Welcome to Today's Webinar!

Improving School Climate and Connectedness: The Role of School Counselors

This event will begin at 2 p.m. Eastern Time.

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Weblinar Logistics

Q&A

If you have a question for the presenters, please type it in the Q&A Pod, or e-mail ncssle@air.org during the webinar.

Feedback Form

At the end of the presentation, a series of questions will appear. Please provide feedback on this event so that we can better provide the resources you need. All answers are completely anonymous and are not visible to other participants.

For assistance during the webinar, please contact the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments at ncssle@air.org.

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Agenda

1 School Climate: An Overview and Update of the Field
Sandy Williamson, Project Director, NCSSLE

2 Effective Strategies for Addressing School Climate via a School Team
Kevin Dwyer, Associate Research Scientist, American Institutes for Research

3 School Climate and School-based Mental Health: The Connection
Nancy Lever, Ph.D., Co-Director, Center for School Mental Health

4 Reflections: The Role of School Counselors in Addressing School Climate
Connie Pohlgeers, Director, School Improvement, Campbell County Public Schools, KY
FY 2014 Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Grant Recipient

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Webinar Objectives

1 Describe school climate, its impact on student attendance, behavior, and academic performance, and recent national trends in school climate improvement efforts.

2 Identify effective team structures, including school climate teams, that can help school counselors and other specialized instructional support personnel make school climate improvements and enhance school-based mental health supports.

3 Explore the role of community-partnered school mental health services in enhancing school climate.

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Polling Question #1

Which of the following best describes your role?

- ❑ State education agency (SEA) staff
- ❑ Local education agency (LEA) staff
- ❑ Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Grantee
- ❑ Project Prevent Grantee
- ❑ School Counselor
- ❑ Other Specialized Instructional Support Personnel
- ❑ School administrator
- ❑ Classroom teacher
- ❑ Community stakeholder
- ❑ Other

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Polling Question #2

Which of the following best describes the primary reason you chose to participate in this webinar on school climate and connectedness?

- ❏ I want to learn what comprises school climate and school-based mental health.

- ❏ I want to understand what districts have done to address school climate and school-based mental health.

- ❏ I want to obtain strategies and resources regarding how to enhance school climate through school counseling efforts.

- ❏ I want to obtain strategies and resources regarding how to enhance school-based mental health efforts.

- ❏ Other

School Climate: An Overview and Update of the Field

Sandy Williamson, Director, National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments

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National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments

- Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students.

- Provides training and support to states and districts; administrators of districts and schools; teachers; school support staff at schools; communities and families; and students.

- The goal is to improve the conditions for learning through measurement and program implementation, so all students have the opportunity to realize academic success in safe and supportive environments.

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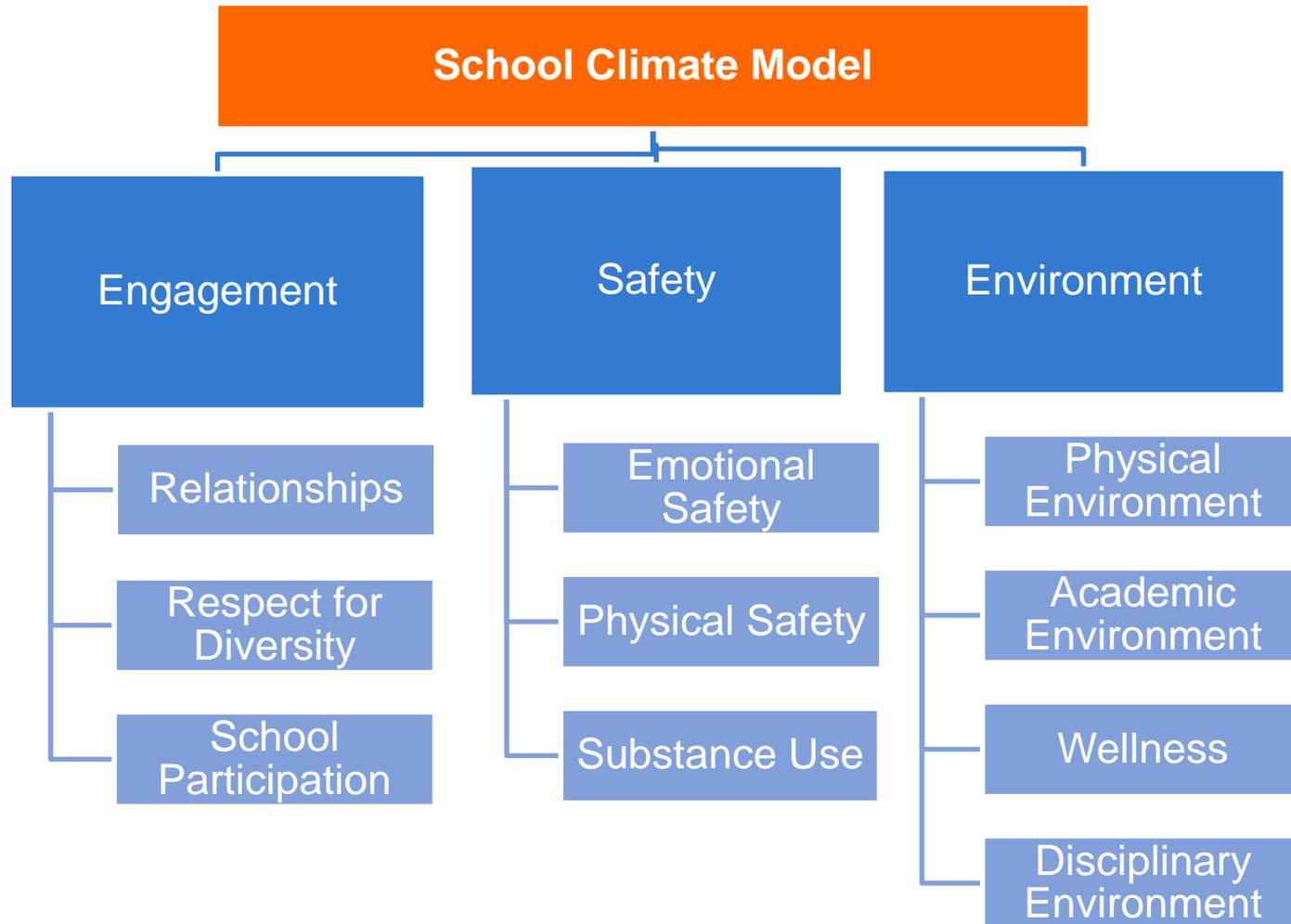
What Is School Climate?

