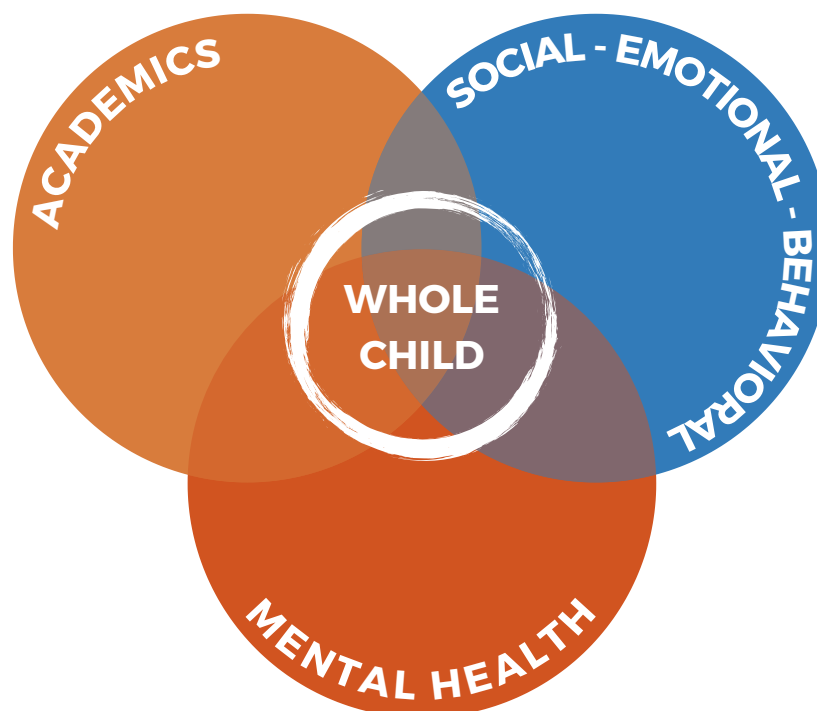


Working Together to Support the Whole Child

School-Based Mental Health Professionals assist and strengthen schools and districts by providing comprehensive support. These professionals, with their unique skills, training, and expertise, work collaboratively to meet the many needs of students and staff. Collaboration, consultation, and direct services are provided within a multi-tiered system of supports, which emphasizes evidence-based interventions, data-based problem-solving practices, student equity, and family resource connections.

School communities use tiered supports for educational, social-emotional-behavioral, and mental health outcomes for all students. The flexibility of this framework allows students to move fluidly between tiers of intervention as needed. This process is not linear nor on a timeline. Mental health is a critical component of MTSS.

HOW DOES THE WORK OF SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS INTERSECT AT YOUR SCHOOL?



Overview of School-Based Mental Health Providers in Oklahoma



The Unique Roles of School-Based Mental Health Providers

School-based mental health providers support each other while bringing expertise to address the comprehensive needs of students. Although each provider plays a specialized role, some supports may overlap to foster the well-being of the whole child. These professionals provide direct and indirect student services to ensure equitable access to support for all students to learn, thrive, and grow.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

- Teach school-wide school counseling classroom lessons based on the Student Standards
- Facilitate small group counseling
- Provide individual student support, academic planning, and goal setting
- Provide short-term counseling to students
- Make referrals for long-term support
- Collaborate and consult with families, teachers, administrators, and community
- Advocate for students at student-focused meetings
- Analyze data to identify student issues, needs, and challenges
- Act as a systems change agent to improve equity and access, achievement, and opportunities for all students
- Recommended individual-to-provider ratio: 250 to 1

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

- Facilitate and link engagement between student, family, school, and community
- Advocate for the promotion of equal access to services and supports
- Provide guidance related to home and family situations to encourage student success
- Provide a multi-tiered system of supports in behavior and mental health services
- Assist students with developing social and emotional skills
- Assist in crisis intervention
- Help students cope with family, grief, medical, substance use, and sexuality issues
- Provide assessments for behavioral health, assess school climate, develop safety plans
- Obtain and coordinate community resources and systems of care that provide external and wrap-around services for students and families
- Provide training and communicate policies and procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect
- Recommended individual-to-provider ratio: 250 to 1

