

# School-based Mental Health Roles and Responsibilities

**Supporting Student Wellbeing Within the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support**

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# Learning Objectives



Participants will understand the framework in the Behavioral Health toolkit.



Participants will discover how to systematically build comprehensive school-based behavioral health services for students.



Participants will understand how to prioritize School-based Mental Health (SBMH) staff to meet the needs of students and prioritize services within the Multi-Systems Tiered Supports (MTSS) framework.



Participants will understand the scope of practice of SBMH staff and other mental health professionals.



# What is School-based Mental Health?



SBMH focuses on providing services that promote and support students' overall wellness and social, emotional, and behavioral health to help them achieve academic and social success.



Utah State Board of Education(USBE) prioritizes school safety and student well-being through a comprehensive approach.



This approach includes Attending to School-based Mental Health as one of nine conditions in the Utah School Safety Framework.



Legislation has allocated funds to LEAs to hire or contract with qualified mental health personnel and conduct mental health screening.



Utah's efforts have advanced over the last five years with goals to increase multi-agency collaboration, improve resources, and build capacity within every LEA.

# Who are Considered SBMH Professionals in Schools?

School-based mental health includes a variety of professionals.

These can include school counselors, school social Workers, and School Psychologists licensed by USBE.

School nurses are licensed by the Division of Occupational Licensing (DOPL) play an integral role in the school Multidisciplinary team.

Can also include those licensed by DOPL as mental health professionals.

Some professionals may hold dual licensure from both DOPL and USBE.



# Key Requirements for SBMH Services

LEAs must provide **training to educators on parent consent** requirements and ensure employee compliance (R277-313).

Utah Code 53E-9-203 requires schools to obtain **prior written consent** before administering any psychological or psychiatric examination, test, or treatment, or any survey revealing personal information about the student or family (protected topic).

*The requirement for prior written parental consent **may be postponed if waiting to contact a parent would put the student or another person at immediate risk** of serious bodily injury or suicide (76-1-101.5).*

Utah Code 53G-9-901 & 902 **regulates restricted services in a school setting**(Mental Health Services/Mental Health Therapy) and outlines specific parameters for parent notification and consent

Under Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), **parents have access to any and all information in education records**, which include health records created by school staff or agents.

# What are "Restricted Services"?



**Definition:** A "restricted service" is defined as a mental health service that takes place in a school setting (53G-9-901).



**Clarification:** USBE clarified in R277-313 that Mental Health Services has the same definition as “practice of mental health therapy” contained in Subsection 58-60-102(17).

## Counseling

A method used by school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists to assist individuals and groups in learning how to solve problems, develop coping strategies and make decisions about personal health, social, emotional, behavioral, educational, vocational, financial, and other interpersonal concerns (Board Rule R277-313).