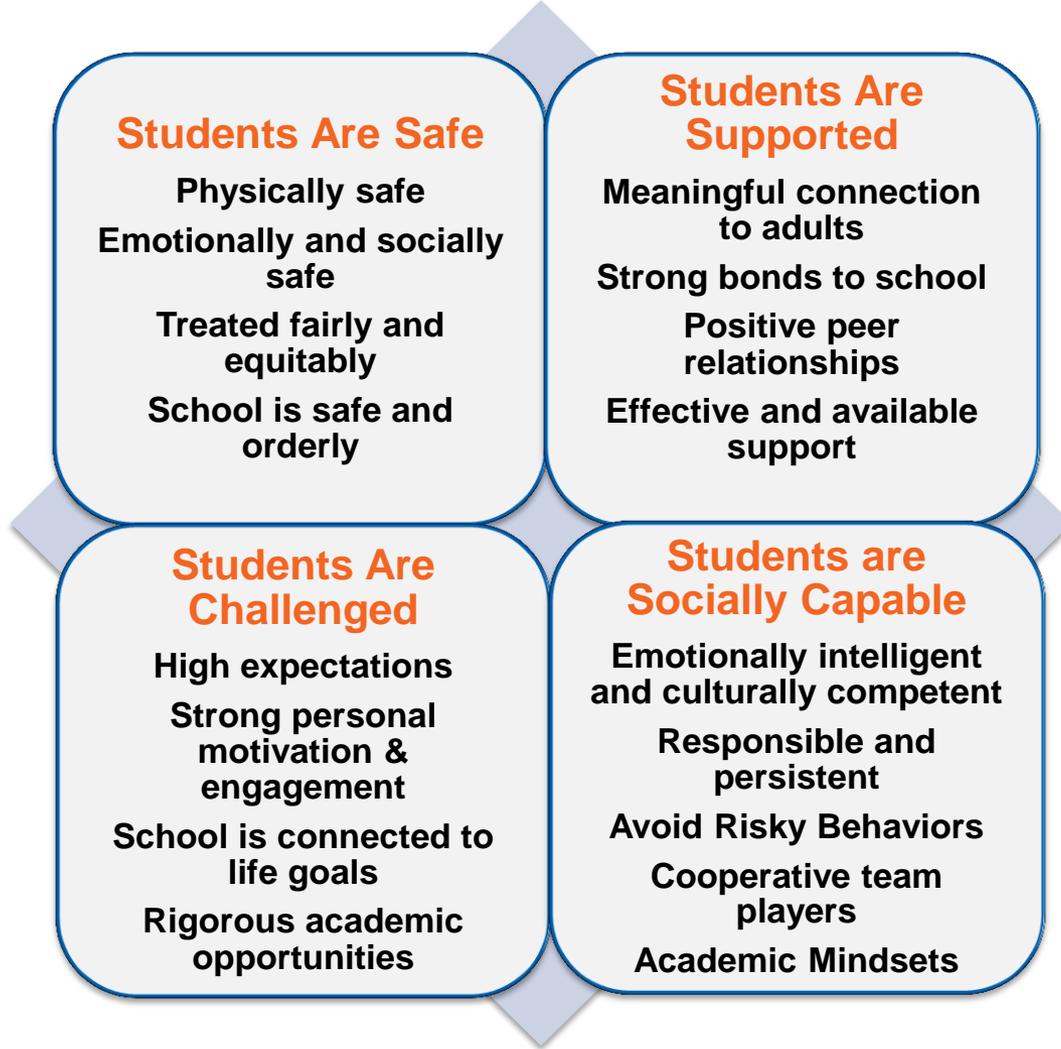**School climate describes the conditions that influence student learning. Positive school climate involves:**

- **Engagement —** Strong relationships between students, teachers, families, and schools, and strong connections between schools and the broader community.

- **Safety —** Schools and school-related activities where students are safe from violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use.

- **Environment —** Appropriate facilities, well-managed classrooms, available school-based health supports, and a clear, fair disciplinary policy.

As you can see, most aspects of school climate are directly related to your role as a school counselor which our other presenters will review in more detail.

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A Model for School Climate

School Climate Model

- **Engagement**
  - Relationships
  - Respect for Diversity
  - School Participation

- **Safety**
  - Emotional Safety
  - Physical Safety
  - Substance Use

- **Environment**
  - Physical Environment
  - Academic Environment
  - Wellness
  - Disciplinary Environment

Citation ▪ 8

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Conditions for Learning: Aspects of School Climate that are Related to Teaching & Learning

Students Are Safe

Physically safe

Emotionally and socially safe

Treated fairly and equitably

School is safe and orderly

Students Are Supported

Meaningful connection to adults

Strong bonds to school

Positive peer relationships

Effective and available support

Students Are Challenged

High expectations

Strong personal motivation & engagement

School is connected to life goals

Rigorous academic opportunities

Students are Socially Capable

Emotionally intelligent and culturally competent

Responsible and persistent

Avoid Risky Behaviors

Cooperative team players

Academic Mindsets

Citations ▪ 9-15

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School Climate Is Critically Important

Having a positive school climate and strong conditions for learning can help districts, schools, teachers, and support staff including school counselors meet key goals, including:

- Boosting student achievement and closing achievement gaps.

- Increasing high school graduation rates.

