

Quality Guide: Teaming

The *Quality Guide: Teaming* 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 teaming, possible action steps, and resources to help systems incorporate teaming into a long-term quality program plan.

Background:

The *Teaming* domain within the *School Mental Health Quality Assessment Survey* comprises five indicators:

- 1) Having a multidisciplinary school mental health team
- 2) Having streamlined teams that avoid duplication and promote efficiency
- 3) Having a productive meeting structure
- 4) Having a system in place to promote data sharing among team members
- 5) Having well-established working relationships with community mental health resources to refer students and families to when their needs cannot be met in school

A school mental health team is a group of school and community stakeholders that meet regularly and use data-based decision-making to support student mental health, including addressing individual student problems, improving school climate, and promoting well-being. This requires schools and community partners, including families, to be committed to building a multi-tiered systemic approach that addresses the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students.

Many schools have teams that meet to discuss and strategize about student mental health issues. The five indicators within the teaming domain, and the action steps and resources provided here, relate to any school mental health team(s) in your school or district. Schools may have one team devoted to the full continuum of mental health supports (mental health promotion to selective and indicated intervention) or multiple teams that address different parts of the continuum, such as the following:

- ✓ School climate team
- ✓ Student support team
- ✓ Intervention/tertiary care team
- ✓ Tier 2/3 team
- ✓ Any other team at the school or district level tasked with addressing student mental health concerns as part of its purpose

A school behavioral health team is a group of school and community stakeholders that meet regularly and use data-based decision-making to support student behavioral health, including addressing individual student problems, improving school climate, and promoting well-being.

Action Steps:

1. Build a multidisciplinary team

- Build upon an existing team when possible. Recruit new members or restructure as a subcommittee of an existing team if needed.

- At the school level, convene key team members such as the principal, assistant principal, student support staff, school psychologist, school social worker, school counselor, school nurse, other school-based health provider, community mental health partner, student(s), family member(s), and teacher(s).
- At the district level, convene key team members such as a principal representative or other administrators, director of student support staff, director of community-partnered services based in schools, community partner leadership, school psychology or social work leadership, child serving system representatives, and youth/family advocate or liaison.
- Include students and family partners. They are critical stakeholder groups to engage in the school mental health team and are the primary consumers, beneficiaries, and advocates for mental health programs and services in schools. Parents and other family members are experts on their own children and should be encouraged to participate when there is a team meeting about their child.
- Involve family organizations. They bring knowledge and passion based on practical, real-life experiences. Such organizations are often expert in navigating varied systems.

2. Ensure efficient team structure and practice.

- Appoint a school mental health team leader. This person should possess excellent group facilitation skills (e.g. keeping participants on task, making them feel valued); excellent listening skills (e.g. refrain from imposing his or her own opinions); and be respected by all participants.
- Consider the number of teams needed for your school system. Some schools prefer to have one universal team and one combined Tier 2 and Tier 3 team, and others may only have one team to address all three tiers. Communicate across teams to ensure purposes are complimentary, not duplicative, and streamline if needed (collapse or divide teams).
- Establish a regularly scheduled time and frequency for meetings and agree to hold each other accountable for regular attendance and active participation.
- Collaboratively determine the purpose, target goals, activities, and processes of the team.

3. Use and share data.

- Ensure your target goals are clear and measurable. Then, identify data collection sources and processes to track and review progress toward action items.
- Identify issues related to data sharing such as HIPAA and FERPA issues up front. Give careful consideration to securing consents and releases of information to allow data sharing across system partners in an effort to have a more comprehensive picture of student progress across educational and social-emotional-behavioral domains.

4. Maintain working relationships with community providers.

- Seek, establish, and maintain positive working relationships with community mental health resources. Determine policies and procedures to refer, connect, and coordinate services and supports with those providers for students whose needs cannot be fully met in school.
- Collaborate across systems in your local, regional, and state networks to establish multilevel strategies to effectively support the whole child, the family, and the school. This will support your efforts to streamline access to services in and out of school, enhance communication between



agencies, promote more effective care, and develop and leverage funding mechanisms across agencies to support comprehensive school mental health.

Resources:

Online Training Videos and Webinars

- Center for School Mental Health (2015) Module 6: *Teaming*. Community-Partnered-School Mental health Implementation Modules. <https://mdbehavioralhealth.com/training>. This module reviews how to assemble a school mental health team and best practices for engaging partners and operating school mental health teams. The role of community, school, and family and youth partners is considered in detail.

Articles and Guides

- Appendix E: Implementation guide: District and community leadership teams. In S. Barrett, L. Eber & M. Weist (Eds.), *Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-Wide Behavior Support* (pp.140-141). <https://www.pbis.org/common/cms/files/Current%20Topics/Final-Monograph.pdf>
- *Leading by Convening – A Blueprint for Authentic Engagement* provides a guide toward developing authentic stakeholder engagement. <https://www.nasdse.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=uyli21KRYB4%3D&tabid=36>
- Stephan, S., Sugai, G., Lever, N., & Connors, E. (2015) Strategies for Integrating Mental Health into Schools via a Multi-tiered System of Support. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 24, 211-231.
- Shaw, B., McCabe, M., & Tracy, P. Guidelines for School-Community Partnerships Addressing the Unmet Mental Health Needs of School Age Children. *Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership*.



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