

BUILDING OUR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TOOLBOX TOGETHER



NEW MEXICO
ALLIANCE FOR
SCHOOL-BASED
HEALTH CARE



Sheena Moe, LCSW

Behavioral Health Consultant for NMASBHC

Brooke Tafoya, MSW

*Behavioral Health Specialist for NMPED's
Safe and Healthy Schools Bureau*



Filling the Toolbox:

Strategies for Stronger Behavioral Health Systems

The purpose of this workshop is to examine what tools, resources, and strategies are currently supporting Behavioral Health in our schools and clinics—and to identify where we need to strengthen or expand our toolbox.

Together, we'll look at:

- Broadening our understanding of Behavioral Health tools
- Developing a “Systems Lens” for Behavioral Health
- Reimagining our Behavioral Health system
- Exploring strategies that go beyond individual interventions to address environmental and systemic factors within school communities.
- Reflecting on “what is” and envisioning “what could be”



What constitutes Behavioral Health and whose responsibility is it?

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states:

- Behavioral health is a key component of overall health.
- Behavioral health refers to mental, emotional, and social well-being and behaviors and actions that affect wellness.
- Improving behavioral outcomes means addressing factors at multiple levels, including social determinants of health—supporting the environments where we live, work, learn, and play.



How can Behavioral Health Tools be used?

To Recognize + To Connect + To Repair + To Create + To Build +?



Activity #1: We invite you to take 5 minutes to complete the “My Mental Health Toolbox worksheet”

📄 My Mental Health Toolbox Worksheet 📄

Think of each question as a tool that helps you take care of your emotions and your relationships.

🔍 Recognize

How do I recognize my own emotions and needs?

🔗 Connect

Who is supportive to me in my life?

🔧 Repair

How do I repair relationships when harm has occurred?

🎨 Create

What is most important to me?

🏠 Build

How do I take care of my own mental health?



Current approach to Behavioral Health

- It appears we, as a culture, have decided if you are struggling, you need to see a therapist. This can and has resulted in a flooding of our Behavioral Health medical model system
- Primarily using a one-on-one approach that focuses on individuals who have a clinical diagnosis¹
- Limits the number of people for whom the appropriate level of care is available¹
- Does not address the needs of those who do not reach the diagnostic threshold¹
- Miss the opportunity for prevention and early intervention¹
- Therapists are meant to be temporary supports and are not meant to replace natural supports

¹Evans, A. C., & Bufka, L. F. (2020). *The critical need for a population health approach...* Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2020/20_0261.htm

Sequence and Dosage of Intervention



- What symptoms/ indicators were before the concerning incident?

- Assessing and exploring activities that could help reduce symptoms, shift harmful thoughts

- Consider variables that impact "success"

- Consider formal and informal
- What variables impact outcomes;, how can they be mitigated?

