



Five Best Practices for School Mental Health

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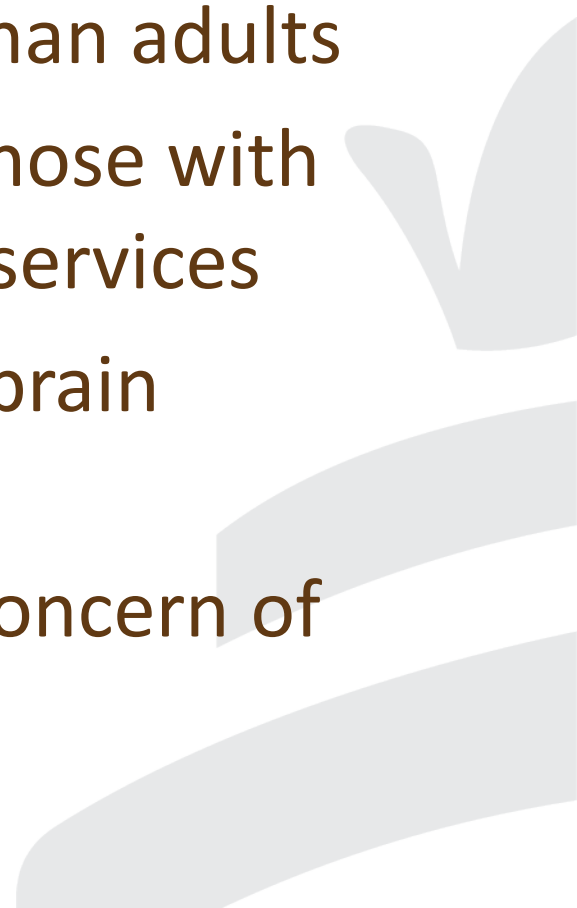
Project Director, Mental Health





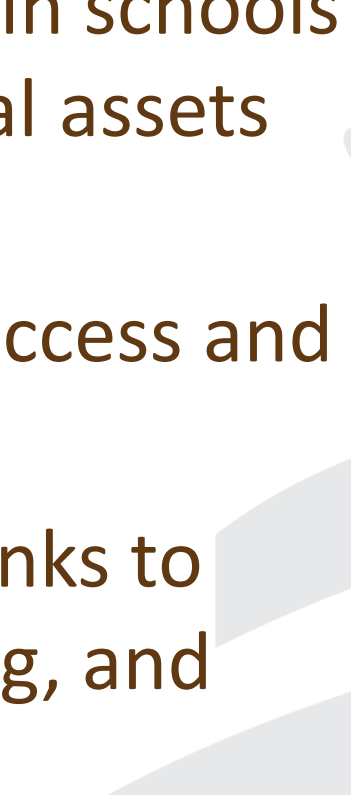
What is the problem?

- Mental health challenges are common
- Symptoms can emerge in childhood and adolescence, and look different than adults
- Most children and youth, even those with insurance, do not have access to services
- Mental health challenges affect brain development and learning
- Behavioral symptoms are a big concern of teachers and schools





Why in schools?

- Most children and youth who receive services get them at school
 - Individual and group counseling in schools are linked to more developmental assets for students
 - School-based services increase access and reduce stigma
 - Improvement in mental health links to improvement in behavior, learning, and social skills
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What can school mental health services address?

- Adjustment disorders
- Complex trauma
- Disruptive behaviors/disorders
- Internalizing behaviors/disorders
- Grief/loss
- Concerns related to child and adolescent development
- Parent/child or teacher/student conflict
- Concerns related to academic struggles or learning differences
- Concerns related to physical health or chronic illness





Mental health programs and services are **responsive to the needs** identified in your school community.





Mental health services are built from a positive school climate and delivered in a **tiered intervention** framework.





Mental health services are leveraged through strong school staff and community provider partnerships.






