



Southeast (HHS Region 4)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Change is the Constant: Navigating Staff Turnover in School Mental Health Programs

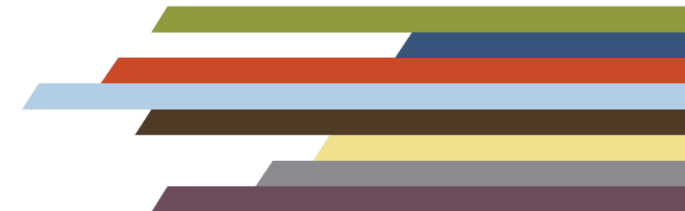
Presenter: Christina Borbely, Ph.D.

School Mental Health Initiative

Southeast Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)

Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University

February 22, 2023



# Disclosure/Disclaimer

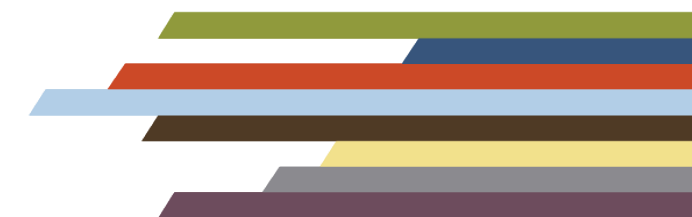
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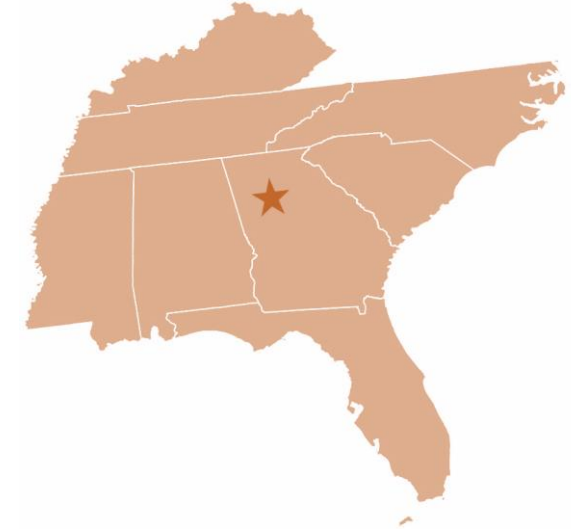
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# About the Southeast Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)

**The Southeast MHTTC** is located at the Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University.

**Serve states in HHS Region IV:** Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.



**Our Mission:** To promote the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based mental health services in the Southeastern United States.

**Our Vision:** Widespread access to evidence-based mental health services for those in need.



Southeast Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

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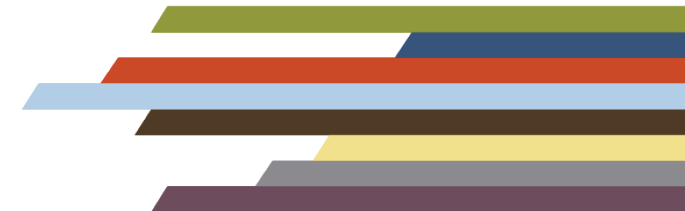
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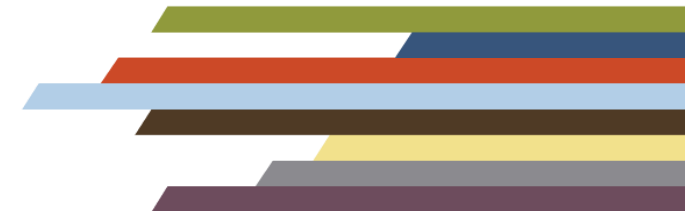
# About Me



## **Christina Borbely , Ph.D.**

School Mental Health Advisor, SEMHTTC

- Developmental Psychologist
- 20+ Years experience providing technical assistance and consultation on federal and state initiatives to improve school mental health systems and youth MH services
- Former Project Director of national technical assistance center for Project AWARE



# Learning Objectives

Participants who join this session will be able to:

1

- Approach program staffing as a fluid and flexible element of a school mental health initiative.

2

- Prepare transition planning and procedures to ensure knowledge transfer and communication about core program components.

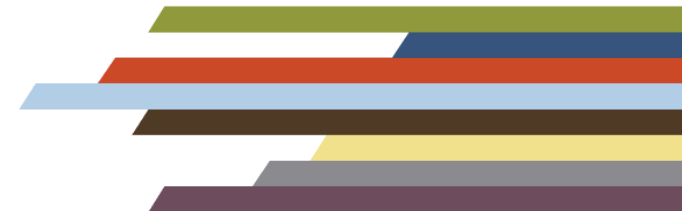
3

- Leverage effective practices implemented by peers who are effectively navigating staff turnover.

