



# INTEGRATING MULTI-TIERED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS INTO EDUCATION

Towards a national school mental health agenda for Canada

## IMAGINE...



That every child and youth in Canada would receive a warm greeting from staff and fellow students as they arrived at school each day

That students would begin the day ready to learn, after a check-in from teachers who take the emotional temperature in the classroom prior to starting lessons

That students would learn and practice social-emotional development skills each day at school, as part of the regular curriculum

That students went out of their way to watch for and help other students, through formal peer mentoring, and individual acts of kindness

That parents and families would be engaged in student learning and school life and that the school would be a hub for community activity

## AND IMAGINE...

That all educators in Canada would understand their role in supporting student well-being, and would practice and model self-care and balance with support of their school and system leadership team

That all educators would feel comfortable and confident in talking about mental health and mental illness with students and colleagues

That all educators would be equipped with skills to notice when something is wrong, and to provide caring support in the classroom

That all educators would be familiar with the district and community pathways to care, and would work with partners to collaboratively support vulnerable students to, from, and through services as needed



## AND THEN IMAGINE...

If we could collaboratively achieve this vision, what an amazing place Canada would be for children and youth to grow and learn - with a strong sense of belonging, meaning, purpose, and hope.



# WHAT WOULD IT TAKE?

How do we identify best practices,  
bring them to scale, and sustain them over time?



# RESEARCH

## We need to know what works in school mental health

- ✓ There is a strong and growing literature on evidence-based, implementation-sensitive school mental health practice
- ✓ Recent Canadian synthesis echo those conducted elsewhere, providing support for multi-tiered systems and use of evidence-based interventions across the tiers
- ✓ Compelling return-on-investment literature related to core practices in mental health promotion and prevention – and school-based interventions are amongst the highest yield
- ✓ National and international leaders are sharing the best with us in Banff!



# PRACTICE

## We need to put high-yield programming into the daily life of schools

- There are already amazing pockets of excellence in school mental health in Canada – visit the Innovation Showcase on Tuesday!

BUT...

- Scan data suggests there are also examples of benign, untested, and even harmful practices in use in Canadian schools
- Educators are being barraged with well-meaning programming, resources, speakers, and supports that may or may not align with life in schools
- Evidence-based manualized programming is difficult to take to scale and sustain over time

