



**School-Based Mental Health and Substance Abuse Consortium
Educator Mental Health Literacy Roundtable**

School Board Decision Support Tool for Mental Health Capacity Building

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School Mental Health Literacy Roundtable

District Decision Support Tool for School Mental Health Capacity Building

About the School Based Mental Health and Substance Abuse Consortium

The School-Based Mental Health and Substance Abuse Consortium (SBMHSA Consortium) was formed in 2009. It is comprised of 40 researchers and practitioners from across Canada with particular expertise in school mental health. The Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health provides leadership for this project. This group received a contract from the Mental Health Commission of Canada to complete a national survey of educators about school mental health, a scan of best practices in this area, and a systematic review of the academic literature.

About the Educator Mental Health Literacy Roundtable

The Knowledge Translation and Exchange (KTE) Team of the SBMHSA Consortium identified, through early engagement activities, that the issue of Educator Mental Health Literacy is very pertinent to any discussion of school mental health in Canada. That is, educators feel ill-prepared to identify, understand and manage student mental health problems at school and are seeking professional development to build capacity in this area (Short, Ferguson, & Santor, 2009). A number of resources have recently come onto the market in this regard and the KTE Team decided to itemize these, and to provide some guidance to school districts with respect to selection of particular resources for their setting. To achieve this, a national team of educators, product developers, and researchers came together to create a Listing of Educator Mental Health Literacy Resources, a decision support tool for school boards, and some recommendations regarding the future development work.

About the Decision Support Tool for School Mental Health Capacity Building in Ontario

Increasingly, educators in Ontario are seeking information to assist in building capacity related to supporting student mental health. There are many products and services entering the market that are being positioned around the new Mental Health and Additions Strategy. School Mental Health ASSIST is introducing the Decision Support Tool created by the SBMHSA Consortium as a resource for school board and school leaders to help with the selection of appropriate and aligned professional development approaches.

*Note that these considerations are meant as an aid for system/district decisions about educator professional development efforts, **not** for decisions about school/class programming for student mental health promotion or prevention.*

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The SBMHSA Consortium wishes to thank the following Educator Mental Health Literacy Roundtable members for their contributions to the development of this Decision Support Tool:

Roundtable Members	Organization	Steering Committee Members	
1. Keli Anderson	F.O.R.C.E Society for Kids' Mental Health	1. Connie Coniglio	BC Mental Health and Addiction Services
2. Catherine Bancroft	Toronto District School Board	2. Bruce Ferguson	Hospital for Sick Children
3. Candace Bergeson	Program and Student Services, Manitoba Education	3. Michelle Forge	Council for Ontario Directors of Education
4. Ann Blackwood	Government of Nova Scotia	4. Stan Kutcher	Dalhousie U & IWK Health Centre
5. Elana Bloom	Center of Excellence for Mental Health, LBPSB	5. Ian Manion	Ontario Centre of Excellence for CYMH
6. Don Buchanan	HWDSB and Offord Centre for Child Studies	6. Despina Papadopoulos	Ontario Centre of Excellence for CYMH
7. Sarah Cannon	Parents for Children's Mental Health	7. Fiona Scott	SBMHSA Consortium
8. Patrick Carney	Simcoe-Muskoka Catholic District School Board	8. Kathy Short	School Mental Health ASSIST
9. Kacey Dalzell	Simon Fraser University	9. Yifeng Wei	Dalhousie U & IWK Health Centre
10. Dena Davis	Edmonton Public School Board	<p>National Educator Mental Health Literacy Roundtable</p> <p>Mission Statement</p> <p><i>To bring educators, policy officials, product developers, and researchers together into conversation about best practices in Educator Mental Health Literacy in Canada, in order to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Develop and share a mapping of EMHL activity</i> ▪ <i>Establish criteria for EMHL initiatives, based on educator-identified needs and preferences</i> ▪ <i>Provide districts/policy officials with guiding considerations for selecting EMHL initiatives</i> ▪ <i>Begin to develop a program of research in this area</i> 	
11. Judy Elliot	IWK Health Centre		
12. Sherry Elwood	Comox Valley School District		
13. Barrie Evans	Thames Valley District School Board		
14. Cindy Finn	Center of Excellence for Mental Health, LBPSB		
15. Barry Finlay	Ontario Ministry of Education		
16. Kimberley Howard	Edmonton Public School Board		
17. Tanya Jorgensen	Mental Health Commission of Canada Youth Council		
18. Bethann Levinson	Hincks Dellcrest Centre, ABCs of Mental Health		
19. John MacDonald	Grand Erie District School Board		
20. Lynn Ryan MacKenzie	Government of Nunavut		
21. Jennifer McPhee	Mobilizing Minds		
22. Sherri Mohuruk	Government of BC		
23. Louise Moreau	School Mental Health ASSIST		
24. Monica Nunes	Mobilizing Minds		
25. Judith Nyman	Ontario Public School Boards' Association		
26. Kelly Parlatore	Niagara District School Board		
27. Dan Reist	BC Mental Health and Addiction Services		
28. Alisa Simon	Kids' Help Phone		
29. Eric Windeler	The Jack Project		

