



Foundations of Every Moment Counts

- What is Positive Mental Health?
- Every Moment Counts Guiding Philosophy
- **Public Health Framework**
 - Tier 1 – Universal Mental Health Promotion
 - Tier 2 – Targeted Mental Health Prevention
 - Tier 3 – Individualized Mental Health Intervention



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Public Health Approach to Mental Health

A public health approach to mental health has been advocated by the World Health Organization¹ and provides the guiding framework for Every Moment Counts, emphasizing the promotion of mental health as well as the prevention of and intervention for mental disorders. National leaders in the field of children's mental health have also promoted the adoption of a multi-tiered public health approach.^{2,3,4,5,6,7} This continuum of care is also referred to as a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and supports a change in thinking from the traditional individually-focused deficit driven model of mental health intervention to a whole-population, strength-based approach.

What does this mean for School Personnel?

Mental health is everyone's business!

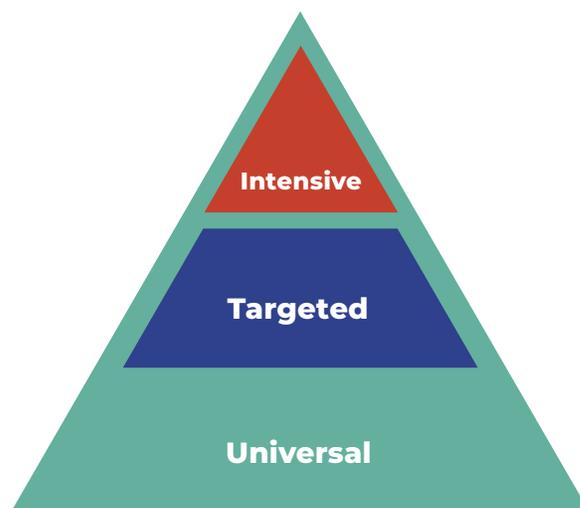
Because addressing children's mental health is complex, leaders are calling for a shift in practices – to better prepare all school personnel (e.g., teachers, administrators, para-educators, and related service providers) to proactively address the mental health needs of all students.^{8,9,10}

Within this public health model, a range of services are provided and include:

- **Promotion:** enhancing competencies; helping children be mentally healthy and happy
- **Prevention:** reducing risks; minimizing mental health problems and promoting positive mental health
- **Intensive, individualized:** accommodations and interventions provided to reduce the effects of a mental disorder and promote positive mental health

Depicted as a pyramid representing a multi-tiered system of interventions and supports, this approach is designed to meet the mental health needs of all students:

- **Tier 1: ALL** (green area) Universal, whole school strategies for promoting positive mental health in all students with and without mental health challenges. **Focus:** promotion & prevention. [Learn more](#)
- **Tier 2: SOME** (blue area) Targeted interventions for students at-risk of developing a mental health challenge. **Focus:** prevention and promotion using small groups and embedded strategies (e.g. teaching self-regulation strategies for a student experiencing anxiety) [Learn more](#)
- **Tier 3: FEW** (red area) More intensive, individualized interventions for students experiencing a mental health challenge. School personnel collaborate with mental health providers and families to provide a coordinated system of care. **Focus:** promotion, prevention and intervention to reduce symptoms and enhance well-being. [Learn more](#)



School Mental Health

School Mental Health (SMH) can be thought of as a framework of approaches expanding on traditional methods to promote children's mental health by emphasizing prevention, positive youth development, and school-wide approaches. This SMH framework promotes interdisciplinary collaboration between mental health providers, related service providers, teachers and school administrators in order to meet the mental health needs of all students.^{11,12}

“Education and mental health integration will be advanced when the goal of mental health includes effective schooling, and the goal of effective schooling includes the healthy functioning of students”.²