- The focus here is on pharmacological stabilization

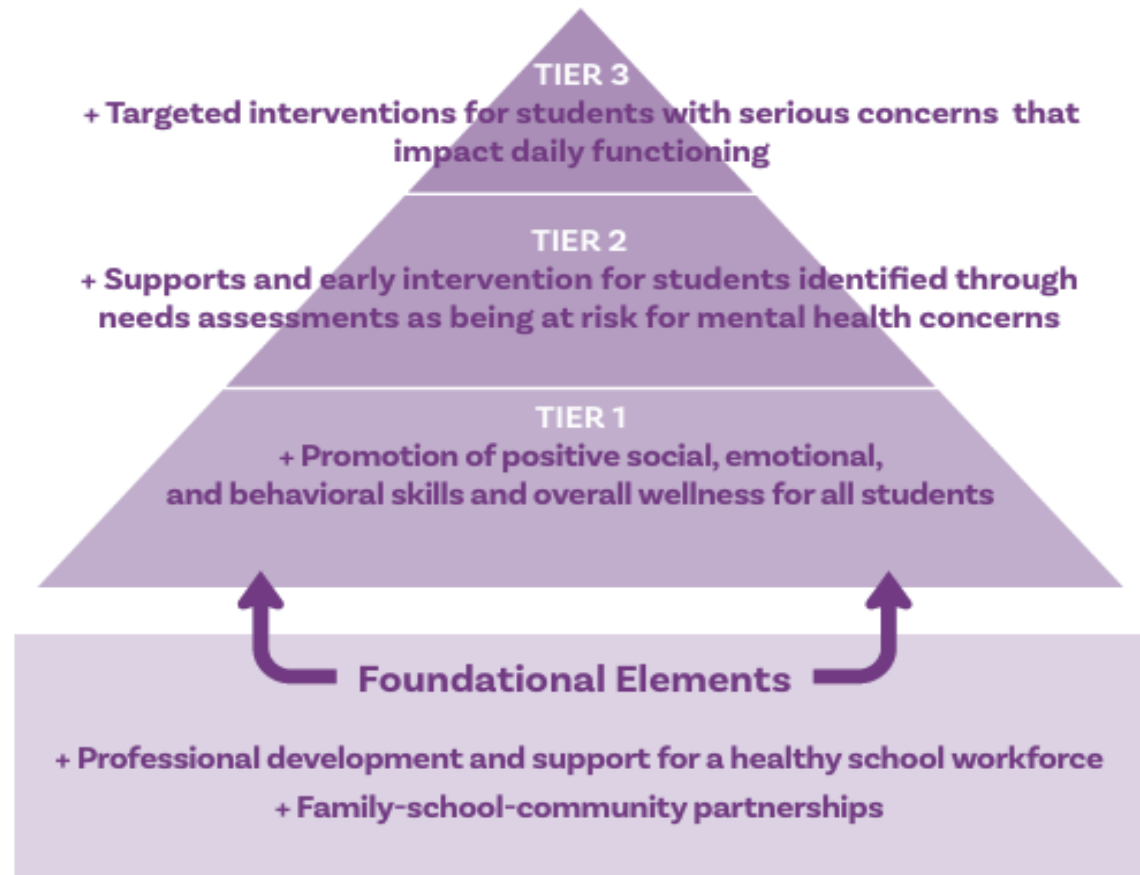
Need for diverse strategies

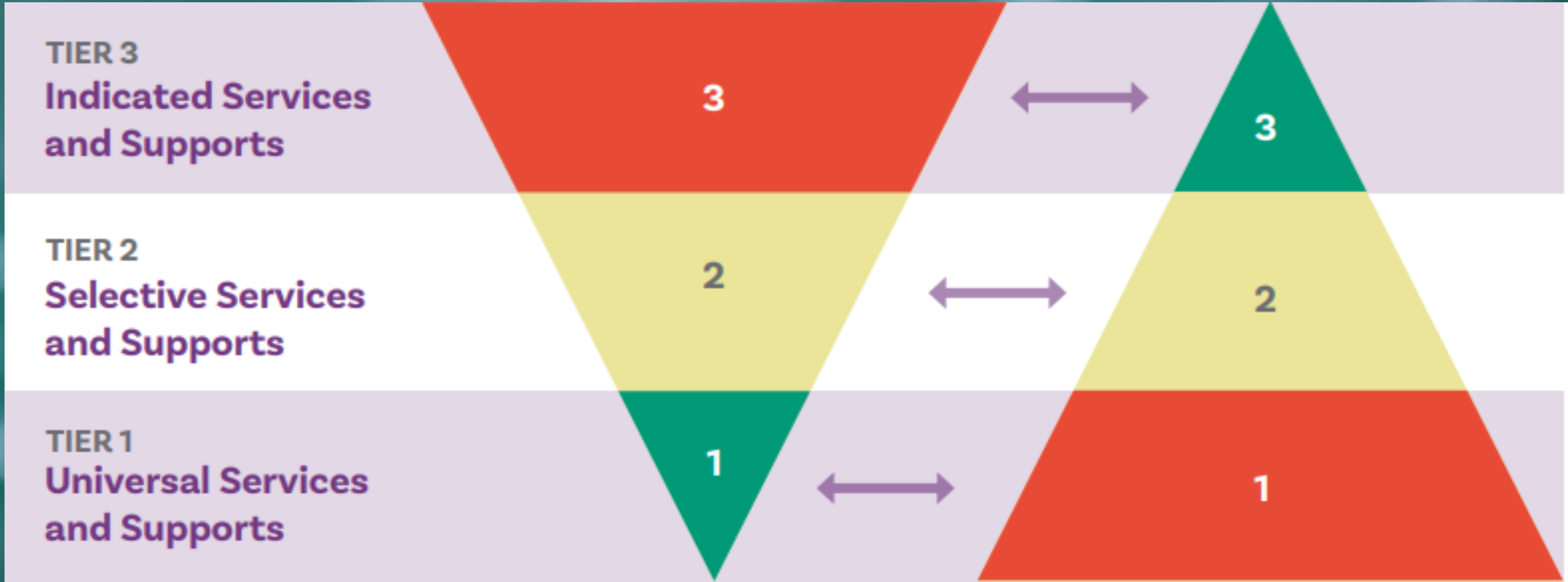
- By implementing environmental and system-level strategies, we have an opportunity to improve behavioral health on a larger scale
- Looking at addressing stigma differently. Instead of destigmatizing mental health treatment, talking about mental health as universal and part of being human
- What if we taught students how to identify their emotions, build skills to regulate their emotions, learn communication skills to express their needs and develop relationship skills to connect with others in schools?
- We need to implement skills and supports in a person's environment so that everyone has access to wellness.

