

MHF-EEE CURRICULUM SAMPLE

Cost-Effective Mental Health Treatment

The cost of mental health treatment is often offset by:

- Reducing the number of days out of school (absenteeism)
- Increasing academic productivity while at school
- Improving stability in students' lives

Effective identification and treatment of mental health problems leads to increases in academic achievement, graduation rates and school safety

School personnel are often the first adults to recognize student mental health problems

Module 1: Investing in Mental Health in the Schools

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Mental Health Care in Schools

- School-based interventions reach students who would otherwise receive no services
- Some students will obviously need referrals outside of the school; this improves learning
- Adults who demonstrate care, concern and support for students have a major impact on mental health ("I'm here if you need me")
- Adults teach students problem-solving strategies

Goals for school-based mental health services:

- Work to reduce stigma in the school community
- Coordinate school mental health efforts with existing community support
- Increase students' knowledge of mental health and their willingness to seek help when needed
- Document use of school-based mental health services

Module 1: Investing in Mental Health in the Schools

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Empathy: An MHF Skill

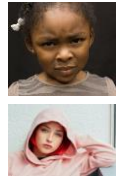
- The ability to understand students from their own perspective rather than our perspective
- The emotional connection allows the MHF to think *with* the student rather than *for* or *about* the student
- A deep connection to the emotional state of the student
- The ability to recognize what is important to the student without necessarily agreeing with the student
- Empathy is not sympathy or feeling sorry for the student
- Using empathy allows us to focus on students' feelings instead of moving away from or avoiding emotions

Module 2: Understanding Students' Feelings

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Focusing on Feelings

- The MHF process provides an understanding and safe relationship that helps a student identify and explore emotions
- Feelings are an important part of any communication
- Some students may not have the vocabulary for their feelings
- Physical symptoms may mask emotions (e.g., headaches, stomachaches, fatigue, loss of appetite, sore muscles)
- Information about the problem can be discovered by exploring feelings
- Watch for students who focus "too much" on their feelings



Module 2: Understanding Students' Feelings

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Development Occurs in Stages

- Stages range from birth to death (cradle to grave)
- Considering what it is like to be your student helps you to identify
 - Their stage of growth
 - The way they understand and make sense of their world
- Also affects your ability to understand your students

Knowledge of child growth and development helps you to:

- Recognize age-related challenges
- Acknowledge age appropriate knowledge and skills
- Determine impact of peers, family, school, gender and other influences

Module 3: Understanding Child Development and Diversity

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Life Stages



- Throughout life, people grow and change
- Basic life stages:
 - Infancy
 - Childhood
 - Adolescence
 - Adult
 - Elder
- Cultural contexts determine expectations at each life stage

Module 3: Understanding Child Development and Diversity

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Open-Ended Questions

- Require more than a one- or two-word response
- Encourage specifics and details about the situation
- Help provide a clearer idea of what is happening
- Focus on what can be done to solve the problem or improve the situation
- Encourage the student to think
- May open the door



Module 4: Communicating in Mental Health Facilitation

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Explore!

Use an open-ended question to respond to:

"My teacher told me I would receive my grade when I finished the project. That would mean I could move forward and all my school worries would be over. But, I haven't finished and it's past my deadline."

Module 4: Communicating in Mental Health Facilitation

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The Importance of Reflecting Content

Reflection of content:

- Encourages the student to tell you more and to continue talking
- Clarifies the student's story and point of view
- Confirms your understanding of the story
- Allows the student to hear the story told by someone else
- Allows you to gently direct attention to certain important aspects of the story

Module 5: Reflecting in Mental Health Facilitation

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Two Steps in Reflecting Feelings

1. Use listening and observation skills to form an impression about how the student may feel about the content of the story
2. Name the emotion that you believe the student is experiencing

("It sounds like you are feeling...")



Module 5: Reflecting in Mental Health Facilitation

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Students Coping With Problems

- Many students will turn to family, friends, neighbors, voluntary associations, religious leaders and school personnel for assistance
 - But, family members may disapprove of seeking mental health care
- Parents tend to speak with a primary support person before seeking formal services
- Parents may not know where or how to seek services
- Informal helping and support networks can be very helpful

Teachers play an important role in helping students solve problems

Module 6: Understanding Problems

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Problem-Solving and Readiness to Change

- What is causing the most distress?
- What does the student need?
- What is most important to the student?
- How open is the student to making changes?
- What has the best chance for success?
- What resources are needed to make changes?



Module 7: Problem-Solving and Setting Goals

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MHF-EEE CURRICULUM SAMPLE

Problem-Solving Relationship Issues

- Peer relationships affect academic success
- Insecure students are less likely to be accepted by peers; aggressive students are likely to be avoided
- Peer rejection in primary school is associated with later problem behavior
- The earlier the problem with peers, the higher risk for poor academic achievement
 - More problems with teachers
 - School truancy increases
 - Suspensions increase
 - Increase in drop-out rate



Module 7: Problem-Solving and Setting Goals

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Positive Communication Strategies

- Build unity in the classroom – *we are all in this together*
- Co-develop class norms with students
- Expect cooperation – listening, taking turns, working together
- Model good communication – effective listening and speaking skills
- Demonstrate and coach – show what you want and give students chances to try out those behaviors, give them feedback on how well they have done



Module 8: Student-Teacher Relationships and Managing Student Behavior

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Student Behavior Management Has Five Purposes

1. Establishes an orderly environment for student learning
2. Enhances student social and moral growth
3. Effectively handles student misbehavior
4. Develops trust in teachers and peers
5. Teachers perceived as interesting and personable have students who are more connected to them
 - Increases students' likelihood to cooperate with teacher

Wants of the teacher (W) +
the efforts of the student (E) = WE

Module 8: Student-Teacher Relationships and Managing Student Behavior

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Some Helping Goals

- Reduce the length of time the stress, distress or disorder exists
- Decrease risk factors (prevention)
- Increase protective factors
- Teach problem-solving skills
- Slow the progression of severity
- Lengthen the time between episodes of the problem
- Stop the recurrence of the problem
- Reduce gap between episodes



Module 9: Recognizing Stress, Distress and Disorder

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Explore!

