

CULTURE OF WELLNESS FRAMEWORK



Medicine Hat Public School Division
601 1 Ave SW, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 4Y7

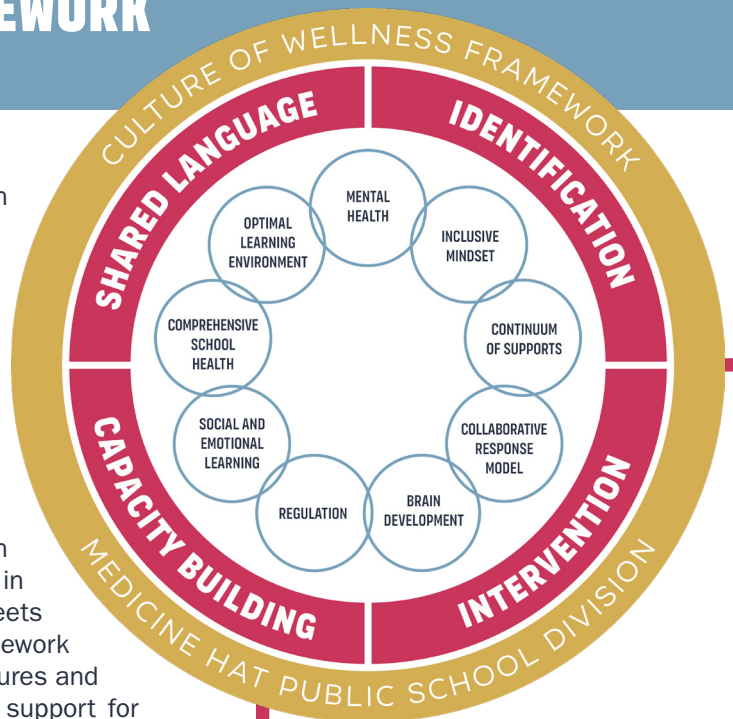
403.528.6700
mhpsd.ca

CONTENTS

Culture of Wellness Framework	3
WELCOMING, CARING, RESPECTFUL AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS	4
Comprehensive School Health Framework	6
Mental Health Literacy	7
Collaborative Response Model	8
Professional Practice Standards	10
Early Years Framework	11
Alternative Programs	13
Nutrition	14
STUDENT CENTERED SUPPORT TEAMS	15
Comprehensive School Health Teams	16
Family School Liaison Workers, Division Psychologist, Art Therapist, Child and Youth Care Worker	17
Alternative Learning Team	18
Classroom Support Teacher, Optimal Learning Coaches, First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Coordinator and Support Workers, English Language Learning Support	19
Speech Language Therapy, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy	20
Community Resource Worker Program, McMan Youth Hub Outreach Services, School Resource Officers	21
TRAINING	22
Social Emotional Learning Continuum of Supports	23
Social Emotional Learning Curriculum	24
Building Better Brains Together	25
Trauma Informed Practices	26
Self Regulation: Shanker's Self-Reg Framework	28
Collaborative Problem Solving Approach	29
Understanding Challenging Behaviour	30
Risk Assessment Training	32
MHPSD EMPLOYEE SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES	33
Health, Wellness, and Attendance Advisor	34
Occupational Health and Safety	36
REFERENCES	37

CULTURE OF WELLNESS FRAMEWORK

Students, staff and school community members within Medicine Hat Public School Division (MHPSD) have the right to learn and work in schools that promote equality of opportunity, dignity and respect. We are committed to providing a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. MHPSD believes in fostering a healthy school community that creates a culture of wellness for all its members by providing each school with a comprehensive school health team that promotes a whole school approach to supporting mental health and social emotional learning. We approach all people with an inclusive mindset; seeking to ensure that all are engaged in the life of the school community in a manner that fully meets their needs. This is accomplished through a systemic framework known as the Collaborative Response Model where structures and processes are established to ensure the best possible support for our inclusive learning environments. Through a comprehensive continuum of supports we provide universal, targeted and specialized supports to meet the needs of all learners. By collaborating and establishing positive and productive relationships we support student learning and success through a strength based and student centred approach. We acknowledge that everyone is responsible for creating, fostering and upholding a culture of wellness. Through a Collaborative Response Model and Continuum of Supports, MHPSD is committed to fostering a culture of wellness.



The ultimate goal of the culture of wellness framework is to provide an understanding of the supports provided that target mental health, well being, and social emotional learning.



OPTIMAL LEARNING - Building Optimal Learning Environments for all learners, in all settings and communities, honouring rights to learn.

THINKING & ACTING INCLUSIVELY - Personal and academic development are best achieved when people's needs are addressed with respect, kindness, open-mindedness, cultural competence, humility and with empathy; seek to ensure all are a valued part of the school community.

WELLNESS - Supporting a healthy school community that creates/promotes a culture of wellness through focus on trusting relationships and efficacy for all.

TRUTH & RECONCILIATION - Developing knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences and contemporary contexts of Indigenous peoples.



WELCOMING, CARING, RESPECTFUL, AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Students, parents and school authorities are responsible for ensuring welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respect diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self. MHPSD believes that when students feel a sense of belonging, it encourages them to stay in school to learn and succeed.

Inclusion is an attitude and approach that embraces diversity, differences and promotes equal opportunities for all. Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance and promotes a sense of belonging. We strive to be flexible and responsive to individual needs while establishing, promoting and sustaining inclusive environments. We will ensure that all children and students, regardless of race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status or sexual orientation, or any other factor(s), have access to meaningful and relevant learning experiences that include appropriate instructional supports.

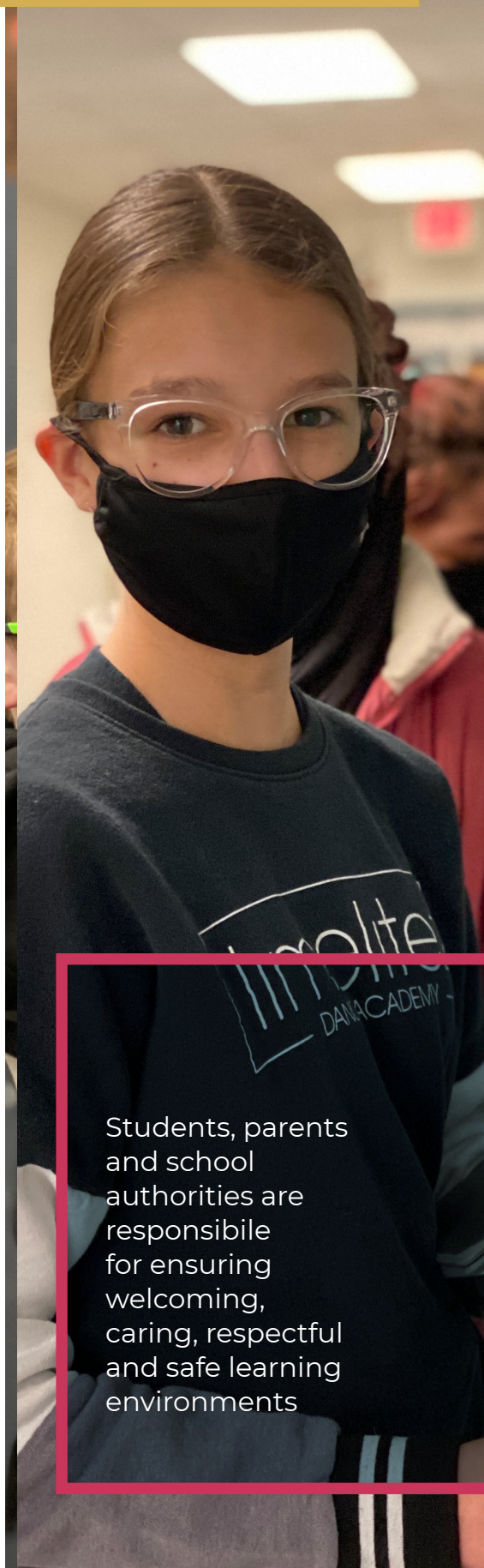
In order for a school to be fully inclusive, evidence informed strategies and practices to promote welcoming, caring, safe and respectful learning environments should be implemented using a whole school approach. A whole school approach is inclusive of school staff, students and education partners, promoting positive mental health, academic achievement, and includes social and emotional learning in school practices, policies and partnerships. Welcoming, caring, respectful and safe schools have environments where:

- healthy and respectful relationships are built and fostered
- students feel that adults care for them as a group and as individuals
- positive mental health is promoted
- values, rights and responsibilities are respected
- support is demonstrated through collaboration, high expectations, mutual trust and caring
- diversity is respected, celebrated and understood as a strength
- expectations are clear, consistent, and regularly communicated
- children, youth and adults model positive social and emotional skills, including empathy and compassion.

Within Alberta, there are a number of research based frameworks that provide practices and strategies that support mental health and wellbeing within a whole school approach for:

- [comprehensive school health](#)
- [mentoring](#)
- social and emotional learning
- [student advisories](#)
- response to intervention
- [peer networks](#)
- [trauma informed practice](#)
- bullying prevention
- restorative practices
- [service learning](#)
- [positive behaviour supports](#)

The *Education Act* and MHPSD have legislation and policies and procedures that outline the responsibility to ensure that each student enrolled in a school is provided a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.



Students, parents and school authorities are responsible for ensuring welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH FRAMEWORK

Comprehensive school health is a framework and whole school approach for building healthy school communities that support students to reach their full potential as learners. Comprehensive school health is an internationally recognized approach to supporting improvements in students' educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated, and holistic way. It is not just about what happens in the classroom; rather, it encompasses the whole school environment with actions addressing four distinct but interrelated components that provide a strong foundation for a healthy school community.

This whole school model builds capacity to incorporate wellbeing as an essential component to student achievement. When actions in all four components are connected, students are supported to realize their full potential as learners - and as healthy, productive members of society.

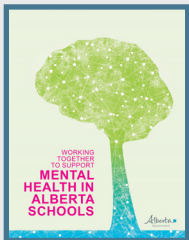
Health and education are interdependent:
healthy individuals are better learners, and
better educated individuals are healthier.

Research has shown that comprehensive school health is an effective way to enhance that linkage; improving both health and educational outcomes and encouraging healthy behaviours that last a lifetime in both staff and students. In the classroom, comprehensive school health facilitates improved academic achievement and can lead to increased positive behaviours. In the broader school environment, it helps both staff and students develop the skills they need to be physically and emotionally healthy for life.