How is the system being used vs how is it designed?

Similar model: MLSS
Multi-layered System
of Support

Multi-Tiered System of Support





Now, let's get to work!

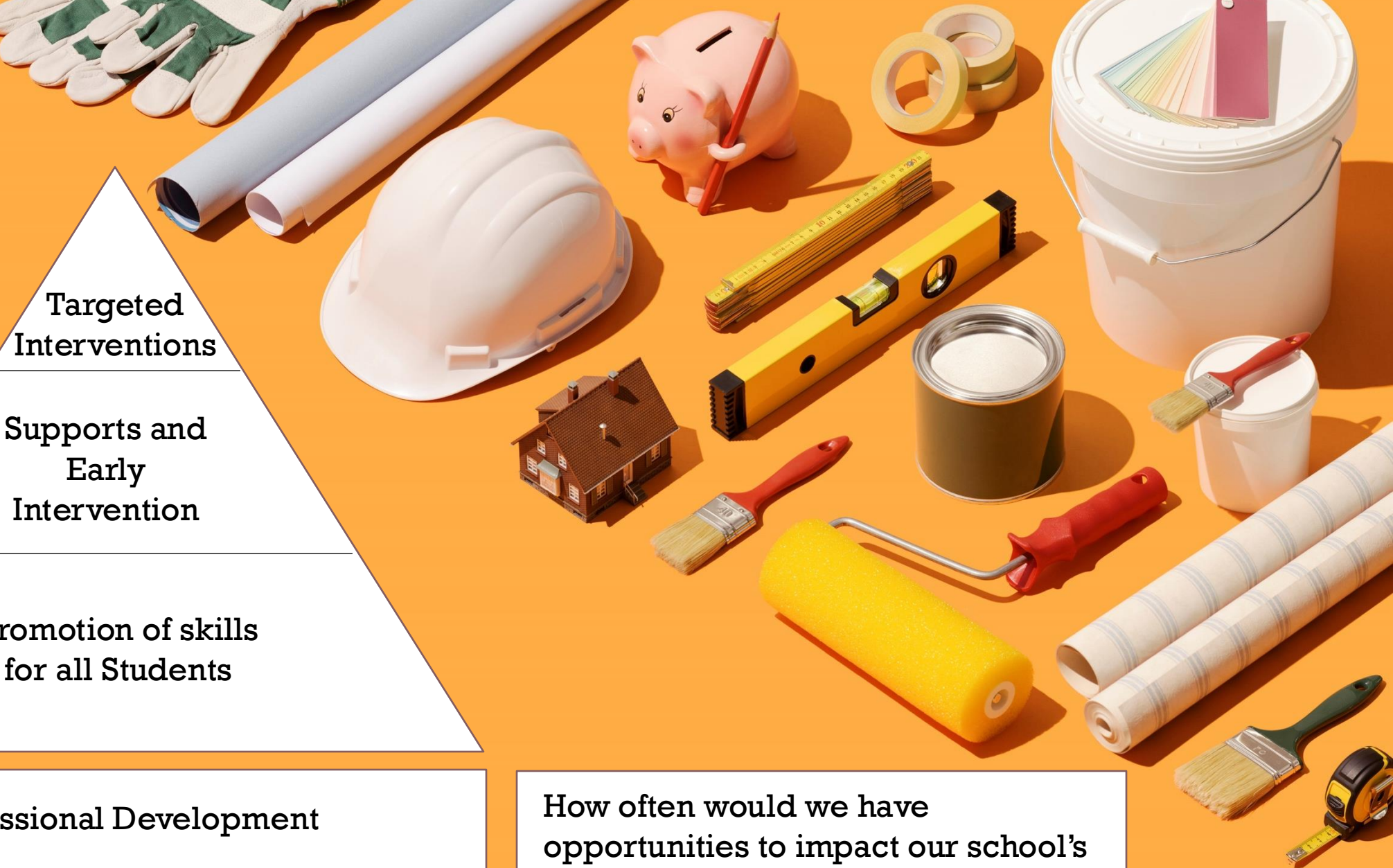
Work with your table group preferably from your clinic location or neighboring locations

