Protocols for Professional Development

- Board has a systematic approach to capacity building in mental health and well-being that includes:
  - Mental Health Awareness for all
  - Mental Health Literacy for those most closely involved with students
  - Mental Health Expertise for those delivering specialized assessment and intervention services.
- High quality training protocols, delivered by an engaging expert
- Job-embedded, with ongoing coaching.

Key Steps

- Review existing capacity within your District. What system wide mental health professional development has been offered or is currently offered.
- Review your range of stakeholders (trustees, superintendents, school administrators, teachers, support staff) and establish their knowledge needs. All staff need mental health awareness (basic facts, warning signs) others need a deeper level of literacy such that they can recognize signs and implement classroom strategies, and some must acquire expertise to provide assessment and prevention/treatment services.
- Consider your content needs for each of your audience groups. What is their scope of practice? Review your mental health data and determine if there is a particular focus topic that needs specific support.
- Review the Ontario Leadership Framework and consider what strategies your District is currently implementing for collaborative inquiry.
- Consider how mental health awareness and literacy can be included in your System plan, your BIPSA and your SIPSA.
- Consider how your audience likes to learn ie. small group, webinars etc. Keep in mind that literacy is not an event but an iterative deepening of knowledge.
- Consult with your community partners. If you are a “Working Together for Kids Mental Health” community, your children’s mental health agency may partner with you to offer mental health awareness training.
- Consider establishing a multi-disciplinary working group to develop a decision making support tool for capacity building that will inform the development of your District staff development protocol.
- Ensure that the protocol is aligned with related board initiatives.
- Consider how you can involve students in the provision of mental health awareness training with other students. Plan to include individuals with lived experience in presentations to students.
- Review all professional development resources to ensure they are research-based. 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?
- Consider costs, sustainability and availability of coaching.
- Remember to avoid a perception that this will increase the workload of already busy staff. Position professional development initiatives as a way to help educators and administrators to better manage the one in five students who struggle with mental health problems.

Presenter

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