COMPONENTS

1. Social and Physical Environment
2. Teaching and Learning
3. Healthy School Policy
4. Partnerships and Services

RESOURCES



[Working Together To Support Mental Health In Alberta Schools](#) is a resource that provides information, guidance and tools for:

- Developing a shared language related to mental health that partners can use for collaborative conversations and planning.
- Understanding the connection between brain development and mental health.
- Shifting to a more strength-based approach by building resiliency, enhancing social-emotional learning and supporting recovery.
- Implementing a whole-school approach that supports positive mental health.
- Designing a continuum of supports and services to meet the mental health needs of students and their families.
- Understanding what is meant by pathways to services.
- Identifying roles of key partners in supporting mental health in schools.

[The Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health and the World Health Organization models, supports, and encourages the partnership between health and education that are essential to comprehensive school health.](#)

MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

When we talk about mental health it is critical that we have a common understanding of the language we use as this shared understanding will help facilitate collaborative conversation and planning. Understanding and promoting positive mental health in schools is a shared responsibility of parents, educators and community partners. This is done through shaping early childhood experiences, understanding brain development and early intervention, and effective educational services and programs. When we support the mental health needs of our students we:

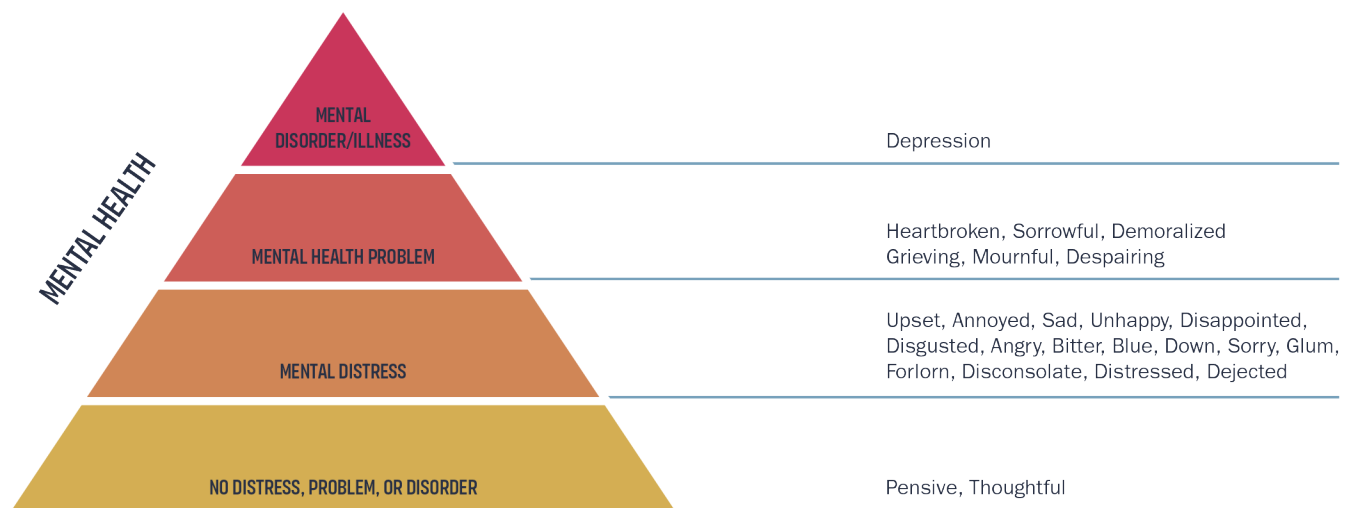
- enhance academic achievement and school attendance
- increase academic confidence and engagement in learning and in community life
- reduce high risk behaviours of children and youth
- increase involvement in community activities and citizenship
- enhance respect and appreciation for diversity and individual differences
- create welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments

Part of improving mental health literacy is making sure we are using the right words to describe the various components of mental health and mental illness. Understanding the differences is crucial to getting the right kind of help if needed, to avoid seeking treatment when it is not needed and to be clear about the language we use to tell others how we are feeling.

Mental health literacy aims to reduce barriers to learning by addressing the mental health needs of students and staff, and is defined as:

1. Understanding how to foster and maintain good mental health
2. Understanding mental disorders and their treatments
3. Decreasing stigma
4. Understanding how to seek help effectively

We continue to work to improve mental health literacy among students, educators and school staff, through training and professional development opportunities.



RESOURCES

[MENTALHEALTHLITERACY.ORG](https://www.mentalhealthliteracy.org)

COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE MODEL

The Collaborative Response Model (CRM) is a schoolwide framework that values collaborative, action focused responses, data informed discussions, and timely intervention to ensure all students can experience success. Through the CRM, schools are able to address the needs of students at all levels of development, through the following core beliefs:

1. All students can learn
2. Teachers make the greatest impact on student learning
3. Schools cannot achieve high levels of success when adults work in isolation
4. Leadership is responsible for ensuring structures for collaboration

The CRM is the guiding framework that supports how we meet the needs of all learners within our community. Through collaborative structures and processes, schools are able to plan for collective ownership and shift thinking from ‘my’ student to ‘our’ student. We know that together we are better learners and teachers, and that all staff work in the best interest of every student. This framework is focused on student learning and success and includes three foundational components:

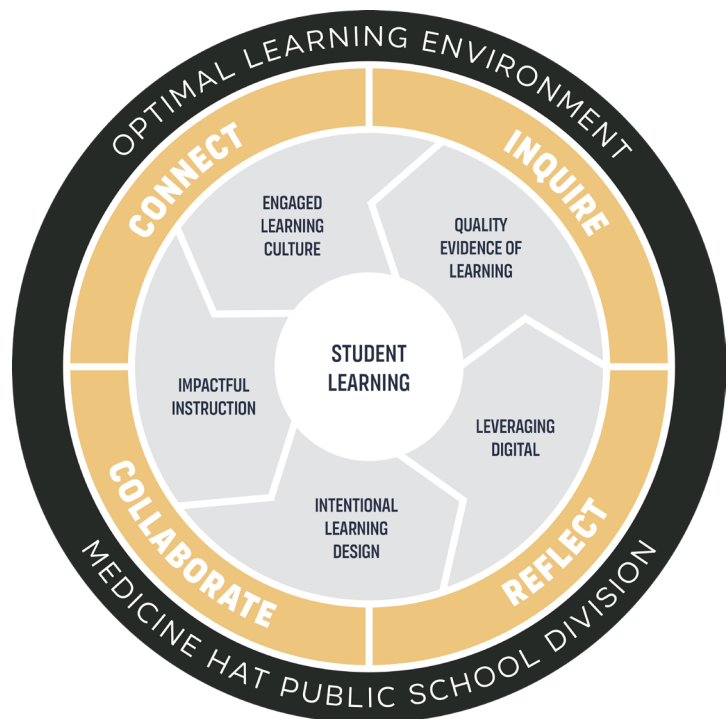
- regular collaborative team meetings (CTMs) and programming team meetings (PTMs)
- develop a 4 tier continuum of supports
- ongoing assessment and universal screeners

All schools have developed a **Continuum of Supports** (see next page) that allows school teams to answer the question “So now what do we do?” by providing a visual framework of supports, strategies and interventions to assist students at different levels of learning and build teacher capacity.

OPTIMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The *optimal learning environment* (OLE) model was developed based on the belief that highly effective teachers are key to student learning and success. As a system, we believe in continuous improvement of teaching and learning practices and the OLE outlines five indicators that directly impact student learning and the importance of creating a school culture where students can aspire to achieve their greatest growth through welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments.

- [1. Engaged learning culture](#)
- [2. Impactful instruction](#)
- [3. Intentional learning design](#)
- [4. Leveraging digital](#)
- [5. Quality evidence of learning](#)



CONTINUUM OF SUPPORTS

Tier 3: Targeted School Intervention

Supports and interventions delivered by either the classroom teacher or school based professionals, ideally within the inclusive classroom.

Tier 4: Specialized Supports and Interventions

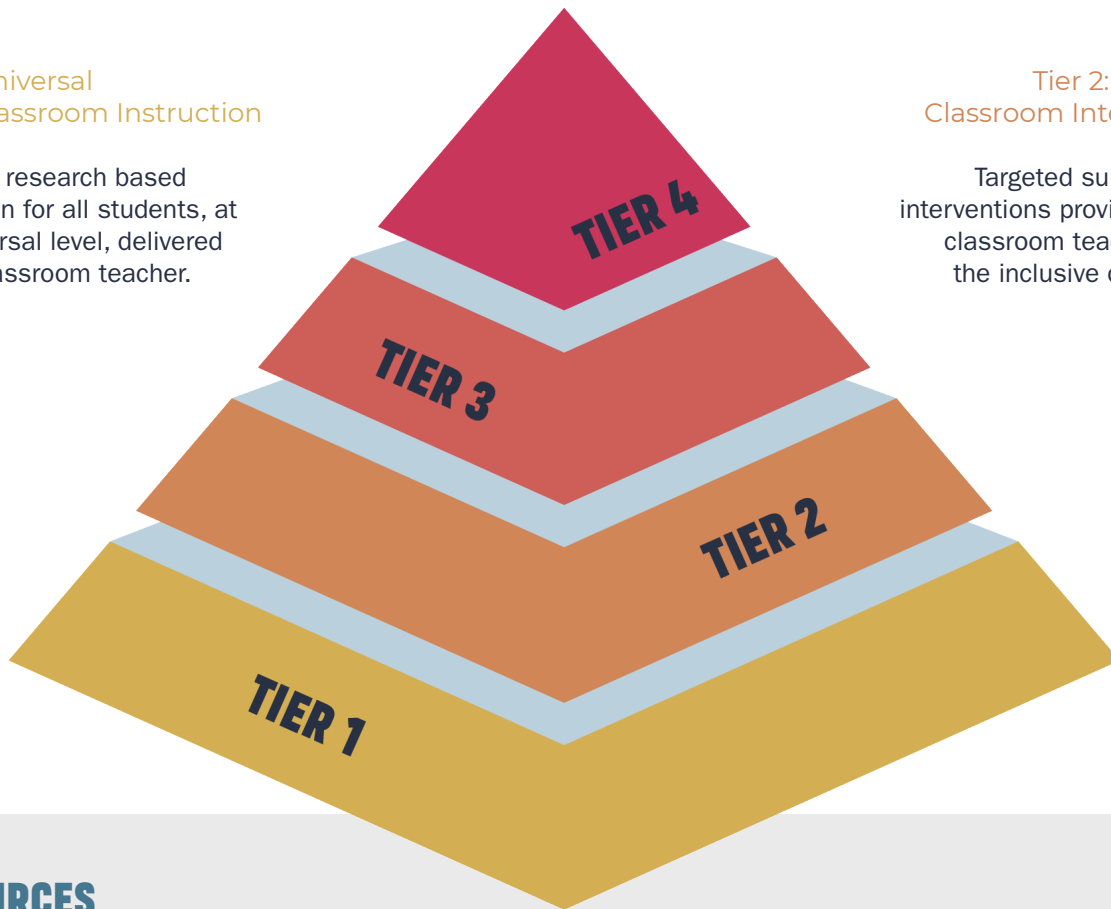
Intensive individualized supports. At this tier, outside resources, agencies and diagnostic testing may be accessed.