- Decreasing teacher turnover and increasing teacher satisfaction.

- Turning around low-performing schools.

- Improving students sense of physically safety in their classrooms, offices, hallways, bathrooms, and outside the school building.

- Ensuring students feel emotionally safe because they treat each other with respect, get along well together, and look out for each other.

Citations ▪ 1, 16-39

Negative School Climate Can Harm Students

On the flip side, negative school climate actually harms students and raises liability issues for schools and districts.

- Negative school climate is linked to poor attendance, decreased student achievement and graduation rates.

- Negative school climate can contribute to or exacerbate violence, bullying, and even suicide.

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Protective Factors Contribute to a Positive School Climate and High Academic Achievement

Protection

- Connection
- Safety
- Positive Relationships With Adults and Peers
- Caring Interactions
- Academic Challenges
- Academic Support
- Academic Engagement
- Positive Role Modeling
- Social Emotional Learning
- Positive Behavioral Supports
- Consistent, Restorative Discipline
- Access to Needed Services and Supports

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Risk Factors Contribute to Negative School Climate and Low Academic Achievement
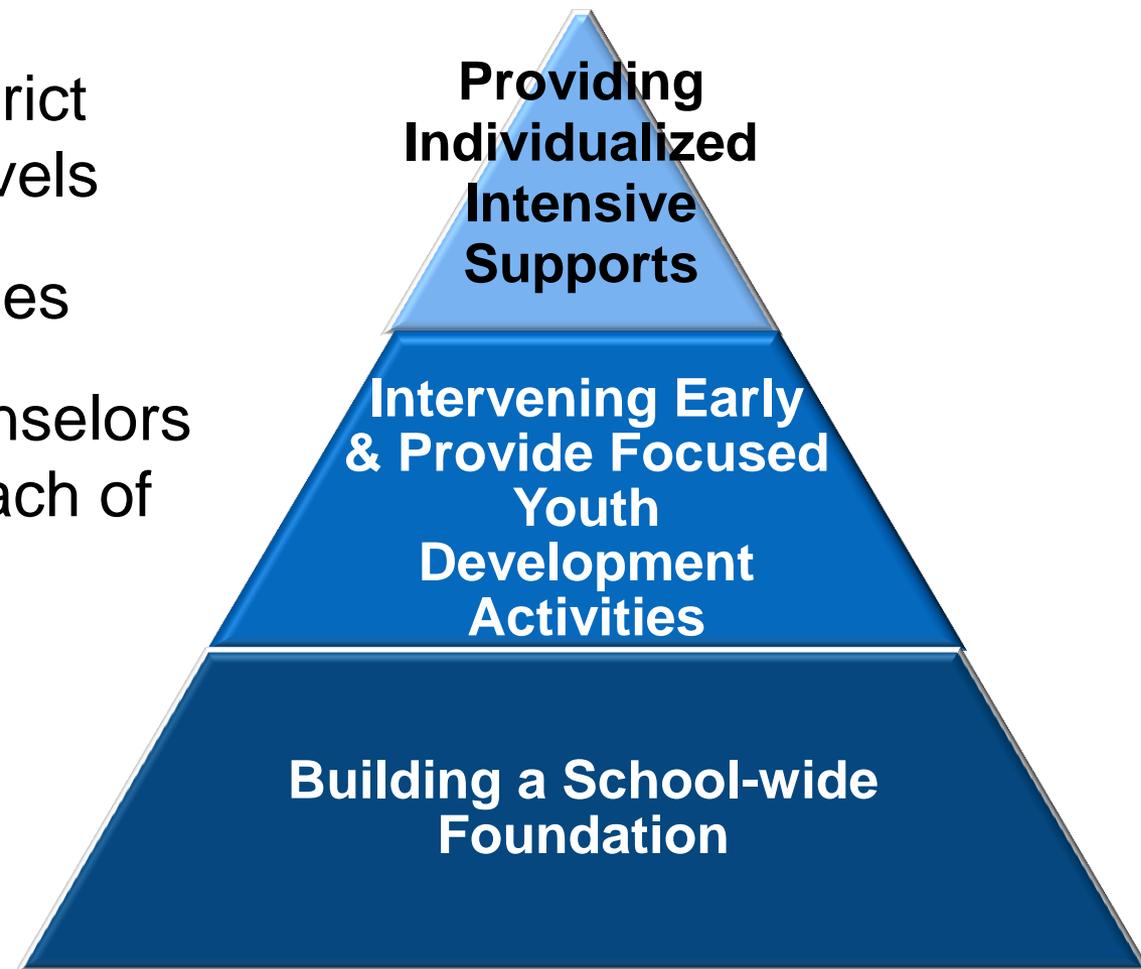
Risk

- Lack of Connection
- Lack of Safety
- Teasing, Bullying, Gangs, Violence
- Negative Relationships with Adults and Peers
- Uncaring Interactions
- Low Expectations
- Academic Disengagement
- Academic Frustration
- Poor (or No) Role Models
- School-driven Mobility
- Reactive Punitive Approaches to Discipline
- Lack of Access to Necessary Services and Providers

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School Climate Improvements Efforts

- Occur at State, district and local school levels

- Range of approaches

- Role of school counselors are integrated at each of these levels

Providing Individualized Intensive Supports

Intervening Early & Provide Focused Youth Development Activities

Building a School-wide Foundation

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Impact of Positive Behavior Supports

- Reduction in number of serious disciplinary issues.

- Improvements in academic achievement.

- Enhanced perception of organizational health & safety.

- Improved school climate.

- Reductions in teacher reporting of bullying behavior.

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Questions?

Q & A

Rachel Goins: How do supportive discipline practices lead to safer schools?

If you have a question for the presenters, please type it in the Q&A Pod, or e-mail ncssle@air.org during the webinar.

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Polling Question #3

Which of the following statements best describes your primary role as part of a team addressing school climate?

