Quality Guide: Needs Assessment/Resource Mapping

The *Quality Guide: Needs Assessment/Resource Mapping* 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 needs assessments and resource mapping, possible action steps, and resources to help systems incorporate a needs assessment and/or resource map into a long-term quality program plan.

Background:

The *Needs Assessment/Resource Mapping* domain within the *School Mental Health Quality Assessment Survey* comprises four indicators:
(1) Conducting a comprehensive school mental health needs assessment
(2) Utilizing the needs assessment to inform decisions about service planning and implementation
(3) Conducting resource mapping to identify school/community mental health programs and services
(4) Utilizing resource mapping to inform decisions about service planning and implementation

Needs assessment is a collaborative process to evaluate the unique breadth, depth, and prevalence of student mental health needs in your community. Conducting a needs assessment is a foundational step in a comprehensive, ongoing resource mapping process and should inform team-based decisions about school mental health service planning and implementation.

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Resource mapping is a method used to identify and link community and school-based resources with an agreed upon vision, organizational goals, strategies, or expected outcomes. It may also be referred to as asset mapping or environmental scanning. Mapping focuses on what communities have to offer by identifying assets and resources that can be used for building a system. By identifying what services are already being provided, resource mapping can improve access to these services, avoid duplication of services, and enhance communication and collaboration across agencies.

Action Steps:

Step 1: Needs Assessment and Pre-mapping
- o Determine who will participate in the mapping process for your school mental health system.
  - o Include a diverse group who understands and represents the community (administrative staff, teachers, school nurses, behavioral health professionals, families, and students).
- o Conduct a *needs assessment* to determine strengths and needs of students and their families in your school or school district.
  - (1) Take inventory of current data and build upon existing efforts.
    - Gather data from office referrals, expulsion and suspension rates, attendance and truancy records, nursing and counselor logs, crisis referrals, emergency petitions,

school climate and behavioral surveys, minor incident reports, homework completion rates, homelessness rates, etc.

(2) Identify what other data might be useful for your school and how to gather it.

(3) Determine patterns, such as:
- Are there common problems? Where are they occurring? What are the most pressing behavioral health issues that are impacting most students (Tier 1), some students (Tier 2), and just a few students (Tier 3)?

(4) When determining needs, consider emotional/behavioral needs, medical needs, basic needs (e.g., food), child developmental level, social support, financial needs, cultural beliefs, child strengths, and family strengths, demands, values, and functioning.
- At the high school level, needs might include vocational and early career development. At an elementary school level, needs might include after-school programs and summer camps. Identify possible enrichment activities as well.

o Consider what your resource map is going to look like and where it will be.
   o Is it going to be electronic or handwritten? Will it be entered into a database, written on a chart, or kept in a binder? Who will have access to entering/updating the data? Where will it be housed?
o Identify what information you want to gather.
   o For example., the name of the program or organization, description of service, website, address, phone number, hours of service, eligibility requirements, insurance accepted, cost of service, wait list status, and anything else that you think would help a family decide if this a resource that they would like to use.

Step 2: Mapping
o Identify what resources are already available to students and families in your school and local community.
   o Use Internet search engines such as Google Maps to enter words related to the resources you are mapping, such as "housing," in the Search Maps button and it will populate a map with those resources.
   o Use SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatment Services locator which provides comprehensive information about mental health services and resources by zip code.
   o Call 211 from the United Way, a confidential informational and referral service that uses a comprehensive database of more than 4600 federal, state, and local services.
o Create and foster school-community partnerships to ensure ongoing communication about programs, services, and/or new organizations available to students/families.

Step 3: Post-Mapping
o Continue updating the map.
   o How will you identify changing needs? How will you make sure that your information stays relevant? How and when will updates be made based on feedback about resources and the mapping process? Who is leading the team-based mapping process?
o Evaluate the outcomes of the map.
   o Were the goals achieved? For instance, were unmet needs that you had identified addressed? Are staff and providers satisfied with the map? Are students and families satisfied? How easy is it for school-based staff, families, and youth to access the resources? Is communication enhanced among providers?

- o Disseminate needs assessment and resource mapping data regularly to all appropriate stakeholder groups at the community, school and district level.
- o Reference needs assessment and resource map data in all your school mental health teams to inform the type of services and supports prioritized, developed, and sustained in your school or district.

Resources:

Online Training Videos and Webinars
- o Center for School Mental Health (2015) Module 5: *Resource Mapping*. Community-Partnered-School Behavioral Health Implementation Modules. https://mdbehavioralhealth.com/training. This module describes the steps to resource mapping, how to prepare for and sustain mapping efforts, and outlines the importance of resource mapping for schools.

Websites and Web-based Materials
- o The SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator is an on-line source of information for persons seeking treatment facilities in the United States or U.S. Territories for substance abuse/addiction and/or mental health problems. For more information, click here http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/
- o 2-1-1 helps people assess their needs and links them directly to the resources that will help. For more information, click here http://www.211.org/
- o *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

Articles and Guides
- o Anderson-Butcher, D., Stetler, E. G., & Midle, T. (2006). A case for expanded school-community partnerships in support of positive youth development. *Children & Schools*, *28*(3), 155-163.
- o Crane, K., & Mooney, M. (2005). Essential tools: Community resource mapping. *Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. Retrieved March*, *1*, 2006.
- o The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition published a 3-part series on supplemental security income for parents. For more information, please click here http://www.ncset.org/publications/
- o Lever, N., Castle, M., Cammack, N., Bohnenkamp, J., Stephan, S., Bernstein, L., Chang, P., Lee, P, & Sharma, R. (2014). *Resource Mapping in Schools and School Districts: A Resource Guide*. Baltimore, Maryland: Center for School Mental Health.
- o Lever, N., Stephan, S., Castle, M., Bernstein, L., Connors, E, Sharma, R., & Blizzard, A. (2014). *Community-Partnered School Behavioral Health: State of the Field in Maryland*. Baltimore, MD: Center for School Mental Health.