

MTSS-B Key Messages for Community Mental Health Partners

What is MTSS-B?

NH's Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Behavioral Health and Wellness (MTSS-B) is a collaborative, system-level effort between school districts and community mental health agency (CMHA) partners. MTSS-B mobilizes integrated teams—with CMHAs as vital partners—to coordinate delivery of high-quality student behavioral health supports across tiers: universal supports for all, targeted supports for those at risk, and intensive supports for students with the highest needs.

Why partner with school districts?

Reduce barriers to access and systematize school-based CMHA services

MTSS-B offers a unique opportunity for CMHAs to participate in the design of improved systems for supporting youth mental health needs. Examples include:

Collaboratively develop facilitated referral pathways—or “warm hand-offs”—that support students and their families in making contact with CMHA partners to engage in services.

Change policy so that initial CMHA intake appointments can happen on school grounds, reducing access barriers for families.

Provide “bridge” services in schools to support students/families who are on longer waitlists for services in the community.

Have a voice in crisis response protocols in schools, helping to clarify criteria and procedures for emergency behavioral health response by CMHAs.

Increase access and reduce no-shows

Mental health appointment no-show rates, which can approximate 50% in some settings¹, are extremely costly for CMHAs. CMHAs can reduce common logistical barriers such as transportation, scheduling, and child care needs by working with students in the school setting, improving completed appointments.

Help reduce stigma

Visible partnerships between schools and CMHAs help to normalize mental health for students, families, and school personnel.

How can CMHAs partner?

At the district level

District-Community Leadership Team (DCLT)

CMHA leadership with decision-making authority participates on the DCLT, supporting (1) development of enabling policies and procedures to facilitate access to behavioral health supports; and (2) strategic planning, prioritization, and infrastructure supports to drive MTSS-B implementation across schools.

At the school level

Schoolwide/Tier 1

CMHA clinicians participate on Tier 1 teams to offer perspective on schoolwide programs and supports; e.g., schoolwide behavioral health programming, behavior expectations and acknowledgement systems, universal social-emotional supports/curricula, mental health literacy, substance misuse and suicide prevention campaigns, etc.

Advanced Tiers

CMHA clinicians participate on Advanced Tier teams to offer perspective on procedures and supports/services. These include social-emotional-behavioral screening, facilitated referral pathways, evidence-based interventions, matching students to services, care coordination, crisis response, and development of data sharing procedures. Clinicians provide consultation to school staff, offer group and/or individual clinical services, monitor student progress, and coordinate care with school staff and families.

Where do we start?

Reach out

CMHAs can contact district-level leadership (e.g., Superintendent, Director of Student Services) in school districts within their geographic catchment areas to inquire about behavioral health initiatives in their schools and ways to get involved.

CMHAs can also contact an MTSS-B Consultant in the [NH Education Department's Office of Social and Emotional Wellness](#) to learn more about MTSS-B, the role of the CMHA, and the districts and schools across the state that are engaged in MTSS-B implementation.

Develop shared understandings

Learn more about NH's MTSS-B Framework at nhmtssb.org and visit the comprehensive MTSS-B Toolkit at nhmtssb.org/the-toolkit.

Join the MTSS-B TA Center's Community of Practice by registering at: nhmtssb.org/community-of-practice.

Talk with district-level leadership about how MTSS-B's integrated service delivery system differs from traditional co-located models of school mental health, including the specific roles and responsibilities of each organization. Shared understanding, language, and values are essential to effective MTSS-B partnerships.

¹ Kessler, R. (2012). Mental health care treatment initiation when mental health services are incorporated into primary care practice. *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine: JABFM*, 25(2), 255-259. <https://doi.org/10.3122/jabfm.2012.02.100125>