- ❑ You are currently a member of a School Climate Team (or school leadership team) and are looking for information to support your role.
- ❑ You are currently assigned to develop and chair a School Climate Team (or similar entity within a school).
- ❑ You are a leader or member of a Student Intervention Team that addresses at-risk and students with academic and or behavioral needs.
- ❑ You are responsible for gathering practical information and strategies on School Climate Teams in order to share it with colleagues.
- ❑ You are interested in forming a School Climate Team and are seeking initial information regarding effective strategies to do so.
- ❑ Other (Please detail in Chat box.)

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Effective Strategies for Addressing School Climate via a School Team

Kevin Dwyer, MA, NCSP

Guiding Principles
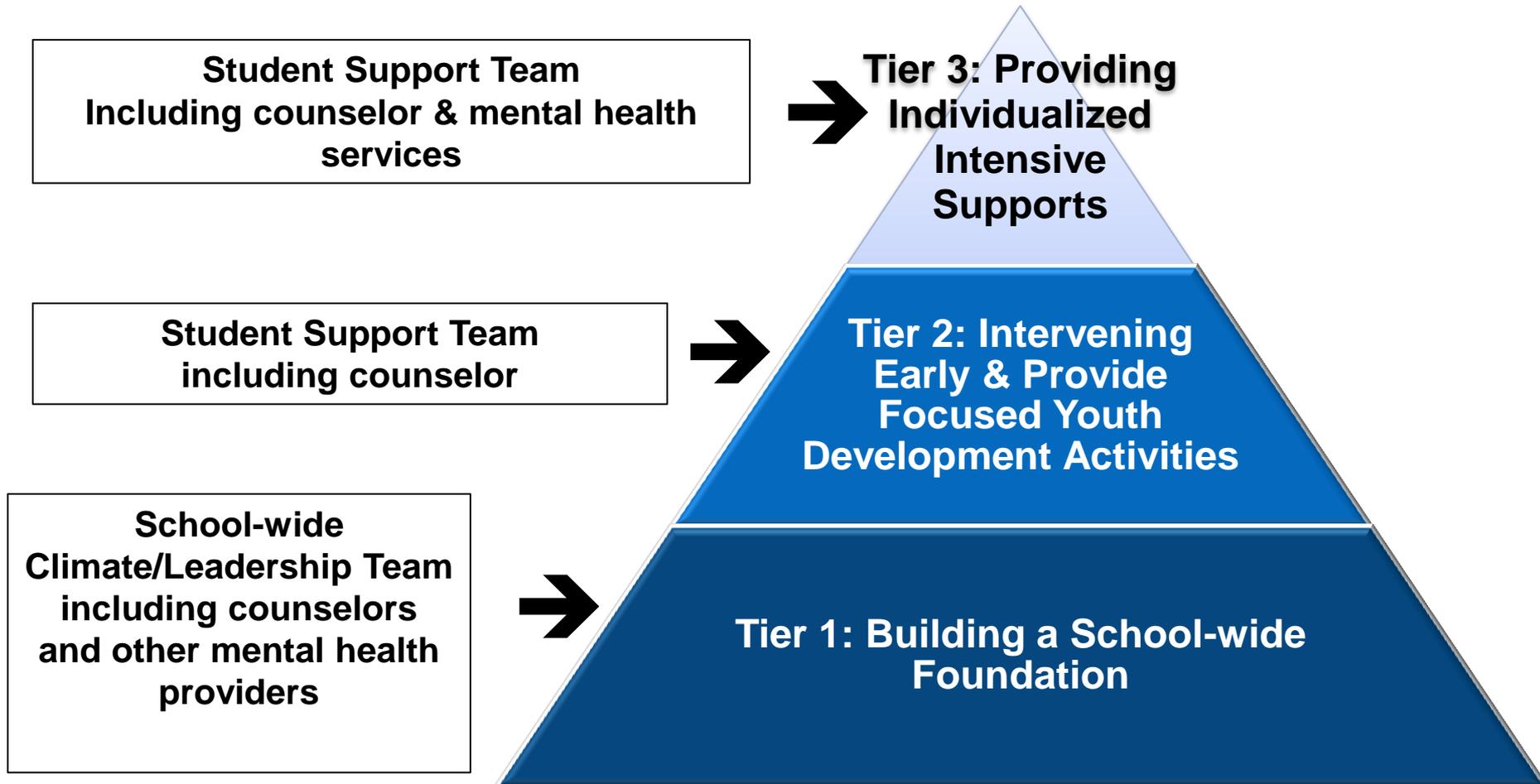
It is important that:

- There is **strong support at system and school administrative levels** for counselor participation.

- Complex problems can be scientifically identified and remedied using **best practices.**

- The change process be **sustained by school-based leadership & local ownership**.

- The change process include multi year **strategic plans supported by action steps that enable best practice implementation, including; training, coaching, and alignment**.

- Implementation of best practices include **a system of ongoing quality improvement** with a focus on needed modifications and adherence to fidelity and results-based outcomes.

Guiding Principles continued

It is important that:

- **A *Prevention/Intervention* paradigm is clearly evident.**

- ***Conditions for Learning* are addressed** in the plan including: (1) caring and connection; (2) social, emotional learning; (3) positive discipline and (4) high academic standards with supports for all.

