



# A PARENT'S GUIDE TO CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH



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# A LOOK INSIDE...



This toolkit will provide you with information on various terms, warning signs, and policies. You will also find worksheets and checklists to help guide you as you learn more about mental health and become better equipped to support your own child's mental health.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Getting Started .....	4
Enhancing Mental Health and Wellness at Home .....	5
Taking Care of Your Own Mental Health .....	6
Cultural Diversity and Mental Health Needs .....	7-8
Common Diagnoses and Concerns .....	9-10
How You Can Help .....	11
Mindfulness Activity.....	12
Starting the Conversation About Mental Health.....	13
The Feeling Wheel .....	14
Journaling .....	15
Warning Signs, Risk Factors, and Protective Factors .....	16
Checklist of Warning Signs .....	17
Checklist of Risk and Protective Factors .....	18
Promoting Your Child's Protective Factors .....	19
The Importance of Addressing Mental Health Early .....	20
Overview of a Systems Approach to Mental Health .....	21
A School's Role .....	22
Individual Roles Within the School .....	23
Know Your Rights .....	24
Addressing School-Wide Mental Health .....	25
School Policies .....	25
Screening Guide for Parents/Guardians.....	26
Progress Monitoring for Parents/Guardians.....	27
A Multi-tiered Approach .....	28
Tier 1 .....	28
Tier 2 .....	28
Tier 3 .....	28
Appendices .....	29-33

# GETTING STARTED – LEARNING BASIC TERMINOLOGY

To understand mental health in your child, a brief overview of key terminology is essential. **Mental health** refers to positive social, emotional, and physiological well-being. Positive functioning is a central component of mental health. Mental illnesses relate to a child's inability to effectively manage those aspects of well-being and, therefore, have difficulty progressing throughout the day. As such, **behavioral health** is often used interchangeably with mental health. These terms also relate to the promotion of intervention, prevention, and treatment for mental illnesses. Specifically, interventions enhance children's chances of better mental health throughout their lives.

**Wellness** is a comprehensive approach to health, including physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being. Focusing on wellness is a positive process in which an individual is consciously working toward achieving their goals.

The term **positive psychology** refers to the goal of maintaining happiness and developing personal strengths over time.



The so what...

Why is it important for you to know these terms as parents?

These terms are interrelated and provide a basis for developing an awareness of your child's mental health. In supporting your child, it is critical to acknowledge that mental health and wellness are multifaceted and your role as a parent is key to fostering environments in which your child can build skills and achieve their goals.

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Fertman, C., Delgado, M., & Tarasevich, S. (2014). *Promoting Child and Adolescent Mental Health*. Jones and Bartlett Learning

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# ENHANCING MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS AT HOME

*Checklist for fostering mental health:*



- Identify ways to relax with your child**
  - a. movies, walk, reading together
- Engage in family fun activities together**
- Emphasize their strengths through positive reinforcement**
  - 1. Pay attention to your child's use of the internet and social media
    - a. Focus on emphasizing physical activity
- Make goals with your child**
  - a. Practice goal-setting with smaller or easier goals to achieve
- Assist your child in maintaining routines at home**
- Model behavior** - demonstrate your own personal focus on mental health by talking about mental health and doing things for yourself (e.g., yoga, walking)
  - a. Try to avoid negative conversations with your spouse or other family members (e.g., financial issues, relationship/marital issues)



# TAKING CARE OF YOUR OWN MENTAL HEALTH

**On an airplane you are always told to put on your own oxygen mask before helping your child. The same holds true for mental health – in order to help your child with their mental health, it is crucial to ensure that you are practicing healthy behaviors as well. Here are some ideas of how to focus on improving mental health as part of your daily routine:**

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- Do something to unwind every day, if possible, separate from your child
- Dedicate time during the day for reflection and meditation in a quiet space
- Exercise as a family (e.g., yoga, hiking)
- Get in a routine of eating healthy
- Make an effort to get an adequate amount of sleep



# CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

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## WHAT IS CULTURAL DIVERSITY?

- Interchanged with the term “multiculturalism”
  - Recognizes diverse cultures
  - Respects differences between cultures
  - Values different cultures
  - Acknowledges and validates different cultural expressions and contributions
- 

## Why does cultural diversity matter when considering identifying and addressing mental health needs in our community?

**Cultural Diversity** is important to consider when identifying and addressing mental health needs within the community because they share a complex relationship. Culture can impact mental health in various ways because culture directly impacts your view on certain ideas or behaviors. It can determine your decision to seek help for mental health issues, whether you believe in certain treatments, and more.

