



What you do matters

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

Leadership commitment at the system and school 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 works closely with supervisory officers' affiliates, OCSOA, OPSOA and AGÉFO to offer opportunities to advise, review and learn about school mental health.
- ▶ Aligned with the board strategic plan, the Mental Health Leadership Team is responsible to collaboratively develop, implement and monitor the board's three-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.
- ▶ All boards have referral pathways for students who need more intensive mental health support.
- ▶ As supervisory officer, 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.



Your board has a Mental Health Leadership Team (MHLT) that is supported by an SMH-ON implementation coach.

Our Board's implementation coach is:

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:

- ▶ SMH-ON has a [Mental Health Literacy course for school leaders](#) (MH LIT)
- ▶ SMH-ON has a [Mental Health Literacy course for system leaders](#) (MH LIT)



You inspire through your actions when you...

- ▶ Bring coherence to your department plans and work with families of schools by aligning with your board's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and Action Plan.
- ▶ Intentionally and explicitly engage in discussions and actions to move the strategy forward.
- ▶ Have regular focused conversations to support the work taking place within your department and/or schools to align the boards' mental health strategy.
- ▶ Engage in a process to bring the discussion from your department and/or schools to the executive table 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 and well-being...

- ▶ Prioritize a focus on caring, inclusive, safe learning environments.
- ▶ Support schools and departments to address any disproportionate impact on mental health for students who have special needs, are Black, Indigenous and marginalized.
- ▶ Recognize school and local community strengths, cultural assets and values. Work with school leaders as they involve all members of the community in their significant role to support student mental health and well-being.
- ▶ Encourage schools/departments to engage students in deep, meaningful and relevant ways to bring student voice and agency to the ongoing mental health work.

You are key to sharing information effectively

School leaders receive an abundance of information and requests from various organizations. In order to discern alignment with the board strategy, as SO, you can encourage your school leaders to be aware of the importance of 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. Supervisory officers are invited to participate in a community of practice (CoP) hosted by SMH-ON, focused on school mental health. This CoP explores what leadership commitment to student mental health at the system level looks like and what all system leaders can do to support ongoing coherence and alignment in leading the work of student mental health. This is an opportunity to learn from one another, share practice and problem solve. If interested in joining this CoP, reach out to the SMH-ON implementation coach for your board.

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 and follow us on [twitter](#).