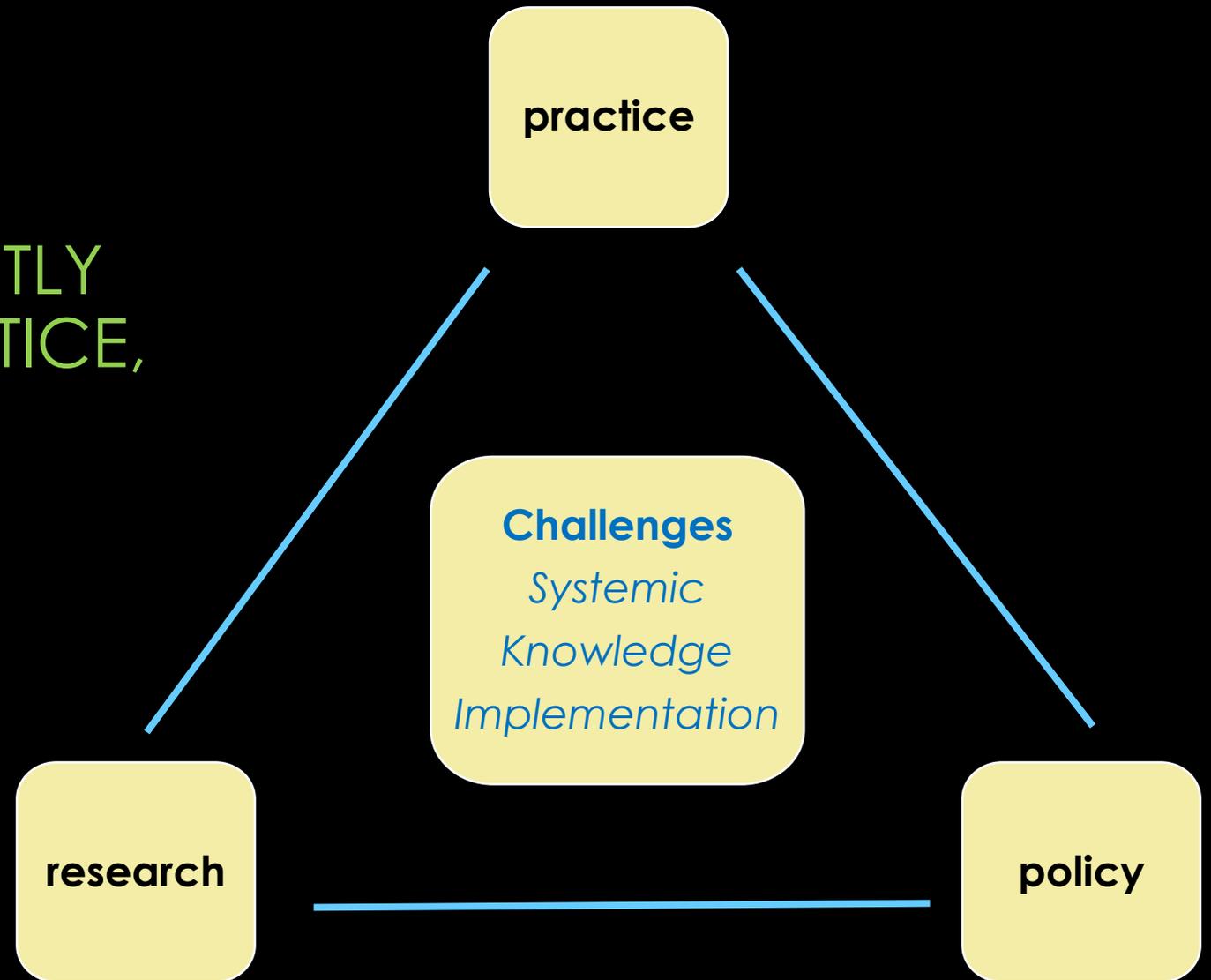


# POLICY

## **We need funding, structures and processes to ensure sustainability**

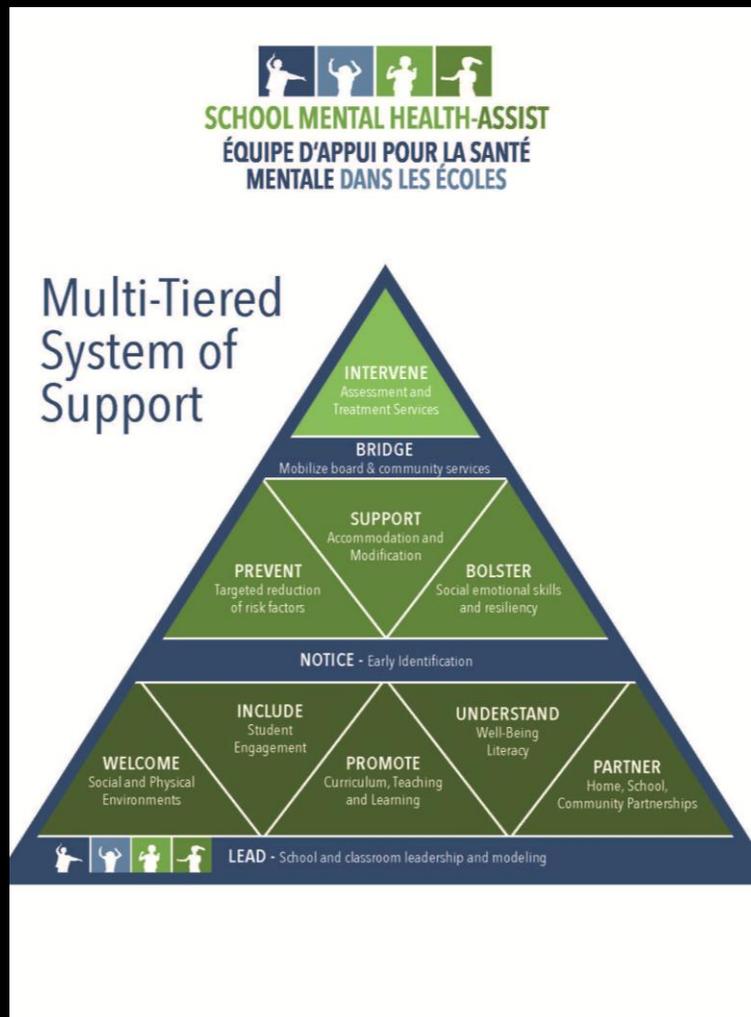
- Governments are listening, investing, and working collaboratively in new ways within and across provinces
- Several provinces have a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy that includes a key role for school based systems of support
- Several provinces have introduced social emotional learning into the general curriculum
- A few provinces have been working towards an all-of-government approach that is designed to break down silos for investment in mental health
- A national policy voice for school mental health leadership is lacking, and there are pressing jurisdictional issues
- While an important lever, policy alone is insufficient to bring about sustained change

WE ALSO NEED TO EXPLICITLY  
ADDRESS RESEARCH, PRACTICE,  
AND POLICY GAPS



# SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH ASSIST

Provincial implementation support team supporting Ontario's 72 school districts in their efforts to promote student mental health and well-being