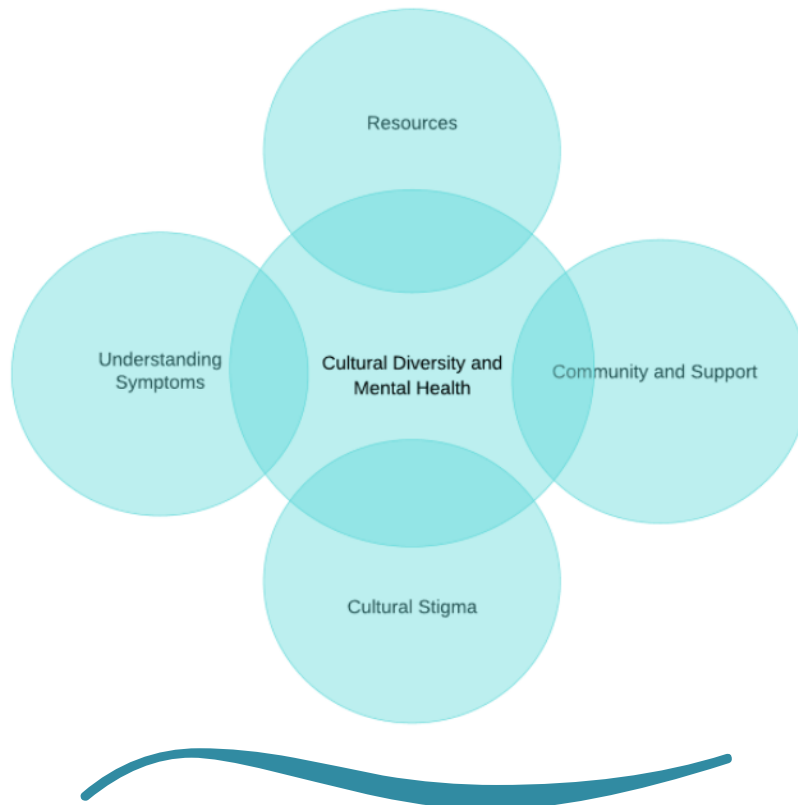
The intersections that exist between culture and mental health include and are not limited to:

**Cultural Stigma:** Every culture has a different understanding and different feelings about mental health. In some cultures, it is considered a “weakness” to ask for help when you need it. Additionally, some cultures may feel the need to hide their mental health challenges. These ideas around mental health can make it difficult to ask for help and talk openly about mental health challenges.

Belfield, L., (2012). What is cultural diversity? Retrieved October 5, 2020, from <https://www.purdueglobal.edu/blog/social-behavioral-sciences/what-is-cultural-diversity/>

Kapil, R. (2019). *Four ways culture impacts mental health*. Retrieved October 5, 2020, from <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2019/07/four-ways-culture-impacts-mental-health/>

# CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS (CONTINUED)



**Understanding Symptoms:** Culture also affects how someone understands and feels about their symptoms. In some cultures, there may be shame connected to admitting you are having symptoms of a mental health disorder. Additionally, culture affects the way people accept their symptoms. Some may choose to only recognize certain symptoms. For example, a person from a certain culture may only choose to recognize and talk about physical symptoms instead of emotional symptoms because that is what their culture influences.

**Community Support:** Cultural influences can determine how much support individuals receive while going through a mental health challenge. In some cultures, individuals who express having difficulties with mental health may be left to find mental health support and services on their own

**Resources:** Navigating the resources for mental health can be impacted by culture. It is common and valid to want to access mental health services from someone with the same background as you. As mental health advocates, we value the differences that various cultures bring to us. We understand that different cultures may view mental health and mental health challenges differently. By understanding the impact of culture on mental health, we strive to create more culturally responsive, competent, and sensitive practices.



# COMMON DIAGNOSES AND CONCERNS IN CHILDREN

“ADHD, behavior problems, anxiety, and depression are the most commonly diagnosed mental disorders in children.”

## Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):

According to the DSM-V, ADHD is “a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with development or functioning.” The DSM-V divides ADHD into two symptom domains: inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity. The symptoms of ADHD usually start prior to age 12.

### What does ADHD look like in school?

- Distractibility
- Restlessness
- Forgetting to complete assignments
- Difficulty concentrating
- Disrupting the class

## Behavior Problems:

Behavior problems in children can present themselves as a “pattern of disruptive behaviors in children.” Behavior problems can present themselves in various settings including, but not limited to: school, home, and social situations. Common behavior problems that are diagnosed in childhood include: Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Conduct Disorder.

### What does ODD/Conduct Disorder look like in school?

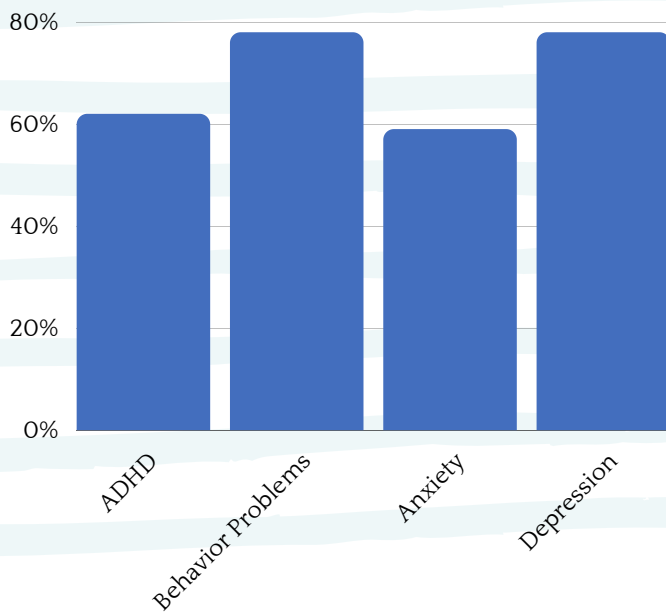
- Negativity
- Noncompliance
- Temper outbursts
- Angry and irritable mood
- Hostility toward authority figures (i.e. teachers or school staff)

## Anxiety:

The DSM-V defines anxiety as “excessive anxiety and worry that is not focused on a single trigger” (i.e. fear of social situations, or fear of a specific event/situation).

### What does Anxiety look like in school?

- Avoidant of certain situation
- Physical symptoms
  - Stomach aches, shaking hands/legs, racing heart
- Feeling self-conscious in certain situations
- Trouble completing classwork
- Missing class or increased absences



Of these common diagnoses...

