

Comprehensive School Community Health

Better Health = Better Learners

Fall 2020



In Saskatchewan, the ministries of Education and Health are committed to using a Comprehensive School Community Health (CSCH) approach to help guide and coordinate government actions and encourage strong family, school and community partnerships to improve student success and well-being.

Aligning with Saskatchewan's priorities, the CSCH approach promotes collaborative action for the enhancement of student learning, skill development, academic achievement and reduced absenteeism. CSCH contributes to better population health by supporting children and youth to become physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally healthy.

This approach focuses on creating opportunities for children and youth to experience healthy, supportive, and equitable learning environments where all students feel safe, cared for and respected.

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Trauma-informed Schools and Comprehensive School Community Health



The return to school this fall may cause different emotions in families, staff and students. Individuals may feel excitement, stress or anxiety. It will be important to re-engage students, support adults and students, rebuild relationships between school, community and family and lay the foundation for academic learning. In Saskatchewan, school division and school leaders are encouraged to implement trauma-informed practices to support students, staff and families. Trauma-informed practice creates a school environment where every student feels safe and supported and where staff understand how trauma affects behaviour and emotions.



How do trauma-informed schools and CSCH work together?

Becoming trauma-informed requires individuals to be educated and informed about trauma and the impact trauma has on the developing brain, social/emotional development and physical health. Trauma-informed schools provide safe, predictable and structured environments which promote healthy relationships and student well-being. The four concepts of CSCH align with the trauma-informed schools approach.

- Healthy physical and social environments help students foster a sense of safety, security and belonging, a positive sense of identity and personal competency, positive relationships and social responsibility. This supports students to feel accepted, connected and part of the school community family.
- Building healthy partnerships with outside agencies and families ensures that students get the range of supports and services they need. Ongoing collaborative partnerships are essential to ensure open lines of communication. Collaboration supports families, agencies and students working together.
- Trauma-informed school policy and procedures which are evidence based and grounded in research can be foundational in helping students become regulated, focused and engaged learners.
- Teaching traumatized youth and children requires teachers to develop healthy relationships with their students. These relationships are rooted in trust, hold students accountable and contain a mutual respect while maintaining professional boundaries and effective communication. This method will help create a consistent and predictable environment so students know what to expect.

Key facts about trauma:

- Children who are exposed to adverse experiences are likely to accumulate toxic stress which can undermine their ability to develop and cope.
- Anxiety, stress, hypervigilance and many other mental and physical health challenges can arise as a result of the neurological disruptions trauma has on the brain.
- Students who have been exposed to unpredictable and uncontrollable threat, such as abuse or severe neglect, live much of their lives in survival mode and are triggered by real/perceived danger through the bodies natural threat response system which is responsible for:
 - fight response - a response of anger (e.g., violence, rage or contempt);
 - flight response - a response of fleeing (e.g., avoidance, constant busyness or hyperactivity);
 - freeze response - a response of disassociation (e.g., hiding or isolating); and,
 - fawn response - a response of codependency (e.g., pleasing or giving up needs, rights and boundaries).
- Traumatic stress can negatively impact a child's developing brain. This can result in learning, memory or social-emotional difficulties and make it difficult to deal with the stressors of everyday life.
- No two individuals experience a similar adverse event in the same way.
- Supportive relationships can influence the impact of childhood trauma. Positive relationships and successful involvement in school can buffer the impact of past adverse experiences.
- According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, one study discovered that more than half of children aged 2–5 had experienced some form of a severe traumatic stressor in their lifetime.

In general, trauma can be defined as a psychological, emotional response to an event or an experience that is deeply distressing or disturbing.

Where can I find more information about trauma-informed schools?

- [Back in the Classroom: Strategies for Teachers](#)
- [Creating Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms in Early Years](#)
- [Strategies for Teachers: Dr. Stan Kutcher](#)
- [Emotionally Safe Classrooms: Dr. Bruce Perry](#)
- [Guidelines for Re-Entry into the School Setting](#)
- [Trauma-sensitive Schools: A Whole School Approach](#)

Where can I find more information to cope with the effects of trauma?