- **Early and intensive interventions are developed & monitored** to help inform school-wide promotion and prevention activities. This is a critical role for counselors.
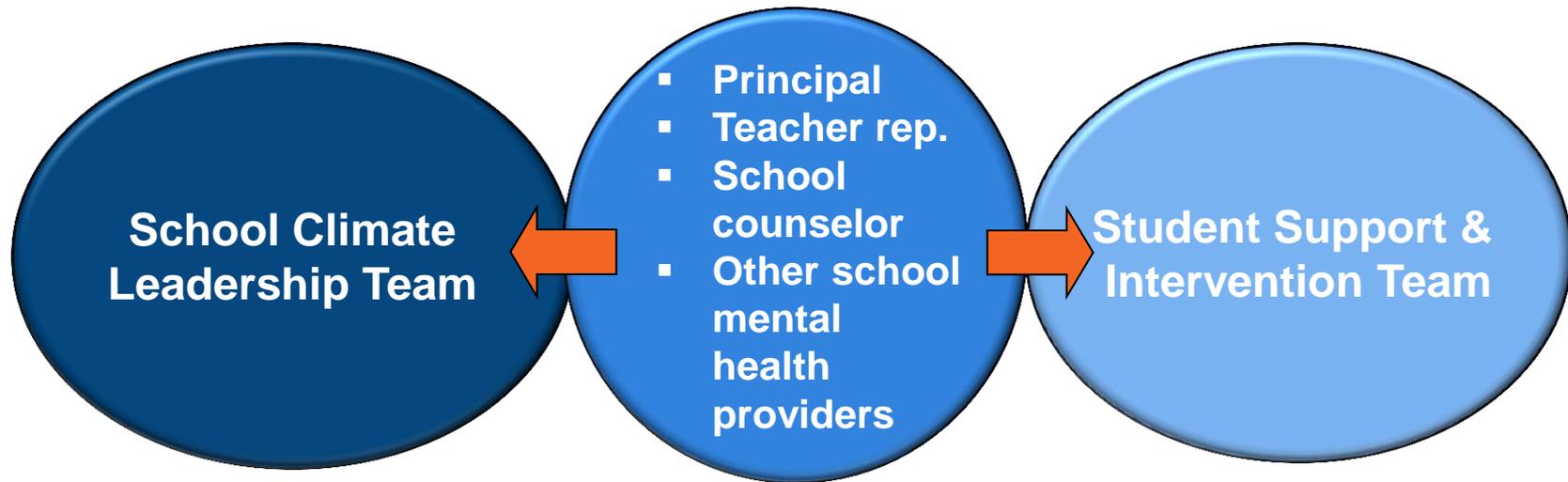
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Prevention/Intervention Paradigm

Student Support Team
Including counselor & mental health services

➜ **Tier 3: Providing Individualized Intensive Supports**

Student Support Team including counselor

➜ **Tier 2: Intervening Early & Provide Focused Youth Development Activities**

School-wide Climate/Leadership Team including counselors and other mental health providers

➜ **Tier 1: Building a School-wide Foundation**

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Which of the levels that we just considered currently receives the most attention in the school(s) in which you work?

- ❑ Tier 1: Building a school-wide foundation
- ❑ Tier 2: Intervening early and providing focused youth development activities & supports
- ❑ Tier 3: Providing individualized intensive supports
- ❑ More than one of the above

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Linking Climate Leadership to Student Support

School Climate Leadership Team

- Principal
- Teacher rep.
- School counselor
- Other school mental health providers

Student Support & Intervention Team

Core team members build the bridge across universal & individual interventions teams.

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Conditions for Learning

Connection, Caring & Trust	Social Emotional Learning & Support
Positive Behavioral Approaches & Supports	**High Academic Standards Learning & Supports**

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Examples of Conditions for Learning Interventions

The following slides provide some examples of ways to address conditions for learning including in the areas of:

- Connection and caring

- Social emotional learning

- Positive discipline

- High academic standards and supports

Examples of Conditions for Learning Interventions

Connection and Caring:

- Student focus groups: initial & ongoing; generating ideas from students & incorporating those ideas.

- Class meetings: can connect to SEL & peer problem solving.

- Resilient classroom techniques.

- Advisories for academic guidance and personal behavioral issues for all students with support from counselors. Advisories help teachers use strength-based and individualized approaches.

- Help teachers & students see themselves as valued.

- Extracurricular activities: training sponsors.

- Greeting students entering school and classroom.

- Name badges with large print FIRST names for all.

- Family liaisons to do outreach & support.

- Training all staff including safety/security to be respectful and positive with students, family and each other.

Examples of Conditions for Learning Interventions

Social-Emotional Learning and Support:

- Teaching a social skills curriculum is shown to increase achievement & instructional time and reduces class disruptions.

- Consider starting with social emotional instruction in the primary grades where you typically get quickest buy-in.

- Use social skills in all school environments: cafeteria, halls, recess.

- Provide parent education and tips for home.

- Include SEL in language arts, creative writing, and other academic subjects.

- Use social skill language in counseling and mental health interventions to connect to the classroom.

Positive Discipline:

- Rewrite discipline code using positive language.

- Utilize a multi-tiered system of support.

- Provide students and families information on how to access help for behavioral issues and disseminate as part of discipline code document.

- Consider planning centers to replace in-school suspension so that students can be helped to find new ways to address their academic frustration and behaviors. Centers can be backed up by counselors providing regular coaching & support.

- Provide professional development for staff to de-escalate behavior problems.

- Identify early warning signs of academic and behavioral issues & implement individualized interventions.

Citations ▪ 83

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Positive Discipline continued:

- Establish well managed peer mediation programs.

- Utilize a Student Support Team to address developing and challenging student behavioral issues.

- Consider implementing the Good Behavior Game in early grades.

- Consider use of Restorative Justice practices.

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Examples of Conditions for Learning Interventions

High Academic Standards and Supports

- Design and support effective high standard curriculum and instruction for all.

- Establish an effective student support team (SST) with knowledgeable members. Provide the team with adequate resources to succeed.

- Engage all staff in a problem solving, "what works" approach to well identified academic problems.

- Ensure challenging academic standards and appropriate instructional supports are in place for all students.

- Support teachers in using individualized and targeted needs-based instruction.

- Provide support and adequate resources for after-school and Saturday instructional support.

- Utilize technology to support curriculum and instruction.

- Monitor each student's progress, including through the SST.