- **6 in 10** children (62%) with ADHD received treatment
- **5 in 10** children (53.5%) with behavior disorders received treatment
- **6 in 10** children (59.3%) with anxiety received treatment
- **8 in 10** children (78.1%) with depression received treatment

**Depression:** Depression in children can look like persistent sadness and hopelessness. It can be presented in many ways but children who may be diagnosed with depression may experience: changes in eating patterns, loss of interest in things they used to enjoy, changes in sleep patterns, changes in energy, inattention, and much more.

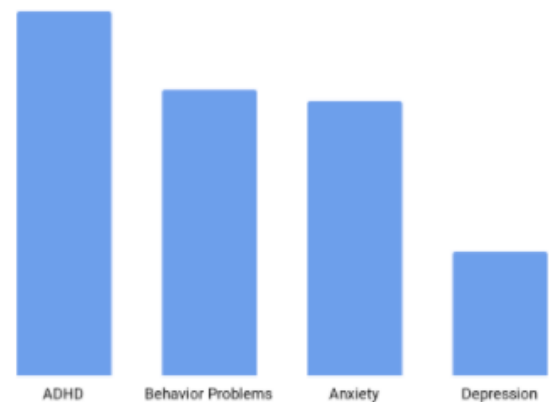
### What does Depression look like in school?

- Poor work completion
- Feeling sick, increased school absence, lack of participation
- Poor work completion
- Isolation and withdrawal
- Sleeping in class

**Comorbidity:** It is very common for conditions to exist together. Comorbidity or comorbid disorders are conditions that often exist together. For example, a child may be diagnosed with anxiety while also experiencing symptoms of depression. Comorbidity is not limited to only depression and anxiety, instead comorbidity can exist amongst many disorders.

In the U.S. alone, children aged 2 to 17...

- 9.4% have received an ADHD diagnosis (approx. 6.1 million)
- 7.4% have a diagnosed behavior problem (approx. 4.5 million)
- 7.1% have diagnosed anxiety (approx. 4.4 million)
- 3.2% have diagnosed depression (approx. 1.9 million)



# HOW YOU CAN HELP

As a parent, you play an integral role in supporting your child if they experience mental health struggles. There are many ways to help and support your child if they are diagnosed with a mental health disorder.

## Start here

- Inform yourself about your child's mental health disorder
- Enroll in parent information workshops about mental needs
- Connect with your student's school team to ensure there is appropriate support for your child
- Explore self-care strategies for yourself
- Being the parent of a child with mental health needs can be difficult, explore ways that you can practice self-care
- Be empathetic and understanding
- Strive to be understanding of your child's mental health struggles
- Remind your child that mental health struggles are common
- Remind your child that it is okay to feel sad, angry, or frustrated about mental health struggles
- Show a lot of love and acceptance

## Environment matters

- Create a positive home environment
- Ensure that your student is in a positive, safe school environment
- Feeling safe at school is critical to a learning and mental health

## Encourage communication

- Listen and respect you child's' feelings about their mental health disorder
- Find an outside provider if your child does not feel comfortable talking to you (therapist, school-based counselor, school psychologist, etc)
- Ask questions and come from a perspective of non-judgement
- Help them to help themselves
- Help your child set realistic goals
- Encourage your child to continue to build strong relationships with friends and family
- Encourage resiliency through connectedness, helping others, and problem solving

Children's Health. (2020). *Mental health in children.: Know the signs.* <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/mental-illness-in-children/20046577>

National Association of School Psychologists. (2017). *Supporting children's mental health: Tips for parents and educators.* <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/mental-health/prevention-and-wellness-promotion/supporting-childrens-mental-health-tips-for-parents-and-educators>

Caringforkids. (2017). *Your child's mental health needs.* [https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mental\\_health](https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mental_health)

## WORKSHEET

# HOW YOU CAN HELP

## *Mindfulness Activity*

This is a helpful activity to do with your child when you notice changes in their mood, or after a stressful day.

1. Ask your child to either tell you or write down the things that are making them sad, angry, anxious, etc.
2. Next, tell them to close their eyes and imagine those feelings and thoughts being placed inside balloons
3. After a few seconds, tell them to imagine those balloons floating away and have them open their eyes.



# STARTING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

## WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER...

- Let the teacher know if you recognize change in your child at home during the school year
- Ask what resources are available at school
- Ask how you can help support your child at home to reinforce coping mechanisms they are learning at school

## WITH YOUR CHILD'S DOCTOR...

- Be prepared with questions
  - inquire about further evaluation and diagnosis
- Ask for clarification on warning signs, as needed

