School Mental Health: Considerations for Reopening During COVID-19

National Center for School Mental Health
@NCSMHtweets

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1. National Center for School Mental Health Resources

2. Tier 1 (Mental Health Promotion)

3. Tiers 2/3 (Early Identification, Intervention, Crisis Response)

4. Resources
1. National Center for School Mental Health Resources
National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH)

• Established in 1995 with funding from the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Health Resources and Services Administration

• The NCSMH mission is to strengthen policies and programs in school mental health to improve learning and promote success for America's youth.

Visit the NCSMH website at www.schoolmentalhealth.org
The National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) provides training and technical assistance to support school mental health nationwide.
COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, is a global pandemic that has shut down much of society, including many schools. The stress associated with this virus may understandably increase worry and anxiety in our students, staff, families, and communities. At the National Center for School Mental Health, we want to support you as you protect your health and the health of those around you. To that end, we have accumulated resources and tips for you to use and share with others in your networks. We will continue to update these resources as we learn more.

- Crisis Response
- Early Childhood Mental Health
- General Resources
- Guidance for School Staff & Administrators
- Stress Management & Self Care
- Students & Families
- Technology to Support School Mental Health
What is SHAPE?

Your FREE, interactive tool designed to improve school, district, and state mental health accountability, excellence, and sustainability.

Learn More

Improve student mental health in your schools, districts, and states. Sign up for:

- Myself
- My School
- My District
- My State
SHAPE helps districts and schools improve their school mental health systems! **HOW?**

- SHAPE users map their school mental health services and supports.
- Assess system quality using national performance standards.
- Receive custom reports and strategic planning guidance and resources.
- Utilize additional SHAPE features including the Screening and Assessment Library and Trauma-Responsive Schools Assessment and Resources.
- Use state and district dashboards to collaborate with schools in your region.
Training Educators about Mental Health – Coming Fall 2020 – www.mhttcnetwork.org

Promoting the Mental Health and Well-being of Students

- Creating safe and supportive classrooms
- Teaching mental health literacy and reducing stigma
- Fostering social emotional competencies

Understanding and Supporting Students Experiencing Adversity and Distress

- Understanding and identifying student distress and linking students to support
- Impact of trauma and adversity on learning and behavior
- Classroom strategies to support students with mental health concerns

Cultural Responsiveness and Equity

(Danya Institute, Central East MHTTC)
2. Tier 1 (Mental Health Promotion)
UNIVERSAL Strategies

- Promote supportive, positive school climate
- Staff wellness
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Crisis preparedness
- Trauma-responsive school policies
- Mental health literacy for school staff and students

Tier I. All Students
Regardless of behavioral health risk

Tier II. Some Students
At risk for behavioral health concerns

Tier III. Few Students
Apparent behavioral health needs

SSET
Bounce Back (K–5)
CBITS (6–12)

STRONG
PFA/PREPaRE

TF-CBT

ALWAYS

School-wide ecological strategies
If the oxygen masks drop down, **put your own mask on first**, and then help the person next to you.
Please don’t just tell me to do more yoga
Promoting conditions that support teacher wellness
Mental Health Literacy

• Understand how to obtain and maintain good mental health

• Understand and identify mental disorders and their treatments

• Decrease stigma

• Enhance help-seeking efficacy: know where to go; know when to go; know what to expect when you get there; know how to increase likelihood of “best available care” (skills and tools)

Kutcher and Wei; 2014; Kutcher, Bagnell and Wei; 2015; Kutcher, Wei and Coniglio, 2016.
Discussion – Enter into Chat

What Tier 1 supports have been successful in your schools during COVID-19?

Please share resources.
NOW - Connect With Students

- Daily check-ins
  https://www.closegap.org/

  https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1UzXhLWoL9DJZQ1aZAixsoZbAZ~PgwLJkfsBQVvmtM8/edit

- Translation of existing Tier 1 strategies
  - SEL in virtual classes/home

- “Encourage reassurance, routines, regulation”

Closegap: Daily Check-ins (Closegap.org)

Students do a daily emotional check-in

Teachers and Parents get Info in Real Time

Students connect with an adult or participate in self-guided activities
Guidance, Scripts, Strategies & Resources for Supporting Students and Educators During COVID-19

Guidance, Scripts, Strategies, & Resources for Supporting Students and Educators

Managing Your Stress Load and Caring for Yourself
Managing your stress load and caring for yourself during COVID-19 is essential to your health and ability to support others. Use this link to review the source of your stress load and create your own self-regulation plan. [link]

1. Connect with Students
   Identify a developmentally appropriate and safe platform to connect with your students. [link]

2. Listen and Reflect
   During the connecting activity, listening and reflecting feelings will help decrease student stress load as it increases connection and feelings of safety. [link]