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About School Mental Health Literacy

Working Definition of School Mental Health Literacy

The knowledge, skills and beliefs that help school personnel to:

- ▶ *create conditions for effective school mental health service delivery,*
- ▶ *reduce stigma,*
- ▶ *promote positive mental health in the classroom,*
- ▶ *identify risk factors and signs of mental health and substance use problems,*
- ▶ *prevent mental health and substance use problems,*
- ▶ *help students along the pathway to care.*

Note!

- ▶ Mental health literacy is not just for educators – it is a shared responsibility with families, students, school mental health professionals, and communities. However, this national team is focused primarily on capacity-building for education sector staff.
- ▶ Mental health literacy is not an event! It is an iterative deepening of knowledge in a complex area.
- ▶ Educators have specific preferences for learning about student mental health (e.g., like to learn from an engaging expert, in small groups, with opportunities for practice and ongoing coaching). Mental health literacy efforts should attend to these preferences.
- ▶ A range of stakeholders, with differing knowledge needs, reside within school districts in Canada (e.g., trustees, superintendents, school administrators, teachers, office staff, etc). Note that some audiences require only awareness level of knowledge, others need a deeper level of literacy, and some must acquire expertise (see Capacity-Building Continuum below, adapted from School Mental Health ASSIST Ontario). Mental health literacy capacity-building efforts should be tailored to audience needs.

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Capacity Building Continuum

Mental Health Awareness	Mental Health Literacy	Mental Health Expertise
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Strategies for providing basic mental health information, tailored for different school board audiences</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Strategies for ensuring fluent working knowledge of strategies to support student mental health for those who work closely with children and youth in schools</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Strategies for ensuring that school mental health professionals possess the skills and knowledge to effectively provide evidence-based promotion, prevention, and intervention</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>All Education Sector professionals need mental health awareness (basic facts, warning signs)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>School and Support Staff need mental health literacy so they can recognize signs and implement classroom strategies</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>School mental health professionals require expertise to provide assessment and promotion / prevention / treatment services</i></p>

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Decision Support Tool

1. BEFORE you select a School Mental Health Literacy Approach

Consider Alignment

What is your board's vision or strategy related to supporting school mental health?

What professional development opportunities in mental health have been recently offered, or are currently available, in your board?

Consider your Audience

Which audience(s) in your school board are you considering for professional development in school mental health?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Assistants? | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Administrators? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary Teachers? | <input type="checkbox"/> School Administrators? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ESL Teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> School Mental Health Professionals (Social Workers, Psychologists)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance Counselors | <input type="checkbox"/> Trustees? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> School Bus Drivers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Occasional Teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education Teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office Administrators? | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary Teachers? | |

Note! It is recommended that professional development be cascaded through the district so that senior administrators are prepared to support school administrators, who are prepared to support school staff, who are prepared to support students and parents.

Consider your Content Needs

Does this audience need awareness level, literacy level, or expertise level training?

Is there a particular focus topic that this audience needs support with?

Consider Delivery Method

Who should deliver this resource?

How does this audience like to learn? (e.g., In small groups? Short sessions over time? Via web-based materials?)

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2. WHEN Selecting a School Mental Health Literacy Approach – Selection Considerations

Selection Considerations – Alignment	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the resource align with your vision and model for school mental health service delivery in the board?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the resource align with your vision of the roles that various stakeholders play in school mental health (e.g., teachers as caring adults, not diagnosticians)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the resource complementary to your existing school mental health capacity-building efforts?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does this resource add to your existing suite of programs/strategies so that there is enhanced coverage across education professionals? Across the student age range? (not a duplication of other resources)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does this resource fit with your strategy for delivering school mental health literacy in a systematic manner?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does this resource fit with staff development standards for collaborative learning?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Will this resource help to deepen knowledge over time within your board?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does this resource fit with your school board culture?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the resource align with provincial curriculum?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the resource align with community / regional / provincial / national initiatives?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the resource create efficiencies with respect to cross-sectoral collaboration and purposeful planning?

