National School Mental Health Best Practices: Implementation Guidance Modules
'Always and Now' Learning Series
Module 5: Mental Health Promotion for All (Tier 1)

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Participant Question & Presenter Response

Q1   *What are some specific roles for community behavioral health providers in Tier 1 MH promotion?*

A1   Community behavioral health providers have an essential role in the implementation of Tier 1 school based mental health services, one of which is to work with the Tier 1 leadership team to uncover the strengths and needs of students before they come into our schools. The community providers can provide community level data (e.g. Calls to crisis centers, proportion of families in the community affected by substance abuse, incarceration, or domestic abuse). They are out in the community and inform us about what are the students' needs are therefore, if the team reviews trends and patterns using both school and community data, the team can work towards can served to strengthening the Tier 1 social emotional behavior support effort.

Too often, we wait for students to fail before seeking for additional supports. It is important to ensure that we are working to prevent the likelihood of anybody failing and that everybody is thriving in terms of funding. To achieve that we need to work at the district level specific things that the State and district leaders can work with schools leaders and staff to remove barriers providing more streamlined way of doing business. For that, we offered the interconnected systems framework, a structure and process education and mental health systems to interact in most effective and efficient way. State, district and school communities use the MTSS core features to guide efforts.

Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-Wide PBIS, Volume 2: An Implementation Guide provides step-by-step process with examples, activities, and resources for district and school teams to install and implement an Interconnected Systems Framework.

Leaders at the state and district level can work with community providers to determine how to pool funding to allow our mental health providers to be situated across all tiers of support so that they cannot only provide that data but they can also consult and co-coordinate care across the tiers of support.

Schools and community behavioral health providers can all maintain a consistent dialogue in order to be a familiar presence (safe person students and families are accustomed to seeing) and two way conversation about trends and emerging needs. Presentations, screening and ultimately a direct referral process can lay the tier 1 foundation and create a smooth transition tier 2 and 3 needs.

Q2	*How has the pandemic impacted Tier 1 and how have you had to adapt or change?*
A2	The pandemic has caused many districts to think differently about universal screening and universal supports as recognition builds that traditional models for who is at-risk don't apply in the midst and aftermath of a global event. At the same time, virtual models of learning provide much less contact with students and relationship building is more difficult. Many districts have had to get creative on outreach and engagement with families, many pairing school material deliveries with check ins or outreach. From a campus level, the pandemic has forced us to find creative ways to do social emotional work virtually – but teach computer skills at the same time for our newcomer kids, starting with how to login. We rolled out our tier 1 social emotional lessons thru weekly videos I made and powerpoint presentations filled with short videos of me teaching the activities. Students were given a paperwork packet and basic school supplies so they could do the hands-on work from home. We also integrated school wide virtual daily check-ins with a visual google form to rate feelings and screen high needs kids since we could not see them between classes like normal. In addition to standard social emotional lessons, we integrated additional questions to assess pandemic related needs and emotional distress (anxiety, etc). [Here](#) is a copy of our therapy rabbit teaching dos and don't's of taking care of your laptop. Frequent follow up phone calls, home visits and alternative means of communication (whatsapp, professional Instagram account, etc.) have helped us remain in touch in order to complete needs assessment and track needs.

Q3   *With the infusion of new COVID-19 relief funds, how do we invest in an implementation framework and ensure equitable distribution?*

A3   The needs assessment and resource mapping process (Module 3) would be a help in sorting through where the greatest need is in terms of types of programming needed, groups within the district/state that need more intense services 9equity), and what resources are available and/or need to be augmented. State, regional and district teams should use data to inform allocation of funding based on community impacts and distribute in an equitable way to ensure every school gets what it needs. Given that COVID relief funds will not ongoing, it may make sense to target one time set up costs including training costs, program materials, or other resources. If funds are used for ongoing purposes, ensure there is a capacity-building plan to continue funding once these resources are exhausted.