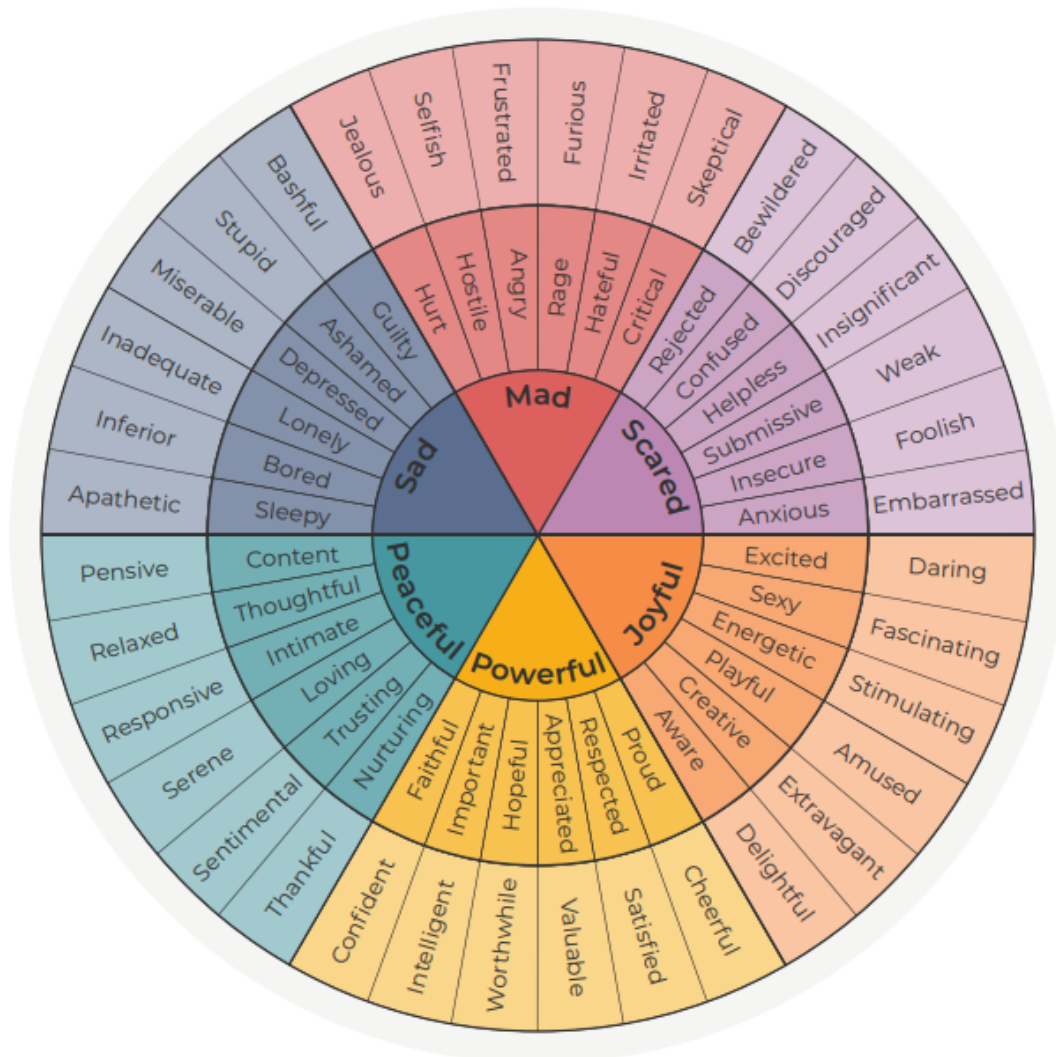
## WITH YOUR CHILD...

- Ask them questions about the things they enjoy
- Listen to their thoughts and feelings
- Describe what works for you or how you approach mental health in your own life
- Use a neutral tone - do not assume they are feeling a certain way
- Have this conversation in a quiet place with little distraction
- Share something about your day first - be open about your thoughts and feelings



*Directions: Print this page and try incorporating the feeling wheel in your conversation with your child. Keep a copy of the wheel in the house to use with your child regularly. Be sure to share your feelings with your child too!*

# The Feeling Wheel



The Gottman Institute  
Developed by Dr. Gloria Willcox

# JOURNALING

*In the space below, reflect on a recent conversation you had with your child about mental health. Print a few copies of this page and try to practice journaling regularly.*

Positive aspects of the conversation:

Areas to improve on:

Plans for future conversations:

# WARNING SIGNS, RISK FACTORS, AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Are you concerned about your child's mental health and don't know where to begin? You may consider:

- Speaking to your child's doctor or teacher about your concerns
- Asking your child's doctor for a referral to a mental health professional who has experience working with children
- Reviewing the warning signs, risk factors, and protective factors descriptions below
- Completing the checklists and worksheets on the following pages (\*note- these are not extensive or complete lists)

**Warning Signs** may indicate that your child is experiencing mental health difficulties. However, they are not used to diagnose mental health disorders. Individual circumstances must be considered when evaluating your child's mental health, as symptoms and warning signs for problems may vary from child to child.

**Risk Factors** are variables that, if present in a child's life, make it more likely that he/she/they will experience a mental health problem. Risk factors can be internal characteristics, or experiences in a child's environment. Understanding these risk factors can help you collaborate with professionals to determine whether your may be at-risk for a mental health difficulty.

**Protective factors** are opposite of risk factors. When present in a child's life, protective factors make it less likely that he/she/they will experience a mental health problem. Similar to risk factors, protective factors can be internal characteristics, or experiences in a child's environment. Protective factors can help a child overcome, cope with, or "bounce back" from a difficult situation, such as a mental health problem.



# WORKSHEET

## Checklist of warning signs



Place a checkmark next to the warning signs you recognize in your child:

- Recurring behavior problems at home or school
- Frequent temper tantrums
- Unusual fears or worries
- Hyperactivity/constant movement beyond regular playing
- Difficulty participating in activities that are normal for your child's age
- Difficulties with concentration, attention, or organization
- Withdrawal from people or activities he/she used to enjoy
- Prolonged lack of energy
- Difficulty going to sleep, staying asleep, or waking up
- Sudden outbursts or explosive emotional reactions
- Prolonged negative mood and attitude
- Frequent physical complaints with no apparent cause
- Seeing or hearing things that are not real
- Frequent refusal to go to school
- Ongoing decline in school performance
- Isolation, loneliness, and a lack of friends
- Risky or dangerous behavior (e.g, sexually acting out, setting fires)
- Feeling hopeless or worthless
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs
- Self-injury or physical harm to others
- Thoughts or talk of suicide **\*If your child is having thoughts of suicide or talking about suicide, seek immediate assistance from a doctor, school professional, or law enforcement and do not leave your child alone.**