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Effective Team Characteristics

- **Strong administrative leadership and participation**

- **Ensures team composition is inclusive of all relevant stakeholders**

- **Efficient: appropriate size & clearly defined function**

- **Action oriented: team does the work to develop & maintain initiatives**

- **Connect to multi-tiered intervention team(s)**
  - Counselor role

- **Use existing leadership team**
  - Increased efficiency by not duplicating efforts
  - Increases *value* by maximizing existing teams
  - Keeps climate central to academic mission of school
  - Reduces stress on school's human resources & time

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Barriers to Success

- Lack of systemic approaches.

- Lack of monitoring and accountability.

- Lack of effective communication between district, schools, community agencies, law enforcement, and families.

- Cultural, structural, and historical disconnects to effective service delivery between community agencies and schools.

- Fragmentation of services for students and families.

- Weak implementation of innovative efforts.

- Failure to systematize change in most projects – pilot programs not going to scale.

- Inconsistency of services across schools.

- Poor data systems leading to incomplete or unusable data.

- Non-strategic professional development.

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Tracking Outputs and Outcomes

PROBLEM DEFINED	ACTION	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
Student behavioral referrals are increasing in all grades. Achievement scores remain low.	Adopt resilient classroom practices (e.g., hold class meetings), de-escalation techniques, and planning centers.	Teacher and related trainings – observations using key-word scale. Documentation of class meetings. Implementation of planning center practices are defined.	Reduced number of referrals Increased student attention & instruction time. Increased positive measures on CFL for students and teachers.

Vision:
Improved academic achievement.

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Problem Defined by Team

- Objectify the problem in measurable observable terms.

- Assist team in connecting possible causes (bullying) to problem (high absence rate).

- Consider effectiveness of present interventions including policies and practices (such as detention for unexcused absence).

Action Steps for Implementation

- Identify who will do what, by when, and how.

- Select and utilize proven best practices that have been shown to address the identified problem and potential causes.

- Include all stakeholders in selecting interventions including leadership for needed resources.

- Establish steps required to enable implementation. This may involve multiple "actions" (gaining staff buy-in, training, and coaching) prior to the implementation.

Determine Outputs

- Select best practices.

- Measure activities that are required for steps toward best practice implementation.

- Ensure that fidelity measures for outputs:

  - Number of trainings for class meetings. Evaluate training based on established criteria.
  - Number of class meetings held; number observed; number evaluated for fidelity; document results and remedies.

Give us some of your ideas about processes for moving ideas into actions (policies, practices).

Determine Outcomes

- Define outcome measures using problem data and desired benchmarks, goals (improved attendance, academic measures, peer relations).

- Whenever possible, use existing data sets.

- Outcomes must be objective (i.e., based on observable behaviors).

What are some of your ideas about outcome measures?

How do you view the counselor's and other mental health provider's role on climate teams in addressing prevention, early and intensive interventions practices?

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Questions?

Q & A

Rachel Goins: How do supportive discipline practices lead to safer schools?

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School Climate and School-based Mental Health: The Connection

Nancy Lever, Ph.D., Co-Director
Center for School Mental Health

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Segment Overview

1	Components of Comprehensive Community-Partnered School Mental Health

2	Connections to School Climate and Multi-tiered Systems of Support

3	Role of the School Counselor

4	Available Resources

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Which of the following best describes your current plans around setting up community-partnered school-based mental health services in your school/district?

- ❑ We are currently using community-partnered school-based mental health services.

- ❑ We are planning to set up and use community-partnered school-based mental health services.

- ❑ Community-partnered school-based mental health services are not in our plans.

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Which of the following best describes the level of integration of your existing community-partnered school-based mental health services with other counseling functions, including your work on school climate?

❑ Community-partnered school-based mental health services are <u>well integrated</u> with my counseling functions.

❑ Community-partnered school-based mental health services are <u>moderately integrated</u> with my counseling functions.
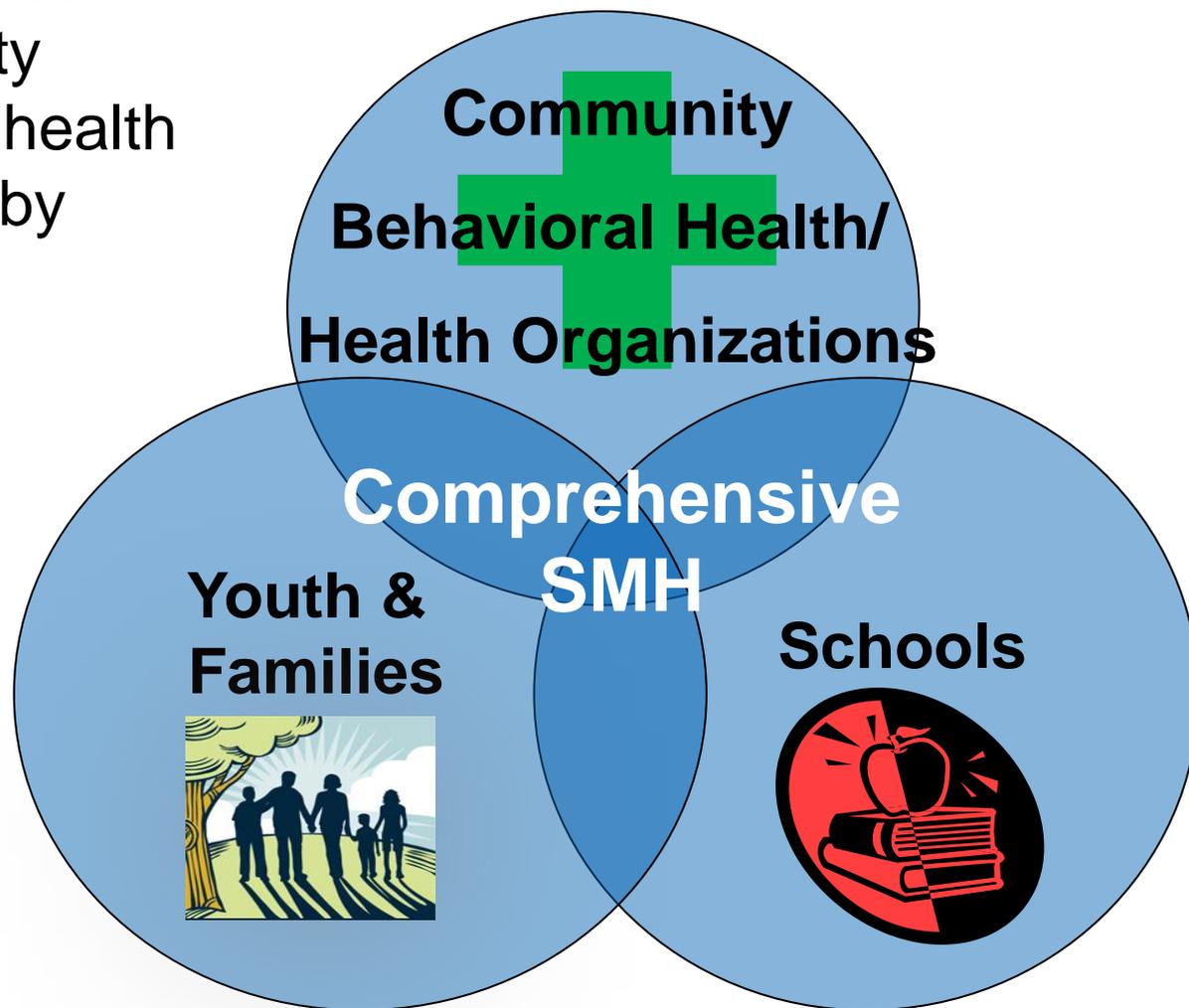
❑ Community-partnered school-based mental health services are <u>not integrated</u> with my counseling functions.

