NFSTAC PRESENTS

Family Engagement in School Mental Health

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2-3:30pm ET
Disclaimer

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The contents herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views, nor are an endorsement of, SAMHSA/HHS or the U.S. government. The National Federation of Families and the National Family Support Technical Assistance Center do not endorse any product presented.
NFSTAC uses family-centered language!

- trauma-responsive
- strengths-based
- avoids blaming caregivers
- inclusive
- person-first
- respectful
- nonjudgmental
- consistent with our actions
Parenting

Born April 3, 2001….25 weeks….1lb 10 oz.
Early School Days
Systems in various states

- Dilworth
- Snowdrop Academy

- Rockburn Elementary

- Grier Middle School
- Gaston Christian School
- Ashbrook High School
High School to College
Let’s Discuss College
Covid, Trauma & College
Relationship
Pa-Rent-Ing
Playing Teacher

Lifetime dream of being a teacher…

- Career Day visit to elementary school
- Practicum in high school
- Elementary Education degree
- Preschool teaching in MO (and GA)
- Teaching toddlers to high schoolers in Japan
- Masters in Educational Psychology
- 2nd grade SPED inclusion class in GA elementary school
- Kindergarten class in NYC charter school
Back to School…What’s going on?

- Optimism
- Frustration
- Fear
- Overwhelm
- Despondency
- Burn Out
Another Good Teacher Leaves the Field

A breaking point…
leaving teaching to make a difference in education policy through developmental psychology research!
Applying Research to Address Trauma in Schools and Bring Families into the Conversation

Teaching Skills, Facilitating Reflection, Sharing Experiences

- **5 min:** Opening mindfulness practice
- **10 min:** Strategies to address mental health alongside school staff
- **15 min:** Reflective questions
- **15 min:** Sharing challenges
- **15 min:** Sharing solutions and successes
Family Peer Specialists have four central roles:

1) Offering **peer support** to family members,

2) Mentoring families to become confident advocates for their children’s desired supports and family-driven systems,

3) Helping families **navigate multiple systems**, and

4) Teaching skills to maintain personal and family **well-being**.
I would really appreciate more of a **breakdown** specifically of our area in Northwest Georgia. **These are the programs. These are the acronyms.** I want a breakdown of day-to-day, **these are the people, and these are the roles.** You can tell me that you're a manager of whatever title, but I don't understand what that means. That's not telling me what your job is. I understand what Ms. Hope and Angela’s duties are. I've seen evidence of what [they] do, but there's still things I'm learning every time we [interact]. **Everything is so vast and it's like a never-ending story, because there's so many things going on.** Don't hand me a pamphlet about ADHD. We can get ADHD information everywhere. **I need to know what is right here, right now that I have access to.** I want to know about the therapy group, which I wouldn't have known about if it wasn't for Angela. **Having those parent groups has been a tremendous help.** I wouldn't have known that if we didn't get referred to [this program]. **I wouldn't have known that had the school not finally had somebody in there saying, ‘Hey, look, this is available to you.’**
Take HEART!

Healthcare workers and Educators Addressing and Reducing Trauma

MAKE A LIST AND CHECK IT TWICE

Make a list and check it twice. Compile a list of policymakers, policy drivers, leaders in education, and influencers you’d like to contact. First, focus on the contacts who represent your community and state. Collect their contact information: name, phone number, email address—and list the representatives you plan to contact.

KNOW WITH WHOM YOU ARE SPEAKING

Know with whom you are speaking. Analyze your audience. Research the viewpoints, voting records, and careers of the stakeholders you meet. Weave this information into your pitch. Come to the meeting with an understanding of the staff member’s power to affect change directly or indirectly with their higher-ups. Tailor your message to their interests, attitudes, and level of understanding.

Tips for Advocating for School Mental Health Needs

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, youth mental health was a burgeoning public health crisis, with the number of youth experiencing serious mental health challenges, substance misuse, and suicidal ideation rising exponentially year after year (Twenge et al, 2018). The global pandemic of coronavirus disease has exacerbated this problem, shedding light on the multiple factors responsible for this crisis, while increasing pressure on governmental, public, and community groups to respond. We developed this tip sheet to help jumpstart your own advocacy efforts to improve mental health services for youth. We address the basics—how, where, who—and give practical, targeted, and effective recommendations to help you explain why there is an urgent need to increase school mental health services.