Designate 1 person to be the notetaker for the next 2 activities

The more participation from everyone the more opportunities for us to learn!



Goal: Write in BH tools currently being used or tools you would like to use in your school in the related tier in the triangle on your table



Targeted Interventions

Supports and Early Intervention

Promotion of skills for all Students

Professional Development Partnerships

How often would we have opportunities to impact our school's Behavioral Health system if we used this model as it is intended?

Activity #2: Let's take 10 minutes to use the "Behavioral Health Supports Toolkit" and Example to build out the Foundational Supports, Tier 1 and Tier 2 in the large triangle on your table

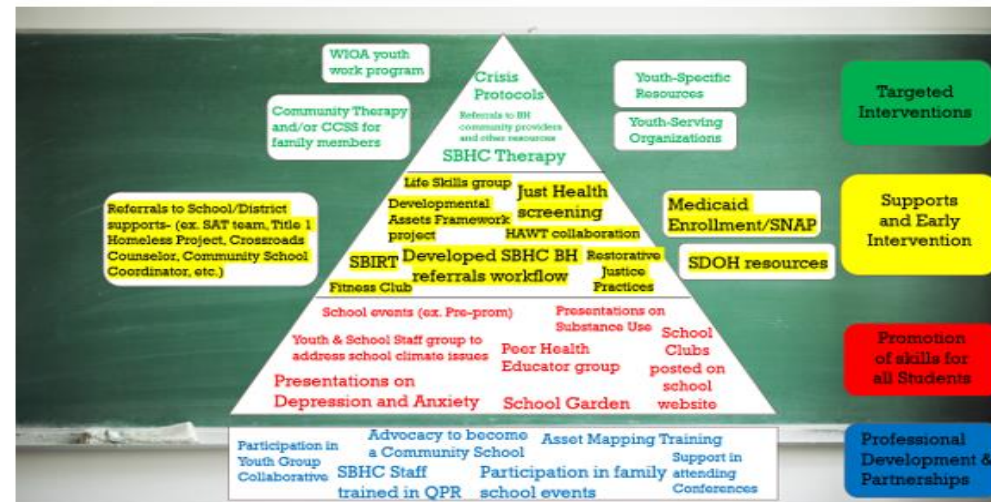
Behavioral Health Supports Toolkit

Build out what you would do in your schools to set the foundation for Mental Health in the Tiers of Foundational Supports, Tier 1 and Tier 2 using any or all of these tools.

