



Substance Use Prevention & Student Assistance Programs

within **the MTSS-B Framework: A Collaborative Approach**

NH Prevention Conference
May 12, 2025





NEW HAMPSHIRE
Student Assistance
NETWORK

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Objectives

Examine how NH SAP and the MTSS-B framework work together

Identify the key components of NH Student Assistance Programs (SAP)

Describe how NH SAP within MTSS-B addresses substance use

Identify resources available for schools in NH to prevent and reduce youth substance use



NH MTSS-B

NH MTSS-B

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

Core Features



Behavioral health and wellness for all

Student and school wellness is an articulated district priority. Social skill building and mental health literacy are integrated throughout school culture, including schoolwide curricula and classroom management, as well as interventions for those with higher needs.



Integrated delivery system

School, mental health, community, and family partners collaboratively develop an intentional, integrated approach to choosing and implementing evidence-based interventions to support student behavioral health needs.



Tiered prevention framework

Supports are delivered across three tiers: Tier 1 schoolwide/universal approaches for all students, Tier 2 targeted supports for at-risk students, and Tier 3 individualized services for the highest-need students.



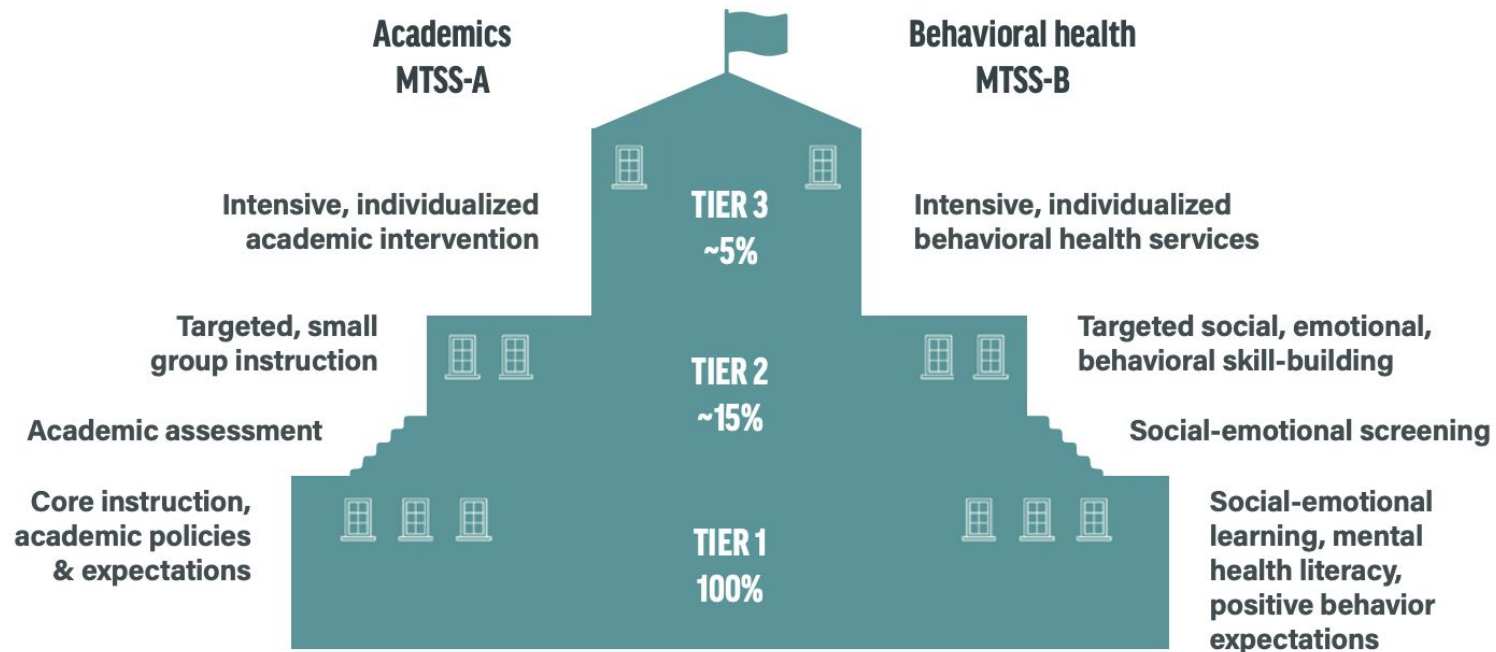
Focus on progress monitoring and outcomes

