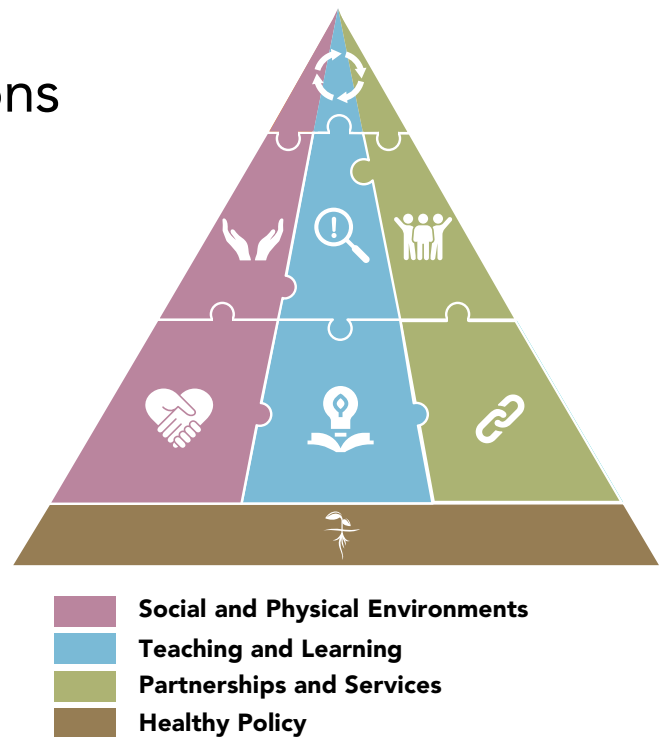


# Mental Health and Well-being in Schools: Definitions for the Framework

The Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools Framework provides a model for a comprehensive, whole-school approach to supporting mental health and well-being. It integrates the comprehensive school health model with the tiers of support pyramid. The puzzle pieces of the framework show the many different components that contribute to health and well-being in a school community and how they align, overlap and complement one another.

*Note: Some components may fit into more than one piece, but they've been categorized into one section to simplify the visual.*



## ASPECT OF THE PYRAMID:

### Foundational Elements

#### WHEN WE SAY:

Healthy Policy and Practice (provincial, district, school) that Supports Equity and Well-Being.

#### WE MEAN:

Guidelines used to steer an organization's decision-making are deliberately crafted such that equity and well-being are kept at the center of each principle of action. Equity and well-being involve each person in an organization being aware of how who they are and how they "show up" in their role (e.g. their biases, experiences, histories, mental models, etc.) influence the culture and climate of the organization, which in turn affects the extent to which each person within it feels recognized, known, and valued. This is nurtured through healthy policy and healthy practice. The BC Mental Health in Schools strategy includes Compassionate Systems Leadership as one promising approach to growing and nurturing cultures and climates that prioritize equity and well-being. "Compassionate Systems Leadership" in education is an approach that inspires transformation and instructional best practices that lead to student success. It is anchored in self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self management and relationship skills" (MHIS,2020, p.7).

#### THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:





A culture and climate of mutual support helps shape the social determinants of health that are influenceable by the organization.





Planning around healthy policy and practice solidifies a commitment to equity and well-being, and prioritizing an organizational culture and climate that positively shapes health.

## REFERENCE

Ministry of Education. (2020). Mental Health in Schools Strategy.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/erase/documents/mental-health-wellness/mhis-strategy.pdf>

ASPECT OF THE PYRAMID	WHEN WE SAY:	WE MEAN:	THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:
Universal Health Promotion	 Supportive School Culture and Climate	School culture is the beliefs and behaviours held by school leaders and others within the school. Climate is the enactment of culture through the relationships in the classroom, school or district.	School culture can either reinforce or contradict health promotion messages learned within the classroom. Students learn best in environments that are (1) trauma-informed, (2) that are physically, socially, emotionally, and culturally safe, (3) when they have positive relationships with the adults in the building and their peers and (4) when they have had their basic needs met.
	 Formal and Informal Learning	Formal learning includes explicit instruction in areas related to mental health promotion including programs, lesson plans, presentations and resources. Informal learning takes place outside of formal and explicit learning opportunities through avenues such as modeling, teachable moments and student-staff relationships. Social emotional learning (SEL) and mental health literacy (MHL) are examples of programs and approaches to mental health promotion.	Mental health promotion activities are most effective when they are both taught explicitly and the key messages and skills are repeated, reinforced and consistent across contexts. Therefore, mental health promotion activities are better if they extend beyond a specific time, period, class or program for SEL or MHL and become embedded in the school culture.
	 Community Partnerships	Community partnerships are aligned and effective working relationships between schools/districts and community organizations or the health sector to advance mental health and well-being.	Partnering with community and health organizations provides students access to resources and services that schools do not provide. These partnerships also provide an opportunity to reinforce key mental health promotion messages across contexts.
	 Family Partnerships	The supportive and welcoming partnerships between school staff and students' families.	Strong school-family partnerships support students' well-being and academic achievement. These partnerships also provide an opportunity to reinforce key mental health promotion messages across home and school settings.

ASPECT OF THE PYRAMID	WHEN WE SAY:	WE MEAN:	THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:
Targeted Prevention and Early Intervention	 <p>Supportive Spaces</p>	<p>The school has supportive spaces for students who might need extra support for their mental health and well-being (e.g., peer support rooms, buddy benches).</p>	<p>Physical spaces in the school can promote student social well-being and emotional well-being (e.g., calm down corner) for students who need extra support for their mental health and well-being and contribute to a positive school culture.</p>
	 <p>Identification of signs and symptoms</p>	<p>Educators have the knowledge to identify signs and symptoms of students who might need extra support. Students have the knowledge to identify when they or a friend might need extra support.</p>	<p>The identification of signs and symptoms is an important first step in accessing extra supports for students if needed.</p>
	 <p>School based supports</p>	<p>School based supports refers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted prevention and early intervention programming offered to select students or groups of students</li> <li>• Counsellors, School Psychologists, Child and Youth Care Workers, or other mental health professionals based in the school.</li> </ul>	<p>Schools can play an important role in providing targeted prevention and early intervention to students which can support student well-being and prevent worsening mental health challenges. In addition to having programs and other supports available, it is important that students and educators alike are aware of and able to access these extra supports. Mental health services that are offered in schools may reduce barriers to access and aid in system navigation.</p>
Intervention/ Referrals	 <p>Referrals to supports and services</p>	<p>Students have clear and accessible pathways to and from supports and services.</p>	<p>When students and their families know about and feel comfortable accessing specialized mental health services provided by mental health professionals, they are more likely to access those services.</p>