# WORKSHEET

## Checklist of risk factors and protective factors



Place a checkmark next to the risk and protective factors you recognize in your child:

Type of Factor	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Health problems</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Insecure attachments to caregivers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Poor social skills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Difficult temperaments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High self-esteem</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Good coping skills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Good problem-solving skills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Normal physical development</li> </ul>
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Controlling parenting practices</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Harsh physical punishment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Violence or abuse in the home</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parent mental health problems</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Loss of a family member</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parent divorce or separation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Structure in the home</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Supportive relationships</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clear expectations for behavior</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clear values</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate limits and rules</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Low socioeconomic status</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Living in dangerous or violent communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mentors and support people in the community</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Engagement in school or community</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Positive community norms</li> </ul>
Societal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Experiencing racism</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Having fewer economic opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Physical and psychological safety</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Positive societal norms</li> </ul>

Bayer, J. K., Ukomunne, O. C., Lucas, N., Wake, M., Scalzo, K., & Nicholson, J. M. (2011). Risk factors for childhood mental health symptoms: *National longitudinal study of Australian children. Pediatrics, 128*(4).

Goodman, A., Fleitlich-Bilyk B., Patel, V., & Goodman, R. (2007). Child, family, school, and community risk factors for poor mental health in Brazilian schoolchildren. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 46*(4).

Youth.Gov. (n.d.). Risk and protective factors. Retrieved October 15, 2020, from: <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/youth-mental-health/risk-and-protective-factors-youth>

# WORKSHEET

## PROMOTING YOUR CHILD'S PROTECTIVE FACTORS

By identifying your child's unique protective factors, you can help promote and build upon his/her/their ability to cope with mental health difficulties.

You may use the following questions to guide this process.

Which protective factors are the most valuable to your child's life?

How have these protective factors positively impacted your child's mental health?  
Provide examples.

List 1 protective factor you would like to help your child improve.

What specific steps can you take to help improve this protective factor?

# THE IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS EARLY

What happens if childhood mental health issues are left untreated?

Untreated childhood mental health concerns are associated with difficulties later in life.

- Approximately 50% of students aged 14+ with mental health disorders drop out of high school
- 90% of individuals who die by suicide have a mental health disorder
- 70% of juvenile justice programs are populated by youth with mental health disorders- approximately 20% of these youth are identified as having severe symptoms

What can you do to help prevent your child from experiencing these difficulties later in life?

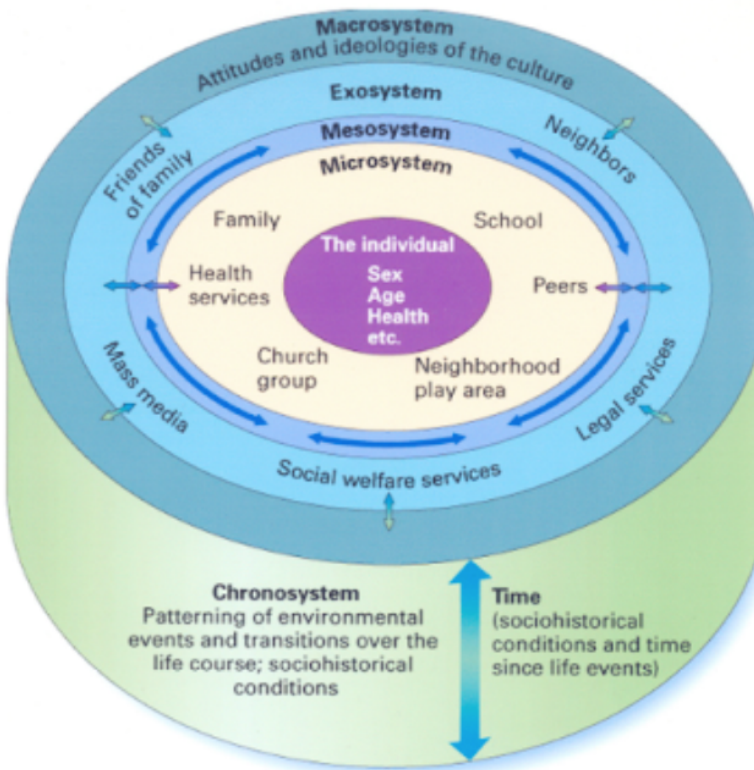
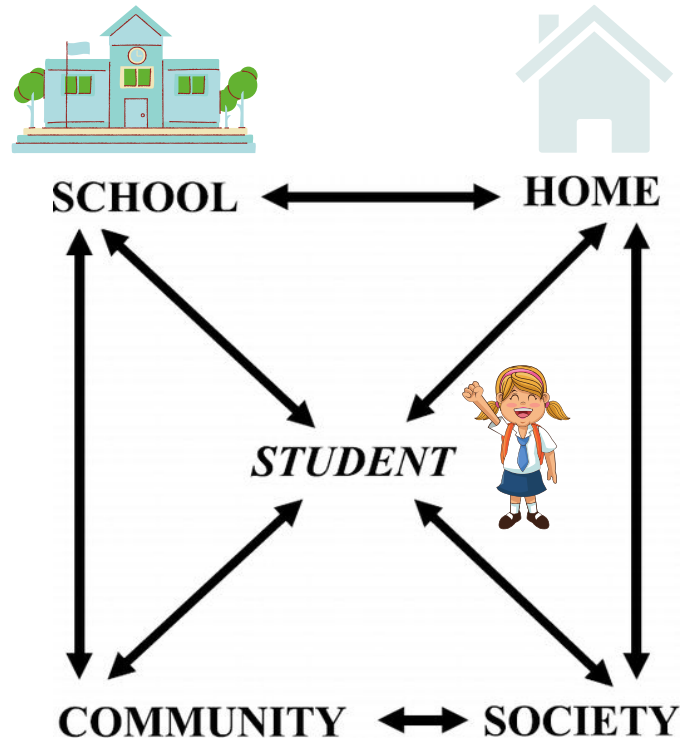
One option is identifying and treating mental health problems **early on**, or as soon as you notice any red flags.

