Mental Health Screening Program Training

H.B. 323 (2020) and R277-625

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Utah State Board of Education

ADA Compliant: 3/29/2021

Introductions

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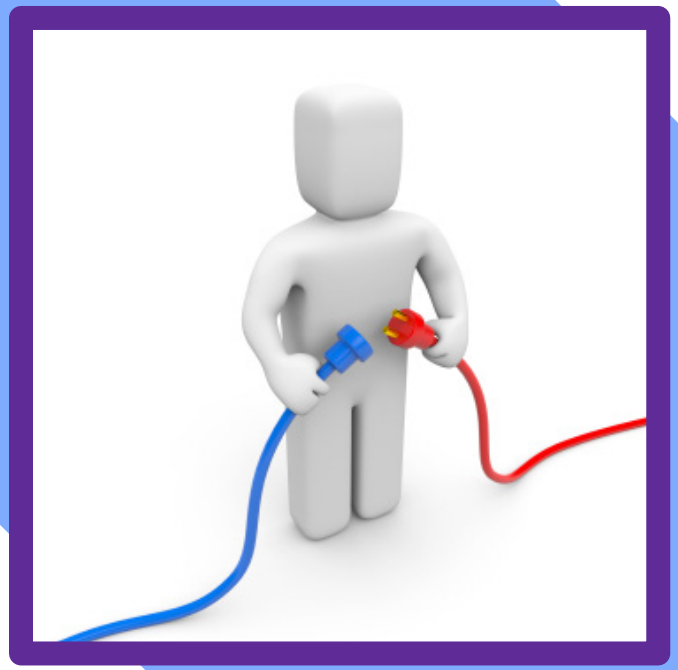
Why?



Connecting Schools and Mental Health

For the benefit of students and families

1 in 5

Children in the Utah have a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral issues (ages 3-17)

Only 55%

Of children in need of treatment are able to access care from a mental health provider

$9.5 million

Amount the State of Utah spent in suicide and mental health crisis services in FY20

> $100 billion

U.S. costs of untreated mental illness

Background

H.B. 323 (2020)

- Standards for Mental Health Screening
- Directed USBE to establish Rule, training, and a process for approval
- Requires LEAs to obtain parental consent for screening
- Establishes the ability for USBE to distribute funds to LEAs in order to provide financial assistance to parents

R277-625

- Board approval required for mental health conditions that can be screened
- USBE will maintain a list of pre-approved mental health screeners
- Guidelines for approval of LEA mental health screening programs
- Data privacy considerations
- Requirements for parental financial assistance (optional)

The Data

School Safety Survey (2020)

Top 3 Risk Factors INCREASED...

Top risk factors which increased due to COVID-19 are anxiety, stress, and social isolation (88%)

Administrators expressed CONCERNS...

Administrators expressed top concerns for student re-entry as academic delays and mental health concerns (68%)

Current Screening Practices Survey (2020)

69%
Conduct Screenings

The leading mental health conditions that are currently screened for include:

- Suicide Ideation (88%)
- Anxiety (58%)
- Depression (56%)

Mental Health 101

Pop Quiz

1) A term that includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being affects how we think, feel, and act.

2) An umbrella term which including substance abuse, mental health, psychiatric, marriage and family counseling and addictions services

A. Behavioral Health
B. Well-being
C. Physical Health
D. Mental Health
E. Phone a friend

Key Definitions

Screening vs Assessment vs Diagnosis:

- **Screening** is a process for evaluating the possible presence of a particular problem.
- **Assessment** is a process for defining the nature of a problem, determining a diagnosis, and developing specific recommendations for treatment of the problem or diagnosis.
- **Diagnosis** is the process of using assessment data to determine if the pattern of symptoms the individual presents with is consistent with the diagnostic criteria for a specific mental disorder set forth in an established classification system such as the DSM-5.

Key Definitions (cont.)

Mental Health Conditions for which an LEA may screen:

- **Anxiety** apprehensive uneasiness or nervousness; abnormal and overwhelming sense of apprehension and fear
- **Depression** a state of feeling unhappy; marked by inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, a significant increase or decrease in appetite and time spent sleeping, feelings of dejection and hopelessness
- **Suicide Ideation** refers to thinking about, considering, or planning suicide

What is a Mental Health Screener?