Tier 1: Universal Classroom Instruction

Effective, research based instruction for all students, at the universal level, delivered by the classroom teacher.

Tier 2: Targeted Classroom Intervention

Targeted supports and interventions provided by the classroom teacher within the inclusive classroom.



RESOURCES

- [1. Collaborative Response Model Staff Handbook](#)
- [2. Jigsaw Learning Website](#)

Website with blog postings, video components and other resources related to the Collaborative Response Model.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE STANDARDS

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE STANDARDS

The foundation for Alberta's excellent education system is built on the talent, skill and the ongoing commitment to learning demonstrated by teachers, school leaders, school jurisdiction leaders and superintendents who work every day to help students succeed. Alberta Government (2019). Professional Practice Standards



Teacher Quality Standard (TQS) describes the competencies for teachers.

Requires that teachers:

- foster effective relationships
- establish inclusive learning environments



Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) describes the competencies expected of school leaders and school jurisdictional leaders.

Requires that leaders:

- foster effective relationships
- lead a learning community



Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS) describes the competencies expected of Alberta school superintendents.

Requires that leaders:

- build effective relationships
- lead learning

RESOURCES

Alberta Education Act

- [Alberta Education Safe and Caring Schools](#)
 - [Walk Around: Teacher Companion Tool](#)
 - [Walk Around: School Leaders](#)
 - [Guidelines for Best Practice: Creating Learning Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expressions](#)

MHPSD Policy 612 Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Schools

- [MHPSD Administrative Procedure 612 P001 - Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [MHPSD Administrative Procedure 612 P002 - Supporting Children with Social and Emotional Needs](#)
- [The Inclusive Education Library for Classroom Teachers](#)
- [Making a Difference: Meeting The Diverse Learning Needs with Differentiated Instruction](#)
- [Engaging All Learners](#)
- [Inclusive Education Video Series](#)

EARLY YEARS FRAMEWORK

Medicine Hat Public School Division offers a variety of programs and settings to provide early learning support for young children. Programs offer language-enriched play based environments; a multi-disciplinary team of professionals work together to provide programming designed to enhance language, social, physical, intellectual, creative, cultural and emotional development.

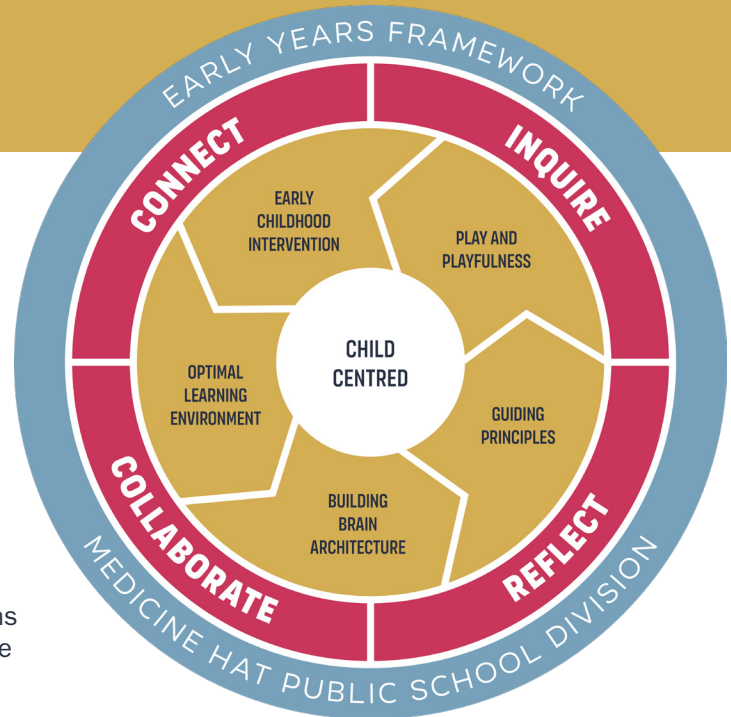
WHAT IS EARLY INTERVENTION?

Early intervention is a term used to describe programs that support children's growth and development in the early years with access to supports such as: speech language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, social emotional supports, and mental health supports, depending on the identified needs of each child. Research shows that many developmental and learning gaps can be successfully improved with early intervention, and set children up for greater success in their school years.

WHAT IS THE EARLY YEARS FRAMEWORK?

MHPSD provides child centered programming in the early years that is reflective of the core beliefs and considerations outlined in the guiding principles set out by Alberta Education.

The experiences in the early years build brain architecture which is a solid foundation for all future learning and development. Through an optimal learning environment teachers strive to provide impactful instruction, an engaged learning culture, quality evidence of learning, intentional learning design, while leveraging digital. We focus on intervention supports in the early years. A multidisciplinary team works together with the teachers and educational assistants to provide intentional supports that target growth and development in the early years where it can have the largest impact. Children learn through play and it is essential for them to have the opportunity for playful learning experiences. Teachers and staff in the early years achieve child centered programming through connection, inquiry, reflection and collaboration.

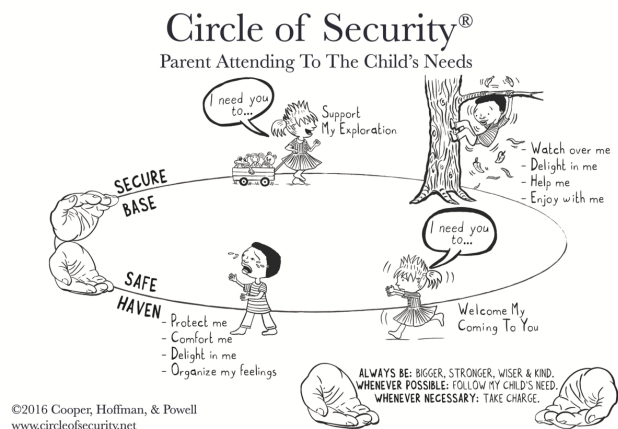


TRAINING THAT GUIDES OUR WORK

Circle of Security - Early Intervention Program for Parents and Caregivers

Community early learning teachers are trained to facilitate an 8 week program with parents and caregivers based on the principles of secure attachment. In this series parents learn tools to:

- read their child's behaviour
- understand their child's needs
- help their child have the confidence to explore their world and come back for comfort and protection
- be a caregiver who is in charge in a kind way



COMMUNITY EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM

The **Community Early Learning Program (CELP)** collaborates with private preschools and childcare centres in our community to provide early intervention support to young children and their families.

The **community early learning teacher (CELT)** creates individualized programs to support the early intervention plan. The team ensures that appropriate supports are in place; provides ongoing support in the centres and offers centre based educational assistants to implement the program plan. CELT teachers facilitate transitions between private centres and MHPSD schools as children move into early learning programs and kindergarten.

The **family programming teacher** supports individual families to implement the goals of their child's individual support plan in their home through family visits and connects families to community resources. This critical resources bridges the gap between home and school.

The **behaviour intervention teacher:**

- models universal strategies in the centres through whole group activities to build a sense of community and social emotional awareness.
- builds capacity through consultation and collaboration sessions with staff around understanding children's behaviours and what the behaviour may be communicating
- supports educational assistants to implement strategies that build individual children's social emotional skills through a series of tailored sessions that include understanding feelings, social skills and emotional regulation.

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM

Early Learning Programs (ELP) operate in MHPSD schools; educational practices are shaped by a strong focus to create learning environments that honour the unique individuality of each child and nurture their growth in body, mind and spirit. ELP classrooms welcome a diverse group of children including children with identified needs and those that are developing as expected.

Early Childhood Educators facilitate engagement sessions that allow for children and their parents to explore our community together. Parents learn how children learn, grow and develop through a variety of play opportunities with their children outside of the classroom. The sessions below are available to families whose children are accessing CELP and ELP:

- Get Out and Play - Let's Explore, Let's Build, Let's Pretend, Let's Get Messy, Let's Move
- Roving Gyms - indoor gross motor play in the winter months in partnership with YMCA and Family Leisure Centre (FLC)
- Literacy Building Blocks - partnership with LEARN to provide parents with an understanding of and how to facilitate play opportunities to engage with the building blocks of literacy (e.g., conversations about books, building vocabulary, story comprehension, print knowledge and sound awareness).
- Family nights are hosted two to three times per year at schools where families are invited to join in activities that encourage all areas of development (e.g., Winter Carnival, Teddy Bear Picnic, etc.).

SPECIALIZED LEARNING SUPPORTS

A multidisciplinary approach is utilized to support students who require speech language, occupational therapy and physical therapy from early learning to grade 12. Students who access specialized learning supports are provided with three layers of services:

CONSULTATIVE

- consultation and assessment with recommendations
- continuing education for staff and parents.
- small group sessions

COACHING

- model specific strategies for staff
- family programming targeting individual children

DIRECT INTERVENTION

- work directly with a student on a regular basis based on the needs of the child

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

MHPSD supports educational programs that provide flexibility to meet the diverse needs of students and to support their success. **Alternative programs** deliver an educational alternative for students who, due to individual circumstances, find that the traditional school setting does not meet their needs. Alternative programs allow students to access resources that improve their ability to succeed academically and socially. A flexible approach is taken to teaching and learning in recognition of individual student needs.

