



## What you do matters

System leaders establish the conditions for quality, consistency and sustainability in identity-affirming school mental health. You create the conditions for success so that mentally healthy environments and instruction can reach every student.

Leadership commitment at the system level is a key factor that supports student mental health. You make a difference!

## Did you know that...

- ▶ [School Mental Health Ontario \(SMH-ON\)](#) is a provincial implementation support team established to help all Ontario school districts bridge research, policy and practice to advance mental health education and supports in schools. Strategic goals focus on the uptake, scalability, and sustainability of culturally responsive, evidence-informed strategies in school mental health.
- ▶ SMH-ON seeks representation to form a Council of Ontario Directors of Education advisory team, which provides guidance, advice and direction.
- ▶ Aligned with the board strategic plan, the Mental Health Leadership Team is responsible to collaboratively develop, implement and monitor the Board's 3 year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and the Annual Mental Health Action Plan.
- ▶ Your board has a protocol for suicide prevention/life promotion, intervention and postvention that is an important document for all system and school leaders.
- ▶ As director of education, it is important to understand, communicate and activate the shared responsibility for effective identity-affirming school mental health and well-being strategies, ensuring that every leader actively plays a role in the mental health strategy and plan.



An SMH-ON implementation coach works with your Mental Health Leadership Team on a regular basis to support their work to protect and promote student mental health at school.

Our board's [implementation coach](#) is:

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The Mental Health Leadership Team is comprised of a mental health lead, a superintendent with responsibility for mental health, and in some districts, a manager of Psychology and/or Social Work.

Our team consists of:

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## You inspire through your actions when you...

- ▶ Align your Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and Action Plan with your Board Strategic Plan.
- ▶ Have regular conversations with your superintendent who has responsibility for mental health.
- ▶ Meet with the Mental Health Leadership Team on a regular basis.
- ▶ Make a space to discuss the mental health strategy at your executive council table so that alignment and cohesion across the system is intentional and explicitly tied to actions that move the strategy forward.
- ▶ Develop a process for superintendents to bring the discussion from the executive table to the school level and create the conditions for this dialogue to come back to the executive council to support the systematic implementation and monitoring of the mental health plan as it aligns to your Board Strategic Plan.

## You lead through cultural humility in ways to encourage belonging and connect mental health...

- ▶ Prioritize a focus on caring, inclusive, safe learning environments.
- ▶ Take action to address any disproportionate impact on mental health for students who have special needs, are Black, Indigenous, and marginalized.
- ▶ Elevate school board and local community strengths, cultural assets and values. Acknowledge the significant role that all members of the community have in supporting student mental health and well-being.
- ▶ Engage students in deep, meaningful and relevant ways to bring student voice and agency to the mental health strategy.

## You are key to sharing information effectively

As directors of education, you receive an abundance of information and requests from various organizations. In order to discern alignment with the Ontario Strategy, when information comes to you, consider using a process, such as the one outlined in the [SMH-ON Decision Support Tool](#).

School Mental Health Ontario is the primary source of evidence-informed resources and professional learning for Ontario school boards. As a director of education, you and/or your Mental Health Leadership Team will receive information or invitation to participate in professional learning from SMH-ON. Review the information received through the lens of your organizational structures and board mental health strategic plans to ensure effective implementation:

- ▶ How does this information align with our plan?
- ▶ Who needs to know about this?
- ▶ Whose work does this align with?
- ▶ What actions will we take?

## What you do matters.

Amplifying the promotive and protective influences with intentional focus on mental health and well-being ensures the key conditions for learning and flourishing. As system leaders, this work is iterative, and requires ongoing communication, monitoring and celebration of successes.

For more information, reach out to your SMH-ON implementation coach, explore the [School and System Leader](#) section of our website, follow us on [twitter](#).