In groups of three, discuss:

Middle and High School

- What is the substance abuse policy in your school?
- How is substance abuse information provided in your school?

Elementary School

- How does stress affect school performance?
- What are good strategies for "early detection" in the classroom?

Module 9: Recognizing Stress, Distress and Disorder

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Ways School Personnel Can Help Reduce Bullying

- Avoid being overly critical or ridiculing students
- Monitor areas where students feel unsafe
- Act without bias toward all students
- Develop, report and use school and classroom rules against bullying
- Define and discuss acceptable and unacceptable school behaviors
- Identify safe places and people to listen to students talk about bullying

Module 10: Common Child and Adolescent Issues

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MHF-EEE CURRICULUM SAMPLE

Working With Migrants, Refugees and Victims of Special Circumstances

- Going from one country or region to settle in another
- Children and adolescents
 - May be alone, especially if refugees
 - Separation from parents may create problems of stress
 - Children may have difficulty adjusting both at home and in school
 - Older children may end up looking after the younger ones



Module 10: Common Child and Adolescent Issues

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Recognizing Risk Factors

- Recognizing risk factors increases access to professional help
- Successfully navigated, student suicide crisis need not be harmful or fatal
- Consider all situations of suicidal risk as an emergency
- Careful risk assessment is the cornerstone of prevention



Module 11: Suicide and Non-Suicidal Self-Injury: Recognition and Prevention

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Suicide Myth 4

If you talk to a student about suicide, you are giving the student the idea.

FALSE

- You will not cause suicidal behavior simply by asking if a student is considering suicide
- Recognizing a student's emotional state and the stress being experienced are useful in reducing suicidal thoughts

Module 11: Suicide and Non-Suicidal Self-Injury: Recognition and Prevention

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Non-Suicidal Self-Injury

- A common phenomenon in adolescents in middle and high school
- Often no suicidal intent, but used to:
 - Reduce distressing mood
 - Inflict self-punishment
 - Signal personal distress to important others
 - Get a reaction, control a situation
 - Stop "bad feelings"
 - Regulate emotion
 - Stabilize mood



Module 11: Suicide and Non-Suicidal Self-Injury: Recognition and Prevention

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Needs of Students in Crisis

- Safety
- Reassurance
- Feeling like things are under control
- Freedom to talk
- Someone to listen
- Being told their feelings and reactions are normal
- Outlets for sadness, worry and pain
- When students are faced with a crisis, the school needs to limit the disruption to academic and social life
- Students with preexisting vulnerabilities require focused attention

Do something **NOW**:

- Provide a sense of safety
- Assess immediate needs
- Assist with:
 - Calming
 - Enhancing sense of self and community
 - Connecting with others
 - Grief

Module 12: Facilitating in Crisis, Disaster and Trauma

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Children, Adolescents & Trauma

- Exposure to violence often results in mental health problems for children
- Especially vulnerable during disasters or traumatic events
- Students suffer disruptions in their normal developmental path
- Needs might be overlooked because:
 - Parents and other caregivers are overwhelmed
 - Children protect their care-givers by suffering silently

Module 12: Facilitating in Crisis, Disaster and Trauma

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MHF-EEE CURRICULUM SAMPLE

Indicators: Child Neglect

- Not attending school
- Falling asleep in class
- Stealing or begging for food
- Abandonment
- Unmet medical needs
- Lack of supervision
- Hunger, poor health habits, improper clothes
- Extremely thin, dirty
- Constantly weak, tired, no energy
- Often late or absent
- Being aggressive or overly friendly
- Unable to make friends

Module 13: Working With Child Neglect

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Explore!

Where do you find

- Child abuse laws?
- School policy for recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect?
- Are you required to report suspicion of child abuse?



Module 13: Working With Child Neglect

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Referring and Consulting

- When reactions, behaviors or symptoms seem serious, you should consult with your school mental health professionals to determine what needs to happen to get the student the help needed
- After consulting, referrals may be necessary
- Reduce the barriers to referral sources
- Have a list of resources especially when information is needed quickly



Module 14: Making Referrals and Ending the Helping Relationship

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Always Refer When—

The student appears to be:

- Experiencing a **mental disorder**
- **Hallucination/dissociation**
- **High anxiety**
- **Depression**
- **Unable to care for self**
- Having **suicidal or homicidal thoughts or plans**
- **Suffering from alcohol or drug abuse**
- **A victim of abuse**

Module 14: Making Referrals and Ending the Helping Relationship

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Contextualizing the MHF Program is Critical

- Places the MHF program in the school and community context where the program will be implemented
- Identifies school and community helpers
- Explores how the MHF program will most effectively work in your school and community
- Encourages participants to become actively involved in learning about student mental health
- Helps identify and address potential areas of implementation and challenges



Module 15: Benefits of Contextualizing the MHF Program

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Important Questions for Continued Contextualizing of the MHF Program

- How can you reduce the resources gap between mental health needs and access to services?
- How will you apply MHF in your school?
- What issues and concerns do you have implementing the MHF program in your school?
- What can you do with your new MHF skills in the next 3 months?
 - Next 6 months?
 - Next school year?
- What do you need to succeed?

Module 15: Benefits of Contextualizing the MHF Program

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