

This brief bulletin will bring you up to date on the activities of the Mental Health Steering Committee at the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB). The committee provides advice and direction to our efforts at HWDSB to improve the mental health and well-being of all students and all staff, in order to provide the best possible environment for achievement, engagement and equitable outcomes.

Building the District Mental Health Strategy

Coordinating our District Mental Health Strategy is Michelle Bates, from the Social Work Department. Michelle has presented the District Strategy to many groups this past year, both within HWDSB and to partners in the community. Beginning with Principals and administrators, Michelle has spoken about the importance of working together to improve mental health, and listened to their perspectives on the challenges of helping students with mental health problems.

Michelle also shared the results of a survey that found that almost all Principals felt that mental health problems was very important or extremely important to achievement, and that educators feel ill-prepared to deal with the mental health concerns of their students. Michelle has been supported in this work by members of the District Mental Health Strategy Working Group.

Mapping System resources

One important initiative has been to determine the breadth and depth of social and emotional supports currently in place across our District. Schools completed a self-identification of programs they are currently offering. These ranged from very specific programs that focused on particular mental health problems, to more general "foundational" programs such as school nutrition programs.

We know that a variety of programs help to build an inclusive and mentally healthy school community. This mapping of programs will help schools who are thinking about starting a new initiative to learn from other schools that have successfully launched the program. This mentoring can be an important factor in the implementation of something new.

The mapping has also resulted in a clearer picture of what community programs are being offered in schools. The Steering Committee has established an approval process to ensure that mental health programs offered in our schools are high-quality, and have evidence that they are effective.

Improving educator mental health literacy

Helping educators understand more about mental health problems is an important goal of the District Plan. The objective is not to have educators identify or treat students with mental health problems, but to help teachers understand how they can adjust their teaching so that students with mental health problems can achieve to their full potential.

A locally-developed resource "Making a Difference: An Educators Guide to Child and Youth Mental Health Problems" has been used in a number of schools, both in HWDSB and our partners at the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board. Developed through partnership with our local community agencies and the School Support Leadership Initiative, the guide has been well-received by teachers.

Upcoming Projects for 2011-2012

Building Capacity.

Educators across our organization have identified student anxiety as a major barrier to achievement, and they are interested in promoting good mental health for students in their classroom. With a grant from the



Knowledge Network for Applied Educational Research (KNAER) HWDSB staff spent two weeks this summer developed training modules on anxiety and on mental health promotion in the classroom. These modules are designed to be delivered in several different formats that that require as little as 30 minutes to complete. We will be piloting these modules this fall in several areas.

HWDSB has been chosen to pilot a new national mental health awareness initiative titled “The Jack Project” (www.thejackproject.org). The focus of the initiative is to prepare Grade 12 students for challenges they may experience as they transition to the workplace, to apprenticeship, to college, or to university. Often this transition means that students are cut off from their usual circle of support, and The Jack Project hopes to help them anticipate this change and to learn about other resources where they can find support.

Communication and Collaboration:

The Mental Health Working Group continues to share information and ideas with other school districts that are looking at school-based mental health. Dr. Kathy Short is part of a national

consortium that is collecting best practices in school-based mental health intervention, and we will benefit from this expertise.

The Steering Committee will also meet with a few community partners to focus on specific, problem-focused evidence-based interventions that we may jointly offer to students. The aim is to ensure our students receive the best possible programs in our classrooms.

Monitoring and Tiered Intervention:

Our District Mental Health Strategy will continue to work within the Tiered Intervention model at HWDSB. That is, we will deliver some programs to all students, some programs to many students, and some programs to a few students, depending on their needs.

We will identify and try out evidence-based programs for anxiety in students at each of these levels. As well we will pilot the Coping Power program, an evidence-based program that helps students develop self-monitoring and self-control strategies. We will also participate in a study to help us understand how principals and administrators identify the types of programs that would be most useful for their school.

Mission, Vision and Values

Mission: The Mental Health Strategy is designed to raise awareness, build capacity, engage partners, and provide a coordinated and evidence-based approach to supporting student well-being within HWDSB.

Vision:

The HWDSB Mental Health Strategy will provide leadership so that **students** have a strong sense of belonging in their schools, strategies for taking care of their well-being, an understanding of mental health symptoms and supports, and a network of caring adults at school.

The HWDSB Mental Health Strategy will provide leadership so that **staff** demonstrate a shared responsibility for student well-being and each other that is grounded in the ability to recognize signs of concern, to apply supportive strategies in the classroom/workplace, and to mobilize community support.