How to Advocate

Follow recommendations from the National Association of School Psychologists (2020)

- Ready to Learn, Empowered to Teach promotes these seven guiding principles for maintaining a high-quality public education system:
  - Review, evaluate, and reconstruct or replace existing school structures, policies, and procedures that lead to inequitable outcomes.
  - Combine high expectations for all students with high-quality instruction across a well-rounded and culturally responsive curriculum for general and special education students.
  - Create positive school climates that balance physical and psychological safety for all students.
  - Provide access to comprehensive school-based mental and behavioral health services and ensure adequate staffing levels of appropriately trained school-employed mental health professionals.
  - Increase family and community engagement to support student success.
  - Create systems that support the recruitment and retention of properly trained and prepared professionals that reflect the diversity of the school community.
  - Create accountability systems that use a broad set of school, district, and state metrics to measure progress and drive improvement.

www.heartcollective.info
Family engagement is a collaborative and strengths-based process through which professionals, families, and children build positive and goal-oriented relationships. It is a shared responsibility of families and staff at all levels that requires mutual respect for the roles and strengths each has to offer.
Effective Practices in Education

1. Shared decision making
2. Value families as partners and leaders
3. Bidirectional
4. Culturally responsive
Effective Practices in Mental Health

1. Psychoeducation
2. Accessibility
3. Understanding of family view on mental health
4. Culturally responsive
How do we monitor and improve family engagement in school mental health?

2 Domains
- Activities for caregivers
- Quality of services and supports

Input
- Analysis of SMHQA
- Feedback from Caregivers – FREDLA
- Feedback from School-Based Mental Health

Instructions
- 15-20 minutes
- Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), Almost Always (5), Always (6)

Results
- Strategic Planning Guide
- Continuous Quality Improvement
- Quality Guide
Comprehensive School Mental Health Systems

• Provide a full array of supports and services that promote positive school climate, social emotional learning, mental health and well-being, while reducing the prevalence and severity of mental illness

• Built on a strong foundation of district and school professionals, including administrators and educators, specialized instructional support personnel (e.g., school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, school nurses, other school health professionals) in strategic partnership with students, families and community health and mental health partners

• Assess and address the social and environmental factors that impact health and mental health
DOMAINS
How do we monitor and improve family engagement in school mental health?

2 Domains
- Activities for caregivers
- Quality of services and supports

Input
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Results
- Strategic Planning Guide
- Continuous Quality Improvement
- Quality Guide
How often does my school...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Almost Always</th>
<th>6</th>
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**Share information**
- provide information about different ways that caregivers can be engaged in school mental health

**Invite to caregiver to school teams**
- invite caregivers to participate in school mental health teams related to planning and implementation

**Hold accessible meetings**
- hold meetings at days/times/locations that are accessible for parents to attend

**Provide alternatives**
- provide alternative options for parents to be engaged in decision-making if they cannot attend meetings

**Assess perspectives**
- assess caregiver perspectives and priorities related to student mental health strengths, needs, and services

**Inform policies and procedures**
- invite families to learn about and inform mental health screening policies and procedures
### How often does my school...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1 Never</th>
<th>2 Rarely</th>
<th>3 Sometimes</th>
<th>4 Often</th>
<th>5 Almost Always</th>
<th>6 Always</th>
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<td>Invest time</td>
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<td>• invest time and resources into building positive relationships with caregivers</td>
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<td>Establish communication</td>
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<td>• establish and maintain bidirectional communication with caregivers</td>
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<td>Maintain proactive and positive communication</td>
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<td>• establish and maintain proactive and positive communication with caregivers</td>
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<td>Be culturally responsive</td>
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<tr>
<td>• use culturally responsive approaches in building relationships with caregivers</td>
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</table>
How often does my school...