MTSS-B implementation is monitored by ongoing measurement of: (1) reach – the who, what, where, and when of practice delivery; (2) fidelity – the degree to which the framework is implemented in a way that is faithful to the guiding model; and (3) outcomes – at both the individual student and school levels.

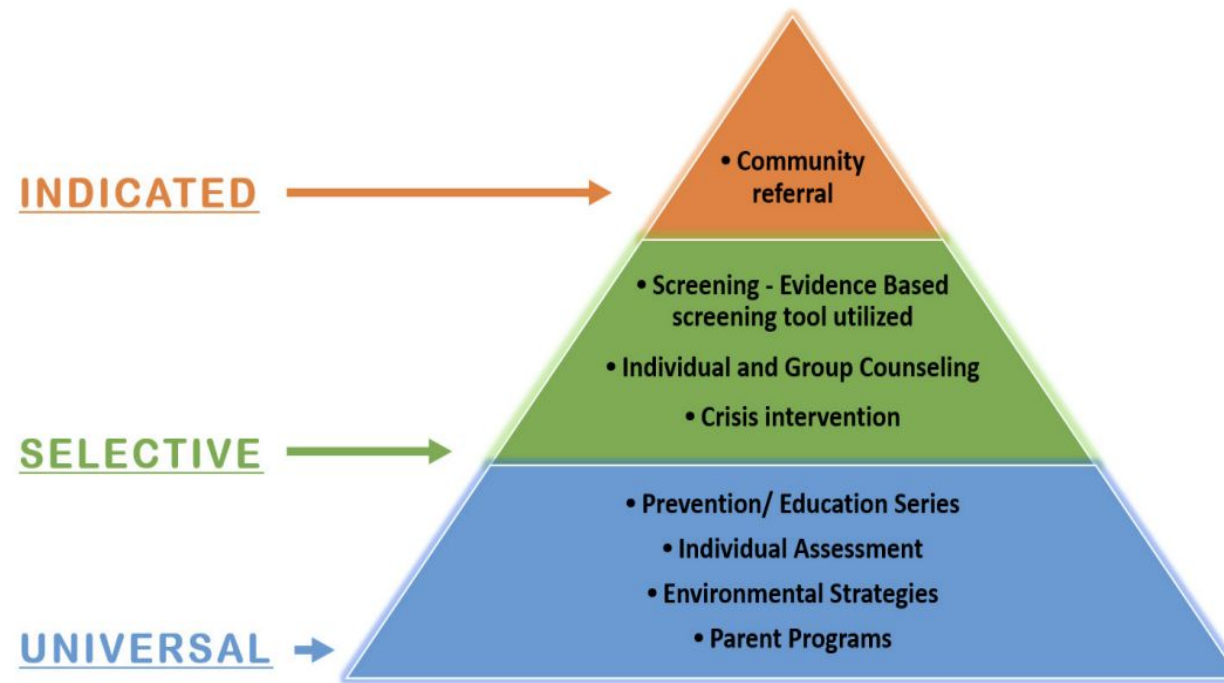
NH MTSS-B

How does MTSS-B fit with what we're already doing?

MTSS-B isn't about recreating the wheel. Schools are already offering behavioral health supports and many are using "MTSS-Academic" (MTSS-A) frameworks such as Response to Intervention (RTI) to meet student academic needs. MTSS-B brings social-emotional and behavioral health into the tiered prevention frameworks already in use.



