



Universal Mental Health Screening: The Whats, Whys, and Hows

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Who Am I?

- School Counselor at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy
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What We Will Cover

- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
 - PBIS to RTI to Current
- Universal Mental Health Screening
 - What is it?
 - Why integrate it within your school or district?
 - How to start the process of incorporating it
 - Benefits and Challenges
 - Resources

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

- Included in the 1997 amended language of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Evidence-based
- Three-tiered approach
- Employ interventions that focus on prevention and instruction to benefit students within a community

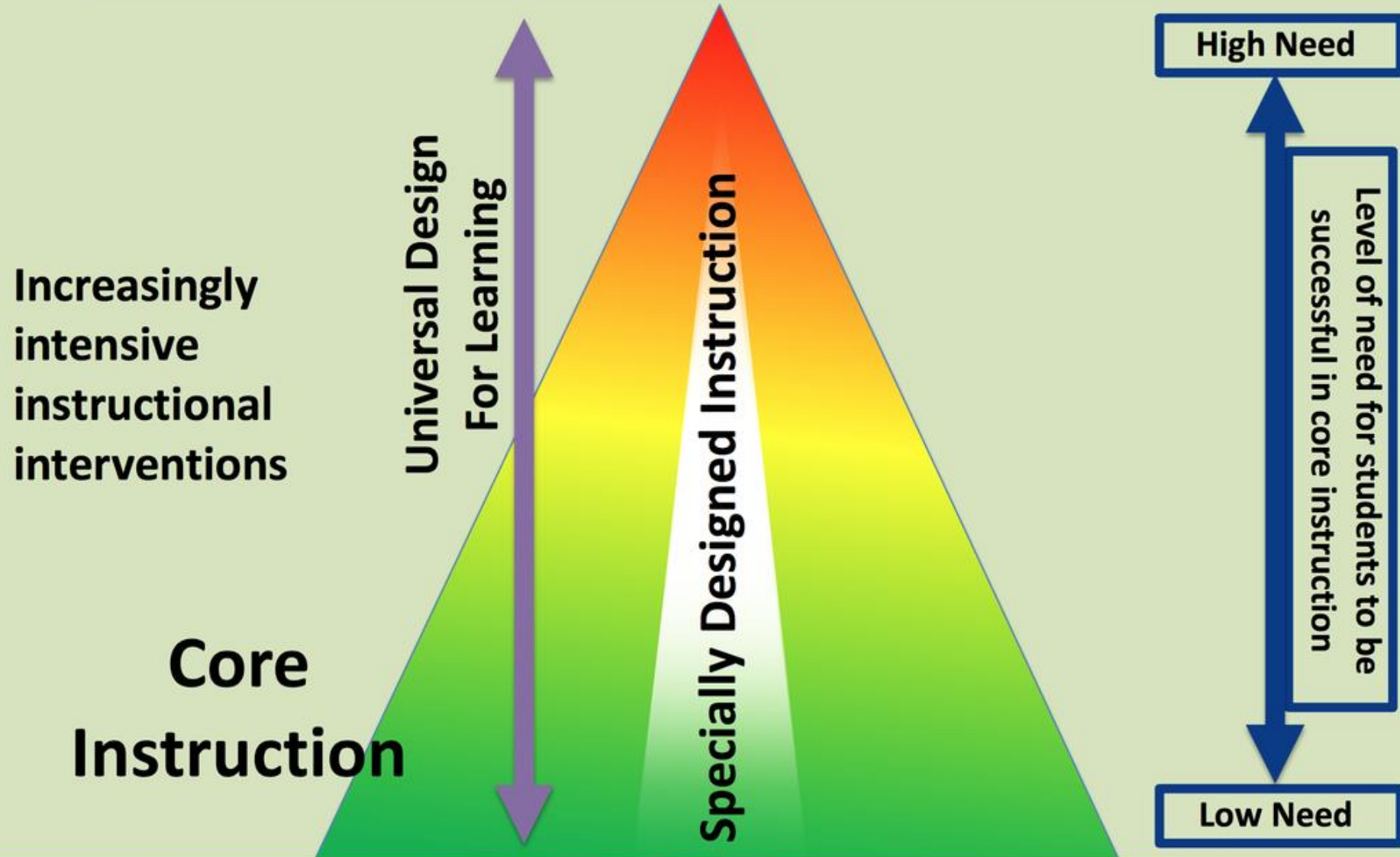
Response to Intervention (RTI)

