



# School Psychology

## Professional Practice Brief

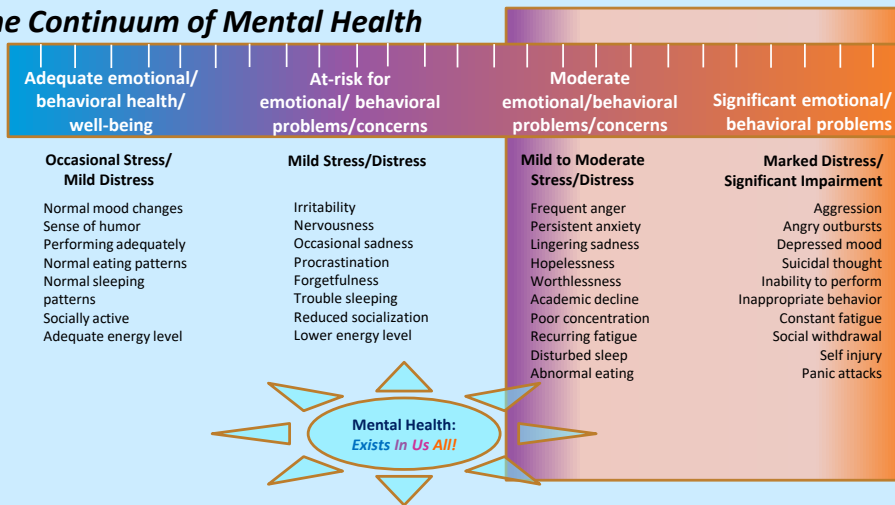
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

### TOPIC: School Mental Health

APRIL 2019

As the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) summarized in their [2015 White Paper](#), school psychologists are *qualified health professionals providing child and adolescent behavioral health services*. NASP situates these types of services delivered by school psychologists within a multi-tiered system of supports. It is through this lens that we are able to better understand the continuum of mental health and recognize that it exists in us all, including the students, families and staff that we serve.

#### NC's Focus - The Continuum of Mental Health



Understanding and explaining the mental health continuum to stakeholders can help in reducing the stigma that is often associated with the term and encourage a broader understanding that, like physical health, mental health includes those who demonstrate positive wellness and overall well-being, as well as those who are at-risk for mental health problems and those who require a very high level of supports and services due to their intensive mental/behavioral health needs.

Both national and state level models of school psychological service delivery are positioned to be most effective when operating through a framework that supports the academic and behavioral health needs of the entire student population, including those that school psychologists have a lot of experience working with, our students with most intensive needs, and students with identified disabilities. Now more than ever, it is important for all stakeholders to understand the intended role and function of school psychologists operating within an MTSS. NC has embraced this framework very familiar to school psychologists as a promising framework for total school improvement.

Share these NASP infographics with stakeholders

**School Climate**  
Many factors affect school climate: School Environment, Working Environment, Family Involvement.  
Why School Climate is Important: A school's environment—and the degree to which students feel connected, accepted and respected—heavily influences students.  
How to Improve School Climate: Positive Discipline, Home-School Collaboration, School Connectedness, Prevention and Intervention, Cultural Competence, Physical and Psychological Safety.  
How School Psychologists Can Help: Develop and implement positive behavior supports, Foster trusting relationships among students and staff, Support improved home-school-community engagement using consultation and collaboration, Ensure access to and quality of mental and behavioral health supports, Develop and integrate programming to foster school climate, prevent violence, and balance physical and psychological safety.

**Creating Trauma-Sensitive Schools**  
Creating adversity: Stress, shame, and trauma can negatively impact students' ability to thrive.  
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)  
ACEs are stressful or potentially traumatic experiences, including abuse, neglect, and exposure to community violence.  
75% of children and youth in the U.S. will experience at least one ACE before the age of 18.  
As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for psychological, behavioral, or emotional problems, substance abuse, academic failure, social maladjustment, and poor mental health.  
Characteristics of Trauma-Sensitive Schools: Access to comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services, Effective community collaboration, Feelings of physical, social, and emotional safety among all students, Positive and culturally responsive discipline policies and practices.  
Promoting trauma-sensitive school approaches has the greatest potential to positively impact all students, regardless of trauma history.  
The Role of School Psychologists: School psychologists have unique training that allows them to deliver mental health supports within the context of learning. These services directly contribute to more positive student outcomes and achievement. They can provide early identification and intervention services to help students build the skills they need to meet the demands of school and life.

#### Professional Resources



Check out the school mental health resources available in the [School Psychology Lending Library!](#)

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## School Mental Health

APRIL 2019

Systems and Structures of MTSS



School Psychologists are specifically trained in problem solving, analyzing data, and using available data to advise teachers and administrators.

Where does school psychology fit?



Each local system is unique and needs to provide flexibility in the role and function of school psychologists within an MTSS,

depending on the structure of their local system and dedicated resources available to support a comprehensive role.

As public schools across the state scale up their efforts in providing a continuum of social-emotional and behavioral health supports and services to students, there are many resources and tools available through the NC DPI Integrated Academic and Behavior Systems (IABS) Division's [NC MTSS Implementation Guide \(LiveBinder\)](#). Information on universal practices, supplemental supports and intensive services can be found through the tab titled [Develop a Behavior/Social-Emotional and Attendance Component to the System of Interventions](#).

NC DPI IABS Division has recently released the [April MTSS Communication Brief](#) on School-Based Mental Health.

**CHECK THIS OUT**

If you have questions, please email [integratedsystems@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:integratedsystems@dpi.nc.gov) or contact your [Regional IABS Consultant](#).

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<https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/instructional-resources/school-psychology>  
[NC DPI School Psychology LiveBinder](#)



**Mental Health Matters**

School psychological services promote students' mental and behavioral health.

75%–80% of children and youth in schools in need of mental health services do not receive them. Of those who do receive assistance, 70%–80% receive mental health services in schools.

Unaddressed mental health needs increase risk for suspension, expulsion, dropout and entering the juvenile justice system.

School psychologists are uniquely positioned to provide mental and behavioral health services in schools.

School psychologists are trained in:

- Data-Based Decision-Making
- Fostering Positive School Climates
- Consultation and Collaboration
- Social-Emotional Screening
- Crisis Preparedness and Response
- Prevention and Intervention

NASP NASP advocates for comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services to ensure that all children and youth thrive in school, at home, and in life. [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)

### Upcoming SMH Events

April 18-19

[Southeastern School Behavioral Health Conference - Myrtle Beach SC](#)

May 12-18

[SAMHSA's National Prevention Week](#)

June 13-14

**FREE** 2-day conference sponsored by the [NC School Mental Health Initiative](#) and [Carolina Network for School Mental Health](#)

Durham, NC

**Registration Opens Soon!**