NH Student Assistance Program



NH Student Assistance Program

- students age 12 - 18; grades 6 - 12
- critical framework for preventing substance use and mental health challenges through coordinated activities across school- and community-based initiatives.
- effective means to address substance use and mental health concerns through prevention and intervention supports.
- prevention specialists and licensed clinical professionals work with school administrators, teachers, nurses, counselors, support staff, and community providers
- brings behavioral health promotion, prevention, treatment, and continuing care practices to school settings.



Student Assistance Program Framework

- modeled after Employee Assistance Program, 1980s SAP translated into schools
- students exhibiting risk factors that interfere with their educational success
 - experiencing issues with substance use and / or mental health challenges
- integrated trained professional into school to support the work of school faculty



NH Student Assistance Program



Integration with School



Prevention and
Intervention
Programming

Prevention Pyramid, SAMHSA, Retrieved from
<https://preventiontrainingservices.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/Session-1-slides-SAPST.pdf>



Integration with
Greater Community



Data informed
Prevention Plan



Prevention Planning



<https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/strategic-prevention-framework-pep19-01.pdf>



Four Step Process; Multi-Tiered System of Supports GUIDANCE DOCUMENT, Office of Elementary Education and Reading STUDENT INTERVENTION SERVICES May 2020,
https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OAE/OEER/Intervention/guidance_document_mtss_june2020.pdf

Using Data

Data Sources:

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

School attendance

School discipline

Universal Screener

Define the Problem or Goal

What is happening that interferes with student success? What specifically do we want students to know or be able to do?

Analyze the Problem - what are the gaps, what are the root causes. Why is this occurring? What are the barriers?



The NH Substance Misuse Prevention Fidelity Tool

Small updated 10/25/24

NH Substance Misuse Prevention Fidelity Tool

School District/LEA: School: Date completed:

Name of person facilitating administration of this tool:

Role of the facilitator:

Purpose

The NH Substance Misuse Prevention Fidelity Tool is intended for use with schools that (a) have identified substance misuse as a priority area, and (b) are exploring or implementing a multi-tiered system of supports for behavioral health. The goal of the tool is to identify strengths and areas for improvement to inform actions that will enhance prevention of substance misuse.

The SMP Fidelity Tool can be used as a stand-alone assessment or as an optional module of your NH MTSS-B Fidelity Inventory (NH-MFI) administration, which assesses the degree to which districts and schools are implementing the core features of the NH Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Behavioral Health and Wellness (MTSS-B) framework.

Administration

This fidelity tool should be completed by a team knowledgeable about schoolwide substance misuse prevention efforts in your district/school. It will require approximately 30 minutes to complete. Ideally, an external MTSS-B coach should facilitate administration, helping the team understand each item, reality-check their perceptions of implementation, and reach consensus on scoring. If an external coach is not available, an internal MTSS-B coach or team lead with expertise in both multi-tiered systems of support and substance misuse prevention should administer the tool.

Team	Time Required	Responsibilities
Schoolwide/Tier 1 or Substance Misuse Prevention team At minimum, this should include a Tier 1 team lead, substance abuse provider, building administrator, teacher, school behavioral health staff, and family and youth representatives.	Annually, during typical school planning time to support annual strategic/action planning Optional: one additional administration mid-year to gauge ongoing progress	Internal or external MTSS-B coach or team lead with substance misuse prevention expertise

Download and save a copy of this form before completing the tool.

NH MTSS-B
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Face 1 of 6

- identify strengths and areas for improvement to inform actions that will enhance prevention of substance misuse.
- can be used as a stand-alone assessment or as an optional module of your NH MTSS-B Fidelity Inventory (NH-MFI) administration.

Make a Plan

Problem

Contributing
factors

Interventions

Short-term
Outcomes

Long-term
Outcomes

low perception of
harm related to
vaping

lack of cessation
resources

Implementing a
vaping prevention
curriculum

offering cessation
support

creating a
school-wide
anti-vaping culture

increased
understanding of
harms of vaping

increased access
to cessation
support

reduced # of
vaping violations

reduced vaping

Vaping

NH SAP Prevention Principles

1. Increasing perception of risk of harm.
2. Changing adolescents' norms and expectations about substance use.
3. Building and enhancing social and resistance skills.
4. Changing community norms and values regarding substance use.
5. Fostering and enhancing resiliency and protective factors, especially in high risk youth.