- [Coping Strategies for Supporting Students](#)
- [Managing Parenting Stress: Self Care](#)
- [Coping Strategies for Children](#)
- [Coping Strategies for Youth](#)

CSCH in Saskatchewan Schools

Mental Health Capacity Building Initiative: North Battleford

The Mental Health Capacity Building initiative (MHCB) in North Battleford offers programming at North Battleford Comprehensive High School and John Paul II Collegiate. The focus of MCHB is mental health capacity building within the students and staff. This is achieved by providing evidence based programming and experiential learning opportunities.

A Light of Christ Roman Catholic Separate School Division superintendent noted, "MHCB allows a trusting relationship to be built with staff and students. Our school promoter integrates mental health promotion in more and more facets of daily school life."

MHCB assisted in forming the *Young Peoples Theatre Ensemble*. Students created a theatre piece that highlighted their voice in their community. The diverse student group created an honest narrative from a distinctively teenage perspective. Confidence and relationships were formed and new skills developed. The youth support each other and find strength in the vulnerability that comes with telling their stories. This builds capacity in the students.

A youth member shared, "The ensemble helps make me feel good by making others feel included. It has helped me to boost my skills and teach others new things. There is always meaning behind what we are working towards. I think the message of our story is going to be really impactful."



Do you want to share your CSCH success story?

Are you involved in a CSCH related project that you would like to share across the province? Would you like to highlight a positive collaboration between health and education that is supporting your school community? Click the CSCH icon on the right, fill out the form and send it to one of our Saskatchewan School Health Coordinators to share your story. Help build a CSCH knowledge network throughout our province!



Want to share your successes across the country? Scroll down and check out the Joint Consortium for School Health Stories Map.

CSCH Related Media, Tools, Resources and Articles

How can we support the emotional well-being of teachers: TedTalk (French subtitles available)

Teachers emotionally support students, but who is supporting teachers? Sydney Jensen explores how teachers are at risk of "secondary trauma" -- the idea that they absorb the emotional weight of their students' experiences -- and shows how schools can get creative in supporting everyone's mental health and wellness.

Kids will need recess more than ever when returning to school post-coronavirus: The Conversation Canada

After months of physical and social isolation, stress and uncertainty, students are going to need a supportive, safe and inclusive place to connect with each other — recess is that social space. (English only)

The Positive Mental Health Toolkit, 2nd ed.: Joint Consortium for School Health

The Positive Mental Health Toolkit, 2nd ed. is an online resource “designed to promote positive mental health practices and perspectives within the school environment”.

Respect in School Online Training: Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education and Respect Group Inc. launched Respect in School online training that focuses on respectful school environments – preventing, identifying, responding to and reporting incidents of bullying, abuse, harassment and discrimination in schools. The training supports the implementation of the *Child Abuse Protocol* and *Child Abuse Prevention Education and Response* policy statement.

All schools in Saskatchewan are invited to participate in this voluntary and free training. Participants may include all school division staff, such as classroom-based personnel, custodial and office staff and bus drivers. The training is approximately 90 minutes and can be completed at the participants own pace and convenience.

Student, Coach and Parent Resource: Respect Resource Line for Sport: Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport

The Respect Resource Line provides professional support in Saskatchewan regarding possible bullying, abuse, harassment, discrimination or hazing in sport. This confidential and anonymous resource, is available from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day and offers three points of contact:

- Phone: 1-888-329-4009;
- Text: 1-306-717-9636; and,
- Email: resourceline@respectgroupinc.com.

The Government of Saskatchewan and Sask Sport partnered on an awareness campaign regarding this important resource. Available in English and French, posters were distributed to school divisions and are available electronically here: www.sasksport.ca/safesport/promotionalMaterials.html.

We encourage you to post these posters in your sport and recreation facilities as well as use and share this information to help us promote the value of keeping sport healthy, safe and fun!



Share: Joint Consortium for School Health (JCSH) Stories Map

Looking for a way to share the amazing work happening in your school and community with the rest of Canada? -Want to learn about other success stories that are happening around the country? [Click here](#) to check out the JCSH School Health Stories. Once there, click on the “Submit Your Story” button to share your story or click the location pins for information on other stories and links from across the country.

This e-newsletter has been prepared by the Saskatchewan School Health Coordinators. The information included and articles selected may be of interest to individuals working to support CSCH. We will provide you with email updates and encourage you to share this information with your colleagues as you feel is appropriate.

Please advise if you would like to be removed from this distribution list.

If you have items that you would like to share via this e-newsletter, please contact one of the School Health Coordinators listed below.

Best wishes,

Saskatchewan School Health Coordinators:

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