❑ Unknown

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Components of Comprehensive, Community-Partnered School Mental Health

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What Is Comprehensive, Community-Partnered School Mental Health?

It is a *partnership* between schools and community health and behavioral health organizations, *guided* by families and youth.

Community Behavioral Health/ Health Organizations

Comprehensive SMH

Youth & Families

Schools

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It builds on *existing* school programs, services, and strategies.

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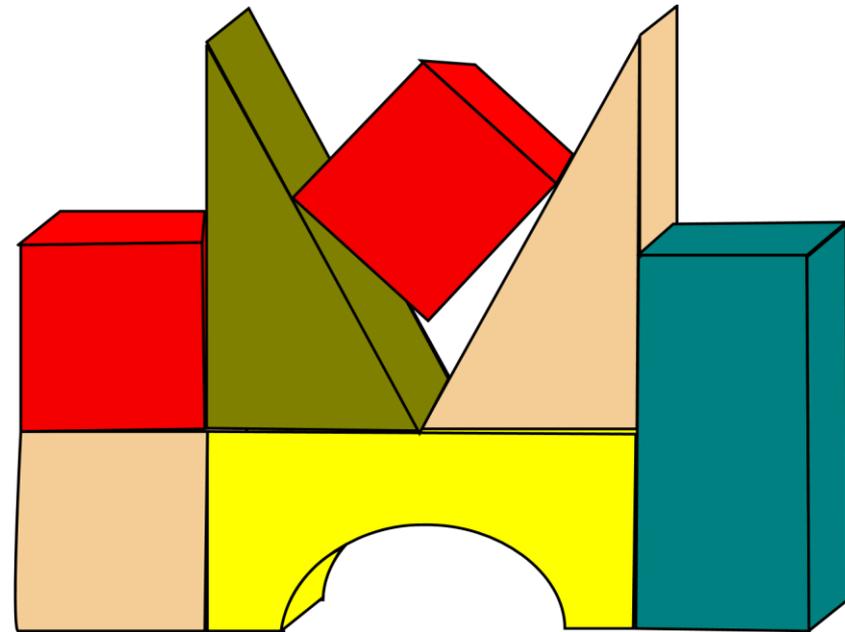
It focuses on *all* students…

…in both general *and* special education.

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What Is Comprehensive, Community-Partnered School Mental Health?

It includes a full range of programs, services, and strategies.

Indicated

Selective

Universal

INDICATED PREVENTION:
- Specialized programs
- Individualized plans
- Includes strategies for students already displaying mental health concerns.

SELECTIVE PREVENTION:
- Specialized programs
- Includes strategies for students who are at-risk for mental health concerns

UNIVERSAL PREVENTION:
- Includes school/classroom/ grade level strategies targeting all students, staff, and settings.

Citation ▪ 90

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Summary of Components

All of these components make up school mental health.

Partnerships	Programs
Involve schools and community health/mental health organizations, as guided by **families and youth**.	Build on **existing school programs**, services, and strategies.

Full Provision	Continuum of Services
Focus on **all students**, in both general and special education.	Involve a **full range** of programs, services, and strategies – mental health education and promotion through intensive intervention.

Citation ▪ 91

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Comprehensive Community-Partnered School Mental Health: Best Practices

- Establish and maintain effective family/school/community partnerships.

- Integrate C-PSMH into multi-tiered systems of support.

- Conduct needs assessment and resource mapping.

- Utilize empirically supported interventions.

- Advance family-school-community teaming.

- Collect, analyze, and utilize data.

- Obtain, sustain, and leverage diverse funding streams.

School Climate and Multi-tiered System of Support

Pyramid (left):
- Providing Individualized Intensive Supports
- Intervening Early & Provide Focused Youth Development Activities
- Building a School-wide Foundation

Pyramid (right):
- Indicated
- Selective
- Universal

INDICATED PREVENTION:
- Specialized programs
- Individualized plans

SELECTIVE PREVENTION:
- Specialized programs
- Includes strategies for students who are at-risk for mental health concerns

UNIVERSAL PREVENTION:
- Includes school/grade/classroom level strategies targeting all students

Citation ▪ 93

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Roles for School Counselors

- Service Provision (individual/family/group)

- Prevention/Promotion (school-wide/grade-level/classroom)

- Screening/Identification/Referral

- Student Support /Mental Health Team Leader/Member

- Needs Assessment/Resource Mapping Informant/Leader

- Outcomes Collection/Evaluation/Continuous Quality Improvement

- Family/School/Community Partnership Development

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Resources to Support Community-Partnered School Mental Health

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Community-Partnered School Behavioral Health Modules

Modules focus on supporting student social, emotional, behavioral and academic progress via a community-partnered approach to school behavioral health.