SAP Components



Universal Strategies	Selective & Indicated Strategies
Classroom Instruction- Prevention Education	Screening with parent permission
Environmental Initiatives	Individual Sessions
Presentations / In-service	Group Sessions
Education & information for educators and families	Crisis Intervention
	Referral services for students and their families

Universal Strategies - Tier 1

Universal strategies provide services regardless of student risk.



Classroom Instruction Prevention Education

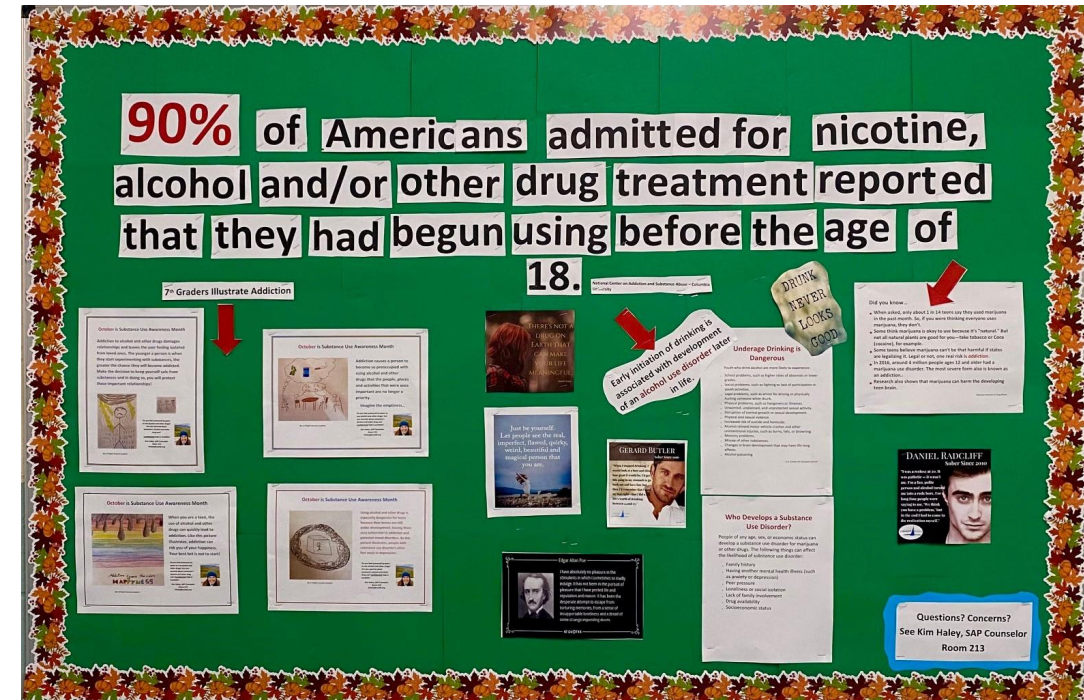
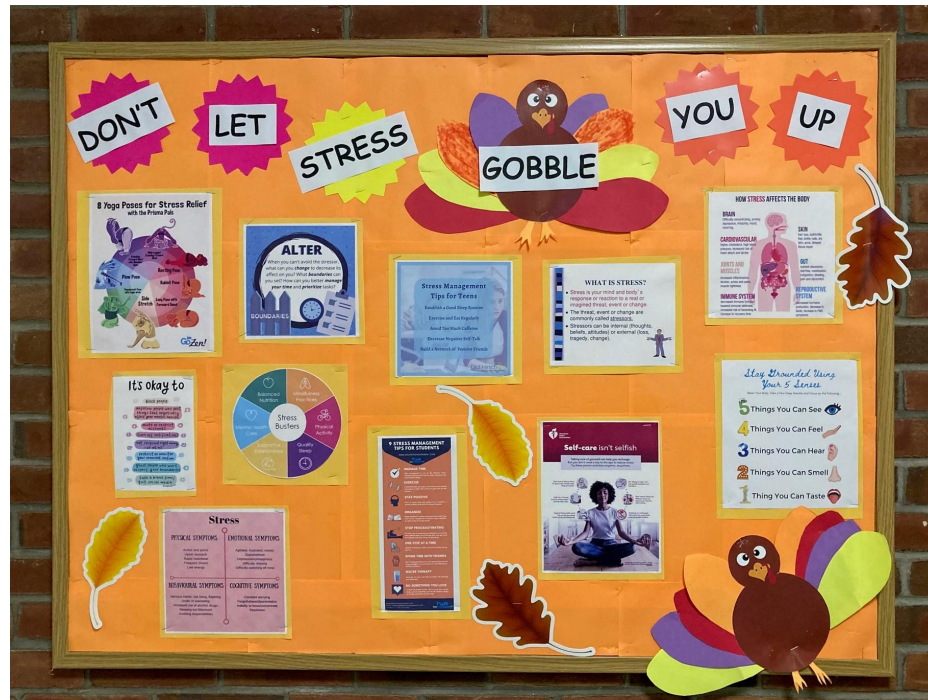
6 - 8 Sessions