The HWDSB Mental Health Strategy will provide leadership so that **school communities** work with mental health professionals, parents, and neighbouring schools to share resources and build access to services.

The HWDSB Mental Health Strategy will provide leadership so that **the district** provides a continuum of services that are coordinated, aligned and responsive to the needs of students, parents and staff.

The HWDSB Mental Health Strategy will provide leadership so that **the wider Hamilton community** works collaboratively with the board to minimize stigma, promote positive mental health, advocate for integrated evidence-based services, and support students and families in a coordinated way.

Values:


- Culture supporting well-being and positive mental health
- Coordination and alignment of efforts
- Collaboration with practice and research community
- Communication of priorities and protocols
- Capacity-Building for educators
- Continuum of Services, delivered equitably
- Evidence-Based Approach
- Implementation Rigour

**CMHO November 22nd, 2011
Building Mental Health Literacy
in Educators**

Session aims



1. Share development & parts of the District Mental Health Strategy
2. Discuss educator mental health literacy efforts within HWDSB & invite discussion about educator mental health literacy



Mental health activities in HWDSB

In the past, HWDSB has conducted and evaluated Mental Health Program Pilots:

- Apollo
- **Choosing Healthy Actions and Thoughts**
- Missing Pieces
- Substance Use Education Program
- Suspension Pilot

- Class-wide depression prevention program
- Co-facilitated by teacher and MH professional
- 20 sessions, grade 7, aligned with curriculum
- Partnership with UCLA, Harvard, & McMaster
- 3 years of pilot, followed by 2 year RCT

Mental health activities in HWDSB

- Knowledge Mobilization Lab Case Studies
 - SBMH Learning Forum
 - Mental Health Speaker Series
 - Teacher Preferences Study
 - Making a Difference Implementation Trial




Mental health activities in HWDSB

Collaboration with Community Partners


- AATD, Contact Hamilton
- Student Support Leadership Initiative Organizations (HWDSB, Community Mental Health Agencies, HWDSB)
- McMaster Children’s Hospital, Offord Centre for Child Studies
- Child and Youth Mental Health Information Network



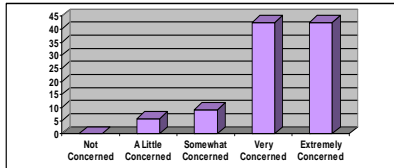
Mental health activities in HWDSB

District Mental Health Mapping

- Student Report Data (Tell Them From Me, Safe and Equitable Schools Survey, Program Evaluation Data)
- Teacher Needs and Preferences Data
- Principal and Superintendent Needs Data
- School by School Scan of Practices



What We Learned from our survey data:



85% of principals are very, or extremely, concerned about student mental health

Ratings were slightly higher in High Needs schools, but the difference was not statistically significant.

High Needs	Moderate Needs	Low Needs
4.5 (.71)	4.3 (.88)	4.1 (.87)

What Else We Learned from survey data:

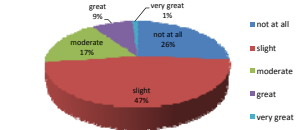
Educators are most concerned about:

1. Anxiety and Mood Problems
2. Conduct Problems
3. A Sense that Problems are Escalating
4. Situational Factors
5. Substance Use

Comfort talking to parents about MH



Concern about Accessing MH Services



What We Learned from our survey data

Stakeholder priorities:

1. Mental health literacy for staff
2. Collaboration with community partners
3. Additional resources and support
4. Expedited access to school based mental health professionals
5. School and classroom- level strategies



Building a District Mental Health Strategy

- What are the pieces?
- What will the final picture look like?
- How do all the pieces fit together?



Strategy Puzzle Pieces

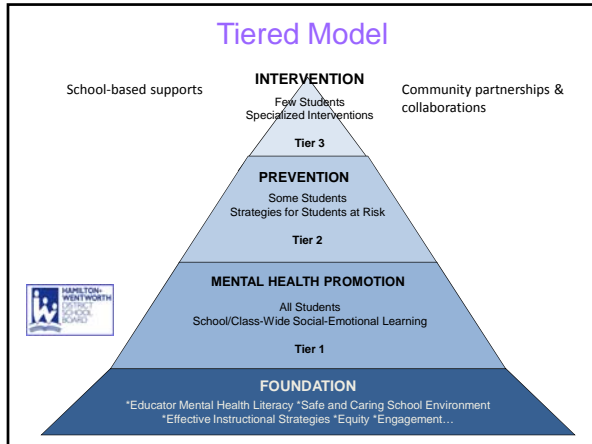
- Local & provincial data
- Research, literature (Evidence-Based Practice and Implementation Science)
- Experience
- Existing resources
- Legislation, policy
- Stakeholder priorities
- Taking Mental Health to Schools



The District MH Strategy will:


- Build system capacity
- Coordinate and unify programs (that are often fragmented)
- Initiate and support programs & interventions
- Identify promising and exemplary practices
- Support successful implementation of effective practices, programs & interventions
- Create opportunities for shared learning






Mission...