Mental Health Screener is:

a systematic tool or process that is used:

1) to identify if a student is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, issues related to the student's mental health;
2) for an early identification strategy to detect the onset of mental health conditions, enabling the mental health conditions to be potentially addressed; and
3) that is not:
    a) a diagnostic tool or process; or
    b) a system or process used by a student's teacher to observe behavior for the purpose of targeted learning interventions.

Mental Health Screening Requirements

PARTICIPATION APPLICATION

Every year by May 1

PRE-APPROVED SCREENER

Link to the list on Safe and Healthy Schools Website

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF A SCREENER NOT ON THE LIST

ANNUAL TRAINING PROVIDED BY USBE AND DSAMH

ANNUAL DATA REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

COMPLY WITH DATA PRIVACY AND PARENTAL CONSENT REQUIREMENTS

Parental Consent Issues

- Parental consent needs to be obtained within 8 weeks prior to administering the mental health screener.
- Has to be a separate consent form, cannot be combined with other consent forms.
- Consent form must include:
  - Which board approved mental health conditions the screener measures.
  - Additional variables that might influence the screener results.
  - A statement that the screener is optional and not a diagnostic tool.
  - The parent has the right to seek outside resources and opinions.
  - A list of all data potentially collected by the screener.
- Parental consent must be obtained regardless of the age of the student.

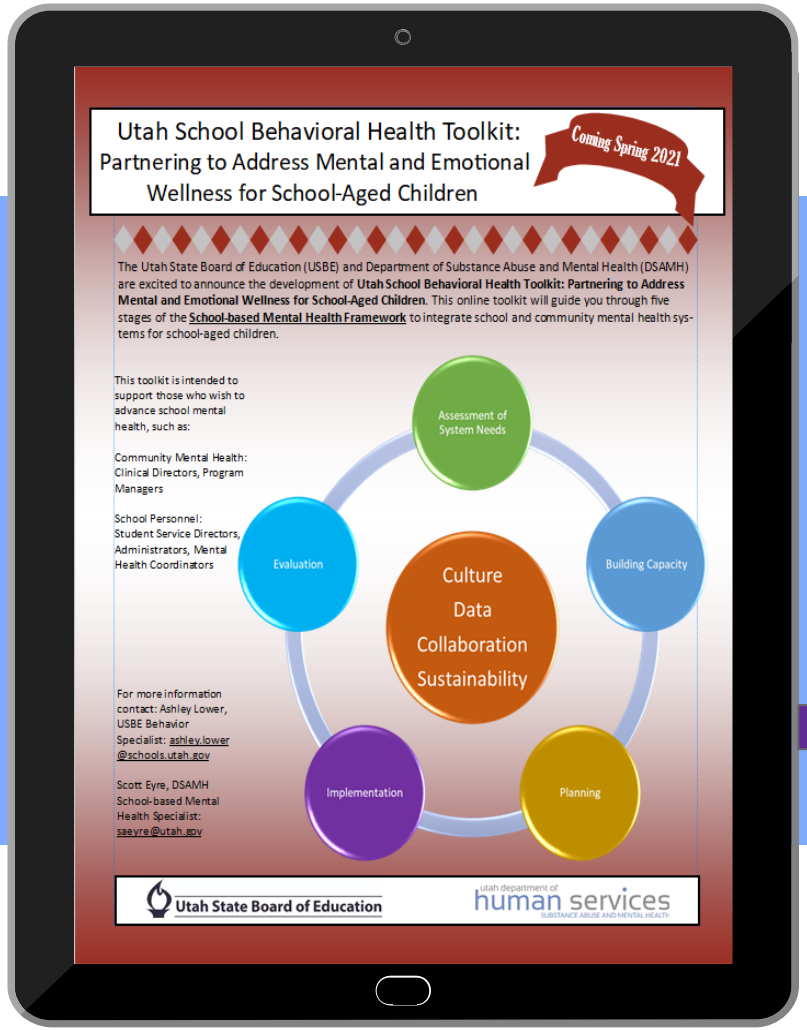
Mental Health Screening Clarifications

- Universal screening = offered to all students
- What constitutes a Mental Health screener?
- Participation Application: Notification to USBE of LEA plans to use a pre-approved screener OR apply for a screener not on the approved list (Participation Application)
- Is it mental health screening? Screening vs assessment vs crisis intervention
- 504 and Special Education assessment / Psychoeducational testing excluded
- Contracting for services
- Supports for parents