PATHWAYS

Pathways serves students in junior and senior high who present with complex and diverse behavioural and social emotional learning needs. Pathways is universally recognized as a collaborative learning community that accepts diversity, fosters hope and promotes academic success and social emotional wellness for all students through personalized learning.

Program objectives:

- develop and demonstrate positive social and emotional skills in five core areas: self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making
- continued academic growth; students are either working toward their high school diploma or knowledge and employability certificate of achievement
- develop employment and independent living skills by building resilient and empowered active citizens through connections to a variety of community supports
- gain the necessary skills to be successful in an inclusive setting and to transition back to their community school if they choose

SPECIALIZED PROGRAM

Serves students in grades 7-12, providing them with functional and adaptive skills. Independent living, social and communication skills, functional academics and employment skills are emphasized through a variety of activities within the school and community. An emphasis is placed on the development of skills required for the highest level of independent functioning that the student is capable of in order to facilitate the transition to adult life. Assessment techniques reflect the classroom learning experiences which are based on modified expectations of the Alberta program of study and MHPSD life skills curriculum.

PAS

Partnership between MHPSD, Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education, Prairie Rose School Division and Alberta Health Services. The PAS program is a six week intervention for youth in grades 7-12, supported by a team consisting of a teacher, educational assistant and mental health professionals.

Program objectives:

- empower youth to facilitate positive change and enhance resiliency and mental health
- provide support in a therapeutic academic environment
- provide comprehensive and multidisciplinary assessments and treatment for students and enhance family connections
- create transition plans that will scaffold and help maintain positive changes

YOUNG MOMS

Partnership between the Medicine Hat YMCA and MHPSD.

The YMCA early intervention program for Young Moms is an educational program designed to meet the needs of pregnant or parenting teens. Students in this program can complete their high school education in a supported learning environment while learning life management skills. Children are cared for onsite in a professional nurturing environment close to their parents, supporting contact during the school day. Financial support may be available for students dependent on their circumstances. Students work alongside a life skills coach to practice and learn about child development, parent training, life management and employment skills.

For more information on our alternative programs contact the administrator of alternative learning.

NUTRITION

HEALTHY EATING

Healthy eating is an integral part of growth and development. Good nutrition is conducive to student learning. It is essential to create an environment that provides and promotes healthy food choices and healthy attitudes about food.

MHPSD supports access to healthy, safe nutritional food choices for students as defined in the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth, in order to:

- provide students with the skills, opportunities and encouragement they need to adopt healthy eating patterns
- promote good nutrition in theory and in practice
- establish nutritional procedures that make healthy choices the easy choice through practices such as having nutritional food and beverages prominently and positively displayed and easily accessible
- offer healthy food and beverages choices in school cafeterias, vending machines, stores or canteens, at special events and for fundraising

All MHPSD schools are supported by a breakfast and lunch program in collaboration with Breakfast Club of Canada and The Root Cellar.





STUDENT CENTERED SUPPORT TEAMS

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH TEAMS

SCHOOL BASED

A healthy school community is one that supports the wellness of all its members and strives to be a healthy setting for living, learning, and working. As part of our ongoing commitment to health and wellness in MHPSD, we have established a comprehensive school health team at each site. These teams are made up of health and wellness champions, guidance counselors, success coaches, family school liaison workers (FSLWs) and an administrator (or delegate). The team goal is to help the school community create a culture of wellness and help students, staff and families understand the linkage between overall health and educational outcomes. Together, members of the comprehensive school health teams collaborate to support staff, student, and family well-being, in both our schools and our community.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS CHAMPIONS

Health and wellness champions are individuals who take a lead role in facilitating health and wellness activities within the school community. Health champions focus on the student body while wellness champions focus on the school staff. These champions connect the school to existing resources and identify other supports that may be needed. Health and wellness champions aim to ensure that the health and wellness needs and goals of staff and students are being met. This includes:

- increase awareness and knowledge of health and wellness within their school community for both students and staff
- work with the comprehensive school health team to plan, support and implement health and wellness initiatives
- act as a contact for external partners such as Alberta Health Services, the Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund and Ever Active Schools

A healthy school community is one that supports the wellness of all its members.

GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

Guidance and counseling services are available to students as an integral part of a continuum of supports and services. Dr. Roy Wilson Learning Centre, Alexandra Middle School, Crescent Heights High School and Medicine Hat High School counselors work collectively with students, parents/guardians and the school learning team to support the educational, personal, social and career needs of students.

SUCCESS COACHES - MENTAL HEALTH CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

The Mental Health Capacity Building (MHCB) project works to promote positive mental health in children, youth, families, and communities. MHCB is one of 37 locally planned, coordinated and implemented programs that operate across the province with funding from Alberta Health Services (AHS) Provincial Addictions and Mental Health. When individuals, communities and agencies work together to promote mental and emotional wellbeing in whole populations of children, youth, and families, we can enhance positive mental health as well as decrease the negative impacts of emerging mental illnesses. All schools are supported by a success coach who works alongside classroom teachers to support the program's overarching goals through evidence based programming.

Goals:

- enhance physical, social and mental wellbeing of the school community
- establish healthy relationships
- raise awareness of positive mental health
- build resiliency skills
- cultivate character development
- encourage positive behaviour
- facilitate leadership and positive role modeling
- strengthen school community connections
- promote self confidence and empathy
- reduce stigma and increase awareness of mental health

FAMILY SCHOOL LIAISON WORKERS

The role of the FSLW is to collaborate as part of the school based team to ensure that social and emotional needs of students are met within the context of an inclusive educational system. FSLWs are registered social workers and act as the connection between families, students, educators, and the community. By nurturing positive and productive relationships, FSLWs support student learning and success using a strength based approach. Working together as a team, FSLWs provide a responsive network of support that is individualized for each student.

BRIDGE A CONNECTION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND FAMILY

- connect with parents and guardians, identify needs, and build relationships between home and school
- assist in understanding and removing barriers to school attendance
- support families in meeting the social and emotional needs of their child

CONNECT FAMILIES TO OUTSIDE AGENCIES AND RESOURCES

- identify barriers to accessing community supports and support families in navigating systems
- make referrals to appropriate community agencies as needed
- coordinate school, family and community services when necessary

PROVIDE ONE ON ONE AND GROUP SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

- offer supportive counselling (individual or group) to enhance personal strengths, build resiliency, and improve coping and regulation skills
- conduct risk assessments as required.
- be visible and a supportive member of the school community

BECOME A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND STAFF

- share information on mental health wellness, healthy relationships, coping skills, emotional regulation, and trauma informed practice
- advocate for the needs of students and families within the school and community

DIRECTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

A school psychologist is a professional who possesses skills and knowledge in the areas of child and adolescent development, principles of learning and behaviour, individual differences, social emotional, academic interventions, assessment, and program planning.

Our MHPSD psychologist works with students, families, and school-based staff to provide support, consultation, and education in the following ways:

- consult staff regarding classroom interventions, accommodations, and programming needs
- conduct assessments, determine strategies/ interventions that support student development
- clinical supervision for the FSLW team, child and youth care worker, and art therapist
- coordinate supports following a traumatic event
- support violent threat risk assessment teams
- support student transitions to post-secondary and adult supports (e.g., PDD, AISH, OPG)
- provide professional development for staff

ART THERAPY

Our art therapist works primarily out of high schools, however services can be provided to students across grade levels who may benefit from this unique approach. Referrals are streamlined through our FSLW team. Art therapy combines the creative process and psychotherapy, facilitating self exploration and understanding. Using imagery, colour and shape as part of this creative therapeutic process, thoughts and feelings can be expressed that would otherwise be difficult to articulate (Canadian Art Therapy Association, 2020).

CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKER

As a member of alternative programming and the student services team, the child and youth care worker (CYCW) collaborates with families and school staff, as well as other community agencies, in order to provide supports and eliminate barriers to student success at Pathways. The goal of the CYCW is to facilitate positive relationships between home and school, implement programming to support positive mental health and social emotional learning, and act as the connection between school and community organizations to support students in achieving their goals.

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING TEAM

The alternative learning team provides frontline support to educational staff and are dedicated to supporting, promoting and approaching all students with an inclusive mindset. Educational practices should be flexible and responsive to the strengths, needs and learning preferences of individual students. Individualized support is provided in the following three areas:

1. BEHAVIOUR AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

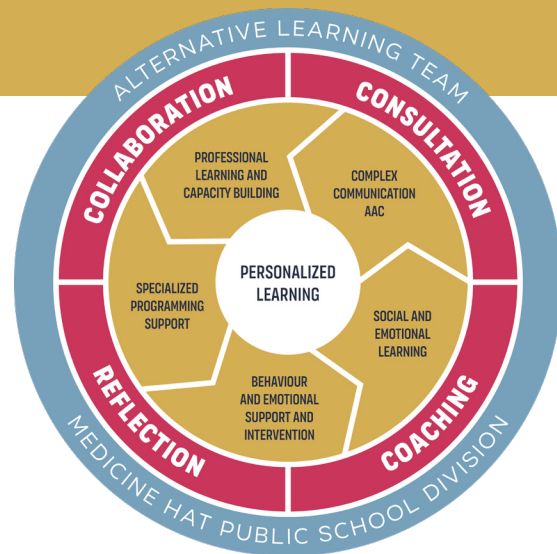
The alternative learning team provides consultation and coaching support for school staff to meet the needs of students requiring tier 3 and tier 4 behaviour and social emotional support in order to:

- build the capacity of staff to understand challenging behaviour
- share evidence based behaviour, social emotional and trauma informed practices, strategies and interventions
- model behaviour management strategies

2. COMPLEX COMMUNICATION

Individuals with complex communication needs benefit from assistive technology and augmentative and alternative communication support. The alternative learning team works collaboratively with the school linked speech language pathologist and Alberta Health Services Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) specialist to provide consultative and coaching support for students diagnosed with a severe language disability or disorder. The goal of this service is to:

- develop foundational knowledge around programming for students who require AAC
- implement evidence based strategies that support the development of aided language learning environments and increase overall communication in multiple contexts
- share and develop resources alongside educational staff that can be used in the classroom to support language development, promote independence and support AAC users in accessing classroom instruction and the Alberta program of study
- support the development and implementation of instructional and communication matrices for students



