

Appendix L: Foundational Best Practices

SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND SUPPORTS: FOUNDATIONAL BEST PRACTICE

Foundational Best Practice	Description	Who is responsible	How to accomplish it
Family-School-Community Partnerships	Partnerships inclusive of <i>all</i> stakeholders' perspectives – family, school and community – with a shared vision and goals for the program. All partners have vested interest in providing the most effective services that ensure the mental health and wellness needs of all students.	District and school teams, family, community organizations	Make families aware of their child's social and emotional development and how to support behavioral learning at home. Include families and community partners in intervention planning and counseling efforts. Organize school-based teams that include family members, community partners, and key school personnel. Collaborate across systems to reduce duplication of services.
Mental Health Promotion and Awareness	Intentional and purposeful efforts to reduce stigma, increase awareness of mental health issues, and promote mental wellness. These can take place at the school, district, or community level.	District staff, school staff, community partners	Students can do this through project-based learning assignments. School personnel can work closely with the community, including families, to reduce the stigma around mental health by conducting awareness campaigns and hosting Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainings and creating a culture of care.
Staff Professional Development	Coordinated training events that are reflective of the school and district improvement plans, are sustained, and progress from introductory to in-depth. Trainings address social-emotional learning, child and adolescent mental health, trauma-sensitive and culturally-responsive classrooms, adolescent development, and the school-based mental health system.	District staff, school staff	School leaders schedule staff professional development for behavioral health throughout the entirety of the year, with follow-up or "booster" sessions as needed. Staff should be trained on <i>who</i> and <i>how</i> to refer students for services, how to speak with families about concerns, how to promote mental health, stigma reduction and mental health awareness, and how to universally screen and progress monitor students.
Positive School Climate and Culture	The quality and character of school life, including its norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, and organizational processes. Includes a school-wide commitment to ensuring the wellbeing, safety, sense of belonging, and success of every student.	District leaders, school staff	Embed behavioral health professionals into the culture of the school. Health professionals and educators can work together to create a support system for students. Ensure trauma-informed and culturally responsive classrooms. Utilize Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at the district and school level.
Accountability Systems	Systems and structures to hold school staff accountable for the attainment of social, emotional, and behavioral health determinants of students, as embedded into school improvement plans.	School administrative staff	Establish learning benchmarks within schools. Create family and community partnerships, cultural responsiveness, professional development, and other strategies that align with foundational best practices.
Data-Based Decision Making	Ongoing, reflective data analyses comparing current trends to the desired state (i.e., progress monitoring), with a commitment to adjusting practices based upon data. Includes routine assessment of progress toward academic and behavioral health outcomes (e.g., suspension rates, academic achievement, and discipline referrals).	District staff, school staff	Administer comprehensive assessments of school climate and culture, mental health issues and concerns. Conduct resource inventories of existing program and practices. Routinely review existing data to analyze risk and protective factors. Identify problems and address gaps in services. Focus on larger school population to maximize program effectiveness (i.e., public health approach).

SOURCE: Maike, M., Osborne, M., Fox, T., Scarano, D. (2017). Exploring the landscape of mental health and wellness in Washington's K-12 education system. Renton, WA: Kaiser-Permanente.