

A Comprehensive School Mental Health Model for Canada

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OBJECTIVE

To create a model that addresses adolescent mental health needs in the school setting in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

BACKGROUND

- Mental disorders are the single largest health problem affecting young people globally¹.
- Adolescence is a period during which many mental disorders, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression and anxiety disorders appear².
- In Canada approximately 20% of adolescents suffer from some form of mental disorder, but only 1 in 5 of those in need receive care³.
- Therefore, adolescence is a critical period for the promotion of mental health, prevention, early identification and treatment of mental disorders.
- The school environment offers a relatively simple and cost-effective way of reaching youth since most young people spend at least 30 hours a week in the classroom.
- The school is also a place where mental health can be linked with other aspects of health, such as physical health, nutrition, sexual health.

MODEL GOALS

1. To promote mental health and reduce stigma through enhancing the mental health literacy of students, educators and parents.
2. To address prevention and promote appropriate and timely care through early identification, triage and evidence-supported site-based mental health interventions.
3. To enhance formal linkages between schools and appropriate health care providers.
4. To provide a framework in which students receiving mental health care can be seamlessly supported in their educational needs within usual school settings.

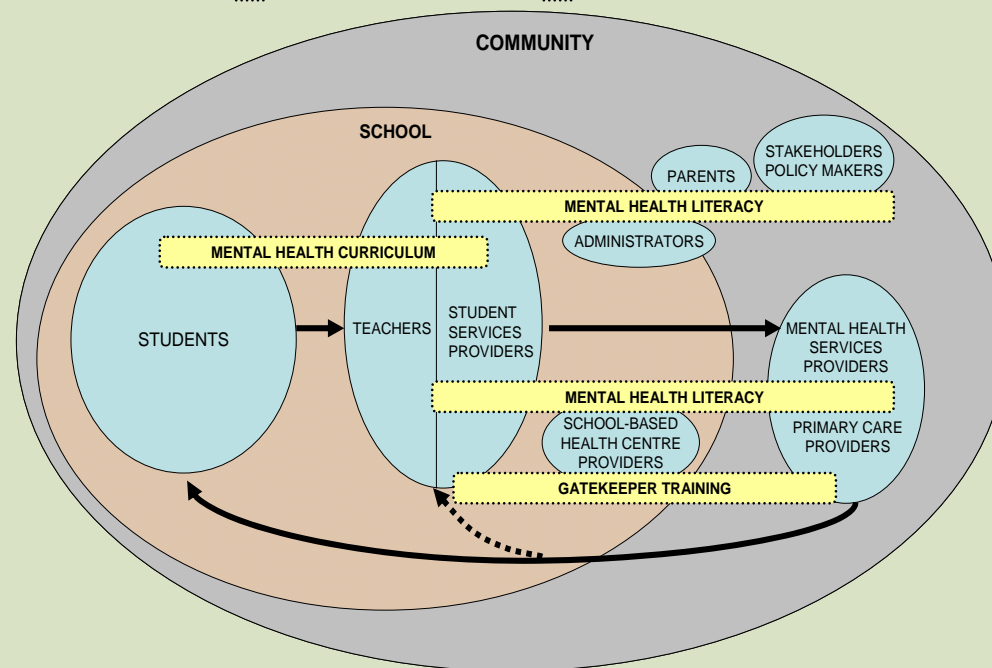
MODEL COMPONENTS

- Mental health curriculum for youth
- "Go-to" educator training
- Student services provider training
- Primary cares provider training
- Upgrading for mental health services providers
- Parent/family/community outreach
- Creation of pathways to care
- Integration of mental health & education services
- Evaluation

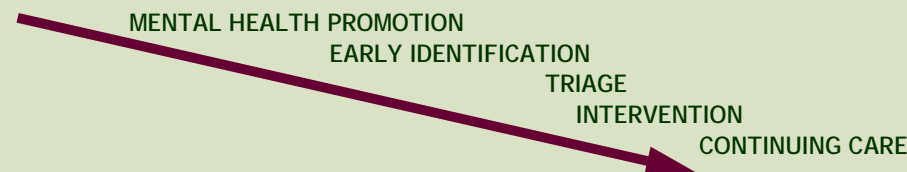
SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH MODEL

Below is a schematic of the comprehensive school mental health model

Target group Program component Process



MODEL PATHWAY TO CARE



CONCLUSION

- The proposed model enhances multiple aspects of mental health care in young people by implementing targeted programs across different groups in the community.
- Two pilot projects are currently underway in Nova Scotia, with effectiveness evaluations forthcoming.

REFERENCES

1. American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR)*. Washington, D.C.: APA; 2000.
2. Health Canada. *A report on mental illnesses in Canada*. Ottawa: Health Canada; 2002.
3. World Health Organization. *The Global Burden of Disease*. Geneva: WHO; 2004.