1. Being an Adolescent
2. Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs (ATOD)
3. Relationships: Friends & Family (Stressors)
4. Skills for Coping



Prevention Education is implemented in 7th and 9th grades in coordination with classroom teachers. The classroom environment serves as a non-threatening way to make difficult topics speakable and for students to get to know the SAP Coordinator and potentially self-refer to SAP services.

Environmental Initiatives



What Parent & Environmental Initiatives Do

NOT SCARE
TACTICS



Pittsfield School District
SAU #52
Student Assistance Program
Newsletter Issue #2
December 2017
Amber Violette, SAP Counselor
aviolette@pittsfieldnhschools.org

How do peers influence my child?

When born, a child's first attempt at socialization occurs within the family and extended family. As the child gets older, however, their social arena expands to include preschool, school, sports teams and other extracurricular activities, the community, and the world at large. A child as young as age 4 is challenged to learn how to form small social groups and avoid others their age who they experience as bullies. Over time, a child will spend increasing amounts of time with peers. The time spent with peers is in itself one measure of influence.

A child's brain is still under development and this process extends until around the mid 20's. One question parents might find themselves asking their child after he or she has done something careless is "what were you thinking?". There is a good reason for this. The part of the brain that controls impulses is not well developed in children and teens. The ability to control impulses, resist pressure from friends, and plan and think ahead in difficult situations

grows over time. According to a study conducted by Lawrence Steinberg and researcher Jason Chein, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/you-and-your-adolescent/2011/02/how-peers-affect-the-teenage-brain>, teens are strongly motivated by the rewards involved in a choice, like whether or not to use substances for instance, and are less focused on the potential risks. What is the most interesting finding from their work is that teens are strongly influenced by the mere presence of their peers even when there is no gooding involved. Teens are undoubtedly most vulnerable in high stress situations where decisions need to happen quickly.

It should be noted that peer influence is not always a bad thing. If your child spends time with peers who excel in school or who are kind, for example, he or she is more likely to hold these characteristics in high regard. There are things parents can do to help their child succeed socially and to support healthy decisions

Tips for Parents

- Model listening, respect, and empathy for your child. Learning these skills will help your child to successfully enter social groups and develop lasting relationships.
- Discuss with your child how others influence his/her behavior and how his/her behavior impacts others. This will help your child grasp cause and effect.
- Give your child responsibilities and encourage them to think independently. A child who learns to be responsible and to embrace their own thoughts is more likely to make solid decisions.
- When in a stressful situation where a quick decision needs to be made encourage your child that it is ok to take a time out to gather his/her thoughts. Get to know your child's friends, invite them to your home or on a family excursion. Get to know the parents of your child's friends as well. It is a good way to know the influences around your child.
- When your teen comes home from being with friends greet them at the door. Smell them for potential substance use.

