a plan to track implementation of core components of EBP.
  - Monitor adaptations to EBP to check fidelity.
  - Ensure that quantitative and qualitative data are obtained to monitor fidelity.
  - Develop a plan to address low-fidelity adherence.

Support training and professional development, including ongoing implementation supports*

The research is clear that training and professional development is necessary to support implementation. However, trainings should be interactive with ongoing implementation support because one-time, didactic trainings rarely result in meaningful practice change.

Best Practices

- **Provide interactive trainings** *(with opportunity for skills practice, role plays, action planning).*

- **Provide ongoing support for implementation** *(by regular coaching, consultation, or supervision that includes skills practice, role plays, and corrective feedback, as well as fidelity monitoring and feedback processes).*

- **Ensure trainings and other implementation supports appropriately attend to cultural responsiveness, anti-racism, and equity.**

  Note: Distribution of materials and one-time didactic trainings without follow-up support are **not** best practices to support training and implementation of practices and are generally necessary but insufficient to support implementation in schools.

What does the research say about training?

- **One-time training may improve knowledge or attitudes, but not practice.**

- **Ongoing coaching and consultation predicts skill learning and application.**

- **Train-the-trainer models require substantial oversight.**

- **80% success after 3 years of implementation with appropriate planning and ongoing support.**

Monitor fidelity of Tier 1 services and supports implementation across tiers

Best Practices

- **Identify fidelity monitoring tools specific to the practice being implemented or develop a tool specific to the practice and the implementation context in school** *(based on fidelity monitoring tools for similar evidence-based practices)*. **Tools might involve reviewing student records or progress, directly observing school staff who are implementing the practice, and/or talking with anyone implementing or receiving the practice.**

- **Ensure the fidelity monitoring tool or system measures the following:**
  - Adherence to intervention's core content *(what is being implemented)*
  - Adaptations to maximize cultural fit and relevancy
  - Quality of program delivery *(manner in which facilitator delivers/implements program)*
  - Logistics *(conducive implementation environment, number/length of sessions implemented)*
  - Participant responsiveness to and staff engagement in services and supports by cultural group or identity *(e.g., age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, sex, socioeconomic status)* relevant to the program and school community

- **Determine frequency of fidelity measurement based on what is feasible and will yield actionable information.**

- **Establish a benchmark for acceptable levels of feasibility** *(e.g., not acceptable, adequate, excellent)*.

- **Monitor and track changes or adaptations to the practice.**

- **Provide feedback to anyone implementing and use the results to continuously improve, adapt, and sustain implementation.**

What is fidelity monitoring?

Fidelity monitoring is a system of evaluating the degree to which an intervention or program is implemented as intended.

This requires:

- Clarifying what the intervention or program intends to achieve.

- Monitoring and tracking the extent to which intentions are achieved.

- Analyzing why actions and/or methods are leading to observed outcomes.

Resource

The Fidelity Monitoring Checklist can be used for fidelity monitoring planning, including:

- Identifying fidelity monitoring tools
- Determining frequency of fidelity measurement
- Establishing benchmark for acceptable levels of fidelity
- Monitoring adaptations

Action Steps

1. **Plan ahead for fidelity monitoring methods and tools before implementation.**

2. **Decide how to strike a balance between fidelity and adaptation.**
    - **Fidelity**: Degree to which a program or practice is implemented as intended.
    - **Adaptation**: How much, and in what ways, a program or practice is changed to meet local circumstances.

3. **Share fidelity data back with implementers and other key members of the team to make continuous improvements.**

Tips

When implementing fidelity monitoring tools, consider the following:

- Use formal fidelity monitoring tools included within intervention materials.
- Schedule routine "implementation check-ins" for team to review training materials and discuss whether the intervention procedures were followed accurately.
- Create a checklist of key intervention steps that can be used to monitor fidelity through live observation or records review.
- Schedule times for a team member to observe implementation of the intervention and complete the fidelity tool or checklist.

**Adaptation is a natural part of implementation.**

- Document adaptations and determine whether adaptations are appropriate as a team.
- Seek input from implementers and program developers or trainers.
- Determine how to balance fidelity benchmarks and adaptations for each program or practice being implemented.
- Use implementer feedback and EBP developer input.
  - *For example, if a teacher says they can only deliver a 30-minute session for a program that is intended to be 45-minutes, that is a necessary adaptation for the school context. It may be beneficial to work with the developer or obtain input from other schools or districts implementing the program.*
- Create feedback loops with the data, using data constructively to learn from and support implementers over time.
  - Provide feedback on strengths and areas for improvement.
  - Fidelity data can also be used to indicate how well the program or practice is fitting in the school or district context; some programs or practices will inevitably be a better fit than others, and fidelity data can be used to make decisions about whether to continue implementation and focus energy on sustainability.