- Emerged from the reauthorization of the IDEA in 2004
- Built off of the concepts around:
 - Behavioral consultation
 - Data-based program modification
 - Learning disabilities

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

- Umbrella term incorporating Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems (PBIS)
- Was implemented in 2015 when it was signed into law with the Elementary and Secondary Education/Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA/ESSA)
- Using data to drive assessments and instructions to meet the needs of students
 - Academic
 - Social-emotional
 - Behavioral

A Conceptual Framework for MTSS



Students may receive services in all areas of the pyramid at any one point in time.

Adapted from U.S. Department of Education

Universal Mental Health Screening (UMHS)

UMHS is a MTSS Tier 1 intervention

- Incorporates a systematic method to evaluate all students within a district, school, or grade level
- Looks at behavioral or emotional criteria (Glover & Albers, 2007)

UMHS is to identify students associated with increased risk of having or developing a mental health and wellness concern (Dvorsky et al., 2014)

UMHS can drive early intervention and prevention programming

- Prevention programs have been linked to positive school outcomes
 - Graduation from high school
 - Improved well-being
 - School readiness
 - Attendance

Why Incorporate UMHS?

- Shift from being reactive to proactive
- Systematic and strategic resource allocation
- Opportunity for early intervention
- Increased crisis prevention and school safety

Purpose of UMHS

- Identify students at risk for poor outcomes
- Identify students who may need monitoring or intervention (e.g., targeted supports for emerging adjustment problems, intensive supports for chronic behavioral issues)
- Inform decisions about needed services
- Identify personal strengths/wellness as well as risk factors/emotional distress
- Assess effectiveness of universal social/emotional/behavioral curriculum

Identification Is **Not** Diagnosis!

Practice Screening Tool

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

S18+

For each item, please mark the box for Not True, Somewhat True or Certainly True. It would help us if you answered all items as best you can even if you are not absolutely certain. Please give your answers on the basis of how things have been for you over the last six months.

Your Name

Male/Female

Date of Birth

	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
I try to be nice to other people. I care about their feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am restless, I find it hard to sit down for long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get a lot of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I usually share with others, for example food or drink	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get very angry and often lose my temper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would rather be alone than with other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am generally willing to do what other people want	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I worry a lot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am constantly fidgeting or squirming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have at least one good friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I fight a lot. I can make other people do what I want	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am often unhappy, depressed or tearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other people generally like me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am easily distracted, I find it difficult to concentrate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am nervous in new situations. I easily lose confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am kind to children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am often accused of lying or cheating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other people pick on me or bully me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often offer to help others (family members, friends, colleagues)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I think before I do things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I take things that are not mine from home, work or elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I get along better with older people than with people of my own age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have many fears, I am easily scared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I finish the work I'm doing. My attention is good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your Signature

Today's Date

Thank you very much for your help

Scoring the Screening Tool

11 May 2015

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Scoring the Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire for age 4-17

The 25 items in the SDQ comprise 5 scales of 5 items each. It is usually easiest to score all 5 scales first before working out the total difficulties score. 'Somewhat True' is always scored as 1, but the scoring of 'Not True' and 'Certainly True' varies with the item, as shown below scale by scale. For each of the 5 scales the score can range from 0 to 10 if all items were completed. These scores can be scaled up pro-rata if at least 3 items were completed, e.g. a score of 4 based on 3 completed items can be scaled up to a score of 7 (6.67 rounded up) for 5 items.

