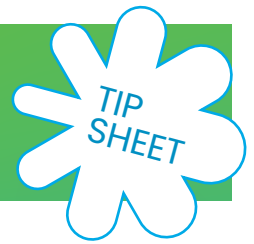


# Mental Health and Well-Being in School Improvement Planning



## Important things to consider:

- Understand and align with the board's mental health strategy and multi-year goals relating to mental health and well-being.
- Prioritize mental health promotion and prevention initiatives over those focused only on mental illnesses.
- Use findings from stakeholder surveys, student data and student voice, alongside research evidence and past practice learning, to inform planning.
- Work to embed evidence-based mental health and well-being in daily practices, not as an add on.
- Build a shared understanding of the goals in your School Improvement Plan, and engage stakeholder voices, to ensure a collaborative implementation process.



## Some essential documents and sites to reference when embedding mental health into your school plan

### [Foundations for Scalable and Sustainable School Mental Health Practices](#)

This resource provides a summary of key foundations that are common to boards and schools that have managed to introduce, scale and sustain identity-affirming mental health programming effectively.

### [Leading Mentally Healthy Schools Reflection Tool](#)

This tool can provide school data on Tier 1 practices and can be used to inform the School Improvement Plan.

### [Ontario Leadership Framework](#)

The Leadership Framework provides indicators for school leaders to use in reflecting on their practices in light of mental health and well-being.

### [School Effectiveness Framework](#)

The School Effectiveness Framework (K-12) is a self-assessment tool for schools. The tool supports educators in their ongoing pursuit of improved student achievement and well-being.

## Questions to think about

- Have you considered how information collected using the tools may support School Improvement Plan development and implementation?
- Is your vision, and are the goals, created collaboratively?
- Have you specifically linked indicators to the work you do in mental health and well-being and school improvement planning?
- Are staff familiar with the board mental health strategy and circle of support process?
- How are you monitoring the progress of your mental health and well-being goals?

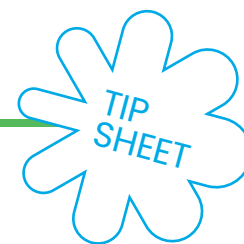
[www.smho-smso.ca](http://www.smho-smso.ca)



School  
Mental Health  
Ontario

Santé mentale  
en milieu scolaire  
Ontario





# A starting place for school planning related to mental health and well-being

Reviewing and assessing needs, gaps, resources, initiatives, and capacity is an important part of the school planning process. This is equally true when considering how best to embed mental health and well-being into the school plan. You likely already have data that has a logical connection to mental health and well-being (e.g., school climate surveys, administrative data, student voice inputs) and could gather more perspectives as part of the planning process. In addition, the Leading Mentally Healthy School Reflection Tool can help to reflect on core elements of mentally healthy schools, to support overall school improvement planning. Becoming familiar with each of the five areas of Tier 1 described in the tool, and the corresponding examples of What does a mentally healthy school look like? will guide your reflection of your school's strengths and areas for improvement. When collecting data consider:

- What relevant data do we have about student mental health and well-being?
- How is the data reflected across the tiered continuum?
- What other initiatives are related, and have we examined that data?
- How can we find out what we don't know?

## Idea for engaging staff in school planning for mental health

The collaborative process described here can assist with gathering a whole school mapping of available supports and services, while at the same time engaging staff and building a common understanding and language for a tiered approach to school mental health and well-being.

Provide staff with a copy of the AIM triangle and ask them to think specifically about each tier:

**Tier 1** – universal class-wide mental health promotion initiatives (ALL)

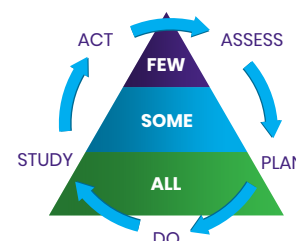
**Tier 2** – supports for students who might be at greater risk for mental health problems (SOME)

**Tier 3** – services for students experiencing mental health problems (FEW)

Invite staff to write down all the current or recent school-based mental health and well-being supports and services at each tier.

### Together, consider:

- Are the current practices evidence-based?
- Do they fill an identified need?
- Are there gap areas?
- What might we prioritize next?
- What does research say about best practices?
- Who can help us with this?



## Are you guided by the 7 key foundations for effective school mental health?

1. **Leadership commitment:** Do we demonstrate commitment to student mental well-being?
2. **Vision and strategy:** Do we have a clear and focused vision for mental well-being in our school?
3. **Infrastructure:** Do we have a school leadership team responsible for student well-being?
4. **Protocols and processes:** Do we know about, and have we shared the Board's processes and protocols for supporting our most vulnerable students (e.g., protocol for suicide risk management)?
5. **Evidence and monitoring:** Do we have a method for monitoring progress towards enhanced well-being?
6. **Engagement and collaboration:** Have we created respectful collaborative relationships with all who support student well-being (e.g., staff, families, community partners)?
7. **Internal and external communication:** Do we have a shared language and a communication plan for talking about mental well-being within our school community?

The mental health leader at your board can be a resource as you plan for a mentally healthy school.

For more information on the planning phases and available tools, see [Leading Mentally Healthy Schools, 2024](#), p.26-27.