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Selection Considerations – Evidence	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the resource research-based?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there evidence* to show that the approach enhances mental health awareness, knowledge, and/or skills amongst those for whom you are selecting the resource?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there evidence to show that the resource leads to positive changes in attitudes towards children and youth with mental health problems and their families?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there evidence to show that youth perceive a benefit, or are positively impacted, through the use of this resource? (e.g., increased help-seeking behavior, enhanced sense of belonging, perception of more caring adults)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there evaluation tools or quality assurance procedures embedded within the resource?
Selection Considerations – Audience	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the resource been developed explicitly for school board professionals?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the resource audience-specific (i.e., tailored to specific education professionals like teachers, principals, or trustees)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the resource been piloted with the group of professionals you are targeting? (e.g., <u>Canadian</u> teachers, principals, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the resource been developed with input from practicing Canadian educators?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the resource been developed with input from parent/family organizations and/or students?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the resource been used / tested with those focused on special populations? (e.g., aboriginal communities, immigrant-serving schools)

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Selection Considerations – Content	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the program consider attitudinal factors (e.g. stigma)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the program consider knowledge building (e.g. mental illness facts)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the program consider skill development (e.g. how to help, refer for help)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the resource include largely Canadian content?
Selection Considerations – Time	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the total time required for training reasonable within your school board setting?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the time required for resource delivery reasonable within a school board setting?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there flexibility in terms of when the resource is delivered within the school year?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Can the resource be delivered in “chunks” of time, rather than all at once?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Can the resource be flexibly integrated into existing professional development and/or curriculum structures?
Selection Considerations – Cost	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are all resource costs specified (e.g., materials, printing, training, facilitator expenses, software, release time, shipping)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are all resource costs within your budget?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is training provided at a reasonable cost?

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Is ongoing support provided at a reasonable cost?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the resource sustainable from a cost and resourcing perspective?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do we have the capacity that is needed to effectively implement the resource (e.g., specially trained personnel, technology)?
Selection Considerations – Delivery Method and Materials	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the methods of resource delivery (e.g., on-line resource, face-to-face workshops, student curriculum, arts-focused methods, ongoing coaching) in keeping with the way that educators in your board prefer to learn?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the individual or team delivering this material have an adequate understanding of the material?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the resource supported by materials that can be effectively used in the classroom (e.g., videos, youth-friendly resources)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has the resource been designed with ongoing school, community and national supports built in?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the resource available in French and English?
Selection Considerations – Information	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the topics/components covered in the resource described clearly in promotional material?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there an information/support line that you can reach for more information?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the information presented in a professional and polished manner?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other considerations:

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About Evidence

- Not all evidence is equal! There are different levels of evidence. To convincingly demonstrate the effectiveness of and program or resource, the “gold standard” is a replicated randomized controlled trial conducted by researchers who are independent of the product development (typically summarized in a systematic review or meta-analysis). Unfortunately, educator mental health literacy is a fairly new area of study and few, if any, resources have been examined in this rigorous manner. A few of the programs in the directory may have been the subject of at least one randomized controlled trial with an active comparison condition. More often, however, they will have been evaluated with some form of pre/post measurement, in an uncontrolled trial. Resources with this level of evidence have a more solid evidence-base than those that have been evaluated using post-only surveys, anecdotal reports, or expert opinion.



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3. AFTER You Select the Educator Mental Health Literacy Resource

- ▶ Create a school board team to support the implementation of the resource and to provide ongoing support (or do this before, to help with the selection process!)
- ▶ This team will need to ensure and communicate alignment with related board initiatives
- ▶ Consider piloting the resource before rolling it out to your full audience
- ▶ Invite participants to complete a **satisfaction questionnaire** that includes items like:

A. Resource /Session Value

1. Content:

1	2	3	4	5
poor	fair	satisfactory	good	excellent

2. Delivery:

1	2	3	4	5
poor	fair	satisfactory	good	excellent

3. Opportunity for Meaningful Dialogue:

1	2	3	4	5
poor	fair	satisfactory	good	excellent

4. Overall Value:

1	2	3	4	5
poor	fair	satisfactory	good	excellent

Comments:

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B. Resource /Session Impact

To what degree did the resource/session:

1. Enhance your knowledge about student mental health:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	a little	somewhat	quite a bit	considerably

2. Enhance your understanding of how you can help to create caring classrooms:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	a little	somewhat	quite a bit	considerably

3. Enhance your understanding of how you can help students who are struggling with mental health problems:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	a little	somewhat	quite a bit	considerably

C. Strengths and Weaknesses and Next Steps

What parts of the resource / session did you find most helpful?

What parts of the resource / session did you find least helpful?

Provide us with suggestions as to how we might better meet your needs in the future:

What would you hope would happen next to support your knowledge needs in this area?

You would use feedback from this satisfaction tool to plan your next Educator Mental Health Literacy selection!

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Contact Us!

We hope that you have found this Decision Support Tool to be a helpful resource. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact the Educator Mental Health Literacy Roundtable, Co-Chairs:

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