Table 1: Scoring symptom scores on the SDQ for 4-17 year olds

	Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
Emotional problems scale			
ITEM 3: Often complains of headaches... (I get a lot of headaches...)	0	1	2
ITEM 8: Many worries... (I worry a lot)	0	1	2
ITEM 13: Often unhappy, downhearted... (I am often unhappy...)	0	1	2
ITEM 16: Nervous or clingy in new situations... (I am nervous in new situations...)	0	1	2
ITEM 24: Many fears, easily scared (I have many fears...)	0	1	2
Conduct problems Scale			
ITEM 5: Often has temper tantrums or hot tempers (I get very angry)	0	1	2
ITEM 7: Generally obedient... (I usually do as I am told)	2	1	0
ITEM 12: Often fights with other children... (I fight a lot)	0	1	2
ITEM 18: Often lies or cheats (I am often accused of lying or cheating)	0	1	2
ITEM 22: Steals from home, school or elsewhere (I take things that are not mine)	0	1	2
Hyperactivity scale			
ITEM 2: Restless, overactive... (I am restless...)	0	1	2
ITEM 10: Constantly fidgeting or squirming (I am constantly fidgeting...)	0	1	2
ITEM 15: Easily distracted, concentration wanders (I am easily distracted)	0	1	2
ITEM 21: Thinks things out before acting (I think before I do things)	2	1	0
ITEM 25: Sees tasks through to the end... (I finish the work I am doing)	2	1	0
Peer problems scale			
ITEM 6: Rather solitary, tends to play alone (I am usually on my own)	0	1	2
ITEM 11: Has at least one good friend (I have one good friend or more)	2	1	0
ITEM 14: Generally liked by other children (Other people my age generally like me)	2	1	0
ITEM 19: Picked on or bullied by other children... (Other children or young people pick on me)	0	1	2
ITEM 23: Gets on better with adults than with other children (I get on better with adults than with people my age)	0	1	2
Prosocial scale			
ITEM 1: Considerate of other people's feelings (I try to be nice to other people)	0	1	2
ITEM 4: Shares readily with other children... (I usually share with others)	0	1	2
ITEM 9: Helpful if someone is hurt... (I am helpful if someone is hurt...)	0	1	2
ITEM 17: Kind to younger children (I am kind to younger children)	0	1	2
ITEM 20: Often volunteers to help others... (I often volunteer to help others)	0	1	2

Discussion Questions

- What are your initial thoughts on using the SDQ as a screening tool?
- What are some of the challenges that you notice students having in your community?
- If you are not sure of what your students need, what are some ways that would help you determine?

Steps to Develop an Operational UMHS System

1. Create a multidisciplinary team and community secure buy-in
2. Clarify the goals and the purpose
3. Discuss resources and process
4. Select the screening tool
5. Collect data to analyze
6. Follow up accordingly

Options for UMHS Tools

- Run a Needs Assessment with your students
- Once you determine the needs, here are some screening options:
 - Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSDB)
 - Student Risk Screening (SRSS)
 - The Behavior Assessment Scale for Children Two: Behavior and Emotional Screening Scale (BASC-2 BESS)
 - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)
- What is your budget, and how will that have an impact on what tool you choose?

Your Multidisciplinary Team

- What mental health resources do you have available to your community?
 - School Counselors
 - School Psychologists
 - School Social Workers
 - Outside Counseling
- What additional resources do you have available to your community?
 - Teachers
 - Administrators
 - Community members
- What is each person's role within the team?
 - Clarity will help lessen role confusion
 - Clarity will result in less redundant work

Benefits of UMHS

- Prevention and early identification and treatment of mental health and behavioral concerns
- The use of data to guide mental health interventions
- A comprehensive approach that encourages systemic thinking and breaks down school/community/family silos
- Collaboration across school-based mental health providers and between school-based and community-based mental health providers
- Greater normalization and awareness of mental health issues within the schools

Challenges of UMHS

Screening Requires Time and Resources

- Need people to administer and score
- Some screening tools cost money
- Some districts or schools lack buy-in
- Takes a good amount of time to plan

Stigma Pertaining to Mental Health

Screening Leads to Over-diagnosis or Targeting

- Students will develop a label from school officials

Minimal Community Resources

Fake Responses

Obstacles to Address

- Those identified will exceed our capacity to serve
- Our community does not like the idea
- Obtaining consent from parents will exceed our capacity
- What exactly will we screen for?

Current Information to Support the Need for UMHS

Preliminary Investigation of UMHS Practices in School--Wood & McDaniel (2020)

- n=245 principals from Indiana schools
- 98.8% of schools sampled are not actively conducting UMHS
- 74.6% reported moderate to extreme interest in conducting UMHS
- 74.6% minimal to no knowledge about UMHS

Resources

- The School Counselor's Guide to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
 - Goodman-Scott, Betters-Bubon, & Donohue
- Mental Health Screening at School: Instrumentation, Implementation, and Critical Issues
 - Stiffler & Dever
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
 - Ready, Set, Go, Review: Screening Behavioral Health Risk in Schools

Contact Me

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