# Agenda

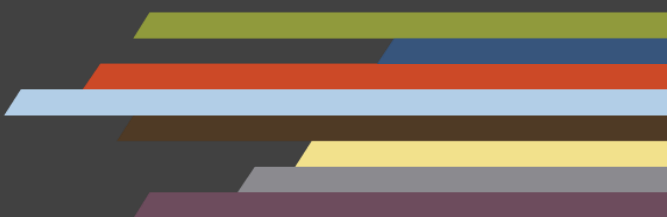


- Staffing of School Mental Health (SMH): What We Know
- Planning for Dynamic Staffing
- Peer Experience
- Discussion





# Staffing of School Mental Health (SMH): What We Know





# Types of Turnover

Poll Question:

What kinds of staff turnover are you experiencing most often?  
*(select most common reasons for staff attrition)*

- Retirement
- Career advancement
- Funding/budget changes reduce positions
- Leaving profession due to burnout/fatigue/too stressful/trauma
- Other

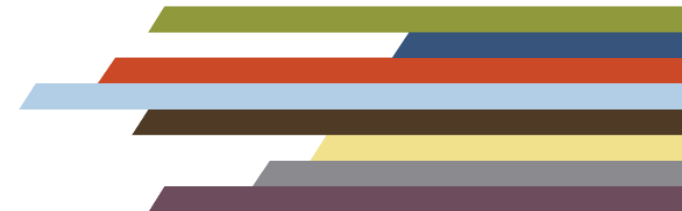
# Before Times: What We Knew

- Turnover among school psychologists was over 20% in a single year (Horvath & Weist, 2006).
- The average turnover rate for mental health staff in schools is 30% (NAMI, 2020).
- School-based mental health providers face high levels of burnout and turnover, with over 50% of school mental health providers leaving their positions within three years (Borrego, Carreón, & Swarbrick, 2017).

# Now: What We Are Experiencing



1. Increased Stress and Burnout
2. Remote Work
3. Financial Constraints
4. Levels of Need (& Awareness of Need)
5. Personal Circumstances



What worked before may not apply now, or may work differently.

Create a supportive, collaborative, and professional work environment that fosters growth and development for all staff members.  
(Walker et al., 2015)



# Before: Approaches to Staff Retention

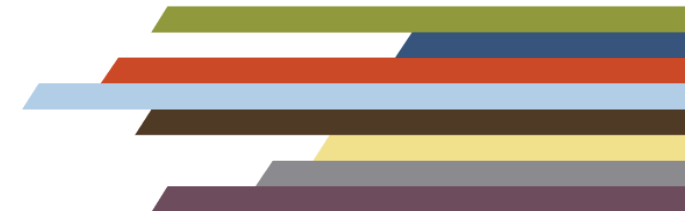
- Recruitment and Retention<sup>1, 2</sup>
- Support and Mentorship<sup>3</sup>
- Professional Development<sup>4</sup>
- Communication and Collaboration<sup>5</sup>
- Evaluations and Feedback<sup>2</sup>



# The Difference



1. More need
2. More awareness of need
3. More demand on providers
4. Pandemic-related burnout
5. Compounding impact of staffing/workforce limitations





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## Executive Summary



[Access the Full Report](#)

## Recruitment and Retention of School Mental Health Providers: Strategies and Key Resources<sup>1</sup>

**Southeast Mental Health Technology Transfer Center, School Mental Health Initiative  
Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia**

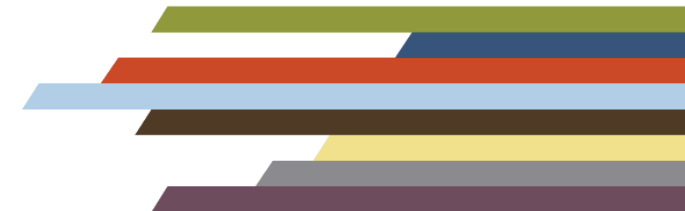
**Authors:** Yidan Xue Zhang, MC Adam S Wilk, PhD Silke von Esenwein, PhD Janet R Cummings, PhD

### • Organizational Strategies

- Collection of Data
- Recruitment Strategies
- Retention Strategies

### • Policy Interventions

- Policies that Aim to Expand the Mental Health Workforce
- Policies that Incentivize Schools and Mental Health Agencies to Invest in Developing the Mental Health Workforce





# Resources

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[Recruitment and Retention of School Mental Health Providers: Strategies and Key Resources](#)

[Recruitment and Retention of School Mental Health Providers Part 1: An Overview](#)