**Early identification and treatment can improve:**

- overall well-being
- age-appropriate skills
- social and emotional skills
- coping with difficulties
- outcomes for children before conditions become more serious, expensive, and difficult to treat

# OVERVIEW OF A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH

- A student's mental health **extends far beyond the home context**
- Qualities of a child (genetic and biological) interact with their environment to influence how they will grow and develop



\*\*These systems interact with and influence each other in all aspects of the child's life and development

**Microsystem:** Smallest and most immediate environment such as the daily home, school or daycare, peer group and community

**Mesosystem:** Includes the interaction of the different microsystems which children find themselves in

**Exosystem:** Interaction between two or more settings, one of which may not contain the developing children but affect them indirectly nonetheless

**Macrosystem:** This ecological system includes children's cultural patterns and values, as well as their political and economic systems

**Chronosystems:** May include a change in family structure, address, parents' employment status, as well as immense society changes such as economic cycles and wars

# A SCHOOL'S ROLE

It is of utmost importance that the school and the parents form a collaborative **team** to help support the student's mental health.



## Schools are an ideal place to provide mental health services and provide greater accessibility

- Every community has a school
- Most children spend at least 6 hours a day at school
- Ideal environment for:
  - Prevention
  - Intervention
  - Positive development
  - Regular communication between school and families
- Have school-employed professionals who know the student and family well like:
  - School psychologists
  - School counselors,
  - School social workers
  - School nurses
- Research has shown that students are more likely to seek counseling when services are available in schools
- In some cases schools provide the only mental health services in the community

## Other Important Benefits

- School mental health services help create and sustain safe schools
- Increased access to mental health services improves physical and psychological safety of students and schools,
- Higher feelings of safety also affect academic performance and problem-solving skills
- School mental health supports create a school culture where students feel safe and empowered through the focus on:
  - Social-emotional learning
  - Mental wellness
  - Resilience
  - Positive connections between students and adults

# INDIVIDUAL ROLES WITHIN THE SCHOOL

## Teachers

- Often the first to notice signs of trouble as they see your student every day
- Once there is a concern or your student asks for help, teachers will direct the student to the proper resources within the school

## Nurses

- can provide immediate care in the event of an emergency
- Distribute medication
- Provide information on mental health care

## Administration

- Ensure implementation of support programs for all students
- Trained to respond during crisis

## School counselors

- Provide mental health care for students in need of general support
- Provide group counseling and classroom education
- Help with academic, career, and social/emotional needs

## School Social Workers (some schools)

- Address social concerns that affect student's development and education
- Work with families
- Connects students to community resources outside of the school
- Can provide mental health intervention, crisis management, and support services

## School Psychologists

- Experts in mental health
- Work primarily with students in special education or those students with severe mental health concerns (such as suicidal thoughts or actions)
- Provide individual and group therapies
- Connect students to resources in the community

Kaufman, J. H., Seelam, R., Woodbridge, M. W., Sontag-Padilla, L., Osilla, K. C., & Stein, B. D. (2016). Student Mental Health in California's K-12 Schools: School Principal Reports of Common Problems and Activities to Address Them. *Rand Health Quarterly*, 5(3), 9.

Who Are School Psychologists. (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2020, from <https://www.nasponline.org/about-school-psychology/who-are-school-psychologists>

Who Provides Mental Health Services in Schools. (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2020, from <https://www.kidsmentalhealthinfo.com/topics/mental-health-schools/provides-mental-health-services-schools/>

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



## As a parent you have the right to...

### **Participate -**

Should your child needs educational services, you can participate in the development of your child's individualized education program (IEP) and be informed about alternative options for your child's special education services

### **Receive Prior Written Notice -**

You can request a written notice in your native language when the school initiates your child's educational identification, assessment, and placement.

### **Access Records -**

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), you have the right to access, review, and obtain copies of your child's educational records.

### **Consent/Refuse Consent -**

you can consent or refuse consent for your child to be assessed, make changes in their special education services, and your child's placement.

## **Confidentiality**

We understand you want to know everything that is going on in your child's life. As counselors and school psychologists, we must maintain confidentiality with our students. Should your child tell us any of the following, our confidentiality is breached and you will be notified immediately:

- threatens to harm themselves
- threatens to harm others
- threat to a serious crime





# ADDRESSING SCHOOL-WIDE MENTAL HEALTH

## What Is School Policy?

School policies outline the school's commitment to your student's mental health. The document guides the ways in which the school will support your child in order to promote their wellbeing.

## Why is school policy important?

**1** in **5** young adults, and **1** in **10** children, have a diagnosable mental health disorder. That translates to roughly **3** children in every classroom.

**A school mental health policy is essential to addressing mental health in schools**

**What your student's school mental health policy should include:**

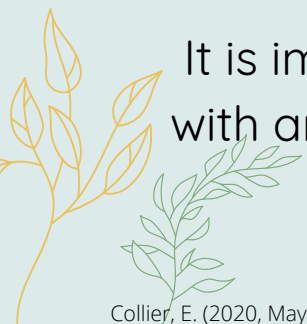
- Policy Statements
- Policy Scope
- Policy Aims
- Key Staff Members
- Support at school and In the community
- Identifying risks and warning signs
- Confidentiality
- School-wide approaches
- Staff training
- Policy review

---

## Get Involved, Ask Questions

It is helpful to read through your student's mental health policy to see how the school addresses mental health and the ways in which they provide services

It is important to communicate with your student's school with any questions you may have regarding mental health policies or procedures



# SCREENING GUIDE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

## What is screening?

Screening is a process for identifying whether students have mental health issues. Screening is conducted through the use of surveys and questionnaires.