3. Provide Reassurance
   As students share their feelings, they may also ask questions. Here is a link to guiding statements for helping reassure them if they have fears, anxiety, sadness, and for some, grief. [link]

4. Coping/Managing Stress Load
   Because these feelings will likely be ongoing, helping students identify self-regulation activities that manage their stress load and help them feel calm and alert will be important. Activities linked here: [link]

5. Additional Support if Needed
   If a student or family needs additional support because of mental health needs or a crisis, use this link for more guidance: [link]
SEL in the virtual classroom/home

- Many online SEL platforms are currently free to educators, including
  - Closegap
  - EVERFI
  - PATHS
  - RethinkEd

- WeDoListen.org – Lessons, books, videos on SEL skills

- Be creative! Colorado school psychologist Adam Parker uploads videos to his YouTube channel with engaging SEL stories and songs for children.
Teacher Well-being and Support

- **Headspace** (available free to educators) is committed to addressing needs of educators such as reducing stress, increasing resilience and improving sleep. [https://www.headspace.com/educators](https://www.headspace.com/educators)

- **MHTTC Tools for Educators During a Public Health Crisis**
  - Taking care of yourself
  - Staying informed without stressing out
  - What stress looks like
  - Strategies for teaching during Covid-19

- **WISE Teacher Well-Being Workbook** – Georgetown University and NCSMH
  - Workbook for teachers to assess and enhance own well-being
Tier 1 Strategies During COVID-19

- Wellness Newsletters for school staff and families
- Integrating SEL curriculum into classrooms and small groups
- Setting up a warm line for families to call for needed mental health support
- Promoting student and staff wellness through mindfulness and stress reduction strategies
- Connect with families through platforms the school is using (e.g., Class Dojo, school Instagram/Facebook with mental health messaging)
Considerations for 2020-21 School Year Planning:

Tier 1

Sample Plans or Strategies:

• Evaluate staff mental health readiness utilizing questionnaires, surveys, direct outreach.

• Provide resources for staff self-care, including resiliency strategies.

• Normalize feelings through forums and spaces for compassionate listening where students and school staff can share, discuss, and process their common experiences relative to COVID.

• Mental health professionals and educators co-teach social emotional learning strategies to help students adjust to the changes in their environment.
3. Early Identification and Intervention
ALWAYS

Well-being check-ups in schools
Treatment in Schools

- Evidence-based psychosocial interventions — e.g., CBITS/Bounce Back, TF-CBT

- Psychiatric care
Why Mental Health Treatment in Schools?

Youth are 6x more likely to complete mental health treatment in schools than in community settings (Jaycox et al., 2010)
Discussion – Enter into Chat

What Tiers 2/3 supports have been successful in your schools during COVID-19?

Please share resources.
Tier 2/3 Strategies - NOW

- Maintain routines from in-person therapy
- Consider how to best adapt structure
- Web-platform interactive features
- Confidentiality and Adapting Consent
Establish Paths for Connection

• Create ways for all your students to reach out to you.
• Consider counseling/support Office Hours for drop-ins.
Utilize Telehealth

• Federally, HIPAA-compliant platforms are temporarily not required to practice telehealth: a variety of face-to-face video platforms are now available for you to use.

• Some students and families prefer telehealth.

• Seek out professional development on telehealth. The Mental Health Technology Transfer Center hosts regular telehealth webinars.
Telehealth 101 Webinar

Telemental Health 101

This 47 minute training, conducted by Jennifer Cox, LCSW-C, Director of the University of Maryland School Mental Health Program, provides an overview to help prepare school mental health clinicians to use telemental health to provide services and supports to students and families.

Staging Matters

- Background objects and colors
- Frame participants
  - Participant arrangement
- Apparent eye contact
- Lighting
- Sound
- Eliminate distractions
- Plug into network whenever possible
Tier II and Tier III Innovations

• Technological innovations for groups or individuals:
  – Bitmoji Classroom
  – Peardeck for Google Slides
  – Sharing videos or read-alouds
  – Closegap emotional check-ins
  – Online games like Uno, Checkers, Chess
  – Jointly created artwork or documents
  – Virtual Calming Room

• Strategies for conducting CBT virtually: behavioral activation and anxiety exposure tasks that can be utilized during social distancing

• Tier II and Tier III information for caregivers to reinforce at home

• Information sharing with school and caregivers (newsletters, shared virtual spaces, using community spaces like grocery stores and food pantries)
Tier II and Tier III Resources

• Chicago Public Schools Office of Social Emotional Learning: SEL in Remote Learning  https://sites.google.com/cps.edu/selremote/home?authuser=0

• Center for Childhood Resilience Guidance for Tier II Group Implementation  https://childhoodresilience.org/schoolclinicianresources

