

The 5-Step Guide to Quality Assessment and Improvement in School Mental Health

Developed by the Center for School Mental Health and National Assembly on School-Based Health Care



THE FIVE-STEP GUIDE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

IN SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH

1. **Convene a team** of at least three stakeholders to assess the quality of mental health services and programming within your school. Potential members could include:

- Educator
- Family member/Advocate
- Guidance Counselor
- Health Provider
- Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) Team Leader
- School Administrator
- School Psychologist
- School Social Worker
- School-Based Community Mental Health Provider
- Student Support Team Leader

Designate one person as team leader. The team leader is responsible for getting team members to complete an assessment, coordinating a team meeting to review results, and monitoring the action plan.

2. **Team members independently complete an assessment of school mental health services.** Individuals should take a moment after completing the assessment to review their ratings and consider what they identified as strengths and weaknesses in their school's mental health programs and services.

3. **As a team, review the results of the assessments and develop a consensus around which indicators to target for improvement during the school year. Select one to three indicators by considering the following:**

- Which indicators were rated the highest and the lowest?
- Were there any patterns or clustering of scores?
- In which indicators was there the most and least agreement in ratings?
- Which indicators are in most need of improvement?
- Which of these can you realistically impact during the school year?
- Which indicators best fit with other school priorities?

4. **Develop and implement an action plan that outlines at least three action steps/strategies that will help your school improve around the selected quality indicators.**

- Be specific--Identify who, what, when, and how within your plan.
- If your selected quality indicators do not address family and/or youth engagement, include action steps/strategies that will enhance family and youth involvement relative to the indicators you selected. Seek input from youth and families and be creative.
- Consider what may prevent you from getting this important work done. Discuss as a team strategies that could help you to overcome these barriers.
- Develop a follow-up plan including:
 - How to communicate about progress (e.g., monthly meetings, email communication, discussions)
 - Other teams and committees at the school in which to incorporate quality improvement activities.

5. **As a team, evaluate your progress regularly by:**

- Re-administering the assessment
- Comparing your scores. Consider:
 - Where are the improvements or decline?
 - To what do you attribute the changes?
 - In which areas is there still need for improvement?
- Using the evaluation data to modify the action plan.