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

- Utilize data-based decision making
- Engage in consultation and collaboration
- Facilitate implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports to provide academic, behavioral, and mental health services and interventions
- Develop school-wide practices to promote learning
- Provide services to promote safe and supportive schools
- Collaborate with family, school, and community
- Ensure equitable practices for diverse student populations
- Research and conduct program evaluations of evidence-based practices
- Support district and school-wide crisis preparedness, response, and recovery
- Conduct psychological and academic assessments
- Recommended individual-to-provider ratio: 500 to 1

RECREATIONAL THERAPISTS

- Teach and develop skills through the APIED (Assessment, Planning, Implementing Interventions, Evaluating treatment, and Documentation) process
- Through structured recreational activities, assist students in mastering and generalizing skills related to school and community
- Provide expertise in leisure, recreation, inclusion, and goal-orientated activities
- Plan for student transitions
- Help close gaps and ensure the education and life success of students with disabilities
- Consider that each provider will be serving students with intensive needs and could have caseloads of up to approximately 50 clients actively receiving services at any one time

LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

- Conduct individual therapeutic interventions for guardian-approved students
- Conduct small group psychotherapy interventions
- Help develop and implement universal supports for Tier 1 and streamlined supports for Tier 2 and Tier 3
- Provide professional development centered around prevention, mental health, and wellness
- Collaborate with students, teachers, parents, administrators, and community members to enhance student mental health support
- Consider that each provider will be serving students with intensive needs and could have caseloads of up to approximately 50 clients actively receiving services at any one time

Best Practices for School-Based Mental Health Collaboration

Multi-Disciplinary Teams facilitate communication, collaboration, and mutual support among individual team members who might otherwise work in isolation. In order to best support the whole child, school multi-disciplinary teams develop a vision and prioritize improvement efforts to ensure that the school mental health system is meeting the individual needs of all students and of the larger school community. They work to maximize resources and to integrate mental health services to meet the needs of students and their families.

Functions of Prioritizing Mental Health in Multi-Disciplinary Teams

- Promote awareness of school mental health needs and resources
- Use a data-driven process to align student services within a multi-tiered system of support
- Train, coach, and support school teams in mental health best practices and provide technical assistance
- Foster school partnerships with community, family, and students
- Act as a liaison between community mental health agencies and schools
- Shape district guidelines and standards of school mental health policy and practice

Teaming Quality Indicators

- Multidisciplinary teams / diverse groups are represented
- Youth, community, and family partnership are cultivated
- All tiers are addressed
- Duplication is avoided and efficiency is promoted
- Best practices for meeting structure/process are followed
- Roles/responsibilities are delineated
- Effective referral processes to school and community services are utilized
- Data-based decisions are made to determine student interventions
- Data is routinely disseminated and reviewed

Best Practices for Effective Teaming

- Schedule and hold regular meetings
- Track attendance and troubleshoot as needed
- Create and use an evidence-based agenda
- Focus on making actionable decisions
- Follow up on the status of action items
- Provide clear self-referral information for students and families
- Promote direct contact with the school-based provider
- Use referral feedback meetings or forms
- Maintain and utilize a current community resource map

School-Based Mental Health Providers and a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

