



Expanded School Mental Health West Virginia

<https://livewell.marshall.edu/mutac>

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Universal Screening

Tool Kit #4

Early and ongoing universal screening supports schools in identifying and intervening on behalf of all students to promote resilience, well-being and school success.

– West Virginia Expanded School Mental Health Steering Team, 2017

Universal screening is the systematic assessment of all children within a given class, grade, school building, or school district for social – emotional and behavioral indicators identified by research that impact student success and well-being.

Screening, is an essential component of the Expanded School Mental Health framework and compliments the mission of schools to identify youth in need, linking students to effective services and positive educational outcomes.

Expanded school mental health (ESMH) is a multi-tiered system of support where schools and strategic community partners work together to enhance student mental health in schools. It is a framework that:

- includes the full continuum of prevention; early intervention and treatment;
- serves all students;
- builds upon core programs/services being provided by schools
- emphasizes shared responsibility between schools, mental health providers and other community partners

About **one-half** of all students will experience a diagnosable mental health, behavioral or substance abuse problem by age 18.¹ West Virginia has one of the highest rates of suicide among young adults in the U.S. Youth with

internalizing disorders such as depression, anxiety or suicide ideation are not as easily identified as those with acting-out or externalizing disorders....For these reasons, formal screening ...that detects depression and suicide ideation are recommended.² Research shows that failure to address mental health and traumatic experiences results in delays in social-emotional, behavioral, physical and academic achievement.

The West Virginia Department of Education supports early identification and screening through initiatives, such as: Support for Personalized Learning, the Early Warning System and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS). Recent code changes outlined in Policy 2423 require health checks/annual comprehensive physical exams to include developmental and behavioral health assessments for all students entering Pre-K and Kindergarten and grades 2, 7 and 12. Best practice ensures school staff collaborate with local providers that ensure information is exchanged when results indicates concerns that require school supports or additional screening.

West Virginia Code §18A-3A-2(5) known as the "Jason Flatt Act of 2012 calls for suicide prevention training for school staff. House Bill 2535 or "Jamie's Law" requires public middle and high school administrators to disseminate and provide opportunities to discuss suicide prevention awareness information to all middle and high school students. Both laws promote utilization of evidence-based screening. Additionally, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends screening for depression in adolescents 12-18 years when systems are in place to ensure accurate diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.

References

- ¹ National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, "Childhood Trauma and Its Effect on Healthy Development," July 2012 (http://sshs.promoteprevent.org/sites/default/files/trauma_brief_in_final.pdf)
- ² Weist, et al, Mental Health Screening in Schools, Journal of School Health, Feb 2007

Best Practices for Universal Screening

Once a community behavioral health partner and school determine that school-based behavioral health screening programs are necessary, several considerations and principles should be followed including: Screenings:

- are proactive, not reactive
- are available to all students
- are voluntary and minimally include passive parent consent;
- protect confidentiality;
- are administered and reviewed by trained staff;
- include a plan for further assessment and immediate access to services;
- include a written agreement with a community behavioral health provider for referrals for emergency and non-emergency follow up services;
- include informing parents of screening results, referral recommendations and available resources for identified students; and
- include a process for offering assistance such as securing an appointment for further evaluation.

Steps for Implementing Screening

1. Designate a school or district-level staff person to coordinate screening and implementation.
2. Convene a group to plan the screening program that includes community mental health providers, school staff, parents, and student representatives.
3. Review and select age appropriate screening measures based on evidence, feasibility, affordability, and acceptance.
4. Determine scope and frequency of the screening: all students, certain grades or classrooms, new students, students with other risk factors.
5. Determine which community health providers to use for screening and referrals and have written agreements defining roles and expectations
6. Establish protocols and policies for informing parents, obtaining consent, responding to students at risk, follow up, coordination with community mental health providers, etc.
7. Promote buy-in through parent and staff information and gatekeeper training on suicide prevention for all school personnel, parents, community.
8. Have trained mental health professionals at the school on the screening days to address immediate needs.

West Virginia Resources

- Behavioral Health Referral & Outreach 1-844-HELP4WV
- Prevent Suicide www.preventsuicidewv.org
- Substance Abuse Screening: The WVDHHR Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment Project (SBIRT) offers training on screening for substance and alcohol misuse. Contact James.A.Matney@wv.gov

- Suicide is Preventable 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Screening & Assessment Tools

- CRAFFT Screening Tool: Center for Adolescent Substance Abuse Research, <http://www.ceasar-boston.org/CRAFFT/>
- Mental Health Screening in Schools: Handout H, Depression in Children and Adolescents, Guidelines for School Practice, NASN and NASP: <http://www.nasponline.org/search/search-results?keywords=mental+health+screening+in+schools>
- PBIS Screening Resources <http://www.istac.net/resources/illinois-pbis-network-resources/PBIS-Trainings/universalscreening/presentations/Universal%20Screening%20Overview.pptx>
- SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions <http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/screening-tools>
- Screening for Mental Health, Inc: <http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org>
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire <http://www.sdqinfo.com/a0.html>
- Free Assessment Measures: Resources for Clinicians, Center for School Mental Health. <https://csmh.umaryland.edu/Resources/Resources-for-Clinicians/>

General Resources

- National Traumatic Stress Network www.nctsn.org
- Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Preventing-Suicide-A-Toolkit-for-High-Schools/SMA12-4669>
- Recognize Trauma www.recognizetrauma.org
- Signs of Suicide (SOS) On Line Training: Free gatekeeper training for school personnel: <https://mentalhealthscreening.org/gatekeeper>
- Universal Screening in PBIS: <http://www.istac.net/resources/illinois-pbis-network-resources/PBIS-Evaluation>
- Strengths and Difficulties <http://www.sdqinfo.com/py/sdqinfo/b0.py>

The purpose of the ESMH toolkits is to provide a common framework and recommendations to assist schools and community mental health providers to more effectively develop a comprehensive approach to school mental health that is consistent with current West Virginia Department of Education policies and best practices.

These recommendations and resources were reviewed and approved by West Virginia's Expanded School Mental Health Steering Team.

For more information visit, <https://livewell.marshall.edu/mutac>

Leadership for the West Virginia School Mental Health initiative is a shared commitment. This toolkit was prepared by:

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