3. SPECIALIZED PROGRAMMING SUPPORTS

The alternative learning team provides consultative and coaching support for students who require individual and specialized programming and are supported in an inclusive setting. Individuals who require specialized programming supports are working on a modified program to address foundational skills (e.g. functional literacy, numeracy and life skills programming), and whose instruction, content and performance criteria is significantly different from the grade level program of study. The team works to support staff by:

- personalizing learning outcomes to provide the student with the opportunity to participate meaningfully and productively across a variety of learning experiences and environments
- providing individualized strategies and supports that target content, process and product

COLLABORATION

- collaborate with staff on their professional practice
- provision of school based professional development as requested

CONSULTATION

- formal observation or assessment with recommendations provided

COACHING

- based on individual goals and is direct intervention for one student
- modeling specific strategies and interventions

CLASSROOM SUPPORT TEACHER (CST)

A classroom support teachers (CST) builds capacity by working collaboratively with teachers and administrators in providing targeted and specialized supports and interventions for students. The CST provides the following support, among other possibilities, dependent on the need of the student and their family, teacher, and school:

- facilitate individual support plan development implementation and assessment
- support academic and social emotional learning needs
- assist teachers in developing capacity across the continuum of supports through program/curricular adaptations and modifications
- plan and support transitions from grade to grade, school to school and school to post-secondary, community and adult services
- use classroom observations to identify areas impacting student learning and achievement (e.g., academic, social, behavioural, environment)
- administer appropriate assessments for the purpose of identifying specific learning needs and interventions
- coordinate services for students who require targeted or specialized supports

OPTIMAL LEARNING COACHES

The optimal learning coach (OLC) works with teachers to increase student achievement through implementation of effective research based practices; supporting the optimal learning environment (OLE). Optimal learning coaches provide front line support to teachers to build capacity in the areas of instruction, curriculum and inclusive learning practices. These practices support an engaged learning culture that fosters academic achievement and wellbeing.

FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT COORDINATOR & SUPPORT WORKERS

The healthy development of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) children and youth requires dedicated and sustained efforts. Centered on traditional understandings of interconnectedness and wholeness, the role of the FNMI coordinator and support worker includes:

- act as a resource and provide liaison services between FNMI families and the school or between the family and community agencies
- collaborate with home and school to address the needs of the students
- reduce barriers and stigma
- provide short term, crisis intervention counselling services to students and families
- advocate for individual student and families with regards to family, school and community issues and services
- interpret aboriginal cultures in social settings for aboriginal and non aboriginal students to allow FNMI students to connect with their cultures
- work as a team member with appropriate school personnel in order to assist students to overcome difficulties and develop their full potential
- provide universal classroom presentations for students and professional development for staff

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING SUPPORT

MHPD provides coaching and consultative services to teachers and administrators to support school placement and programming decisions for English language learning (ELL) students. Instructional coaching and support with diagnostic assessments when required, to inform targeted intervention, is also available. In buildings with a large proportion of ELL students, a dedicated educational assistant may also be available to support those students, in building language proficiency and literacy skills in consultation with the classroom teacher. The MHPD ELL framework outlines the expectations, procedures and supports for students in further detail.

SPEECH LANGUAGE THERAPY

When communication is a challenge, there is a significant impact on the health, wellbeing and quality of life of children and their families. Early language development sets the foundation for children to be able to use language wherever and whenever they need it. Good communication skills help students to:

- build communication confidence
- develop and maintain peer relations
- put feelings into words
- support social thinking (e.g., making inferences, tuning in to facial expressions)
- engage in conversational turn taking
- understand others' points of view
- develop theory of mind

Untreated problems with speech, language, hearing and communication skills can lead to significant difficulties in any or all of these areas and may lead to behaviour challenges, depression, poor resiliency and isolation in society. Speech language pathologists are an important part of the mental health team that assess and develop treatment targets for people with mental health issues. Speech language pathologists can access and treat underlying speech and language concerns while working directly with the child, their school and the family to improve overall communication and mental health outcomes.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Kids need active bodies to build their best brains. There are important connections between the health of the body and of the brain, connections that must be fostered in order for kids to reach their mental, emotional and intellectual potential. Childrens' bodies have to move to get the wheels in their brains turning and they need to be active; their brain health depends on it. A growing body of evidence indicates that physical activity in childhood is essential for a healthy brain and leads to improved:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • thinking and learning | • stress management |
| • emotional regulation and self control | • ability to cope with anxiety and depressive symptoms |
| • problem solving ability | • self esteem and self worth |
| • memory | • attention and focus |
| • brain plasticity: growth of new brain tissue | |

All domains of children's learning and development interrelate. Motor skills and physical literacy are among the tools that are essential for not only academic success but also mental health. Research supports that active kids are healthy kids, and kids that are active are even happier and less stressed than kids who are less active. Physical therapists' educational background, understanding of human development and motor proficiency, and the scope of physical therapy practice renders them uniquely equipped to facilitate the development of these skills.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Occupational therapists support children in their occupations of education, social interaction and play. They have expertise related to sensory, motor and arousal regulation along with task analyses. Through a holistic approach, they provide screening, assessment and psychosocial intervention to students who are living with:

- affective disorders such as depression and anxiety
- developmental disorders such as autism spectrum disorder, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
- those who have experienced trauma (abuse, neglect, loss of a family member), traumatic brain injury, resettlement of refugees and other mental health challenges

A collaborative approach with school and classroom teams and specialized support teams (alternative learning team, FSLWs, psychologist, etc.) is used to provide support and intervention for these students. Interventions aim to help children develop and maintain function or to compensate for loss of function. Using sensory integration theory with a trauma informed lens, the focus is on supporting children to be in the just right state to be able to learn, socialize and play. Dysregulation often underlies children's ability to function within the classroom, whether it is due to sensory, emotional, or cognitive reasons. Sensory motor activities or body based input can help with overall regulation. It also explores sensory motor issues that can impact self esteem and function within the classroom. Occupational therapists also explore basics such as sleep, nutrition, screen time, etc. that are impacting regulation.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE WORKER PROGRAM

The primary purpose of the community resource worker program is to facilitate a community based preventative approach for the support of individuals, children, youth, seniors and families. The program helps connect residents to community supports and resources. Resource workers engage with numerous organizations to develop and practice preventative social initiatives that enhance the wellbeing of individuals, families and the community. Families are assisted to find the resources they need and supported in navigating systems and advocating for supports such as health benefits, mental health supports, disability services, housing options, financial benefits, etc. Currently there are three community resource workers who work with residents and community partners to build and sustain a vibrant, healthy, safe and responsive community.

MCMAN YOUTH HUB OUTREACH SERVICES



The Youth Hub is a free systems navigation service where youth ages 13-24, including those with complex needs, can receive assistance in order to get connected with permanent housing, mental wellness and financial supports, and any other resources they may need to fully participate in community life. Youth outreach workers support community based youth that are at risk of becoming homeless due to family conflict,

as well as those currently homeless or staying at the Roots Youth Shelter. They also provide one to one support for youth and families including the “Common Ground” Parent/Youth Conflict Resolution program. Workers provide services in our middle and high schools and have been a wonderful resource for our mental health teams.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

In partnership with Medicine Hat Police Service, MHPSD has two school resource officers (SROs) located in our high schools, the role is designed to meet the following goals:

- enhance community and school safety with a visible presence at the school
- collaborate with school administration, staff, students, parents and the community to address school concerns and issues
- develop and provide presentations to staff and students on various relevant topics
- serve as a mentor and educate students to help guide them into becoming responsible citizens
- build rapport with students, staff, and community residents that is based on integrity, respect, and accountability with a goal of establishing a positive image of police
- investigate all complaints of criminal activity that occur within and around the school





TRAINING

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING CONTINUUM OF SUPPORTS

MHPSD uses the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework to help support the work of advancing equity and excellence within our system through social and emotional learning. A working group of CSTs* gathered data on current practices and resources being used to support social emotional learning.

Learning happens best when the physical and emotional needs of learners are met, and therefore, it is critical that we support the positive development of social emotional learning and mental health for our students. The working group is developing a social emotional learning (SEL) continuum of supports to assist teachers, educational assistants, administrators and other school support staff. The SEL continuum of supports will offer a variety of strategies and approaches, and links to resources that schools can use to embed social emotional learning into their daily practices at each tier.

Staff were surveyed and the data showed the importance and the high value we place on:

- social emotional learning and its impact on academics
- culture of wellness
- regulation

The survey also captured data on the strategies, approaches and resources that are being used.

97%

of staff believe that implementing social and emotional learning in our school creates a culture of wellness

96%

of staff believe that social and emotional learning helps students feel more connected

98%

of staff believe that regulation is a component of social and emotional learning

98%

of staff believe social and emotional learning impacts a student's ability to engage in academic learning

Data from SEL Survey. CST Working Group.
2021 Sample Size: 88 MHPSD staff members

1. SELF AWARENESS SKILLS

Essential Understanding: The ability to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behaviour across contexts.

2. SELF MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Essential Understanding: The ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviours effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.



3. DECISION MAKING SKILLS

Essential Understanding: The ability to make caring and constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions across diverse situations.

5. SOCIAL AWARENESS SKILLS

Essential Understanding: The ability to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.

4. RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Essential Understanding: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING CURRICULUM

SECOND STEP PROGRAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A holistic approach to building supportive communities for every child through social emotional learning. The Second Step Program provides universal, classroom based, social emotional learning curriculum for early learning to grade 6 students that nurtures children's social emotional competence and foundational learning skills. Using a holistic approach, the program supports children and educators SEL competencies by:

- providing SEL throughout the child's day and embedding it into all curricular areas
- supporting the child across developmental stages
- supporting educators' social emotional competencies and wellbeing
- supporting a positive implementation environment

Success coaches across the system are working with their school teams to implement the second step program and support classroom teachers with embedding it into their daily practice. Schools have access to a digital platform and can work with their success coach to access the evidence based classroom kits.

THE FOURTH R JUNIOR AND HIGH SCHOOL

This curriculum consists of lessons that are evidence based and align with the health and life skills program of study for Grade 7 to 12. The Fourth R supports students in developing skills in making responsible decisions and building health relationships. The curriculum seeks to involve the school and community in delivering positive messages to youth and students are engaged through active learning, peer mentoring and role modeling of appropriate behaviours.