Free Online Training Series and CEUs:

- 15 Multimedia Modules (may be completed individually or as a series)

- Practical resources, tools, and strategies

- Role play demonstrations

- Best Practice tips from experts in the field

Who should participate in this training series?

- School-based providers (e.g., counselors, social workers, psychologists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists)

- Educators, Administrators, Other Student Support Staff

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Community-Partnered School Behavioral Health Implementation Modules

1. Community-Partnered School Behavioral Health: An Overview
2. Operations: An Overview of Policies, Practices, and Procedures
3. Overview of School Language and Policy
4. Funding Community-Partnered School Behavioral Health
5. Resource Mapping
6. Teaming
7. Evidence-Based Practices and Programs: Identifying and Selecting EBPs
8. Implementation Science: Lessons for School Behavioral Health
9. Data Informed Decision Making
10. School Behavioral Health Teacher Consultation
11. Psychiatry in Schools
12. Starting Early: Supporting Social Emotional Development and School Readiness
13. School Behavioral Health Program Evaluation 101
14. Ten Critical Factors to Advance State and District School Behavioral Health Objectives
15. Working with State Leaders to Scale-Up School Behavioral Health Programming

Citation ▪ 94

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Document Templates

Templates created by the Center for School Mental Health Clinical Programs include:

- When to Refer a Student

- Referral Form

- Consent for Treatment

- Release of Information

  - *Release to/Receive from school*

  - *Release to/Receive from other providers/agencies*

- Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding (MOA/MOU) (school/community partner example)

- MOA Components to Consider

Questions?

Q & A

Rachel Goins: How do supportive discipline practices lead to safer schools?

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Reflections from the Field: The Role of School Counselors in Addressing School Climate

Connie Pohlgeers, *Director of School Improvement and Community Education, Campbell County School District*

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District-wide Comprehensive School Counseling

Doing "Whatever It Takes"

OUR COMMUNITY. OUR SCHOOLS.
OUR COMMITMENT.

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District-wide Professional Learning Community (PLCs)

- School counselors and Family Resource and Youth Service Center Coordinators participate in monthly professional learning community.

- The infrastructure allows for design, implementation and evaluation our continuum of care.

- Work is led by the district Director of School Improvement.

- Professional learning is concentrated on district-wide policies and behavior and discipline expectations.

- Efforts have led to the development of K-12 protocols for referrals and screening, and a multi-layered approach to evidence-based intervention.

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Key Components of Our District-wide Comprehensive School Counseling Program

1. Includes mission, vision and goals in continuous planning efforts.

2. Employs Data-based decision making.

3. Uses tiered interventions.

4. Promotes engagement in professional learning.

5. Sustains partnership with the local university.

6. Builds supports for family member participation in education.

7. Provides early screening identifies students with critical mental health needs.

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Solid Infrastructure:

- Establishes a solid infrastructure led by a district administrator.

- Keeps common goals in mind.

- Provides direct services, including early identification of counseling needs and interventions.

- Commits to fully embrace an evidence-based counseling approach beginning with our district-wide PLC book study.

Support from the Top:

- Starts with our superintendent believing in the need.

- Reflects a district–wide culture.

- Annual board retreats with focus on student support services.

Results Experienced in Our District

- Student to counselor ratio has gone from 652:1 to 245:1 at the elementary level; from 330:1 to 240:1 at the secondary level.

- All school improvement plans include language specially addressing the role of the school counselor.

- An overall district-wide reduction in discipline referrals of 15% from 2013-14 to 2014-15 school year. (First full year of ESSCG implementation.)

- 1 of our 7 schools are RAMP certified with 3 others submitting applications in October. Our remaining 3 schools will submit in October of 2016.

- CCS holds a distinguished label based on Kentucky State Accountability measures; ranking at the 97th percentile.

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Additional Results Experienced

- Based upon needs assessment data, non-cognitive data and academic data, each of our schools run a variety of small group interventions.

- During the 2014-15 school year, we screened over 30 students on the GAIN Short Screener at the middle/high school level. (Confidentiality prohibits me from reporting the numbers in active referral, parents who denied services, etc.)

- During the 2014-15 school year, we completed 68 threat assessments for harm to self or others ranging from elementary to high school aged students. This year we have already completed 10 since the start of school.

- During the 2014-15 school year, each of our 7 schools held a minimum of three parent trainings focused on non-cognitive skill development. The same is planned for this school year.

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Questions?

Q & A

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Take-A-Ways

Effective Strategies for Addressing School Climate via a School Team	• Leadership must be actively supportive of the vision by resourcing its initiatives • Action oriented team management is sustained to manage and monitor interventions. • Buy-in must be generated to ensure fidelity of implementation. • An implementation plan should include frequent feedback that celebrate steps to success.
School Climate and School-based Mental Health: The Connection	• School mental health is most effective when developed within the context of a multi-tiered system of support. • School mental health service provision can be enhanced, offering a broader continuum of services through family-school-community partnerships. • Community partnerships in schools depend on close collaboration and teaming with school staff. • School counselors play a critical role in all aspects (from planning to implementation to continuous quality improvement) of Comprehensive, Community-Partnered School Mental Health.
Reflections: The Role of School Counselors in Addressing School Climate	• A successful comprehensive counseling program requires a strong infrastructure built around common goals and a continuous cycle of evaluation and planning. • A tiered, evidence-based approach is critical to meeting the needs of all students. • Support from the "top" is a must when growing a strong district-wide culture focused on student need.

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