## Services

- Leadership and Guidance
- Capacity-Building and Resource Development
- Implementation Coaching
- Community of Practice

## Approach

- Alignment with MHA Strategy, Ministry initiatives
- Multi-Tiered System of Support
- Evidence-Based Implementation-Sensitive Approaches
- Differentiated Workforce Development
- Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement

# SOME STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES



## Systemic Challenges

Organizational Conditions for Effective School Mental Health at the Province, District and School Level



## Knowledge Challenges

Capacity-Building that is differentiated by audience  
Awareness, Literacy, Expertise



## Implementation Challenges

Implementation Coaching alongside District Mental Health Leadership Teams, Community of Practice, Peer Support

# AS WE PARTICIPATE IN A NATIONAL CONVERSATION IN SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH...

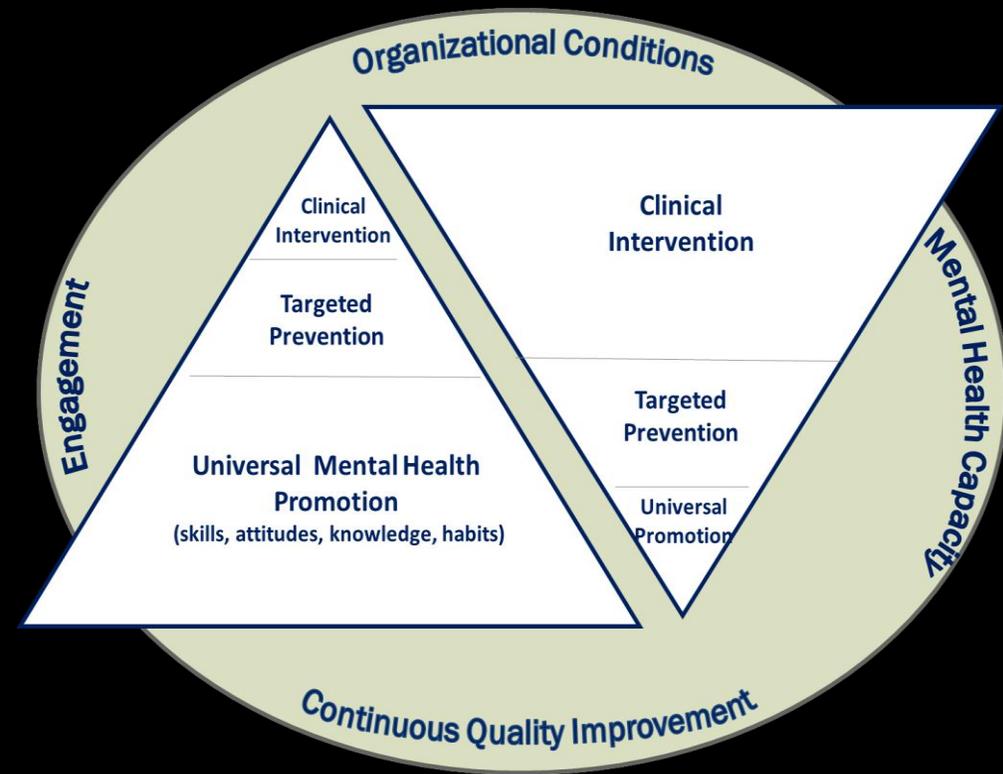
SMH researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, educators, youth, family members, philanthropy...

## REFLECT INDIVIDUALLY:

- What is my part in the system of care?
- How can I help to advance the vision for school mental health in Canada?
- Where are the pockets of excellence in my area?
- How have we addressed challenge areas?

## REFLECT COLLECTIVELY:

- How can MTSS guide us forward nationally?
- How can we best bridge research, policy, and practice across provinces?
- Where are the challenges still to be addressed?
- What else is needed to achieve our vision?



# DO WE NEED A NATIONAL AGENDA FOR SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH?

- That provides evidence-informed leadership, direction, and coherence
- That links research, practice, and policy
- That joins provincial efforts and facilitates co-learning
- That draws together islands of excellence into communities of practice
- That honours the voices of students, families, and education professionals
- That models continuous quality improvement and monitoring
- That inspires sustainable positive change nationally, provincially, and locally
  
- And nurtures the vision that we collectively imagine for the mental health of Canada's children and youth – hope, belonging, meaning, and purpose.

# RECOMMENDATION REPOSITORY

Over the next few days, post your suggestions and ideas on the Recommendation Repository. We will collate these to create some possible actions for school mental health in Canada

**RESEARCH**

**POLICY**

**PRACTICE**

# CONTACT:

**Kathy Short, Ph.D., C.Psych.**

Director, School Mental Health ASSIST

905-527-5092, x2634

[kshort@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:kshort@hwdsb.on.ca)



<http://smh-assist.ca/>

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