Evaluate Fit
- involve caregivers to evaluate the fit of interventions with respect to the strengths, needs, and cultural/linguistic considerations of students, families, and communities

Build consistency between home-school environments
- share and receive information from caregivers to encourage consistency between home-school environments

Invite to trainings
- invite caregivers to trainings and events related to mental health, behavior, and well-being

Seek and incorporate input
- seek and incorporate caregiver input about mental health trainings for i) staff; ii) caregivers; iii) students

Co-Lead Trainings
- seek family partnership in leading trainings about mental health, behavior, and well-being (e.g., leading SEL lesson, contributing expertise to school professional development training, presenting to the school board)
How often does my school...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Never</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
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<td>Sometimes</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
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**Share data**
- share data with families related to student use of mental health services

**Involve in dissemination**
- involve caregivers in dissemination of mental health information to youth and families

**Review data on outcomes**
- partner with families to review data on school mental health system outcomes to inform ongoing mental health programming

**Partner for fundraising**
- partner with families to plan fundraising events that support school mental health programs

**Secure funding**
- engage caregivers to collaborate on pursuing and securing funding (e.g., applying to grants; speaking to funders and collaborators)

**Inform use of funding**
- partner with families to prioritize how to best use funding for school mental health services/supports
Calculate Score for First domain
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provides Training for School Staff</th>
<th>1 Never</th>
<th>2 Rarely</th>
<th>3 Sometimes</th>
<th>4 Often</th>
<th>5 Almost Always</th>
<th>6 Always</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide trainings on student mental health for school staff, including knowledge about signs and symptoms of child psychopathology, support strategies, promoting positive mental health, and culturally responsive strategies for diverse students/families.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Provides Training for Caregivers</th>
<th>1 Never</th>
<th>2 Rarely</th>
<th>3 Sometimes</th>
<th>4 Often</th>
<th>5 Almost Always</th>
<th>6 Always</th>
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<tr>
<td>Provide trainings on youth mental health and related topics for caregivers (e.g., promoting positive mental health, signs and symptoms of concern, routine setting for homework, behavior management at home)</td>
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<th>Provides Training for Students</th>
<th>1 Never</th>
<th>2 Rarely</th>
<th>3 Sometimes</th>
<th>4 Often</th>
<th>5 Almost Always</th>
<th>6 Always</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide training for students on how to support their peers with mental health and behavioral difficulties</td>
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<tr>
<th>Share Information on Referral Processes</th>
<th>1 Never</th>
<th>2 Rarely</th>
<th>3 Sometimes</th>
<th>4 Often</th>
<th>5 Almost Always</th>
<th>6 Always</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide information about available school mental health supports and the referral process to students and families</td>
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<th>Implement Evidence-Based Interventions</th>
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<th>2 Rarely</th>
<th>3 Sometimes</th>
<th>4 Often</th>
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<th>6 Always</th>
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<tr>
<td>Implement evidence-based school mental health programs and supports</td>
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</table>
How often does my school...

1. Incorporate SEL
   - incorporate social emotional learning into daily school activities

2. Sponsor wellness events
   - sponsor mental health and wellness events for students (e.g., mental health fairs, book fairs on youth mental health)

3. Check in on wellbeing
   - check in with students about their well-being regularly

1 | Never | 2 | Rarely | 3 | Sometimes | 4 | Often | 5 | Almost Always | 6 | Always
How often does my school…


**Have mental health professionals**
- have mental health professionals readily available to support students and families

**Maintain regular contact**
- have mental health professionals who are in regular contact with caregivers regarding services and supports for their students

**Seek input on strategies**
- seek input from caregivers about their child’s strengths, challenges, and what strategies work best for the student and family

**Be culturally responsive**
- provide mental health services appropriate for the children’s cultures, languages, and values

**Use accommodations**
- use accommodations successfully to support student’s mental health strengths and needs
How often does my school...

<table>
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Monitor implementation
- monitor how well staff and teachers are implementing programs and share information with caregivers

Monitor outcomes
- monitor how students are responding to programming and share information with caregivers

Communicate with transparency
- communicate transparency in its evaluation procedures and interpretation of any assessments about student mental health

Collaborate
- collaborate with community organizations and partners to host fundraising events that support school and community mental health programs

Secure Funding
- secure funding and develop community partnerships to ensure adequate mental health coverage (e.g., school-employed and community-partnered) and services/supports.
Calculate Score for Second domain
Did your scores match your expectations?

