



## ***National School Mental Health Curriculum: Guidance and Best Practices for States, Districts, and Schools*** **Mental Health Technology Transfer Center**

Implementing comprehensive school mental health policies and practices is a complex task that has the potential to positively affect the lives of many students. To help states, districts, and schools across the United States understand the core components of comprehensive school mental health, as well as engage in a planning process, the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC) Network Coordinating Office and National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) developed a national school mental health curriculum focused on the following core features of effective school mental health initiatives:

- **Roles for Educators and Student Instructional Support Personnel** who are well-trained to support the mental health needs of students in the school setting.
- **Collaboration and Teaming** that ensure schools, districts, and community partners have agreements in place and meet regularly to develop and implement SMH plans that answer the needs of all students across universal/school-wide, indicated, and intensive levels.
- **Multi-Tiered System of Supports** that promotes mental health and reduces the prevalence and severity of mental illness.
- **Evidence-Informed Services and Supports** that are backed by scientific and/or practice-based evidence of implementation success and achieving the desired outcomes.
- **Cultural Responsiveness and Equity** to ensure access to mental health supports and services in a manner that is equitable and reduces disparities across all students.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making** to monitor student needs and progress, assess the quality of implementation, and evaluate the effectiveness of supports and services.

### **Intended Audience:**

The curriculum is intended to be used with district teams that can influence, develop, and oversee school mental health systems at the school district and building levels. District teams may include:

- School District Leaders (e.g., Superintendent, School Board)
- School Administrators (e.g., Principal, Assistant Principal)
- District Mental Health Director or Student Services Supervisor (e.g., Director of Student Services, District Supervisor School Psychologists/Social Workers/Counselors)
- Community Behavioral Health Agency Supervisor/Director (e.g., Clinical Director of an agency that provides school-based services)
- Youth/Family Advocate or Consumer

### **Curriculum Content**

#### *Manuals and Slide Decks*

The curriculum contains trainer and participant manuals, and slide decks, divided into eight modules that are each designed for delivery in one-hour in-person sessions or can be adapted for shorter or longer sessions. It is also intended for local individualization, as needed, such as adding or editing language and resources to align with local cultures and efforts.

- 1) **Foundations of Comprehensive School Mental Health:** Core features and district examples
- 2) **Teaming:** What, why, and how to create aligned district and school mental health teams
- 3) **Needs Assessment and Resource Mapping:** Identifying student mental health needs and strengths
- 4) **Screening:** Why to screen (benefits, considerations) and how (tools and implementation guidance)
- 5) **Mental Health Promotion for All (Tier 1):** The value of universal mental health promotion and school climate
- 6) **Early Intervention and Treatment (Tiers 2/3):** What, why, and how of mental health early interventions and treatments including BRISC and CBITs as examples
- 7) **Funding and Sustainability:** Optimizing financial and non-financial assets to maintain and improve a school mental health system over time
- 8) **Impact:** Data driven leadership through documenting and reporting impact of practices, policies, and programs over time for continuous quality improvement



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Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

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The modules align with the national performance domains and indicators of comprehensive school mental health system quality. These domains and indicators were established as part of the National Quality Initiative on School Health, and were developed through an iterative process led by the NCSMH with significant and diverse stakeholder input. In addition, each module includes resources and tools to support learning extensions and can be adapted and built upon to be contextualized to regions, states, and districts.

The curriculum is being used by the MHTTC Network in regional, state, and local trainings and learning collaboratives. It also may be delivered by a regional/state/district leader who is familiar with comprehensive school mental health services and has thoroughly familiarized themselves with the curriculum content.

### *Virtual Learning Sessions*

In addition to the manuals and slide decks, the National School Mental Health curriculum also includes five recorded virtual learning sessions that took place between April and August 2019. Each recording is about 75 minutes long and includes a deeper dive into some of the curriculum content with additional examples from states and districts across the MHTTC Network.

### *SHAPE System*

A further resource that can be used with the curriculum is the NCSMH's [School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation \(SHAPE\) System](#), a public-access, web-based platform developed for education and mental health leadership to document the landscape of school mental health and then to engage in a quality improvement process to enhance these systems.

The SHAPE System houses the National School Mental Health Census and the School Mental Health Quality Assessment (SMH-QA, district and school versions). In addition, SHAPE has several features to support district and school teams such as:

- School and District Profiles
- Quality Assessment and Individualized Reports
- District and State Dashboards

Currently, the MHTTC Network Coordinating Office is collaborating with the NCSMH to refine current and develop new resources, tools, and curricula for the SHAPE system that address unique regional and state considerations. The new SHAPE System will launch Fall 2019.

### **Access the Curriculum on the MHTTC Website**

You can access the National School Mental Health Curriculum (trainer and participant manuals, slide decks for each module, and the virtual learning sessions) on the MHTTC website by visiting our National School Mental Health Projects page at <https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mhttc-network-coordinating-office/national-school-mental-health-projects>.

**For information about local, state, and regional school mental health training and technical assistance activities, including with the National School Mental Health Curriculum, access the MHTTC in your region at <https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/selection>**

### **Questions about the MHTTC Network?**

Contact the MHTTC Network Coordinating Office  
Email: [networkoffice@mhttcnetwork.org](mailto:networkoffice@mhttcnetwork.org) Phone: (650) 721-8692  
Website: <https://mhttcnetwork.org/>

### **Questions about the SHAPE System or the National Quality Initiative?**

Contact the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH)  
Email: [nscsmh@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:nscsmh@som.umaryland.edu) Phone: (410) 706-0980  
<https://theshapesystem.com/> [www.schoolmentalhealth.org](http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org)