## Why do we have screening?

- Growing prevalence of mental health disorders among students.
- Ensure that students receive services for their unique needs.
- Provide appropriate interventions and treatments to support students.
- Helps educators create preventative programs and curriculum to address school-wide mental health issues.

## Benefits of Screening:

- Preventing mental health issues from growing.
- Meet students' needs.
- Address school-wide mental health programs.

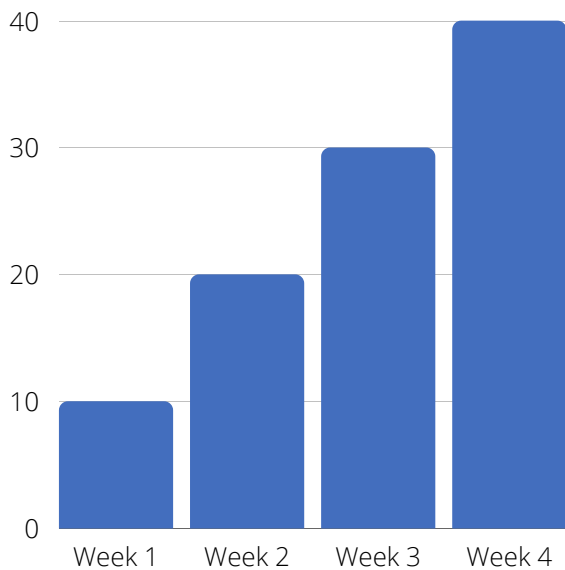
## What does the process look like?

Your child will take a survey/questionnaire. Based on the results, the school counselor or school psychologist will reach out to gather more information and discuss the results.

## What happens if my child needs more support?

Talk to your child's counselor, school psychologist or pediatrician for more information or an in depth evaluation. It is possible they will also provide referrals to outside providers. Interviews from parents/guardians, teachers and other student data will be gathered to develop a comprehensive perspective on your child.

# PROGRESS MONITORING FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

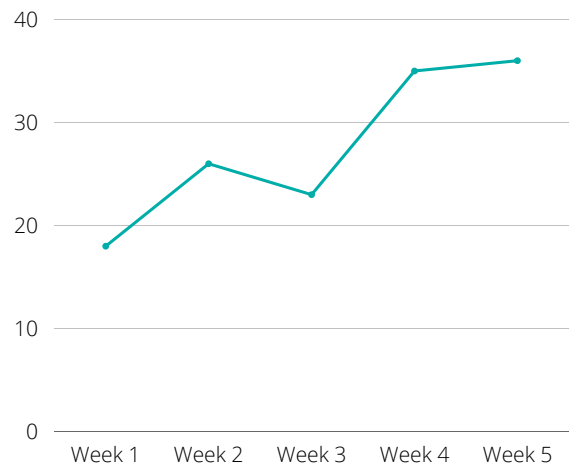


## Why is it important?

Progress monitoring creates accountability and helps educators and families discuss what is working and what is not working, in order to support your child meet their goals. We want to provide quality and effective supports for your child.

## What is progress monitoring?

If your child has academic, behavioral or social goals within the Individualized Educational Program (IEP), progress monitoring is a data collection process that helps understand if interventions or treatments are helping your child. Visual graphs and charts are used to assess the effectiveness of the treatment.



## How can parents/guardians help with progress monitoring?

**Advocate** for your child's learning and educational rights by actively communicating with administrators.

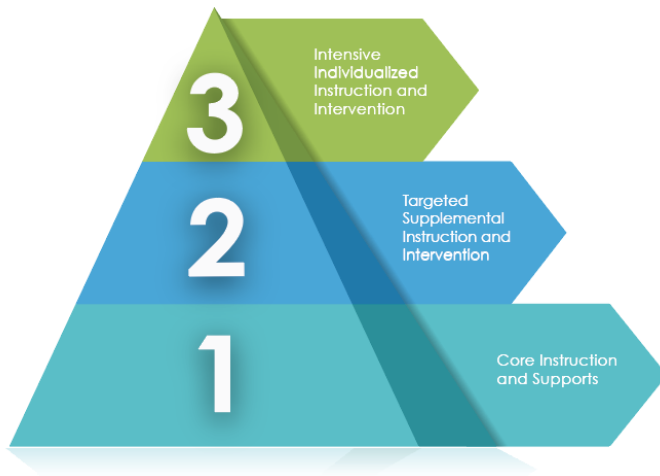
**Ask questions** because you are a valuable part of the process.

**Celebrate** your child's accomplishments and progress.

**Encourage** your child to do their best.

**Share** information or any feedback about your child's progress!

# A MULTI-TIERED APPROACH



A Multi-Tiered Approach to student mental health relies on a continuum of evidence-based practices matched to student needs. There are several terms you might hear in reference to multi-tiered approach including Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Response to Intervention (RTI), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). In all of these approaches there are three levels of support: tier one which all students receive, tier two for students who do not respond to the first tier, and tier three for those students who require more intensive support. As students require higher tiers of support, they will continue to receive the supports from the lower level(s).