Environmental Initiatives:

- Increase perception of risk of harm
- Change/Challenge adolescents' and community's norms about substance use and mental health
- Provide opportunities to speak about difficult topics
- Give opportunities for students to positively impact their peers
- Encourage impacted students and families to come forward for support and to utilize available resources



Selective/ Indicated Services-Tier 2 & 3

Selective and Indicated strategies provide services to students exhibiting risk factors or engaged in problem behavior.



Universal Screener

MTSS-B: Universal social-emotional screening: the process of systematically scanning the entire student population to identify students who may benefit from additional support to improve readiness for learning and increase well-being.

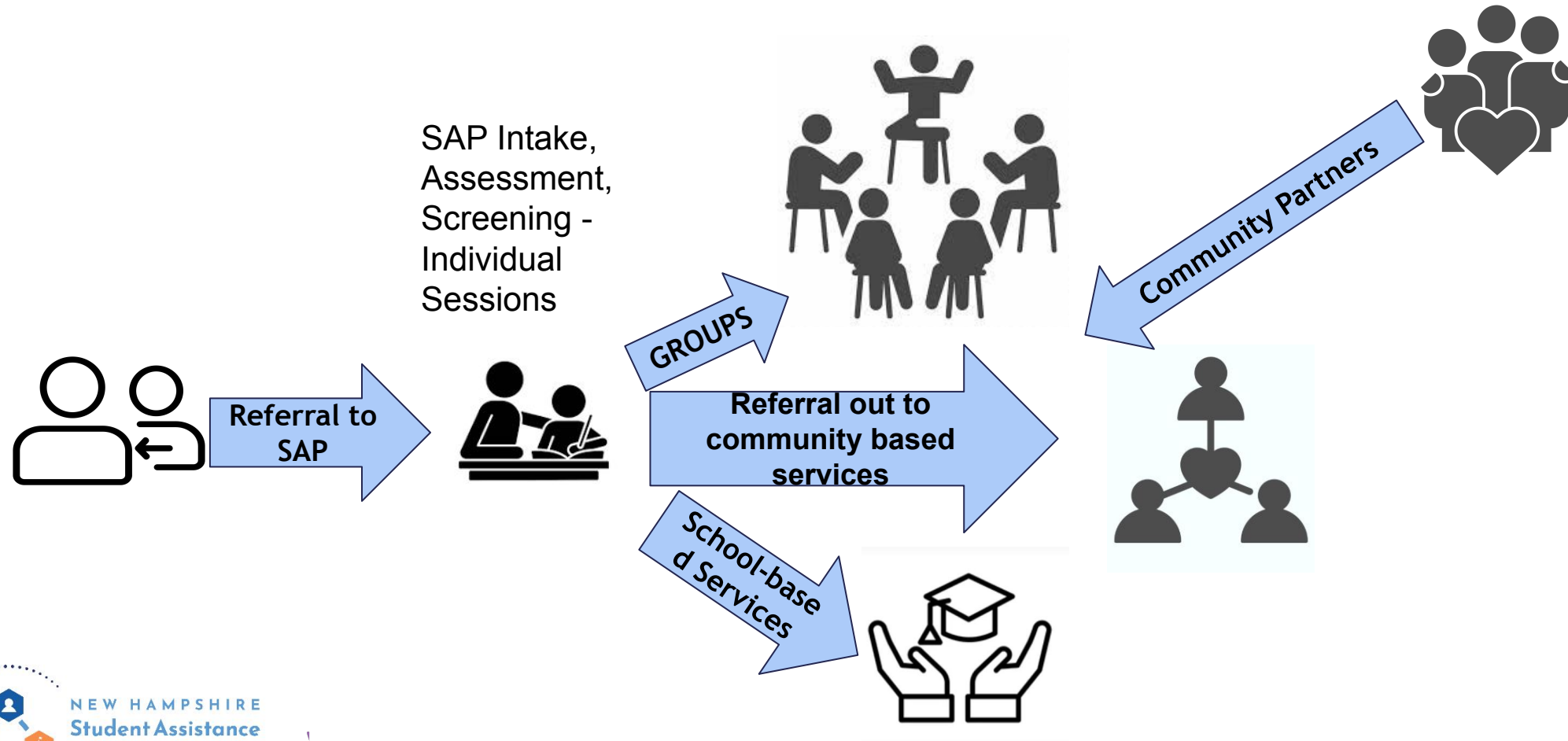
<https://s4be.cochrane.org/blog/2013/04/29/why-dont-we-screen-for-more-diseases/>



