



Invitation to Participate in a Mental Health Promotion Initiative

Building Capacity of School Personnel to Promote Positive Mental Health in Indigenous Children and Youth

The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (Mountain Plains-MHTTC) serves schools in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. We are inviting you to participate in a multi-state initiative that will build capacity of school teams to promote positive mental health in children/youth throughout the school day using a multi-tiered approach. The training will occur January-May 2024. Specifically, Mountain Plains-MHTTC will build capacity of school personnel to support positive identity development emphasizing mental health promotion and prevention.

What will this involve? What will you be expected to do?

If you agree to participate, you will:

- Identify 3-6 interdisciplinary team members to be a part of a Community of Practice (CoP) at your school. The CoP should be an interdisciplinary team including any of the following: teacher, paraprofessional, occupational therapist, administrator/counselor, nurse, speech language pathologists, social workers or school psychologists. It is strongly recommended that the team include a classroom teacher and be interdisciplinary in nature as training emphasizes application in the classroom and interdisciplinary collaboration.
- The CoP will participate in five 1.5 hour virtual training sessions (see schedule overview below). ***attendance is critical**
- Each CoP will engage in an Assessment and Next Steps process to identify gaps or opportunities to improve mental health promotion by supporting positive identity development.

MP- MHTTC will:

- Provide the training described above and any technical assistance during development of the strategic plan and implementation.
- Provide continuing education credits to the CoP members (15 contact hours). If your state requires transcribed credit, the MHTTC will have the training approved, but the transcribed fee is the responsibility of the teacher.
- Provide required readings and resources to the CoP.
- Follow up on the next steps plan.

Benefits to you:

- *Enhanced capacity* of all school personnel through enhanced understanding of how to apply knowledge about children's mental health in the school.
- *Free resources for each CoP.*
- *Free educational sessions* and online discussions regarding mental health promotion.
- *Feeling connected to other schools implementing the projects.*
- *Continuing education credits (15 contact hours for CoP team members).*

Trainers:

LaVonne Fox, PhD, OTR/L- is the Vice President of Academic Affairs at the Turtle Mountain Tribal Community College in Belcourt, ND. She was born and raised on the Turtle Mountain Chippewa reservation. She has considerable experience working with children, youth, and young adults with mental health issues in mental health facilities. Her focus and passion areas are developing Indigenous culturally based interventions to address mental health issues. She also stresses the need to focus on strength-based approaches versus commonly used deficit-based practices.

Sarah Nielsen, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA is professor and chair at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, ND, in the Department of Occupational Therapy, School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Sarah has over 20 years of experience working with children, youth and young adults with mental health issues in communities and schools. Her clinical practice included developing and implementing trauma-informed approaches in mental health care. She assisted students transitioning from mental health programs back to public schools where she trained and assisted schools in this effort.

Please think about the benefits of participating in this project and your availability to attend the five virtual sessions. Please contact LaVonne Fox at lfox@tm.edu or Sarah Nielsen at sarah.k.nielsen@und.edu or at 701 777-2208 to indicate your interest in participating no later than January 2, 2024.

We look forward to meeting and collaborating with you.

Sincerely,

LaVonne, Fox, PhD, OTR/L and Sarah Nielsen, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA
Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

UND Land Acknowledgement Statement: Today, the University of North Dakota rests on the ancestral lands of the Pembina and Red Lake Bands of Ojibwe and the Dakota Oyate - presently existing as composite parts of the Red Lake, Turtle Mountain, White Earth Bands, and the Dakota Tribes of Minnesota and North Dakota. We acknowledge the people who resided here for generations and recognize that the spirit of the Ojibwe and Oyate people permeates this land. As a university community, we will continue to build upon our relations with the First Nations of the State of North Dakota - the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.

Attachment: Session Overview and Community of Practice Sign Up Sheet

Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>CoP Virtual Session and School Personnel Training Topic</i>
January 17 4:00-5:30 CST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to Communities of Practice Process and Assessment and Next Steps Document• Review of best practices in school mental health
February 21 4:00-5:30 CST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-Awareness: Understanding our own Bias and its' Impact
March 20 4:00-5:30 CST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Living Legacy. Trauma and its Impact in the Classroom
April 10 4:00:-5:30 CST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identity Matters
May 8 4:00-5:30 CST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strength-Based Models & Strategies• Final Reflections and Next Steps

School Mental Health Promotion Initiative

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School Information Form

Please complete the following form and return it electronically to sarah.k.nielsen@und.edu by the identified deadline. Thank you. If you have questions, please call Sarah at (701) 777-2208.

Name and mailing address of District/Special Education Unit/Cooperative/or School Participating:

Name, Phone Number and Email Address of Primary Contact:

Please identify 3-6 interdisciplinary team members that will serve as the **Community of Practice (CoP)**. These individuals will participate in five two-hour Zoom video conference sessions in September-January. Because the initiative is about building the capacity of all school personnel, we do recommend the team be comprised of the following: a) teacher, b) administrator/counselor/social worker, and c) occupational therapist/school nurse/special educator/school psychologist. Please provide each person's name, discipline, and email address. The email address will be used for distributing course materials.

<i>Name and Discipline</i>	<i>Email Address</i>