## Tier 1:

This level provides strategies for promoting mental health for all students. Evidence-based practices (ahem-research says it works) are used to promote mental health as well as prevent potential problems. Some common strategies you might hear about are: Social Emotional Learning (SEL), positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), mindfulness, and/or mental health literacy.



## Tier 2:

The second tier of MTSS targets students needing more focused support at school. These additional supports focus on targeted small group instruction/intervention. Your child might be recommended for tier two supports should they need additional academic and behavioral support.

- Examples of tier 2 interventions focused on mental health-
  - Small group counseling
  - Mentorship program
  - Check-in Check-out
  - Targeted social skills instructions



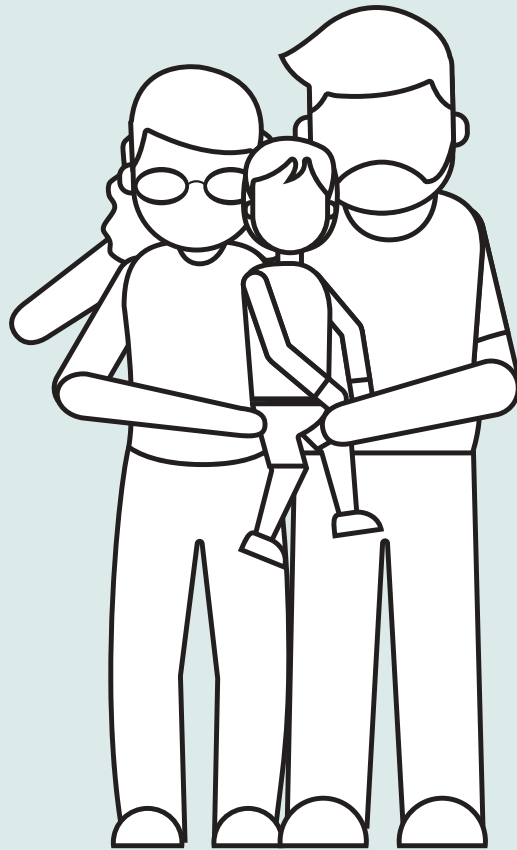
## Tier 3:

Tier 3 provides individualized and intensive support to students not responding to Tier 1 or 2 interventions. The interventions used in Tier 3 provide more individualized support to improve students' behavioral and academic outcomes. Supports within tier 3 are geared to meet individual needs and include services from school-based mental health providers or outside agencies.

- Examples of Tier 3 support can include:
  - Individual counseling
  - Family counseling
  - Group counseling
  - Threat assessments
  - Collaborations and consultation with wrap around services

# Appendix

Additional Worksheets & Resources



# Family Mindfulness Schedule

**Directions:** Below is a family mindfulness schedule, intended to schedule time to be mindful of spending quality time with family. Each day of the week has a different activity. Take 1-2 hours each day to turn off your smartphones, tablets and computers and spend time connecting with each other.

Monday	<b>Family Homework Night</b> Everyone complete homework together! (Parents, if you have nothing to do, how about reading the paper?)
Tuesday	<b>Family Breakfast</b> Everyone set your alarms 15 minutes early so you can eat breakfast together.
Wednesday	<b>Family Cleanup Night</b> Everyone pitch in to clean up the kitchen after dinner.
Thursday	<b>Family Leftover Night</b> Time to clean out the fridge! Pull out all of the leftovers and enjoy a fun family dinner together.
Friday	<b>Family Game Night</b> Join together for a family game night! Try a different game every week.
Saturday	<b>Family Outing</b> Pick a fun family activity to try out with the family.
Sunday	<b>Family Dinner</b> To wind down from the weekend and rest up for the week ahead, sit down for a nice quiet dinner together.

Family mindfulness is an important part of building a strong and supportive family unit and placing an important emphasis on mental health within the family.

It can be easy for everyone to get wrapped up in their own lives, but a great way to stay connected is to follow a family mindfulness schedule.

Week Of:

# Homework Log

Day	Assignments	Upcoming Dates	Mental Health
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

# Weekly Fitness Journal



*Sunday*

Cardio  Strength  Other

Activity:

Minutes:          Calories:

*Monday*

Cardio  Strength  Other

Activity:

Minutes:          Calories:

*Tuesday*

Cardio  Strength  Other

Activity:

Minutes:          Calories:

*Wednesday*

Cardio  Strength  Other

Activity:

Minutes:          Calories:

*Thursday*

Cardio  Strength  Other

Activity:

Minutes:          Calories:

*Friday*

Cardio  Strength  Other

Activity:

Minutes:          Calories:

*Saturday*

Cardio  Strength  Other

Activity:

Minutes:          Calories:

This Week's Check in

Mental Health:

Energy:

Weight:



# PARENT FAQs & RESOURCES

## How do I access my child's school psychologist or counselor?

- Search in the school faculty and staff directory
- Call the school and ask them to connect you
- Search on the school's website

## Who do I talk to when I am interested in having my child connected to additional support resources at school?

- School Counselors, Teachers

## Who do I contact if my child needs therapy?

- School Psychologists

## Who do I contact if my family is looking to connect our child with resources within our community (outside of school)?

- School Psychologist, Social Workers

## Resources

*These websites provide detailed information about various ways to support your child, address mental health, and foster a healthy environment at home.*

[https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mental\\_health](https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mental_health)

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers>

<https://www.mhanational.org/helping-home-tips-parents>

<https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Family-Members-and-Caregivers/Learning-to-Help-Your-Child-and-Your-Family>



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This Mental Health in Schools Toolkit was produced by Chapman University M.A. in School Counseling and Ed.S. in School Psychology graduate students for use in schools and by the community. It is not for commercial sale, in part or in whole.

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