**Emerging** – Domains where contributors reported the practices within the domain do not exist yet within the school or they are observed infrequently. The overall mean falls between 1.0-2.9.

**Progressing** – Domains where contributors reported the practices within the domain exist and they are carried out at least some of the time but they are not standard within the school. The overall mean falls between 3.0-4.9.

**Established** – Domains where contributors reported of the practices within the domain are part of the every-day practice and happening almost always. The overall mean falls between 5.0-6.0.
## Action Planning

### How are we creating space for families in our policies and procedures?
- Sharing decision-making
- Collaborating on trainings
- Gaining input
- Disseminating resources

### How inviting is the environment we are asking them to join?
- Training staff, families, and students
- Checking in on student wellbeing
- Monitoring quality
- Adequate funding

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[www.nfstac.org](http://www.nfstac.org)  [www.ffcmh.org](http://www.ffcmh.org)
How do I want to be involved?

*We hope the practices provide ideas for caregivers too!*

- Participate on teams
- Share expertise
- Attend trainings
- Co-lead trainings
- Support fundraising
- Review and select screeners and interventions
- Communicate with my child’s therapist
What can caregivers do?

Connect with local, district, and state resources to support family engagement!

- Review school, district, and/or state education websites
- Connect with parent organizations
- Statewide Family Engagement Centers
About the MHTTC Network

- Accelerate the adoption and implementation of mental health related evidence-based practices across the nation
  - Develop and disseminate resources,
  - Provide training and technical assistance,
  - Deliver workforce development opportunities for the mental health field

https://mhttcnetwork.org/
MHTTC School Mental Health Initiative

Bringing awareness, disseminating information, and providing technical assistance and training on the implementation of mental health services in schools and school systems

Supporting the Mental Health Needs of Students Attending Tribal Colleges
Publication Date: November 6, 2021
Developed By: Mid-America MHTTC

Supporting the Mental Health of Autistic Students
Publication Date: August 9, 2022
Developed By: Southeast MHTTC

Well-Being Wednesdays
Taking Care of Teachers Who Take Care of Kids

Helping Families Navigate Therapy
Publication Date: January 26, 2021
Developed By: New England MHTTC

Supporting Student Mental Health: Resources to Prepare Educators
Collaborating TTC: Global MHTTC
Publication Date: January 14, 2023

Social Influencers of Health and Suicide in Black Youth
12:00pm - March 1, 2023 | Timezone: US/Eastern
Collaborating TTC: Central East MHTTC

Registration Deadline: March 1, 2023
Need more information? Contact us at webinars@stonyinstitute.org
Classroom WISE: Well-Being Information & Strategies for Educators

Free 3 Part Training Package
www.classroomwise.org
Classroom WISE Online Course

• Self-paced online course with a 5 contact hour certificate of completion
• Includes evidence-based strategies to promote student mental health and support students with mental health challenges
• Skills are based on the scientific literature on school climate, mental health literacy, social emotional learning, and school-based interventions for mental health problems.
Classroom WISE Video Library

How Teachers Can Show Interest
Teachers can help keep students engaged by showing interest. In this video, students of various ages describe ways that teachers have shown interest in them and their lives.
Length: 1:00 sec

Supporting Students in Distress
Teachers can be great sources of support for students in distress. In this video, teachers describe how they initiate a conversation, listen non-judgmentally, provide reassurance, and come up with plans to support students. Length: 3 min 33 sec

Letting Students Know You Are a Safe and Supportive Person
Students often look to teachers when they are experiencing distress. In this video, teachers describe how they let students know they are a safe and supportive person. Length: 3 min 25 sec

Available at https://www.classroomwise.org/video-library
Classroom WISE Resource Collection