[Recruitment and Retention of School Mental Health Providers Part 2: Innovative Strategies](#)





# Planning for Dynamic Staffing





# Point of View

Assume staff turnover – Prepare for it

# Preparing for Predictable Change

## Spotlight – Focused Planning

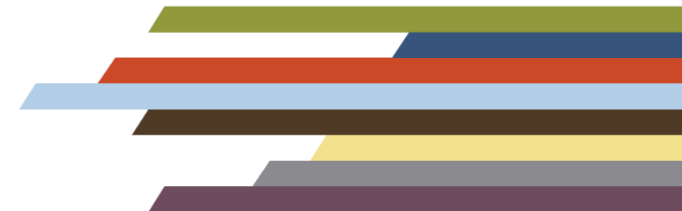
- Key compliance elements
- Key program elements
- Sources/Tools

## Lantern – Broad Planning

- Messaging about staff changes and program continuity
- Assessment and innovation related to recruitment and retention

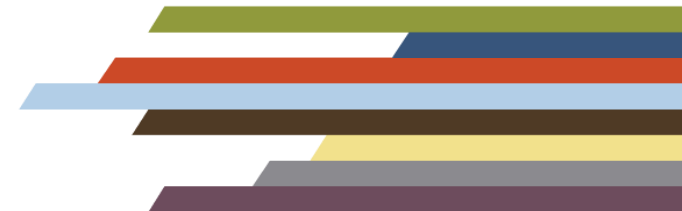
# Tools and Tasks

1. Establish an effective onboarding process
2. Develop a succession plan
3. Provide competitive compensation and benefits
4. Regularly review and evaluate policies and procedures



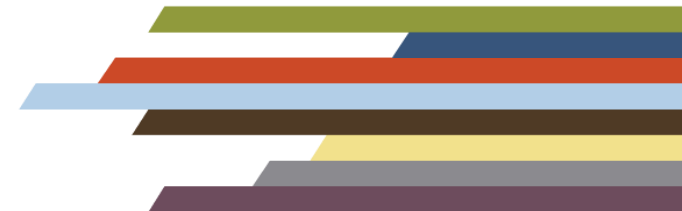
# Workplace Culture

1. Offer professional development opportunities
2. Foster a positive work environment
3. Develop a flexible staffing model



# PR Messaging

- Program continuity: quality and consistency of supports
- Preparedness for staffing changes
- Investment in/value of school mental health programming





# Peer Experiences



# Project **AWARE**

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Peer Example





# Resources

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## **Gantt Chart-based Project Management Tools**

Smartsheet: Project management software that allows interactive Gantt charts to be easily built, updated, and monitored. Paid subscription is required.

TeamGantt: Gantt chart software that shows each task, by day, and who is assigned to complete it. It allows drag-and-drop of tasks for easy development and modification of project schedules. Paid subscription is required.

Zoho: Project management software that allows milestones and tasks to be tracked in a simple Gantt chart format. For each task, progress can be updated and documents can be attached. One project is free, then paid subscription.

Other Project Management Tools


## **Other**

Template for SMH roles and responsibilities from National Center for School Mental Health



# Resources

## California Student Mental Health Implementation Guide

 Click on a section to get started!