The Fourth R is supported in schools by success coaches as part of the students health, physical education and Career and Life Management (CALM) classes. Classroom teachers can also request presentations.

THE ZONES OF REGULATION LEAH M. KUYPERS

The Zones of Regulation framework and curriculum teaches students scaffolded skills towards developing a metacognitive pathway to build awareness of their feelings/internal state and utilize a variety of tools and strategies for regulation, prosocial skills, self care, and overall wellness. The Zones of Regulation curriculum provides a common language and compassionate framework to support positive mental health and skill development for all, while serving as an inclusion strategy. The curriculum incorporates [social thinking](#) concepts and numerous visuals to support students in identifying their feelings/level of alertness, understanding how their behaviour impacts outcomes, problem solving conflicts and learning what tools they can use to regulate their zones.

For more information on the Second Step Program, The Fourth R or The Zones of Regulation Curriculum reach out to your school success coach or classroom support teacher.

RESOURCES

[The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\), CASEL SEL Framework](#)

BUILDING BETTER BRAINS TOGETHER

THE BRAIN STORY

THE ALBERTA FAMILY WELLNESS INITIATIVE

Experiences at sensitive periods of development change the brain in ways that increase or decrease risk for later physical and mental illness. This finding is the premise of the Brain Story certification training that all educational assistants across the system have engaged in to support them in developing a deeper understanding of brain development. Throughout the course, participants engage in conversations in the following key areas:

1. Experiences shape our brains and the importance of human relationships when it comes to leading happier, healthier lives and building stronger communities that reduce the risk for mental health problems.
2. Positive interactions, called “serve and return” involve back and forth play between children and caregivers. These experiences build strong brain architecture, creating a solid foundation for learning, behaviour, and health.
3. A crucial component of strong brain architecture is the development of skills that help children regulate the flow of information, pay attention, plan ahead, and remember and follow rules. Without strong executive functioning and self-regulation skills, individuals face increased risk for mental illness.
4. Resilience is a life outcome based on a combination of genetic traits and life experiences that combine to build brain architecture. To tip the balance towards good health and reduce the risk of mental illness, we need to help students build the foundations of resilience - the skills and abilities that allow us to adapt and stay healthy in the face of severe stress or hardship.

RESOURCES



1. [THE BRAIN STORY](#)
2. [ALBERTA FAMILY WELLNESS INITIATIVE](#)

TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES

KEY UNDERSTANDINGS BASED ON THE NEUROSEQUENTIAL MODEL (DR. BRUCE PERRY)

- Not all stress is bad; we experience both positive (e.g., meeting new people) and tolerable (e.g. death in the family) stress throughout our lives which helps our brains to grow and provides us with new skills.
- Stress turns toxic when it is severe, ongoing, or unpredictable. Multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as abuse, neglect, or exposure to violence can also cause toxic stress without a present and attuned caregiver or healthy adult to buffer the impact.
- Toxic stress can derail development and can result in a trauma response due to excessive activation of the stress response system, leading to long lasting wear and tear on the body and brain.
- Toxic stress impacts brain development, and as a result, can affect students' ability to: learn and recognize emotions, regulate their attention, and manage their behaviour. The focus is on survival rather than on learning and staying regulated.
- When educators understand trauma, they are better able to respond and provide the necessary co-regulation to help the student become regulated and return to learning. We know that students need to be regulated and supported relationally before they can reason or problem solve difficult situations.

In a trauma informed school, the adults in the school community are prepared to recognize and respond to those who have been impacted by toxic stress. Prolonged or repeated exposure to toxic stress can impact brain development and impact learning, behaviour, social skills, and the ability to form positive attachments. Focusing on healthy relationships and positive approaches to teaching and learning can improve student engagement and school culture. When staff understand how toxic stress impacts brain development and the lives of students, they can better select strategies that show empathy and help create safe environments, where students can learn healthy ways to handle emotions.

Create a school environment where every student feels safe and supported and staff understand how trauma affects behaviour and emotions.

REGULATE

RELATE

REASON

The Neurosequential Model is a developmentally informed, biologically respectful approach to working with at risk children, developed by Dr. Bruce Perry, Psychiatrist. The goal of this approach is to structure assessment of a child, the articulation of the primary problems, identification of key strengths and the application of interventions (educational, enrichment and therapeutic) in a way that will help educators, families and related professionals best meet the needs of the child. MHPSD has staff trained in:

THE NEUROSEQUENTIAL MODEL OF THERAPEUTICS (NMT)

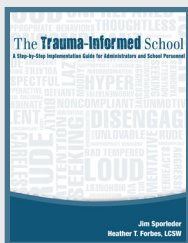
The Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT) is a way to organize a child's developmental history and current functioning to inform clinical decision making and the treatment planning process. This approach integrates core principles of neurodevelopment and traumatology to inform work with children, families and the communities in which they live.

THE NEUROSEQUENTIAL MODEL IN EDUCATION (NME)

The Neurosequential Model in Education (NME) helps educators better understand behaviour and academic performance, draws on concepts related to brain development and promotes safety, collaboration, empowerment and resilience. The goals of NME are to educate teachers and students in the basic concepts of neurosequential development and then teach them how to apply this knowledge to the teaching and learning process.

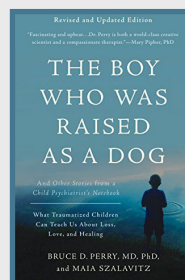
RESOURCES

ALBERTA FAMILY WELLNESS - WHAT WE KNOW



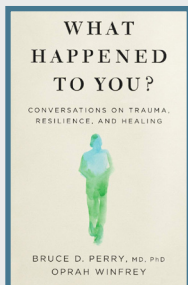
THE TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOL: STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Jim Sporleder and Heather T. Forbes



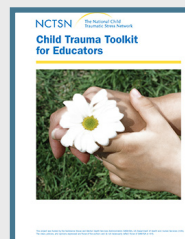
THE BOY WHO WAS RAISED AS A DOG: WHAT TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN CAN TEACH US ABOUT LOSS, LOVE, AND HEALING

Dr. Bruce Perry



WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? CONVERSATIONS ON TRAUMA, RESILIENCE AND HEALING

Dr. Bruce Perry



CHILD TRAUMA TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATORS

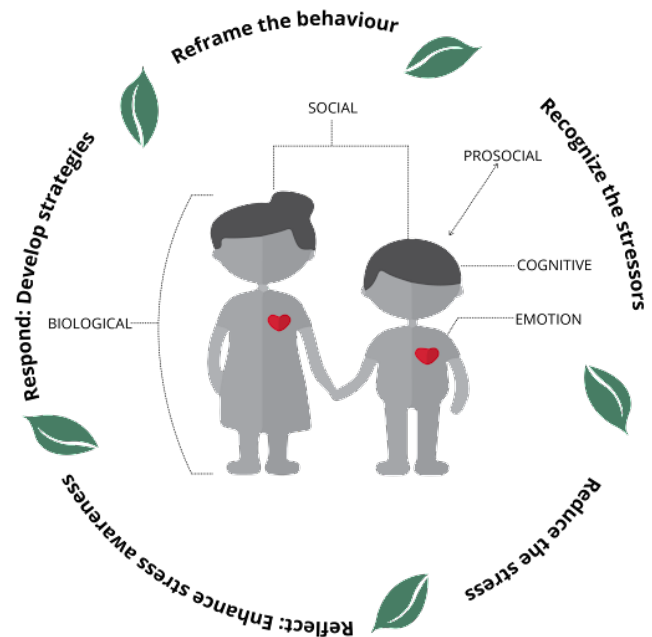
The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

SELF-REGULATION: SHANKER'S SELF-REG FRAMEWORK

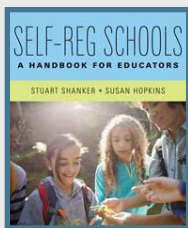
DR. STUART SHANKER

Self regulation refers to the manner in which an individual deals with stress, in all its many forms, and then recovers from the energy expended. Shanker's Self-Reg Framework helps people understand and respond to others (and themselves) by considering self regulation across five interrelated domains - biological, emotional, cognitive, social, prosocial - using The Shanker Method:

1. **REFRAME** the behaviour
2. **RECOGNIZE** the stressors (across the five domains)
3. **REDUCE** the stress
4. **REFLECT** enhance stress awareness
5. **RESPOND** develop personalized strategies to promote resilience and restoration

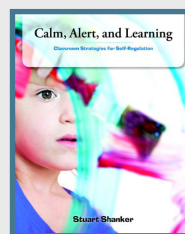


RESOURCES



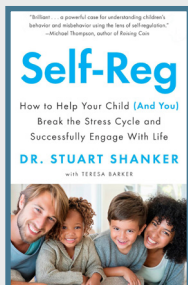
SELF-REG SCHOOLS: A HANDBOOK FOR EDUCATORS Dr. Stuart Shanker and Susan Hopkins

When people want to learn how to make self-regulation a part of their teaching practice they often ask one question: How? Self-Reg Schools: A Handbook for Educators answers that question by detailing how four models, or streams, of self-regulation environments develop in our classrooms and schools.



CALM, ALERT AND LEARNING: CLASSROOM STRATEGIES FOR SELF-REGULATION Dr. Stuart Shanker

Dr. Stuart's book Calm, Alert and Learning provides an overview of the most current research on self-regulation and provides tips and suggestions that can be implemented to support the development of self-regulated learning.



SELF-REG: HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD (AND YOU) BREAK THE STRESS CYCLE AND SUCCESSFULLY ENGAGE WITH LIFE Dr. Stuart Shanker

Self-reg is a groundbreaking book that presents an entirely new understanding of child's emotions and behaviour and practical guide to help kids engage calmly and successfully in learning and life.

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH

The collaborative problem solving (CPS) approach is centered on the belief that challenging behaviour isn't about a lack of will, but rather a lack of skills like flexibility, tolerance, and problem solving. Conventional methods such as rewards, punishments and incentives often backfire, creating frustration and missed opportunities for growth in significant lagging skills.

Instead, the CPS model is based on the premise that concerning behaviour occurs when the expectations being placed on a individual exceed their capacity to respond adaptively. Therefore, the emphasis isn't on the behaviour itself, but rather on identifying the skills the individual is lacking and the expectations they are having difficulty meeting (e.g., unsolved problems or lagging skills).