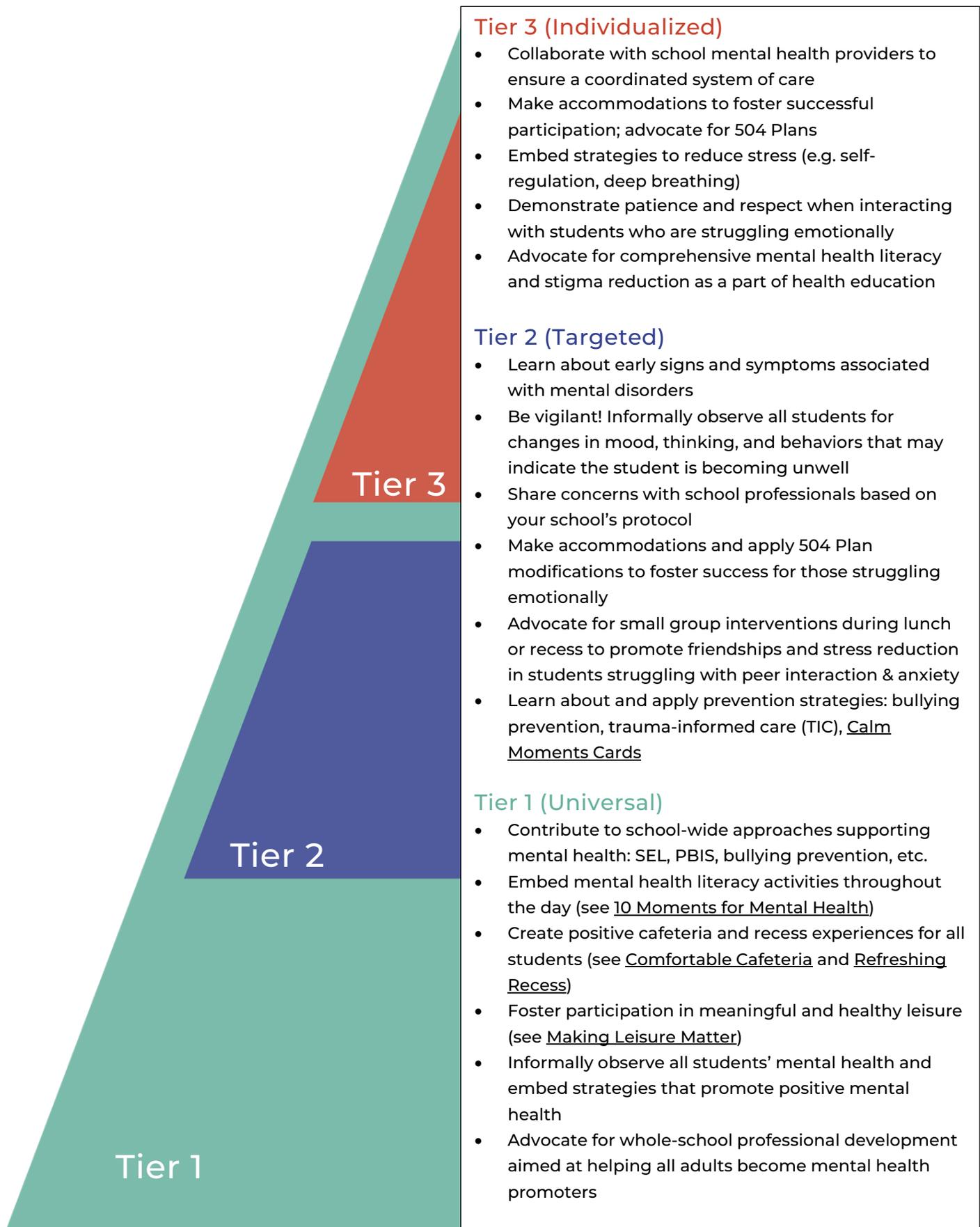
A national movement to develop and expand school mental health (SMH) services has grown during the past several decades as a result of the high prevalence of mental health needs among youth and the awareness that more youth can be reached in schools. Schools must be active partners in the mental health of all children and youth because it is currently accepted that a major barrier to learning is the absence of essential social-emotional skills and not necessarily a lack of sufficient cognitive skills. Approximately one in every five children and adolescents has a diagnosable emotional or behavioral disorder with the most common being anxiety, depression, and behavioral disorders.^{13,14} Emotional and behavioral disorders can adversely affect a child's successful participation in a range of school activities including classroom work and social interaction with peers and adults. Children with disabilities are at increased risk for developing mental and/or behavioral challenges. Nearly 1 in 3 children with developmental disabilities is diagnosed with a co-occurring mental health problem.¹⁵

Legislative changes have also prompted schools to shift to a multi-tiered model of services committing to the success of all students by providing early identification and intervening services. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Pub. L. 94-142), later reauthorized as the Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (Pub. L.108-446), was the first federal initiative that required schools to meet the mental health needs of students with emotional challenges. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (2008; Pub. L. 93-112; 34 C.F.R. Part 104.4), also provides accommodations for students with mental health diagnoses. The World Health Report (2001) called for schools to prevent suicide and help students develop positive mental health.¹ In addition, the health-promoting school model advanced by WHO provides an organizing framework for comprehensive health promotion to create school environments that support students' mental and physical health and family involvement.¹⁶

For more information about School Mental Health, check out the websites listed below.

- [Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland](#)
- [UCLA's Center for Mental Health in Schools](#)

Public Health Framework: Addressing Mental Health



Suggested Citation

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