Mental health services
are coordinated through
a **school-site team.**



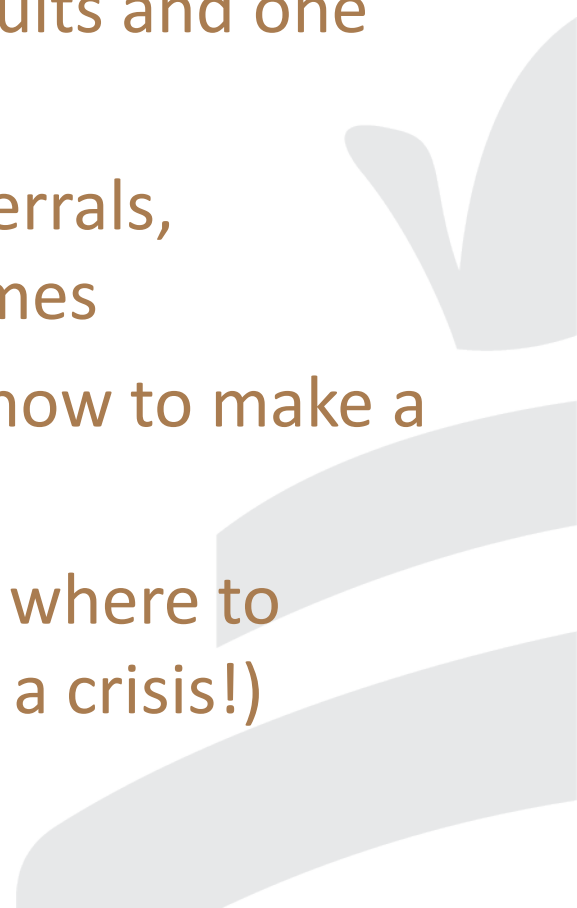
School site coordination teams

- Include school and community-based support, health and mental health staff
 - Conduct meeting in a case presentation format
 - Establish confidentiality and documentation procedures
 - Refer students based on broad criteria
 - Coordinate services to better serve students and reduce duplication
 - Carve out time to discuss school-wide issues
 - Commit to meet weekly at a dedicated time
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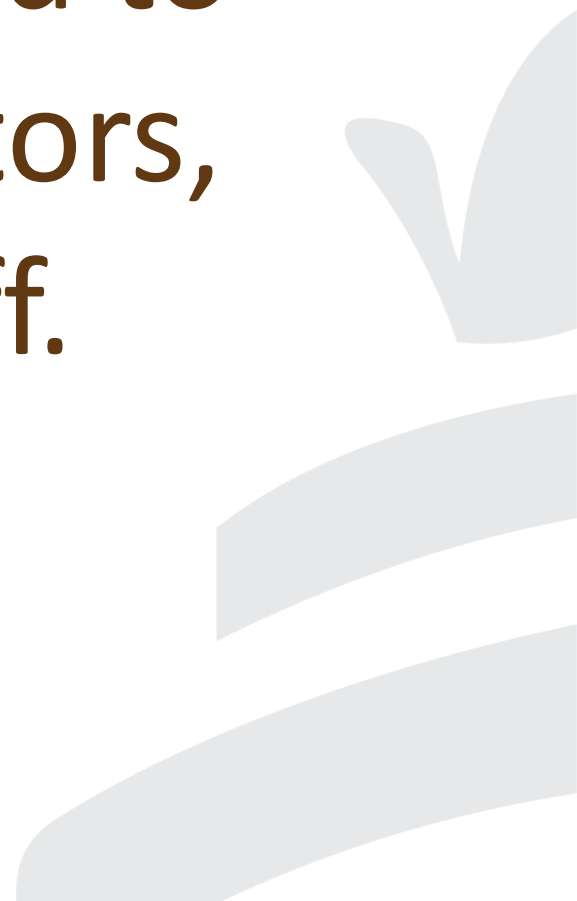
Referral systems

- Coordinate referrals through one person, program or team
- Develop at least 2 forms—one for adults and one for youth/self-referral
- Create a system to track status of referrals, interventions, provider(s) and outcomes
- Educate everyone on campus about how to make a referral and what happens next
- Ensure the school community knows where to refer in a crisis (and what constitutes a crisis!)





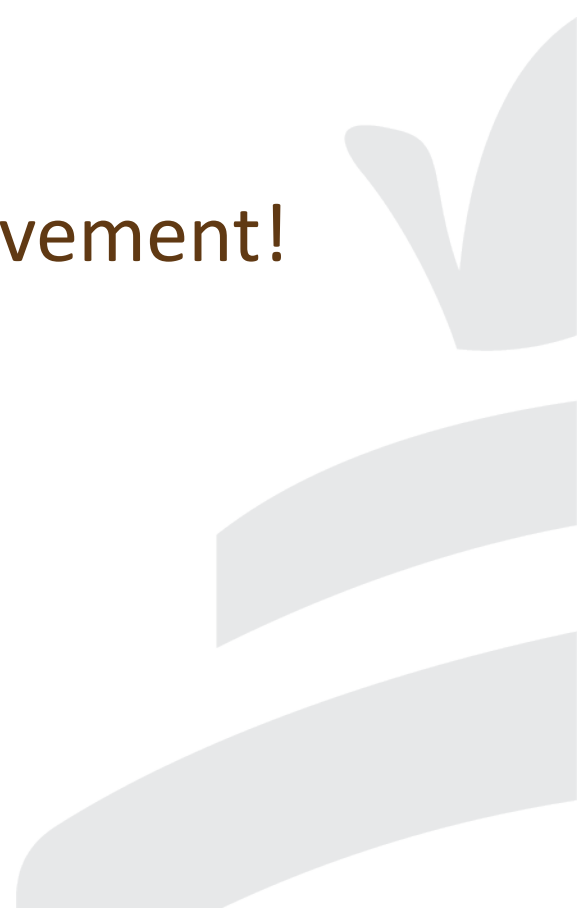
Mental health **training and consultation** is offered to teachers, administrators, and other school staff.





WAIT a minute! What about...

- Confidentiality (HIPPA! FERPA!)
- Funding!
- MOUs and contracts!
- Quality assessment and improvement!
- Evidence-based practices!
- Summer vacation!





So now what?

1. Arrange a visit to a successful school mental health site.
2. Explore available school data and priorities.
3. Identify current services, programs, staff, and systems in the school.
4. Ask students and families about mental health needs in the school.
5. Start small!



For more support and info

Contact Alicia Rozum at CSHA

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Center for School Mental Health

www.csmh.maryland.edu

Regional K-12 Student Mental Health Initiative

www.regionalk12smhi.org