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<https://nhmtssb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Universal-Screening-Overview-Sheet.pdf>

Selective/ Indicated Services-Tier 2 & 3



Referrals

REFERRALS

teachers

administrators

peers

self

caring adults outside of school



Risk Factors - reasons for referral

- Poor attachment to school or community (absenteeism; cutting class)
- Low or inconsistent academic achievement (grades)
- Difficulty in peer or family relationships (conflict)
- Family history of substance misuse
- Early substance misuse
- Low parental monitoring
- Mental health related issues
- History of trauma



The SAP Coordinator also asks for protective factors.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Traumatic events during childhood can have a lasting impact on the physical and behavioral health of individuals and interfere with their functioning due to chronic stress.

Emotional abuse
Physical Abuse
Sexual Abuse
Emotional neglect
Physical neglect
Mother violently treated
Household substance misuse
Household mental illness
Parental separation / divorce
Incarcerated household member

Signs of Trauma

- Extreme shyness and difficulty engaging with others
- Disproportionate reactions to setbacks and unexpected changes
- Trouble managing strong emotions (extreme anger, excessive crying, etc.)
- Clinginess
- Difficulty transitioning from one activity to the next
- Forgetfulness
- Frequent complaints of feeling sick
- Difficulty focusing
- Lack of safety awareness
- Missed deadlines
- Poor academic performance
- Apathy and lack of effort
- Perfectionist tendencies
- Physical and/or verbal aggression



Signs of Trauma

Physical



Increased somatic complaints
Over- or Under-reacting to stimuli
Increased activity level
Withdrawal from people/ activities

Cognitive



Avoiding topics that serve as a reminder
Difficulties with executive function
Worry and fear about safety of self and others
Dissociation

Social/ Emotional



Rapid changes in heightened emotions
Change in ability to interpret or respond
Difficulties with emotion regulation and impulse control
Emotional numbness, isolation, and detachment

Communication



Language development delays and challenges
Difficulties with expressive and receptive language
Difficulties with nonverbal communication
Use of hurtful language

Learning



Absenteeism/changes in academic performance
Difficulties: with authority, redirection, or criticism, listening and concentrating during instruction, generalizing learned material

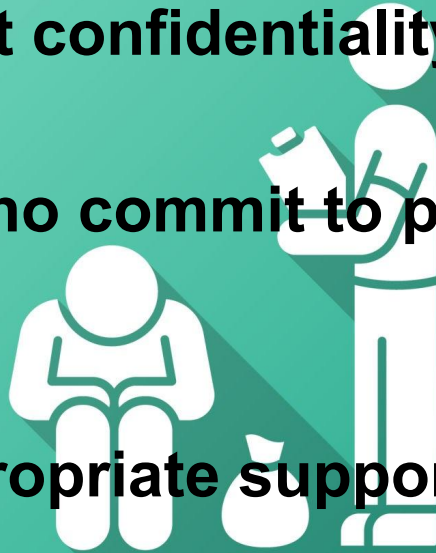
How SAP Supports Students

- Regular **individual sessions** enable students to learn **critical skills** to strengthen their ability to **emotionally regulate, communicate effectively, self-advocate, and build and maintain relationships**.
- **Group sessions** lessen students' sense of isolation and enable them to learn **problem-solving skills** through peers experiencing similar issues.
- **Parent and school staff support** provides **guidance** in regard to challenging child/**student behaviors**. Referral services for students and families help connect them with **needed resources**.
- **Crisis intervention** sessions help students to **emotionally regulate** so that they are in the mental framework needed **to learn**.