Module 1: Creating Safe and Supportive Classrooms
Module 2: Teaching Mental Health Literacy and Reducing Stigma
Module 3: Fostering Social Emotional Competencies and Well-Being
Module 4: Understanding and Supporting Students Experiencing Adversity and Distress
Module 5: The Impact of Trauma and Adversity on Learning and Behavior
Module 6: Classroom Strategies to Support Students Experiencing Distress

Available at https://www.classroomwise.org/resource-collection
Cultural Inclusiveness and Equity WISE

- A companion training to Classroom WISE

- Educators learn:
  - How inequities in education impact student mental health
  - How implicit bias influences our perceptions and responses
  - Culturally inclusive classroom strategies to support student mental health

Module 1: Understanding How Social Injustices Impact Student Mental Health
Module 2: Understanding How Educator Bias Impacts Student Mental Health
Module 3: Engaging in Culturally Inclusive Classroom Actions to Promote Student Mental Health
Module 4: The Impact of Trauma and Adversity on Learning and Behavior
Access all MHTTC Events & Resources

Visit our Training and Events Calendar and Products and Resources Catalog on our MHTTC website
MHTTC Family Engagement Resources

Guide for Engaging Families

Educators can increase youth and family engagement in school and in the classroom by reaching out to establish positive relationships with youth and families; demonstrating respect for diversity; and identifying ways to engage students and families in ways that are meaningful to fostering positive relationships and promoting student success and well-being.

SPECIFIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Build relationships
  - Find common ground
  - Make meaningful connections
- Show respect for diversity
  - Understand different cultural practices
  - Acknowledge diverse cultural viewpoints
  - Foster a culturally responsive classroom

- Foster school participation
  - Provide opportunities for students to engage in school activities
  - Encourage family involvement

- Build communication
  - Send positive messages home
  - Communicate often and use multiple methods of communication, including phone calls, written notes, text messages, links to recorded video messages, etc.

School MH Best Practices ‘Always and Now’ Learning Series: Teaming

Collaborating TTC: Global MHTTC, National American Indian and Alaska Native MHTTC; South Southwest MHTTC
Publication Date: February 24, 2021

More than a DSM Code: Addressing Stigma Experienced by Families | Podcast

Publication Date: June 5, 2023
Developed By: Northwest MHTTC

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FAMILIES
Bringing Lived Experience to Family Support

www.ffcmh.org
MHTTC Family Engagement Resources

From Longhouse to Schoolhouse: AI/AN School Communities Coming Together

Collaborating and Communicating Effectively with Parents

Hosted by: Teresa Brewington, Coharie, Lumbee, MBA, M.Ed.

Learning From and With Students, Caregivers, Advocates and Systems Leaders

Publication Date: July 31, 2020

Developed By: Southeast MHTTC

Family Navigator Model: A Practice Guide for Schools

By Kim Weis, MA, Pacific Southwest MHTTC, with Mike Sweezen, MS, Family-Run Executive Director Leadership Association (FRDLA)
MHTTC Family Engagement Resources

Mental Health and Children: Perspectives from Families on Screening, Diagnosis, and Support

Ambassador Program

Providing Culturally Relevant Services to Families of LGBTQ+ Youth

Leah Love, MSSA, LISW (She/Her)
Consultant to National SOGI Center
Angela Weeks, DBA (She/Her)
Stay in touch with the MHTTC Network!

Visit the MHTTC website!
www.MHTTCnetwork.org

@MHTTCNetwork

For questions about the MHTTC School Mental Health Initiative, contact Jessica Gonzalez jegonzalez@stanford.edu

Subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter to learn about our latest FREE trainings and resources available to you!
Follow Up and Next Steps

In our follow up email, within 3-5 business days, look for:

• A link to the recording of today’s presentation
• Today’s presentation slides
• Invitations to upcoming events
• Additional resources
• Ways to stay connected with us
• A letter of participation emailed to you

www.nfstac.org
Upcoming event announcement

Cutting-Edge Practice Skills for the Family Peer Workforce Presented by Gail Comier and Lachelle Freeman
Feedback Survey

Thank you for joining us!

Please complete the SAMHSA-required Feedback Survey you will be directed to when the webinar ends.
CONTACT INFORMATION

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Thank you for joining us!