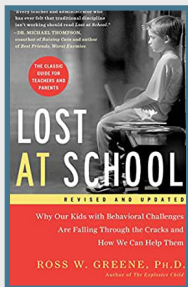
The CPS approach was built on the work of Dr. Ross Greene and Dr. Stuart Ablon.

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING (CPS) RESOURCES

- [Assessment of Lagging Skills](#): used to identify lagging skills and unsolved problems.
- [Problem Solving Plan](#): helps keep track of the high priority unsolved problems being addressed and the progress made in solving them.
- [Drilling Cheat Sheet](#): provides an overview of the drilling strategies that can be used to gather information in the Empathy step of Plan B.
- [Plan B Cheat Sheet](#): provides a graphic overview of the key components to keep in mind when working through Plan B.
- [Bill of Rights for Behaviourally Challenging Kids](#)

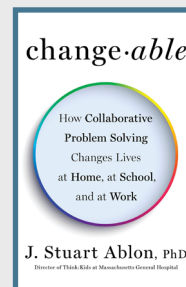
For more information or to request professional development on the CPS model reach out to the Alternative Learning Team at alt@sd76.ab.ca

RESOURCES



LOST AT SCHOOL: WHY OUR KIDS WITH BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES ARE FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS AND HOW WE CAN HELP THEM

Dr. Ross W. Greene



CHANGEABLE: HOW COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING CHANGES LIVES AT HOME, AT SCHOOL, AND AT WORK

Dr. Stuart Ablon



THE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE FIX: CHANGING BEHAVIOR USING THE COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH

Dr. Stuart Ablon

RETHINKING CHALLENGING KIDS: WHERE THERE'S A SKILL THERE'S A WAY

Dr. Stuart Ablon | TEDTalk

UNDERSTANDING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS THROUGH VALUED ATTACHMENT (SIVA)

Supporting Individuals through Valued Attachment (SIVA) training is a holistic approach, relationship based model that effectively utilizes collaboration, goal direction, self management and healthy empowerment to strengthen relationships and create safety with individuals with challenging behaviours and complex needs. The program focuses on developing a proactive approach to dysregulation that reduces power struggles, while fostering a sense of community and belonging for individuals being supported. It also provides a deeper understanding of compassion fatigue and the importance of self-care in relation to supporting others.

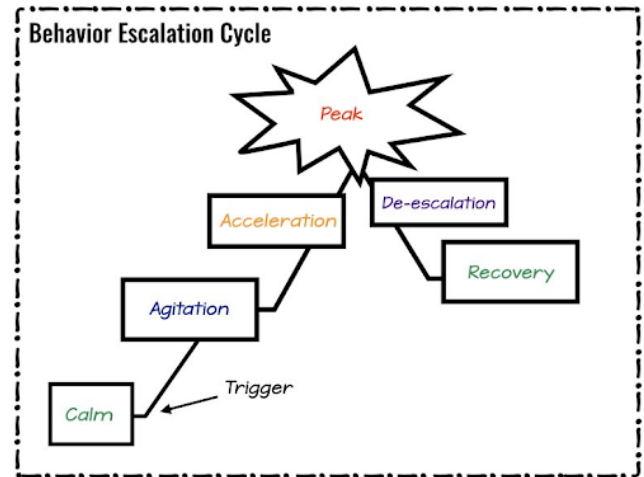
MHPSD has embraced the SIVA training program and promotes the importance of supporting each student from a strength based, whole child perspective. Each school is required to have at least two staff trained in the SIVA model as per administrative procedures under our welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments policy. Certification training sessions are offered at least twice in each school year. Staff who support students with diverse and complex needs are encouraged to take the training to support program development.

STUDIO 3: THE LOW AROUSAL APPROACH

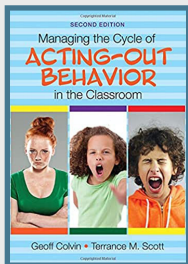
STUDIO 3: The Low Arousal Approach emphasizes a range of behaviour management strategies that focus on the reduction of stress, fear and frustration and seeks to prevent aggressive and/or crisis situations. The low arousal approach seeks to understand the role of the “situation” by identifying triggers and using low intensity strategies and solutions to avoid punitive consequences for individuals who exhibit challenging behaviour. The approach is non aversive and person centred by empowering educators to focus on the person in the situation, identifying the cause and use proven low intensity strategies, solutions and skills to reduce aggression. The low arousal workshop is offered to MHPSD staff each year and allows staff to engage in conversations with colleagues from across the system about challenging behaviours and a student centred approach to dealing with these behaviours.

POSITIVE CLASSROOM APPROACH: UNDERSTANDING THE ESCALATION CYCLE

In order to understand children's challenging behaviours, it's helpful to take a closer look at what is going on when children are dysregulated and heightened. It may seem like this behaviour comes out of nowhere, but in reality, there are phases in this escalation cycle that are recognizable and predictable. When learning to identify the phases in this cycle, intervention can happen earlier to help children learn new behaviours and skills, and adapt teaching methods and classrooms to be more supportive. The figure below shows the steps of the escalation cycle, demonstrating how the intensity builds and accelerates into a peak and then subsides. The goal of the adult is to help the child in the early stages of the cycle, preventing the full cycle from occurring. Adult responses to the child's escalation cycle will completely depend on what point in the cycle the intervention occurs.



RESOURCES



MANAGING THE CYCLE OF ACTING-OUT BEHAVIOUR IN THE CLASSROOM

2nd Edition

Geoff Colvin & Terrance Scott

Minimize problem behaviours and maximize student success. Acting-out behaviour by students manifests in ways that make classroom management and academic success very challenging. In this time-and field tested resource, Colvin and Scot present a system for understanding acting-out behaviour in terms of seven phases and correcting it before it gets in the way of student engagement and learning. Rooted in applied behaviour analysis, sound instructional principles, and functional behaviour assessment, Colvin and Scott's method includes: strategies for each phase of the acting-out cycle - from structuring the classroom, to managing agitation and escalated behaviours, to recovery case studies that distill concrete principles to any classroom. No educator should be without this definitive guide to classroom management and social skill development that sets the stage for student success in school.



RISK ASSESSMENT TRAINING

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Mental health first aid courses reduce the stigma attached to mental health, bring awareness and instill confidence. The Mental Health Commission of Canada and Mental Health First Aid Canada have a number of courses that provide foundational knowledge in understanding and supporting people with mental health problems. Specifically, the mental health first aid course for supporting youth looks at mental health and substance use disorders that often start in adolescence or early adulthood. When these disorders start at this stage in life, they can affect the young person's education, movement into occupational roles, forming of key social relationships and of healthy habits related to eating, sleeping, and substance use.

MENTAL HEALTH ONLINE RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS (MORE)

Mental Health Online Resources for Educators (MORE) is a component of the Healthy Minds Healthy Children (HMHC) program within Alberta Health Services. MORE offers online modules to educators and school staff working with K-12 students on a variety of topics including: child development, educator self care, grief and trauma, health promotion, inclusive education, mental health, sexuality, social issues and substance use. Administrators, teachers, educational assistants, guidance counselors and FSLWs across the system have completed course modules in the areas of suicidal ideation and non suicidal self injury.

The objectives are:

- increase skills and confidence of school staff to more effectively address the mental health needs of their students
- coordinate a school team approach when presented with mental health concerns for students

APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS TRAINING (ASIST)

FSLWs are trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) which supports students and their families in the area of risk assessment as needed. ASIST is a suicide first aid course that teaches participants to recognize when someone may have thoughts of suicide and work with them to create a plan that will support their immediate safety. FSLWs are required to maintain their ASIST certification during their employment with MHPSD.

VIOLENCE THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT (VTRA) TRAINING

Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) training is a comprehensive three stage prevention model that addresses all forms of violence. It allows trained teams of professionals to identify early risk indicators and guides a multidisciplinary team through high end threat assessment, data collection and data driven interventions. This protocol is based on the North American Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response. MHPSD is signed on to the Southeast Alberta Regional VTRA Protocol which includes public, catholic, chartered and post secondary schools, Alberta Health Services, Children's Services, and law enforcement.

An investment in a healthy school community is an investment in student success.

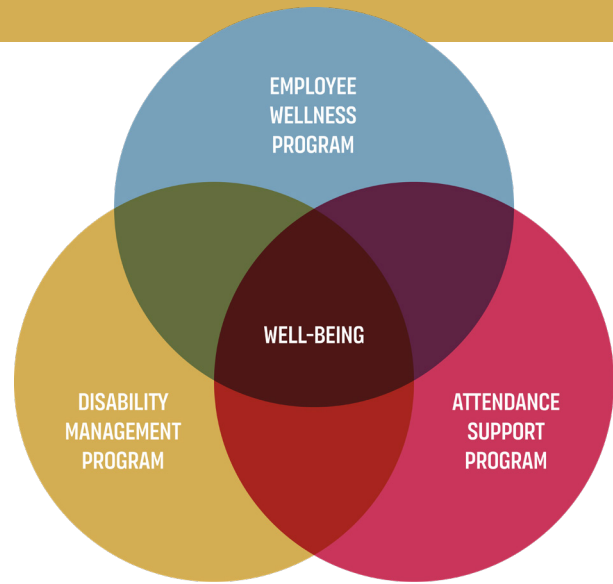
Promoting Health in Schools: From Evidence to Action IUHPE



MHPSD EMPLOYEE SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES

HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND ATTENDANCE ADVISOR

The role of the health, wellness, and attendance advisor in human resources is to provide wellness, attendance, and disability management programs and advice to leadership and staff. Services are provided through the establishment and maintenance of positive wellness and disability management practices. The advisor develops, delivers, and leads the implementation and administration of disability management programs and wellness policy development, aiming to promote physical and mental wellbeing and reduce employee absenteeism due to illness. A healthy school community is one that supports the wellness of all its members and strives to be a healthy setting for living, learning, and working.



EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Be Well Employee Wellness Committee, made up of wellness champions, collaborates to administer the wellness program and aims to ensure the health and wellness needs and goals of staff are being met. This includes:

- identifying the initiatives and strategies needed to achieve staff health and wellness goals
- coordinate the engagement and implementation of health and wellness initiatives across the Division
- identify potential barriers and propose strategies to improve participation in the wellness program
- review progress and results to evaluate program effectiveness

The following principles guide the wellness committee in its decision making as it plans the health and wellness initiatives for staff:

- commitment to share ideas and collaborate in learning
- communication is multifaceted and transparent;
- ensures program participation is voluntary
- creating an inclusive program that reaches all employees in our Division
- commitment to make the program easily accessible
- focus a long term view and commitment to health and wellness in effort to support the Division's ability to self-sustain a focus on healthy people, healthy workplaces
- celebrate successes

The following wellness program outcomes are anticipated if the goals are achieved:

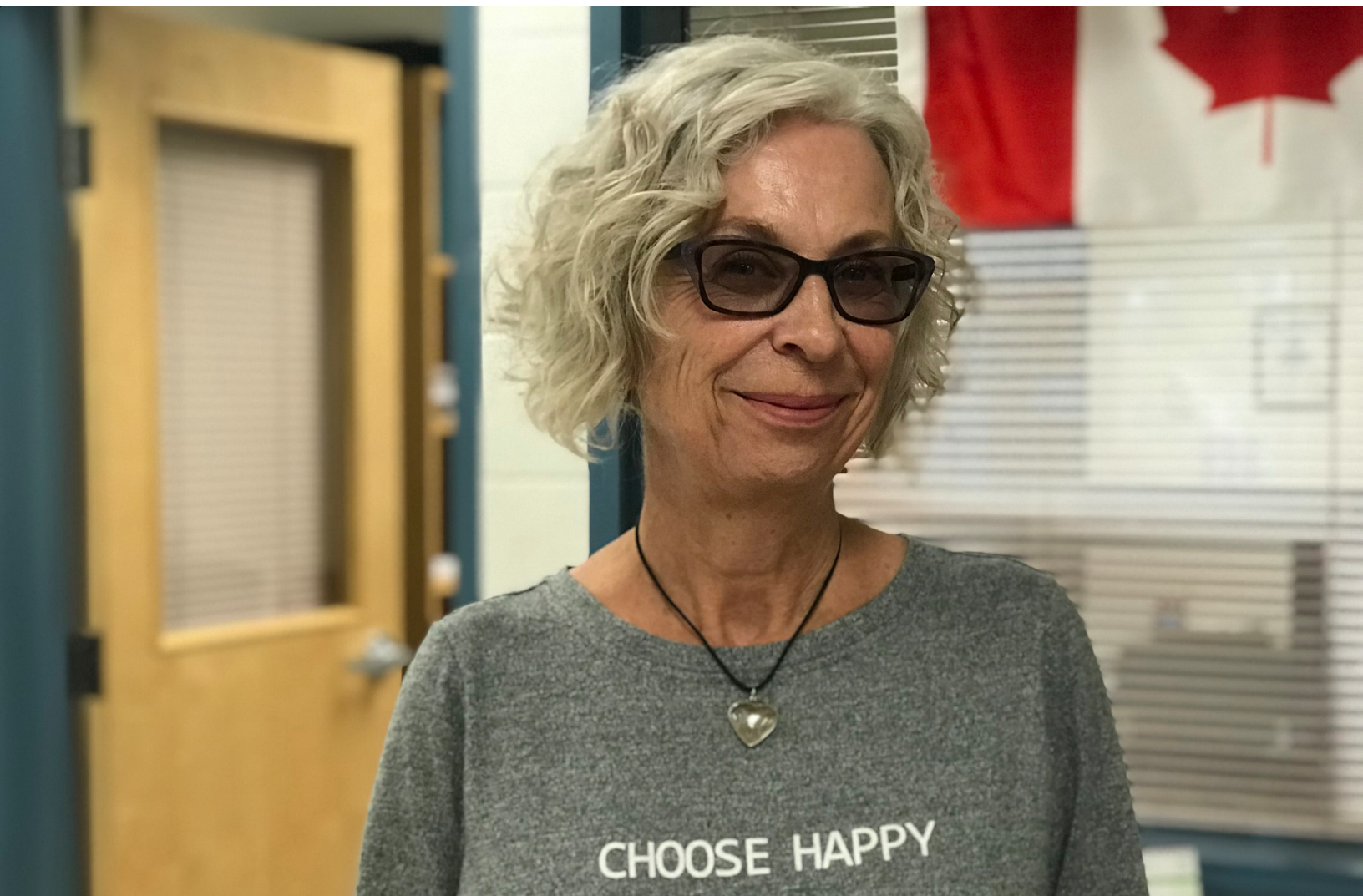
- culture will shift to one that embraces a healthy, balanced approach to work
- positive impact on students and/or families as a result of increased health of individuals
- participants will be/become intentional about health and wellness
- individuals will have increased, accurate knowledge and access to tools to make healthier lifestyle choices and will adopt healthier practices
- health status of individuals will improve, positively impacting their quality of health today, tomorrow and into retirement years
- sustained commitment and focus on health by school jurisdictions will attract new employees and increase retention of existing employees

DISABILITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Almost every employee, at some point in their career, will require a medical leave of absence or accommodation at work. The health, wellness, and attendance advisor role is to support employees and supervisors in this process. As the single point of contact for sick/medical related leaves, the advisor's role is to communicate with all stakeholders, including: employees, physicians, treatment providers, ASEBP, unions, management, human resources, payroll, and occasionally WCB, to ensure employees have the support they need while they are away and when they are planning their return to work. The advisor ensures adherence to legislation that governs collection and use of employee medical information and communicates only the "need to know" information for stakeholders to perform their duties.

ATTENDANCE SUPPORT PROGRAM

An attendance support policy and procedure was established as part of our universal goal in fostering a culture of wellness. The health, wellness, and attendance advisor's role is to provide information, supports, and resources to supervisors and employees. These supports are intended to assist staff in achieving and sustaining personal health and wellbeing and maintain attendance at work.



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Physical and psychological health are both a part of safety culture.

The overall health of a workplace includes both the physical and psychological wellbeing of its workers. The overarching goals of the MHPSD health and safety management system are to:

- establish and maintain healthy and safe working and learning environments
- maintain a healthy and productive workforce
- prevent work related disease and accidents
- maintain and promote the work ability of our staff

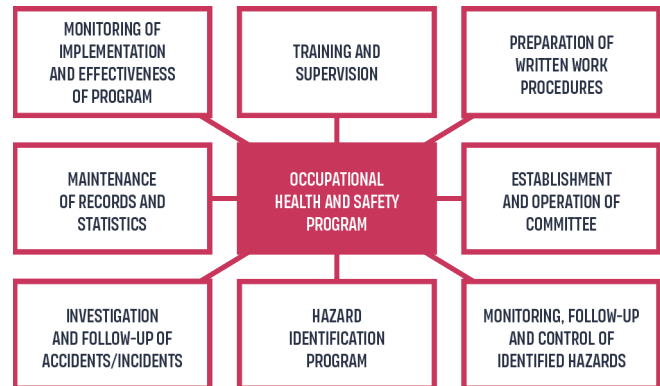
JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE, HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) is a group of employees and management working collaboratively together to address workplace health and safety issues. The goal of the committee is to work in conjunction with school/site health and safety representatives to increase health and safety awareness and continually improve workplace health and safety division-wide. The health and safety representative is the school/site contact for health and safety. Health and safety representatives work together with site administrators/managers to:

- promote health and safety information and education
- assist with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) implementation
- make recommendations for OHS improvements
- ensure JHSC minutes and communications are posted at the school/worksites
- receive concerns about health and safety and forwarding to site administration, the OHS Officer and/or the JHSC as appropriate for follow up

INSPECTIONS

Regular inspections are conducted with the involvement of health and safety representatives to ensure physical environments meet or exceed the safety standards set out in legislation and best practices. Inspections are routine, ongoing and documented.



ACCIDENTY/INJURY REPORTING

The online safety reporting system is accessible to all employees for the reporting of injuries, accidents, incidents and hazards. All reports are forwarded to the OHS Officer for review and further investigation as necessary. Employees that have been injured at work and are covered under WCB have access to expedited and specialized medical services and support for in-depth return-to-work plans. Every report is an opportunity to identify hazards and make improvements to safety in our division.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

All new employees are provided with a general safety orientation before starting work. Ongoing, job, and task, specific training are provided to key staff. Protocols are continually developed and reviewed to address changing legislation, identified needs of students and staff.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING

During an emergency, our first priority is the safety of our students and staff. MHPSD standardized and comprehensive emergency response procedures are contained within the Hour Zero school emergency program. Our plans work in conjunction with our local first responders and are reviewed annually and after an emergency occurs.

REFERENCES

- [Mental Health First Aid](#)
- [Mental Health Online Resources for Educators \(MORE\)](#)
- [Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training \(ASIST\)](#)
- [Alberta Education \(2021\) Safe and Caring Schools.](#)
- [Alberta Education \(2021\) Comprehensive School Health.](#)
- [Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health.](#)
- [Alberta Education \(2021\) Inclusive Education.](#)

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING WORKING GROUP

Gregory Ferris, Vice Principal of Alternative Learning

Claire Petersen, Director of Psychology

Annetta Labash, Classroom Support Teacher,
Alexandra Middle School

Carrie Maxwell, Classroom Support Teacher,
Webster Niblock School

Susan Nelson, Classroom Support Teacher,
Elm Street School

Rosalyn Clark, Classroom Support Teacher,
Medicine Hat Christian School

Kelly Marshall, Classroom Support Teacher,
Dr. Roy Wilson Learning Centre

Amy K. Lynch, Rachel Ashcraft, Kelly Mahler, Colleen Cameron Whiting, Krista Schroeder & Meredith Weber (2020). **Using a Public Health Model as Foundation for Trauma-Informed Care for Occupational Therapists in School Settings.** Journal of Occupational Therapy, Schools & Early Intervention. 13:3, 219-235.

Colleen Cameron Whiting (2018). **Trauma and the role of the school-based occupational therapist.** Journal of Occupational Therapy, Schools, & Early Intervention, 11:3, 291-301.

Jane A. Koomar (2009). **Trauma and Attachment-Informed Sensory Integration Assessment and Intervention.** The American Occupational Therapy Association. Volume 32, Number 4.





To learn. To grow.
To build a better world.



Medicine Hat Public School Division
STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
601 1 Ave SW, Medicine Hat, AB, T1A 4Y7
403.528.6700
mhpsd.ca