Intake and Individual Sessions

- **Inform students about confidentiality**
- **Meet with students who commit to participating in NH SAP services.**
- **Make referrals to appropriate supportive services, assessment, and treatment**

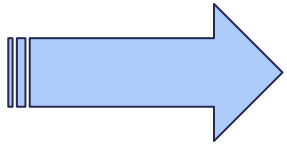


Groups

Newcomers

Children in Families with Addiction

Seniors



Support group participants to set goals

SAP Referrals to School and Community

- Special education
- Tutoring and bridges to educators
- School- and community-based clubs, teams, activities
- Housing, clothing, food pantries, state health insurance
- Family resource centers
- Courts and law enforcement
- Mental health services
- Substance use treatment



Supporting MTSS-B and SAP

NHED -

[Division of Learner Support](#)

[Bureau of Wellness and Nutrition](#)

Office of Student and Educator Wellness

NH DHHS

[Programs & Services](#)

[Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Substance Misuse](#)

Student Assistance Program



A woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a black and white polka-dot shirt, is pointing at a small robot on a table. Two students, a boy in a red shirt and a girl in a white shirt, are looking at the robot and a laptop. The background is a blurred classroom setting.

Everything you need to launch MTSS-B in your NH district and school.

WHAT IS MTSS-B? ►



[About ▾](#)[Services](#)[Our Work](#)[Resources ▾](#)[Events](#)[NH Governor's Commission ▾](#)[We Can Help](#)

Student Assistance Network

The Center has created the New Hampshire Student Assistance Network to strengthen and expand the presence and impact of Student Assistance Programs in New Hampshire schools.



NH Student Assistance Network

**Develops,
Aligns, and
Promotes**

NH Student Assistance Programs (SAP)



NH Student Assistance Network

- Serves as the facilitating organization for BDAS
 - provides grant funds for SAP and manages contracts
- Provides training and technical assistance
- Supports evaluation efforts in collaboration with the state evaluation provider
- Supports quality assurance and improvement
- Supports fidelity to the NH SAP model
- Promotes NH SAP



NH Student Assistance Network

Technical Assistance and Training

- **Monthly meetings**
 - professional development and collaborative learning
- **Regional peer collaboration**
 - weekly or bi-weekly, as the group decides
 - cross-share ideas, engage in case consultation - guidance on how to handle situations that arise with students, families, and staff
- **Individual consultation and Site visits**
 - as needed



Learning Requires:

Safety

Trust

Connection

Belonging

Adaptability

Collaboration



How Educators Can Help At-Risk Students

- Understand that trauma is more common than you might think.
- Before confronting problem behaviors ask, “What has happened to this child to make them act this way?”*
- Don’t take behavior personally
- Build a relationship. It is the #1 way to reach challenging students.
- Provide consistency and prepare students for change.
- Flexibility is a must in relation to seating, assignments, reminders, options, and unpreparedness.
- Speak to students privately regarding performance or behavior concerns.
- Refer students with signs of trauma to SAP and be supportive of their attendance in sessions.

What Has SAP Done For You?

Student Responses

“Most of the time I pretend I’m okay. With my friends, parents, whatever. I put on my fake smile and everyone thinks I’m fine but here I can be honest. Both of my parents drink way too much and I am in charge of my brother all the time and no one knows that and it sucks trying to act like I’m okay all the time. Coming here is like having a journal who’s a person to get everything out to.”

“Having an SAP Coordinator has benefited me by talking out things before I go and make an unsafe decision such as abusing drugs/alcohol. I always know I have someone to come to for my good days and my bad ones.”

“I didn’t know I had a better chance of getting addicted to alcohol or drugs or whatever because my mom is a heroin addict. That kind of scared me, to be honest.”



Questions?



Contact US!

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