Example from the Field

One large urban school district decided to implement restorative practices districtwide. The district started with a few schools to monitor fidelity and implementation to inform sustainable scale-up. Every adult in the school, including instructional and non-instruction staff and community partners, attended a 1-day, interactive training. Two Restorative Practices Trainers used a fidelity monitoring tool to conduct monitoring every fall and spring. The fidelity metric included a principal interview, staff interview, student interview, restorative circle observation, and overall school observation. Scores fell in the ranges of "*not implemented,*" "*developing,*" or "*effective.*" Fidelity data were used in feedback and planning meetings with principals to plan targeted coaching and consultation.

For more resources,
visit the **SHAPE Resource Library** at
www.theSHAPEsystem.com
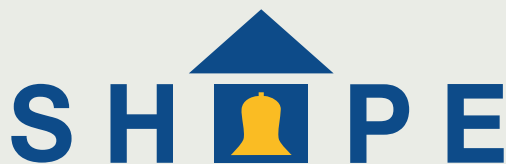
S H A P E   **School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation System**

School Mental Health Quality Guide *At A Glance:* Mental Health Promotion Services & Supports (Tier 1)

QUALITY INDICATORS

1. Assess school climate
2. Improve school climate
3. Assess teacher and staff well-being
4. Improve teacher and staff well-being
5. Set schoolwide expectations about positive behaviors
6. Implement schoolwide positive reinforcement systems
7. Use school-based strategies to proactively build healthy relationships and address conflict
8. Use discipline policies and practices aimed at reducing exclusionary responses
9. Increase mental health literacy for all students and staff
10. Increase social and emotional learning (SEL) skills for all students
11. Determine whether Tier 1 services and supports are evidence-informed
12. Ensure Tier 1 services and supports are equitable and reflective of your school's students and families
13. Ensure adequate resource capacity to implement Tier 1 services and supports
14. Support professional development for Tier 1 services and supports
15. Monitor fidelity of Tier 1 implementation across tiers

Action Steps

- **Plan ahead for fidelity monitoring** methods and tools before implementation.
- Decide how to **strike a balance between fidelity and adaptation.**
- **Share fidelity data** back with implementers and other key members of the team to **make continuous improvements.**
- **Invite your local NAMI chapter to give a presentation** to students and teachers.
- Participate in a **mental health awareness campaign.**
- **Collaborate with organizations** to help **implement specific mental health literacy training and support** in your school or district, such as *Mental Health First Aid* or *Youth Mental Health First Aid*.
- **Use teacher-delivered mental health curricula**, such as *Mental Health Essentials for Educators*.

Tips

- **Before implementation, use a school climate assessment** to determine what interventions are most likely to improve the specific needs identified.
- **Use formal fidelity monitoring tools** included within intervention materials.
- **Schedule routine "implementation check-ins"** to review training materials and intervention procedures.
- **Create a checklist of key intervention steps** to monitor fidelity and schedule times for team members to observe implementation and complete the fidelity tool or checklist.
- **Document adaptations** and determine as a team whether they are appropriate.
- **Seek input from implementers and program developers or trainers.**
- **Decide how to balance fidelity benchmarks and adaptations** for each program or practice being implemented.
- **Incorporate implementer feedback and EBP developer input.**
- **Create feedback loops with the data**, using data constructively to learn from and support implementers over time. **Provide feedback on strengths and areas for improvement.**

School Mental Health Quality Guide *At A Glance:* Mental Health Promotion Services & Supports (Tier 1)