The Mental Health Strategy is designed to raise awareness, build capacity, engage partners, and provide a coordinated and evidence-based approach to supporting student well-being within HWDSB.



Vision...

If we do everything right, how will things look five years from now?




The HWDSB Mental Health Strategy will provide leadership so that...

...**students** have a strong sense of belonging in their schools, strategies for taking care of their well-being, an understanding of mental health symptoms and supports, and a network of caring adults at school

Vision...


The HWDSB Mental Health Strategy will provide leadership so that...

...**staff** demonstrate a shared responsibility for student well-being and each other that is grounded in the ability to recognize signs of concern, to apply supportive strategies in the classroom/workplace, and to mobilize community support



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... **school communities** work with mental health professionals, parents, and neighbouring schools to share resources and build access to services

Vision...

The HWDSB Mental Health Strategy will provide leadership so that...

...**the district** provides a continuum of services that are coordinated, aligned and responsive to the needs of students, parents and staff



Health	Mental health problems	Illness
Well-being	Functional problems or concerns	Mental illness
Occasional stress or mild distress	Mild to moderate distress	Severe distress
No impairment	Mild or temporary impairment	Moderate to disabling or chronic impairment

Vision...

The HWDSB Mental Health Strategy will provide leadership so that...

...the wider Hamilton community works collaboratively with the board to minimize stigma, promote positive mental health, advocate for integrated evidence-based services, and support students and families in a coordinated fashion.



Values...

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- Continuum of Services, delivered equitably
- Evidence-Based Approach
- Implementation Rigour



Key Messages



- 1 in 5 students- in every classroom in every school suffer from some mental health issue
- Mental health & well being is interconnected with student achievement
- Know your student
- It begins with a caring adult & listening to your students
- Support from our HWDSB Mental Health District strategy is available

Guiding Principles



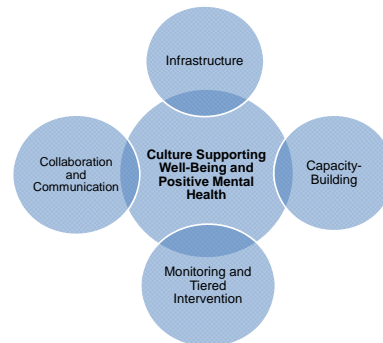
- Knowing our students; knowing our community
- Advice, needs, capacities & capabilities will inform and guide
- Continuum of mental health & well-being
- Intervention continuum that includes promotion, prevention & intervention activities

Guiding Principles Continued

- Shared leadership
- Alignment with Strategic Directions & Annual Operating Plan
- Coordination with local, regional & provincial initiatives



Strategy Components



What's been happening this past year?

- ✓ Hire Mental Health Coordinator
- ✓ Develop infrastructure (Work Team, MH Steering Committee)
- ✓ Work with early adopters
- ✓ Create early engagement opportunities
- ✓ Craft Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals
- ✓ Prioritize strategy components
- ✓ Build awareness (senior admin, system leaders, educators, youth, parents)
- ✓ **Provide Mental Health Literacy**
- ✓ Link with community partners
- ✓ Document implementation



Educator Mental Health Literacy



Educators with mental health literacy are **aware of the potential signs** of student mental health problems so they can provide **early identification and connection to school** and/or community resources while providing **ongoing support to the student** in the classroom.

Recent/Current Initiatives

- Making A Difference
- The Jack Project
- Gatekeeper Training
- Mental Health Curriculum
- In-school workshops/in-services
- Websites



What was one thing that changed your practice behaviour?



What helps educators to learn about mental health?

MH Literacy Pieces

- Format
- Content
- Process – information, learning, skills?
- Aim/Purpose – what is educator mh literacy?
- Active ingredients – what is it that's being changed?
- Implementation – resources, time, competing demands
- Measurement
- Research – the way teachers learn



Educator Mental Health Literacy Modules

- 2 modules with 4 sessions each
- Collaborative inquiry process
- Models differentiated instruction
- Co-facilitated
- Experiential, small group/cooperative based learning
- Adult learning model



Thank you!