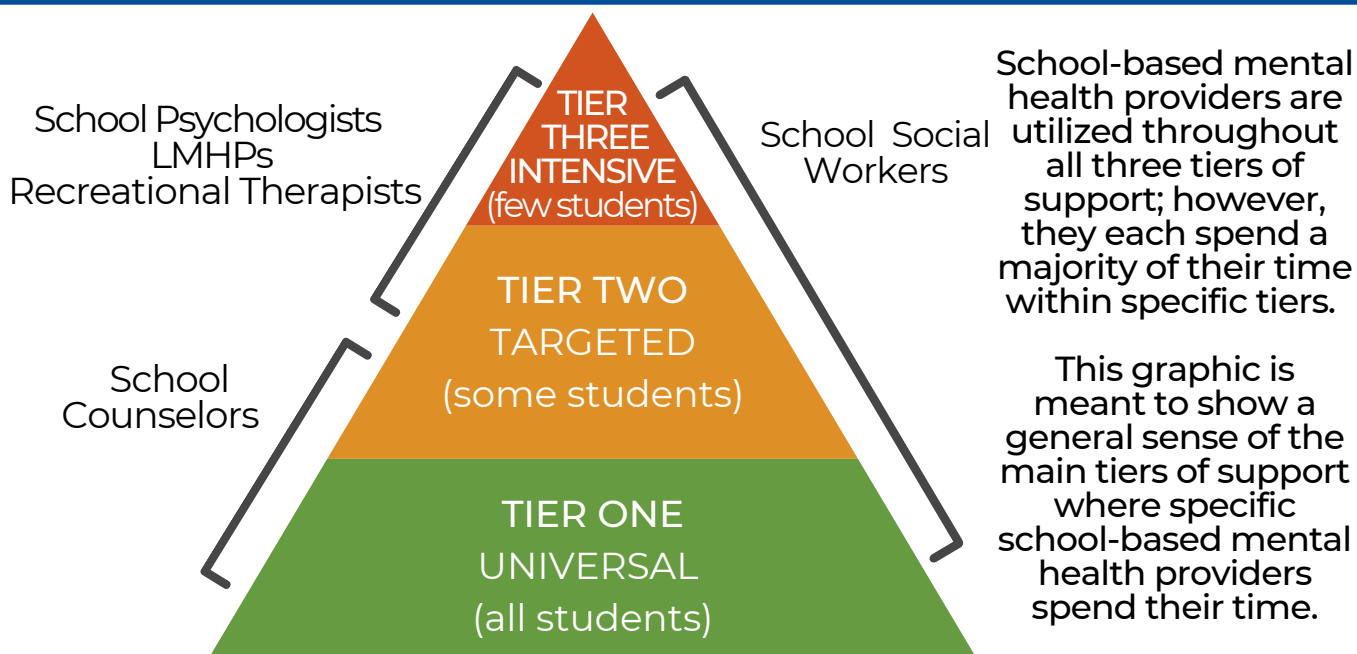
When school-based mental health providers work as a team, they provide a continuum of services through a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). This allows schools to cultivate mental wellness for all students, as well as identify those who need targeted or intensive intervention. Understanding the relevance of a continuum of support is important to ensure all students receive appropriate assistance.

Tier 1 educational and preventative services are focused on universal support for all students and are offered through whole school/classroom instruction and activities. These may include presentations on substance use education, self-care, and mental health awareness. Staff professional development topics may include suicide prevention, self-care, and mandatory reporting.

Tier 2 services are geared at providing targeted interventions to students who need extra support. These may include small group counseling, short-term treatment, collaboration and consultation, and referrals for community services.

Tier 3 services are provided for students in need of intensive support. Intensive school-based or community services may include crisis intervention, collaboration and consultation, referral for long-term individual counseling, and referral for placement in a treatment or program setting.

WHERE DO SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME WITHIN MTSS?



Resources

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [Oklahoma School-Based Mental Health Professionals](#)
- [Oklahoma Comprehensive School Counseling Framework](#)
- [NASW Standards for School Social Work](#)
- [NASP Model of Comprehensive and Integrated School Psychological Services](#)
- [Recreational Therapy](#)

REFERENCES

- [Overview of School-Based Mental Health Providers in South Dakota](#)
- [School-Based Mental Health Providers in South Dakota](#)
- [West Virginia Department of Education's Collaborating for Student Success: Understanding the Roles of Professional Student Support Personnel](#)
- [Lynchburg City School School-Based Mental Health Supports](#)
- [Overlapping and Unique Roles of Ohio Specialized Pupil Services Personnel](#)
- [SHAPE School Mental Health Quality Guide: Teaming](#)