Best Practices

- Establish a **clear system for collecting, analyzing, storing, and sharing school climate data.**
- **Form a core school climate planning team** that includes school-based personnel, youth, family members, and community partners.
- **Share and discuss school climate assessment results** with diverse stakeholders in a manner that is engaging, easy to understand, and invites feedback.
- **Use disaggregated data to identify disparities** in school climate and **implement initiatives with an explicit focus on improving those findings.**
- **Involve groups who reported worse school climate** in improvement planning and implementation.
- **Embed school climate improvement** into school policies, practices, systems, and other improvement efforts.
- **Facilitate well-being assessment with teachers and school staff** using multiple methods of data collection.
- **Regularly assess a range of staff well-being components** and align improvement efforts with identified needs.
- **Assess for secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, and burnout.**
- **Evaluate strengths and needs for both individual and collective well-being**, and address both organizational and individual factors that contribute to stress and well-being.
- **Ensure privacy of information and anonymity** when using surveys, interviews, focus groups, or other means.
- Offer an array of **well-being educational resources and activities** that are **optional, accessible, and free.**
- **Ensure the physical layout of the school supports optimal functioning and safety** of all staff and students.
- Develop and teach **predictable, relevant schoolwide routines/rules that do not inadvertently reinforce systems of oppression.**
- With families and community members, **co-develop 3-5 positively stated and clearly defined expectations** and post them around school in the primary languages of students.
- Train staff to **teach students expectations/rules and how they are developed, scheduled, and delivered.**
- Use specific praise and other strategies to **let students know when they meet expectations.**
- Collaborate with students and families representative of diverse cultural groups and identities to **define problem behaviors and appropriate strategies to address them.**
- Train and support staff in **counteracting individual and system biases of student behaviors, de-escalating crises**, and **implementing disciplinary practices that reduce racial/ethnic disproportionality.**
- Use trauma-informed, culturally responsive strategies that **preempt escalation, minimize inadvertent reward of problem behaviors, and create learning opportunities for emphasizing desired behavior.**
- Use circles, groups, and other healing-centered processes to **provide opportunities for students to share their feelings, build relationships, resolve conflicts, and play an active role in repairing harms.**
- Use a process of **graduated responses that are clearly defined, do not re-traumatize youth, limit involvement of law enforcement, and eliminate exclusionary disciplinary practices** when possible.
- **Compare suspensions/expulsions by demographic group** to better understand differences in policies or practices contributing to disproportionality.
- Work with students, caregivers, and school staff to **develop a clear plan for assessing, promoting, and reassessing mental health literacy and SEL skills** of students and school staff.
- Ensure mental health literacy activities and skills **build on diverse cultural strengths and assets**, are **developed with and communicated by school community members**, and **are ongoing** throughout the school year.
- **Monitor implementation of SEL skill development activities** for fidelity, feasibility, cultural responsiveness, and acceptability to school staff, students, and families.
- **Create a diverse intervention selection committee** and **evaluate fit of existing/prospective interventions** in terms of strengths, needs, and cultural/linguistic consideration of students, families, and communities.
- **Evaluate staffing capacity,** including qualifications, time, and training and/or expertise, to provide culturally responsive, anti-racist, and equitable Tier 1 services and supports.
- **Evaluate costs, materials, and training needed to implement services and supports with fidelity** and determine feasibility within current school mental health system.
- **Identify appropriate fidelity monitoring tools** and determine appropriate frequency of fidelity measurement.
- **Track adaptations** to practices, **provide feedback**, and work to continuously **improve implementation.**

School Mental Health Quality Guide *At A Glance:* Mental Health Promotion Services & Supports (Tier 1)

Examples from the Field

- To generate data-informed school climate improvement plans, **a large, urban school district implemented an annual district-wide school climate survey and hosted summer listening sessions**, wherein students, teachers, and parents provided feedback and suggested school climate improvements for the upcoming school year.

- **Maryland's Children's Mental Health Matters (CMHM)** is a statewide education and awareness campaign.

- Utilizing a steering committee and specialized instruction, **Austin Independent School District scaled up their implementation of SEL to all 129 schools in their district.**

- **One large urban school district implemented restorative practices districtwide** by hosting an interactive training for all school-based personnel, and implementing fidelity monitoring which included principal, staff, and student interviews, restorative circle observations, and overall school observation.

Resources

- The ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)
- The School Climate Improvement Resource Package (SCIRP)
- The Organizational Well-Being Inventory for Schools (OWBI-S)
- Resilience at Work Scale
- Professional Quality of Life (PROQOL)
- Health Related Quality of Life
- Teacher Subjective Well-Being Questionnaire
- Classroom WISE & TeacherWISE
- Supporting and Responding to Students' Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs: Evidence-Based Practices for Educators
- Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports
- Restorative Practices: Approaches at the Intervention of School Discipline and School Mental Health
- Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools: A Guide for Educators
- Mental Health Essentials for Educators (Parts 1 & 2)
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- *CASEL* Program Guides & Team Self-Assessment
- Model Programs Guide
- IES What Works Clearinghouse
- Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development
- *Society of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*
- The Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings webinar series and guide
- The Intervention Planning Form
- The Implementing Evidence-Based Practices in School Settings Checklist
- The Fidelity Monitoring Checklist