**Section 1:**  
Overview of School  
Mental Health



**Section 2:**  
Equity & Anti-Racist  
School Mental  
Health



**Section 3:**  
Needs Assessment



**Section 4:**  
Planning and  
Partnerships



**Section 5:**  
Staffing & Facilities



**Section 6:**  
Coordination



**Section 7:**  
Legal & Liability



**Section 8:**  
Funding &  
Sustainability



**Section 9:**  
Data Collection &  
Outcomes



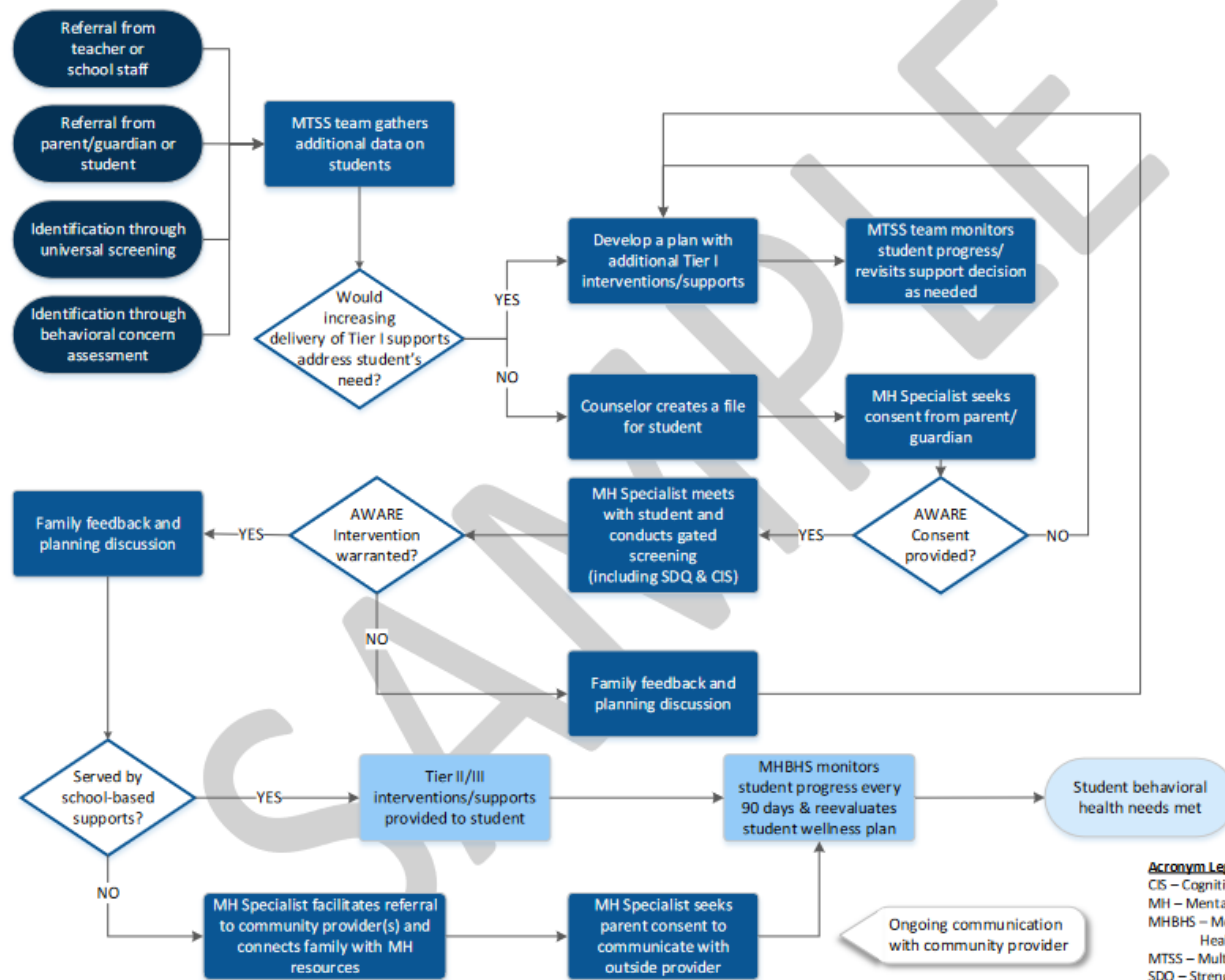
# Resources

## Texas School Mental Health

# Toolkit



### AWARE Texas Process Flow – Sample



**Acronym Legend**  
 CIS – Cognitive Impairment Screener  
 MH – Mental Health  
 MHBHS – Mental Health Behavioral Health Specialist  
 MTSS – Multi-Tiered System of Support  
 SDQ – Strength & Difficulties Questionnaire



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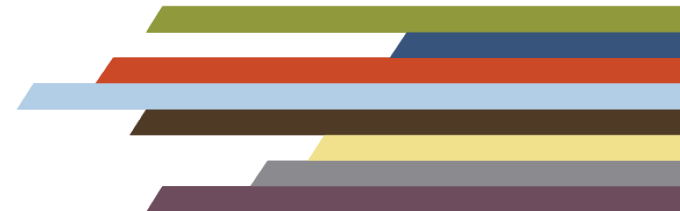
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# Upcoming Sessions

Understanding and Supporting the Executive Functioning of Autistic Students Part 2: Evidence-based approaches to support the executive functioning of autistic students, March 1, 12-1:30 [REGISTER](#)

Southeastern School Behavioral Health Conference, April 20-21 [REGISTER](#)

# View Past Session Recordings

[The Nuts & Bolts of Sustainability: Essentials for the Longevity of School Mental Health Initiatives](#)

[Sustaining School Mental Health at the State-level: Panel Discussion](#)

[Adaptive Leadership: Mobilizing for Sustainability in Your School Community](#)

[Adaptive Leadership: Mobilizing for Sustainability in Your School Community \(Part 2\)](#)

[School Mental Health Financing and Sustainability: Using Stimulus Funds to Advance Comprehensive School Mental Health](#)

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the impact of substance abuse and  
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