• Emotional Check-ins with students  www.closegap.org

• Guidance for Tier II Trauma Groups and Psychological First Aid  http://traumaawareschools.org/inACrisis

• Facing History and Ourselves: lesson plan to help students be upstanders during COVID-19  https://www.facinghistory.org/educator-resources/current-events/coronavirus-protect-yourself-stand-against-racism

CBITS Online Live

Session 1: Introduction, Orientation, and Rationale
Session 2: Psychoeducation and Relaxation
Session 3: Thoughts and Feelings
Session 4: H.O.T. Seat
Session 5: Social Problem-Solving
Session 6: Moving-Up Ceremony

Considerations for 2020-21 School Year Planning: Screening

Sample Plans or Strategies:

• When schools are open and operating, districts may encourage schools to implement a mental health screening for all students.

• Screen students and their families for social needs. One example assessment for social indicators of health is as follows: https://innovation.cms.gov/files/worksheets/ahcm-screeningtool.pdf

• Screen for COVID-specific distress. Example measures include:
  • COVID-19 Adolescent Symptom & Psychological Experience Questionnaire (CASPE)
  • Epidemic Pandemic Impacts Inventory (EPII)
  • DERS for Coronavirus Pandemic
  • Coronavirus Impact Scale
Considerations for 2020-21 School Year Planning: Tiers 2 & 3

Sample Plans or Strategies:

• Hold faculty and staff meetings to provide information on signs and symptoms to observe in students, and clear referral procedures.

• Communicate counseling support services available to students

• Mobilize crisis recovery team to provide emotional and/or psychological support as needed
Resources: Kaiser Permanente Schools Reopening Playbook

Five Starter Plays for Enhancing Mental Health & Well-being for Students & Staff

The 5 Starter Plays

Reestablish Connections
The 5 Starter Plays

Reestablish
Connections

Prioritize
Trauma
Informed PD
The 5 Starter Plays

- Reestablish Connections
- Prioritize Trauma Informed PD
- Discuss Environmental Stressors
The 5 Starter Plays

- Reestablish Connections
- Prioritize Trauma Informed PD
- Discuss Environmental Stressors
- Provide Instruction on Social Emotional Skill Building
The 5 Starter Plays

- Reestablish Connections
- Prioritize Trauma Informed PD
- Discuss Environmental Stressors
- Provide Instruction on Social Emotional Skill Building
- Develop a Process for Providing Support
Resources

https://www.launchne.com/
https://www.launchne.com/conditions-for-learning/wellness/district/
Resources

MARYLAND TOGETHER

MARYLAND'S RECOVERY PLAN FOR EDUCATION

COVID-19 RESPONSE AND THE PATH FORWARD

DRAFT
Resources: Summer Programming

https://www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools/summerschool
Resources

• **An Initial Guide to Leveraging the Power of Social Emotional Learning As You Prepare to Reopen and Renew Your School Community**: In this guide, CASEL shares a framework with actionable recommendations to help school leadership teams plan for the SEL needs of all students and adults during the upcoming transition into summer and the beginning of the new school year. While this guidance is written for school leadership teams, states and districts will play critical roles in ensuring schools have the resources, support, and guidance needed to carry out these actions.

• **COVID-19 Considerations for Reopening Schools: Supporting Student and Staff Wellness**: This guidance document from the Kentucky Department of Education addresses planning considerations for the social and emotional wellbeing of students and staff during the transition when schools reopen.

• **COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Return to In-person Education in Schools**: This American Academy of Pediatrics web page presents a list of considerations for when and how to re-open in-person schools.

• **Guidelines for Re-opening Schools from the AASA COVID-19 Recovery Task Force**: AASA, The School Superintendents Association, is committed to supporting superintendents and other school district leaders throughout the country during this challenging and unprecedented time. On April 30, 2020, the AASA COVID-19 Recovery Task Force, made up of superintendents and the nation’s foremost thought leaders in public education, was formed to create a consensus-driven set of guidelines for reopening schools effectively in the COVID-19 environment. This is a living website and will continue to be updated as the Task Force releases additional details.
• **School Mental Health Planning for the 2020-2021 School Year During COVID-19**: This webinar from the NCSMH and School-Based Health Alliance is part of the School Health Services National Quality Initiative webinar series on Innovation and Emerging Best Practices.

• **School Re-entry Considerations: Supporting Student Social and Emotional Learning and Mental and Behavioral Health Amidst COVID-19**: The American School Counselors Association and the National Association of School Psychologists co-developed this guide, which will be update as school re-entry plans evolve. Successful reentry plans will inform innovative ways schools address student and staff psychological safety, social and emotional learning, and mental and behavioral health during the transition to in-person learning.

• **Schools Decision Tool**: The CDC has created a brief, user-friendly tool to assist schools in deciding when and how to re-open school buildings.
Connect with NCSMH

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