Feel free to write in specific names of programs and/or your own tools.

- 👥 Small groups with specialized focus
- 🏫 School-wide SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) Curriculum
- 🌐 Community School
- 🧠 Mental Health Literacy Training: 👤 Students; 👤 Staff; 👤 Families 👤 SBHC Staff
- 🔗 Building referral systems to community providers
- 🏢 Building school partnerships for referrals (SBHC ↔ school staff)
- 📱 Use of Behavioral Health Apps (e.g., NM Connect)
- 🚑 Behavioral Health Crisis Protocols
- 😊 Positive School Climate
- ⚖️ Restorative Justice Practices / Alternatives to Suspension
- 👤 Mentoring Programs
- 🏆 Prosocial Activities (extracurricular activities, sports, school clubs, after school clubs)
- 👥 Peer Support Programs
- 🍎 Programs addressing Food Insecurity & other Social Determinants of Health
- 🤝 Collaboration between School Health Teams (e.g., Nurse, Counselor, SW, ex HAWT)
- 🏠 Referrals to School Support Programs (e.g., SAT team, Title 1 Homeless Project, Crossroads Counselor, Community School Coordinator, etc.)
- 👦 Positive Youth Development Programs
- 🚫 Suicide Prevention Trainings or Programs (e.g., QPR)
- 📱 Connection to Value-Added Benefits through MCOs (e.g., mental health apps, etc.)
- 🏠 Wellness Rooms

Real World Example of a NM High School's School-Based Health Center Initiatives



School-Based Health Center- Students-Families-School-Community Partnership

Activity #3: Now that we have a bigger picture of our school's Behavioral Health system, let's take 5 minutes to consider what is needed to build out our vision.

As a team, complete one "Build Your Vision Toolbox" worksheet per table to hand in to NMASBHC at the end of today's workshop.



Build Your Vision Toolbox

SBHC's Represented: _____

Instructions: Imagine your vision as a structure you're building. Every builder needs the right tools, materials, and a support crew to get the job done. Use this toolbox to reflect on what might get in the way and what will help you build strong.

Obstacles – What would get in the way?

What might block you from building your vision?

Resources – What would you need?

Think about the tools, skills, people, and materials that would make your vision possible.

Support – How can we help?

How can your community, your partners, or we (the team) support you?



We invite you now to share an “Aha!” Moment or an Intention that came out of today’s workshop



**Thank you for your participation today and for
being on this journey with us.**

**Sheena Moe, LCSW
sheena@nmasbhc.org**

**Brooke Tafoya, MSW
brooke.tafoya@ped.nm.gov**



References

Hoover, S., Lever, N., Sachdev, N., Bravo, N., Schlitt, J., Acosta Price, O., Sheriff, L., & Cashman, J. (2019). *Advancing comprehensive school mental health: Guidance from the field* (September 2019). Baltimore, MD: National Center for School Mental Health, University of Maryland School of Medicine. Retrieved from https://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/media/som/microsites/ncsmh/documents/bainum/Advancing-CSMHS_September-2019.pdf

Brindley, L., Bauer, P., Card, A. J., Crocker, J., Ialongo, N., & Tien, A. (2024). Bridging K-12 student mental health policy to practice gaps with a multi-component framework. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 51(6), 1011–1019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-024-01396-w>

Wilkins, N. J., Krause, K. H., Verlenden, J. V., Szucs, L. E., Ussery, E. N., Allen, C. T., Stinson, J., Michael, S. L., & Ethier, K. A. (2023). *School connectedness and risk behaviors and experiences among high school students — Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States, 2021*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Supplements, 72(1), 16–22. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/su/su7201a2.htm>

Evans AC, Bufka LF. The Critical Need for a Population Health Approach: Addressing the Nation's Behavioral Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2020;17:200261. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd17.200261>

