

Comprehensive School Community Health

Better Health = Better Learners

Fall 2021 edition



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.

What's Inside?

- What is Psychological Well-Being?
- The Importance of Meeting Psychological Well-Being Needs Within the School Environment
- Using CSCH to Promote Psychologically Safe School Environments
 - High-Quality Teaching and Learning
 - Psychological well-being can be fostered through curriculum, instruction and assessment that is engaging, culturally responsive and inclusive.
 - Family and Community Engagement
 - Collaborative engagement brings schools, families, community leaders, organizations and services together in partnership to work toward a common goal: the psychological well-being of all students.
 - Healthy Physical and Social Environments
 - Psychologically safe school environments are physically safe, provide healthy social connections and ensure staff and students feel a sense of belonging.
 - Effective Policy
 - An effective policy can protect, promote and enhance a sense of psychological well-being.
- CSCH in Saskatchewan Schools
 - Do you want to share your CSCH success story?
- CSCH-Related Media, Tools, Resources and Articles

Key Components of Psychological Well-Being in the School Environment

What is Psychological Well-Being?

Psychological well-being is the belief that individual diversity, challenges, ideas, circumstances, perceptions and abilities will be treated with compassion, dignity and respect. In school, students and staff feel psychologically safe when they feel their personal opinions, ideas and feelings are valued. In a psychologically safe environment, individuals are free to ask questions without the fear of humiliation, and mistakes are learning opportunities that create growth and resilience. When psychological well-being needs are met, individuals are more likely to achieve, learn and thrive.

Individuals with unmet psychological well-being needs may develop mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression. For example, a Grade 2 student with unmet well-being needs in the home may communicate through externalized behaviour (e.g., aggression) or internalized behaviour (e.g., meltdowns, shutting down) at school. A school staff member with unmet well-being needs may use sick time or go on short-term or long-term disability as a way of meeting their personal needs.

Using CSCH to Promote Psychological Well-Being in the School Environments

High-Quality Teaching and Learning

Psychological well-being can be fostered through curriculum, instruction and assessment that is engaging, culturally responsive and inclusive. This means that the workload and assignments given to staff and students is challenging and engaging to the point of reaching balance. When demands exceed individual skills or capacity, harms to psychological well-being can arise.



Allowing staff and students to express thoughts and feelings in decision making and day-to-day operations of the school and classroom provides a sense of self-efficacy and autonomy. When staff and students feel they are contributing members to the school environment, an increased sense of confidence, accomplishment and independence can be felt.

It is important that teachers and students learn within meaningful contexts that relate to their lives, communities and world. Inquiry learning provides students with opportunities to build knowledge, abilities and inquiring habits of mind that lead to deeper understanding of their world and human experience. Inquiry builds on students' inherent sense of curiosity and wonder, drawing on their diverse backgrounds, interests and experiences. Effective questions for deeper understanding are key to initiating and guiding students' investigations and critical thinking, problem solving and reflection on students' own learning.



Family and Community Engagement

Leadership values that are compassionate, forgiving, embrace change and diversity, share power, responsibilities and decision making, create school environments that engage families and communities. Working together with families and community partners can be achieved through welcoming and supportive school environments, collaboration and policy development. Bringing members

from schools, families, community organizations and services together through collaboration builds relationships and a culture of psychological well-being.

Students benefit when family and community members are welcomed into the school environment and are actively involved in the life of the school. Family members can provide valuable information and help teachers understand students' behaviours, backgrounds, family values and practices. This understanding helps teachers develop a learning environment where students can thrive socially, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Community members and agencies that are engaged with the school are pivotal in helping link schools to the community at large.

Effective Policy

Effective policy that addresses psychological well-being is informed by research and data. In Saskatchewan, the OurSCHOOL survey is used to learn from all areas of the school climate that may be affecting student success and well-being. OurSCHOOL survey data help inform decision making regarding programs and policy.

An effective policy is clear, consistent and has expectations and guidelines that protect, promote and enhance a sense of psychological well-being. Policy should be based on the shared values and vision of the school community; provide direction for implementing proactive measures to foster and maintain a safe, welcoming and supportive school climate; and include restorative approaches to remediate issues when they occur. Policy can provide formal guidelines and steps for students, staff, parents/guardians and visitors to follow. These guidelines and steps outline what members of a school community are expected to do to ensure that the learning environment is healthy and caring for all.

Healthy Physical and Social Environments

Psychologically safe school environments are physically safe, provide healthy social connections and ensure staff and students feel a sense of belonging. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs describes what individuals need to reach their full potential. Individuals will be more productive when they are motivated to work and learn. Motivation for work and learning comes from meeting individual needs. A sense of psychological well-being is integral in this model.

For example, a student coming to the classroom with little to no sleep may have difficulty focusing on school assignments until they have had enough rest. A staff member who has back pain will not be able to focus on work until they are accommodated to work without pain. A bullied student may not succeed until they are able to share their feelings and feel safe.



Image courtesy of the professionalacademy.com

Reflection Question

How can the school environment create a sense of psychological well-being for all students and staff?

CSCH in Saskatchewan Schools

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 [here](#) to access the story submission form, fill out the form and send it to one of our Saskatchewan School Health Coordinators to share your story. (Their contact info is on the last page of this newsletter.) 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

National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace

The *National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* (the Standard) – is a set of voluntary guidelines, tools and resources intended to guide organizations in promoting mental health and preventing psychological harm at work.

The Circle of Courage®

The *Circle of Courage®* is a model of positive development based on the cultural wisdom that all individuals need a sense of belonging, master, independence and generosity in order to be emotionally healthy.

Emotional First Aid

[Guy Winch: Why we all need to practice emotional first aid | TED Talk](#)

Sex Life Saskatchewan

Sex Life Saskatchewan is a comprehensive, inclusive and evidence-based sexual health website that offers inclusive client resources on a comprehensive list of sexual health topics, as well as an interactive map of sexual health services in Saskatchewan. Included is a page dedicated to resources for parents and teachers, and links to classroom resources. Free cards and posters can be ordered for your school by emailing sexlifesask@saskhealthauthority.ca or by clicking the ‘contact us’ link at the bottom of the website.

The Positive Workplace Framework

The Positive Workplace Framework is a strengths-based approach to optimizing staff and student engagement, performance and psychological safety in K-12 schools.

Waniskāhk: Time to Rise Up

Waniskāhk focuses on life promotion and mental wellness for Indigenous youth and adults.

Healthy School Planner

The Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health has developed a free assessment tool, the *Healthy School Planner*, that schools can use to assess their current health environment (i.e., nutrition, mental health, tobacco use and physical activity) and develop a plan to make improvements

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.



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:

Helen Flengeris
Ministry of Health
306-787-3079
helen.flengeris@health.gov.sk.ca

Anna Grumbly
Ministry of Education
306-787-4350
anna.grumbly@gov.sk.ca