--FAQ document is available on the USBE / Safe and Healthy Schools website

Mental Health Screening Grant

- Funding for a competitive grant program
- Total ongoing funding - $500,000
- Funds can be used for two purposes:
  - costs associated with the screening program
  - to assist “qualifying parents” to pay for resources that cannot be provided by the school
- HB 323 (2020) and R277-625 provide further requirements
- Grant will be released again for the 2021-2022 school year
- More information available on the USBE, Safe and Healthy Schools website



Establishing a Framework:

- Assessment
- Capacity
- Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation

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Best Practices

Assessment of System Needs

- **Resource mapping**
- **Beginning with the end in mind**
- **Clarify goals**
- **Data, measures of effectiveness**

Furthering Questions:

- What do we hope to accomplish?
- Where are our strengths?
- Where are our gaps?
- Who else might we learn from?

Building Capacity

- **Trainings & professional development**
- **Partnering, generating buy in and support**
- **Budget/funding**
- **Examine current practices**

Furthering Questions:

- What outside knowledge can we bring in?
- What is realistic?
- What (or who) else do we need to include to accomplish our goals?
- Are accommodations needed for special populations?

Best Practices

- **Logistics**
- **Nail down specifics**
- **Format and/or setting**
- **Referral Pathways**

It is **NOT** a best practice to begin any mental health screening without first establishing a clear plan for responding to any discovered needs.

Furthering Questions:

- Will we be able to do what we say we'll do?
- Who, what, how, when and why?
- Have we communicated our plan effectively?

Best Practices

Implementation

- **Customer friendly, handle with care**
- **Adherence to the rules**
- **Assuring fidelity, oversight**
- **Listening to feedback**

Furthering Questions:

- What might this feel like for students/families?
- Do we have appropriate oversight?
- Are we in compliance?
- Are we flexible, able to adjust as needed?

Best Practices

- **Data analysis**
- **Lessons learned**
- **Making adjustments**
- **Reporting requirements**

Furthering Questions:

- What went well?
- What do we wish could go better?
- To whom (and how) will we share data?
- How can we apply knowledge gained?

Best Practices

Prevention Strategies

Effective prevention starts with *you*

The Strategic Planning Approach

1. Describe the Problem and its Context
2. Choose Long-term Goals
3. Identify Key Risk and Protective Factors (Strengthening Families - Protective Factors Framework)
4. Select and/or Develop Interventions
5. Plan the Evaluation
6. Implement, Evaluate, and Improve

Approaching strength-based vs deficit-based thinking

BEST PRACTICES

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Referral process:

- School counselors
- Social workers
- School psychologists
- Community partners such as local mental health authorities (LMHA)

Ask your kids:

- What do *you* think it means to have a mental health condition?
- Is there anything stressing you out that I can help with, *right now*?

90%

Breaking stigma means **talking** about mental health.

Stigma comes in 3 forms:
Public, Self, and Institutional

▿ Talk openly ▿ Educate yourself and others ▿ Be conscious of language ▿
▿ Encourage equity ▿ Show compassion ▿ Be honest about treatment ▿
▿ Choose empowerment over shame (strength-based vs. deficit-based thinking) ▿

Activity

- One or more strengths of your screening program

- At least two areas needing improvement

Resources

USBE Website - Safe and Healthy Schools

HB 323 (2020)

USBE Rule 277-625

FAQ

SPRC - Suicide Prevention Resource Center

CSSP - Center for the Study of Social Policy, Protective Factor Framework

NIH - National Institutes of Health

APA - American Psychiatric Association

NAMI - National Alliance on Mental Illness

SHAPE - School Mental Health

Screening Playbook: Best Practices and Tips from the Field

Questions?