

DSBN MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS 2014/15

School-based Mental Health Teams established (a.k.a. IST).

Pathway to Care will involve the following steps:

- Perceived student mental health concern brought to the MHT/IST team.
- In developing a plan, it is determined who will initially support the needs of the student (e.g., caring adult, YC, SW, etc.).
- After plan has been created, the student is once again brought to the MHT for ongoing updates by the person(s) supporting that student.

CARING ADULT, YOUTH COUNSELLOR & SOCIAL WORKER SUPPORTS IN SCHOOLS

Caring Adult responsibility will include:

- Implicit teaching of Mental Health as part of the Ontario Curriculum
- Create a safe, caring, inclusive classroom environment
- Ensure meaningful and positive learning environments
- Establish clear and consistent behavioural norms within the school and classroom environment
- Being a good listener/mentor to students
- Reach out to students who appear to be struggling or not themselves
- Ensure that every student is connected to at least one caring adult in the building
- Determine if issues/symptoms appear to be interfering with the student's functioning
- Communicate issues to IST

Youth Counsellor responsibility will include skill building in the following areas:

- Self-awareness - the ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and influence on behaviour.
- Self-regulation - the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts and behaviours effectively in different situations.
- Social awareness - the ability to take the perspective of, and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behaviour, and to recognize family, school and community resource supports.
- Relationship skills - the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups.
- Responsible decision-making - the ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behaviour and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others

Social Worker responsibility will include the following:

- Clinical assessment of need and development of comprehensive intervention plan
- 3-5 solution-focused sessions, working directly with students
- Clinical case management (e.g., ongoing consultative support while student is involved with outside agency; supporting family systems)
- Referrals to the following: Mental Health and Addictions Nurse
Pathstone School-based clinicians
Community Mental Health Agencies

IST/MHT meetings:

- Supporting Minds is at every meeting and referred to
- Pathway to Care chart is at every meeting
- student concern is brought to team - must include background information, what is the expected outcome/goal for the student
- team determines who will support the student and in what capacity: caring adult, YC, SW, other
- regular updates are provided at subsequent team meetings including strategies tried and progress to date
- Bridge student updates are provided at team meetings - including progress to date, attendance, so school does not lose track of these students

Anti-stigma understanding and awareness:

- YC/SW team to present at a staff meeting Supporting Minds document
- YC/SW team present on Mental Health issues/topics at staff meetings

The following is a guideline for who is best to support students in need:

Caring Adult:

- Sense of purpose and belonging
- Involvement in class/school-based activities
- Emerging disengagement
- Self-regulation
- Peer relations
- Self-esteem/self-worth

Youth Counsellor:

- Self-esteem
- Anger/aggression management
- Social skills building
- Stress management
- Peer relationships support
- Disengagement
- Basic needs (e.g., housing, food, clothing, etc.)

Social Worker:

- Self-harm/suicidal thoughts
- Substance use
- Threat/risk assessment
- Tragic event response
- Child abuse
- Crisis intervention
- Family conflict
- Gender identity support

Team approach required:

- Anxiety
- Attendance difficulties
- Behavioural concerns
- Bullying/victimization
- Bereavement/loss
- Separation/divorce
- School climate
- Mental health support
- Staff support and education