The district community leadership team may also consider using the Hexagon Tool (Metz & Louison, 2019) to help make decisions about new interventions being considered for district-wide installation. The Hexagon Tool guides dialogue and decision-making for selecting potential interventions by organizing information about (a) need, (b) fit within current initiatives, (c) evidence of effectiveness, (d) capacity to implement, (e) usability, and (f) resources and supports. This tool allows the team to assess the fit between the proposed intervention, prioritized need, mission, and assess the implementation readiness and resources necessary to install, sustain, and expand the intervention to all students.

From a campus level: Once appropriate needs assessments are completed (on our campus we often call each family and do the assessment over the phone as many of our families lack formal education in addition to language) and high needs themes and communities are identified, ideally funds can go towards both staff incentives (stipends, paid trainings, etc.) as well as programming support and consultation with community feedback integrated to ensure culturally relevant and mutual goals are being pursed for a shared vision of change.

Additional Resources:

- Access the COMPLETE National School Mental Health Best Practices: Implementation Guidance Modules resource, free of charge, here.
- For information about local, state, and regional school mental health training and technical assistance activities, access your MHTTC Regional Center here.
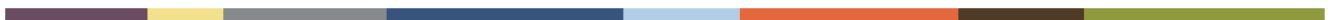
- For information about the National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (Grant No. H326S180001) click here.
- For information about Central School District 13J Trauma Informed Schools Policy click here.

Additional Resources to Support States, Districts, and Schools During and After Pandemic:

Returning to School During and After Crisis: A Guide to Supporting States, Districts, Schools, Educators, and Students through a Multi-Tiered System of Support Framework (MTSS). The compressive guide provides information to support implementation at the state, district, school, and classroom levels. To learn more about how to use this resource, please view the video Guide to the Guide. For more streamlined guidance, please view the state, district, and school guides.

Supporting PBIS Implementation through Phases of Crisis Recovery. The PBIS framework can serve as a road map to consider options for effectively supporting students, educators, and families during and after a crisis. To learn more about how to use this resource click here.

Supporting Students with Disabilities at School and Home: A Guide for Teachers to Support Families and Students. Click here to learn more about five key practices for teachers and families to support all students, including students with disabilities, at school and home. Free access to resources (e.g., informational guides, downloadable materials, research-based programs) are included.

Returning to School: Considerations for Students with the Most Intensive Behavioral Needs, A Guide to Supporting Students With Disabilities, Their Families, and Educators During the 2020–21 School Year. Click here to learn more about strategies and key practices to restart classrooms and schools in a manner that students, their families, and educators can use effectively, efficiently, and relevantly in the current climate.

Additional Social-Emotional Wellness and Mental Health Resources:

Building a Culture of Staff Wellness through Multi-Tiered System of Supports. Click here to learn more about recommendations to district and school leadership teams on how the components of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) can be used to prioritize staff health and wellbeing.

Integrating a Trauma-Informed Approach within a PBIS Framework. Click here to learn how to integrate trauma-informed approaches into the PBIS framework to ensure efforts are linked to student outcomes. Strategies and tools to ensure effectiveness are included.
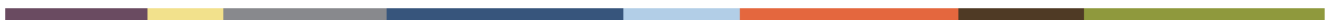
Installing an Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF) at the District/Community Level: Recommendations and Strategies for Coaches and District Leaders. Click here to learn how district/community leaders can embed mental health supports within the PBIS framework to create a unified and comprehensive system of social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) supports in schools. Technical assistance strategies and tools for coaches guiding the ISF process in districts/communities and schools are included.

Teaching Social-Emotional Competencies within a PBIS Framework. Click here to learn how school personnel can teach social-emotional competencies within a PBIS framework to support systematic, school-wide implementation through one system.

Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-Wide PBIS, Volume 2: An Implementation Guide. Click here to learn step-by-step process with examples, activities, and resources for district and school teams to install and implement an Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF).

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