Quality Guide: Evidence-Based Services and Supports

The *Quality Guide: Evidence-Based Services and Supports* is part of a collection of resources developed by the Center for School Mental Health for The SHAPE System that provides guidance to help comprehensive school mental health systems (CSMHSs) advance the quality and sustainability of their services and supports. This guide includes background information on evidence-based services and supports, possible action steps, and resources to help systems incorporate evidence-based services and supports into a long-term quality improvement plan.

Background:

Evidence-Based Services and Supports is a system's implementation of a full continuum of services and supports including mental health promotion (Tier 1), selective prevention (Tier 2), and indicated interventions (Tier 3). The *Evidence-based Services and Supports* domain comprises 15 indicators (five indicators per Tier) to help determine a system's implementation of a full continuum of services and supports including mental health promotion, selective prevention, and indicated interventions that are based directly on scientific evidence. The five indicators measuring performance separately at all three tiers include:

(1) Number of students who receive mental health services and supports
(2) Number of students who receive substance use services and supports
(3) Number of students who receive evidence-based services and supports
(4) Reach of evidence-based mental health and substance use services and supports
(5) Extent that all mental health and substance use services and supports are evidence-based

Evidence-Based Services and supports are programs, services, or supports that are based directly on scientific evidence and have been evaluated in large-scale studies and have been shown to reduce symptoms and/or improve functioning. For instance, evidence-based services and supports are recognized in national evidence-based registries such as *Blueprints for Healthy Development*, *The National Registry of Evidence-based Programs* (*NREPP)*, and *What Works Clearinghouse*. A full continuum of CSMHS evidence-based services and supports include mental health promotion (Tier 1), selective prevention (Tier 2), and indicated interventions (Tier 3).

Mental health promotion services and supports (Tier 1) are mental health-related activities, including promotion of positive social, emotional, and behavioral skills and wellness which are designed to meet the needs of all students regardless of whether or not they are at risk for mental health problems. These activities can be implemented school-wide, at the grade level, and/or at the classroom level.

> *Evidence-based services and supports include mental health promotion, selective prevention, and indicated interventions that are based directly on scientific evidence.*

Selective services and supports (Tier 2) to address mental health and substance use concerns are provided for groups of students who have been identified through needs assessments and school teaming processes as being at risk for a given concern or problem. When problems are identified early and supports put in place, positive youth development is promoted and problems can be eliminated or reduced. Sometimes these are referred to as mental health "prevention" or "secondary" prevention services.

Indicated services and supports (Tier 3) to address mental health and substance use concerns are individualized to meet the unique needs of each student who is already displaying a particular concern or problem and displaying significant functional impairment. Sometimes these are referred to as mental health "intervention" or "tertiary" or intensive services.

Action Steps:
1. Evaluate the rigor of current services and supports.
- o Map existing services and supports across all tiers.
- o Use evidence-based registries to examine the rigor of current services and supports.
- o Identify existing services and supports with a strong evidence base, examine the reach of these services (e.g. are they available for all students who would benefit or only a subsample), and promote expansion within your system.
- o Identify existing services and supports that are not evidence based and consider the area of need and identify replacement programs using national registries.
- o Specific considerations when selecting and searching for evidence-based services and supports include:
  - (1) *Intended population.* Consider the gender, developmental level, race, ethnicity, language, and strengths and needs of those students who will receive the intervention or program. It may be difficult to find an evidence-based program (EBP) that matches exactly with your intended population. If that is the case, determine which factors and/or characteristics are most important to match to a selected EBP.
  - (2) *Intervention target.* Ensure that your EBP is targeted to your intended outcome.
  - (3) *Baseline severity level.* Consider the area of need baseline severity to determine the tier of intervention.
  - (4) *Intervention delivery.* Consider who will deliver the EBP (e.g., teacher, mental health professional, school nurse), when it will be delivered (e.g., before school, after school, during class time), and who will be the target of the intervention (e.g. students, teachers, families).

2. Use national evidence-based registries to identify evidence-based services and supports.
- o SAMHSA's *National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices* (NREPP) includes evidence-based mental health and substance abuse interventions.
- o The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) *What Works Clearinghouse* (WWC) includes academic and emotional/behavioral interventions.
- o The Annie E. Casey Foundation *Blueprints for Healthy Development* provides a registry of evidence-based positive youth development programs designed to promote the health and well-being of children and teens.

3. Use strategies to expand the reach of evidence-based services and supports.
- o Consider ways to build workforce capacity to deliver EBPs including cross-training and collaboration among mental health team members, material sharing, and peer consultation.
- o Reach out to EBP developers about opportunities to partner in EBP effectiveness research in exchange for training and implementation support/reduced costs.

Resources:

- Online Training Videos and Webinars
  - o Center for School Mental Health (2015) Module 7: *Evidence-Based Practices and Programs: Identifying and Selecting EBPs*. Community-Partnered-School Behavioral Health Implementation Modules. https://mdbehavioralhealth.com/training. This module defines EBPs and their importance, provides a list of national web-based clearinghouses for evidence-based prevention and treatment approaches, and discusses how to select and implement an EBP.
- Websites and Web-based Materials
  - o The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) *What Works Clearinghouse* (WWC) aims to inform researchers, educators, and policymakers as they work toward improving education for students. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/
  - o The Annie E. Casey Foundation *Blueprints for Healthy Development* provides a registry of evidence-based positive youth development programs designed to promote the health and well-being of children and teens. http://www.blueprintsprograms.com
  - o The Promising Practices Network provides an archived database (it is no longer updated) of evidence-based interventions for children and families. Educational programming is included. http://www.promisingpractices.net/
  - o National Institute on Mental Health (NIMH) provides easy to read pamphlets and brochures about mental illness in children and adults and effective treatments for each disorder. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/publications-in-english.shtml
  - o National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) provides information on substance use disorders and effective treatments for substance use problems. http://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/treatment
  - o National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. Choosing the right treatment: What families need to know about evidence-based practices. Retrieved at: https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/docs/member_resources/toolbox_for_clinical_practice_and_outcomes/sources/NAMI_Handbook.pdf
  - o National Resource Center for Mental health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, Safe Schools Healthy Students (2014). Selecting Evidence-Based Programs Retrieved from http://www.healthysafechildren.org/sites/default/files/Selecting_EBPs_Website_508.pdf

- o Articles and Guides
  - o Putnam, R., Barrett, S., Eber, L., Lewis, T. & Sugai, G. (2013). Appendix F: Selecting mental health interventions with a PBIS approach In S. Barrett, L. Eber & M. Weist (Eds.), *Advancing education effectiveness: interconnecting school mental health and school-wide behavior support* (pp.142-155). For more information, please click here: https://www.pbis.org/common/cms/files/Current%20Topics/Final-Monograph.pdf

- University of Maryland Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, Safe Schools Healthy Students (2014). Selecting Evidence-Based Programs.
- *Ten Critical Factors to Advancing School Mental Health: What Early Adopters Say* Offers a variety of strategies based on school mental health programs nation-wide. For more information, please click here: http://csmh.umaryland.edu/media/SOM/Microsites/CSMH/docs/10criticalfactors.pdf