Creating a Culture of Mental Health in Schools!

Grab post-it notes and jot programs, policies and practices within the mental health/SEL field that align to the component on the WSCC framework. One idea per post-it!
Creating a Culture of Mental Health in Schools

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Objectives

By the end of this session you will be able to:
• Understand how mental health, SEL fits into the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child framework and opportunities within the Every Student Succeeds Act;
• Hear how we provided support to districts in Oregon; and
• Understand what effective SEL/Mental Health support in schools can look like.
National Perspective - WSCC and ESSA
WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD (WSCC)
Every Student Succeeds Act- an Opportunity for Mental Health in Schools

AZ: Would use Title II-A funds for: School climate, bullying prevention, suicide awareness and school safety, WSCC model mentioned

MA: The Department strongly recommends sustained professional development and collaborative learning around issues of cultural competency and SEL. Developing students’ social emotional competencies can provide an opportunity to develop a sense of positive self-worth in connection to a student’s race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation.
Every Student Succeeds Act- an Opportunity for Mental Health in Schools

MI: Michigan is redeveloping its comprehensive needs assessment process using a Multi-Tiered System of Support approach to focus on the whole child, which includes supporting schools to do a data-based review of all the conditions that relate to student learning, including school safety, discipline, bullying/harassment and student health (inclusive of physical, mental, behavioral and social emotional health)
General Findings

• **37** states mention some aspect of comprehensive school mental and behavioral health in their ESSA state plans
  • Mainly in reference to social emotional learning, MTSS/early identification, fostering supportive conditions for learning, PBIS and addressing student behavior/discipline
  • Often in context to an existing initiative, not a new focus on MH

• **33** state plans explicitly reference school employed mental health professionals (e.g school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers)

• **18** state plans mention improved access to mental health professionals in the context of equity and school improvement
General Findings

• 22 state plans mention professional development in the context of comprehensive mental and behavioral health
  • Primarily as it relates to MTSS/PBIS

• 9 states reference mental and behavioral health as a possible school improvement strategy
  • Note that most school improvement plans are district led

(From National Association of School Psychologists)
Building School Systems: Oregon

Project was funded by Oregon Public Health Division, through Garrett Lee Smith Grant (funded in 2016)

Goals:

• Provide direct technical assistance to communities to strengthen school suicide protocols.

• Develop a protocol development toolkit for use in Oregon schools.
Process

• Adapted Protocol Assessment developed in Maine.
• Provided a range of individualized TA options to county, district, school staff.
  • Protocol review and feedback.
  • Facilitated assessment, prioritization, work plan and material development.
• Developed and adapted resources, templates and sample language to support each component of the assessment.
• Gathered example protocols and stories of success from across the state.
What’s in the Toolkit?

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Portland Public Schools Suicide Intervention Protocol Flow

- **A student has displayed risk for suicide**
  - Take immediate action; notify a building administrator/designee

**Warning signs**
- Gatekeeper completes suicide risk screening with the student, if in doubt, call Medical Crisis Line: 307-392-4881

**Screening Determines Low Risk**
- No plan, no intention to harm self, low parent concern
- Follow School Suicide Risk recommendations including parent and current provider consultation if applicable

**Screening Determines Medium to High Risk**
- Self-harming behavior, threats, ideation, plan, history of attempt, access to means
- Do not leave student alone

**Clear the area of other students; do not leave the student alone**

**Injuries are life-threatening?**
- **Yes**
  - Call 911 & parents
  - Provide necessary CPR & first aid if necessary
  - Follow school suicide risk and high-risk recommendations

- **No**
  - Document actions taken including Suicide Screen Medium to High Risk recommendations
  - Discharge after review
  - Monitor other at-risk students; provide support
  - Contact parents to discuss safety plan with provider recommendations

**Student arrested by mental health provider or hospitalized?**
- Follow-up with EAP/BP (e.g., Project Respite, Emergency Care, provider recommendation)

**Student is hospitalized**
Successes

• Increase use of evidence based tools to identify, screen and refer youth at risk of suicide.

• Develop clear protocols/flow charts with clear triage points and responsibilities.

• Facilitate a flexible process that met communities where they were. Modifiable samples, templates and checklists vs. full scale model policies/protocols.
Lessons Learned (Oregon)

- Lack of capacity at school district level to dedicate staff time to protocol development.
- Partnership is crucial. What can community partners (i.e. county mental health) do to support schools?
- Have to meet schools/district where they are.
- Leverage what schools already have to do (i.e. statute, requirements).
School Social Work Services at a Glance
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Refer students to counselors first for screening

Consultation to teachers/staff on abuse reporting and supporting at-risk youth
Classroom presentations on suicide prevention and depression
Individual screenings and short-term counseling for mental health and addictions issues
Support groups for: grief/loss, anxiety, trauma/abuse survivors, drug/alcohol problems
Family support providing resources and referrals inc. housing, food, wellness workshops

Cleveland High School
Role of the School Social Worker (in a nutshell)

- Facilitate support groups
- Engage with and do outreach to community partners to bring services to youth in schools
- Provide short-term counseling and crisis counseling including suicide assessments.
- Educate staff and parents by hosting seasonal workshops
Reducing Anxiety through Mindfulness

• Goal is to reduce 504 plans while increasing kids distress tolerance
• Mindful Studies class
• Yoga class
• Wise Minds group
• Mental health providers at school
School Community Approach to Suicide Prevention Using the SOS Curriculum

• Suicide prevention is a critical aspect of school based health and mental health services.

• Focus is on 3 key players --
  • Parents
  • Staff
  • Students
One School’s Community Approach to Sexual Violence Prevention/Intervention

• Prevention lessons about consent
• Consent culture advocacy center
• Chrysalis girls group for student survivors of trauma
• Goal to have systematic reporting and support protocol
Questions?