

## **Mental Health & Schools**

The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health (DMH) recognizes that there is an ever growing body of evidence that supports preventing the onset of mental health challenges and intervening early when symptoms arise ameliorates the burden of illness on the individual and society at large. In collaboration, the Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership has developed the Interconnected System's Model of School Based Mental Health. This three tiered model is designed to meet the universal (prevention), early intervention, and treatment needs of Illinois students through the development of a partnership between child serving systems, including early childhood, education, mental health, juvenile justice, health, human services, substance abuse, violence prevention, corrections, and other relevant systems. The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Child and Adolescent Service System's Mental Health and School Collaboration project seeks to develop systems of support within the educational setting designed to reduce the effects of both internal and external mental health concerns that can cause barriers to learning and engaging in the educational process. To be successful in this venture, it is necessary for Community Mental Health providers to partner and work collaboratively with schools, families, and the aforementioned child serving systems.

### **The Illinois Public Health Approach to School Based Mental Health Services and Supports: Guiding Principles and Key Components**

1. The Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership (ICMHP), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health (IDHS/DMH) have collectively developed a three-tier approach as an organizing framework for all school based mental health efforts (Appendix A).

Within the three tier model, key components essential to the success of any school-based mental health effort include the following.

- Program Goals: Program goals should be explicit, agreed upon by all partners, obtainable, measurable and sustainable.
- Population served: All programs should clearly identify the population to be addressed, including age, gender, disability and any other eligibility requirements for Tier II or Tier III interventions.

- **Identification and/or referral process:** Referral processes should be simple, efficient and offer a rationale for identified populations. Referral processes and pathways to accessing services should be well understood by school personnel, students and families.
- **Evidence informed and Evidence-based practice:** Programs should be grounded in evidence-informed and evidence-based practice. Evidence informed practice is defined by IDHS/DMH as “a collaborative effort by children, families and practitioners to identify and implement practices that are appropriate to the needs of the child and family, reflective of available research, and measured to ensure the selected practices lead to improved meaningful outcomes.”
- **Infrastructure supports:** Schools, school districts and key community agencies should develop policies and related infrastructure (e.g., staffing) that clearly define leadership expectations, support district and school-wide implementation teams, use reliable data to inform decision making, and provide for adequate training and coaching.

#### Resource Links - ICMHP Guidelines/ISBE/SEL Standards

##### **ISBE:**

Social and Emotional Learning Standards:

[http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/social\\_emotional/standards.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm)

Comprehensive System of Learning Supports:

<http://www.isbe.net/learningsupports/default.htm>

##### **ICMHP:**

Guidelines for School-Community Partnerships:

<http://icmhp.org/icmhpproducts/gdlnsclcmnty.html>

School Based Mental Health in Illinois Report:

<http://icmhp.org/icmhpproducts/schlbds.html>

Social and Emotional Learning Brochures:

<http://icmhp.org/icmhpproducts/selbrochures.html>

The National Community of Practice (CoP) on School Behavioral Health:

<http://www.sharedwork.org/web/school-behavioral-health/home>

Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition

<http://illinoischildhoodtrauma.org/>

National Children's Traumatic Stress Network

[http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/complex\\_trauma\\_facts\\_educators\\_final.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/complex_trauma_facts_educators_final.pdf)

Complex trauma, Facts for Educators  
<http://nctsnet.org/>

Mental Health First Aid  
<http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/>

Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice, Restorative Practices in Schools  
<http://ibarji.org/schools.asp>

- o Link to: [Illinois Interconnected Systems Model for School Mental Health \(PDF\)](#)