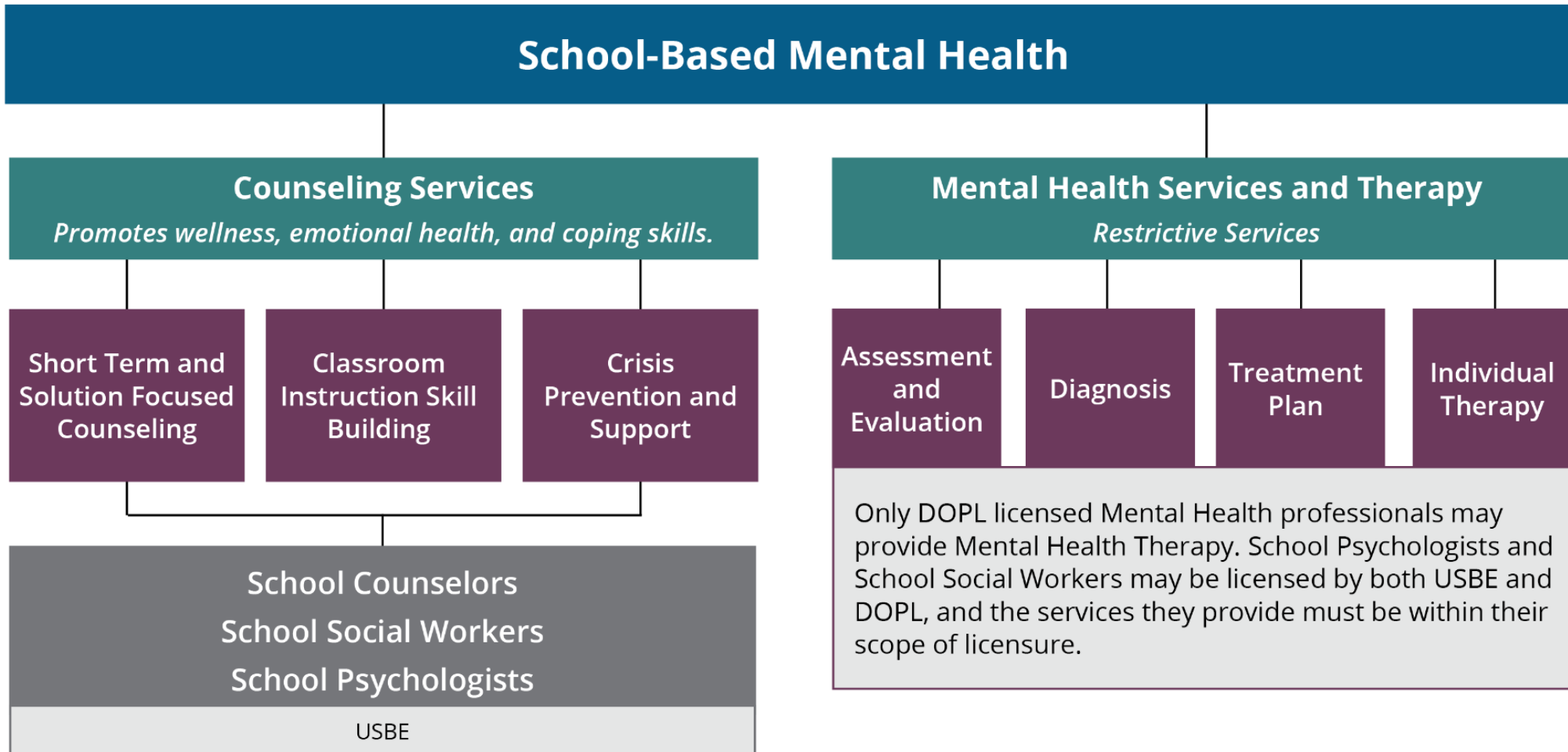


## Mental Health Therapy

Treatment or prevention of another individual's mental illness or emotional disorder, whether in person or remotely, including:

- Conducting a professional evaluation of an individual's condition of mental health, mental illness, or emotional disorder consistent with standards generally recognized in the professions of mental health therapy,
- Establishing a diagnosis in accordance with established written standards generally recognized in the professions of mental health therapy,
- Prescribing a plan for the prevention or treatment of a condition of mental illness or emotional disorder, and,
- Engaging in the conduct of professional intervention, including psychotherapy by the application of established methods and procedures generally recognized in the professions of mental health therapy (58-60-102(17)).

# Interplay of SBMH Professional Scope of Practice

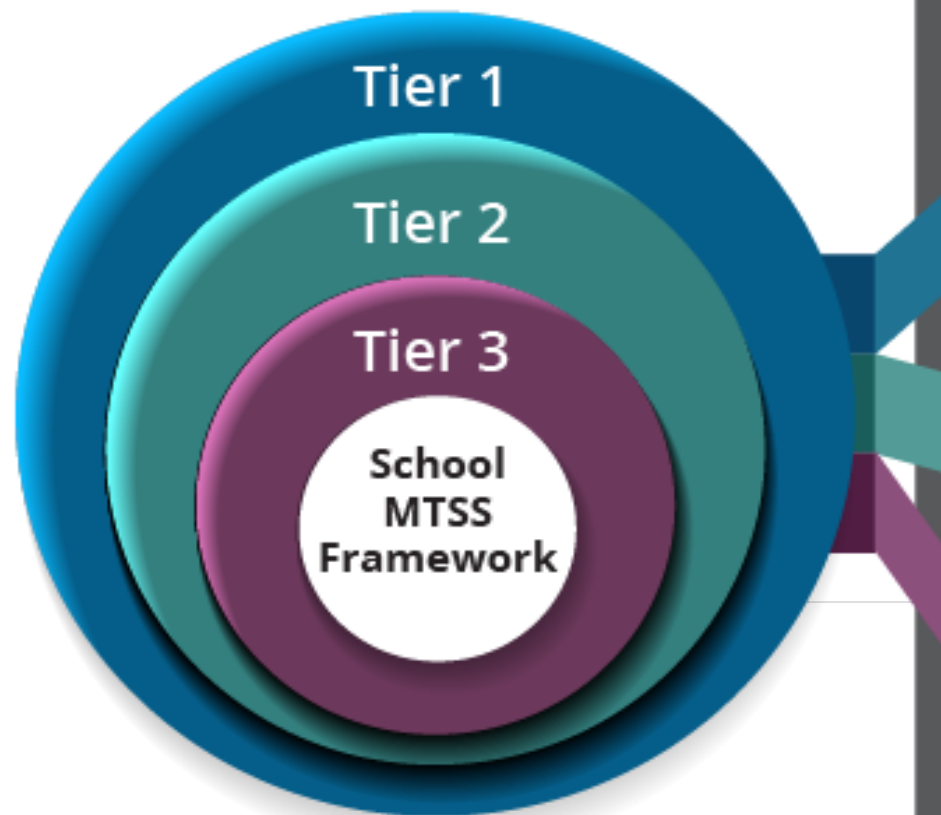





## Key Differences Between Counseling and Mental Health Therapy

- **Scope:** Counseling services are broader, aiming to equip all students with essential life skills to address life's challenges, while mental health therapy is more focused on providing assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health disorders.
- **Approach:** Counseling services are proactive and preventive, fostering a supportive environment, whereas mental health therapy is often reactive, addressing existing mental health concerns.
- **Integration:** Counseling services are embedded in daily school activities and lessons, while mental health therapy is usually provided by mental health professionals through a referral pathway.

# Integrated Systems of Support



 **Community Mental Health Treatment**

- General Outpatient Mental Health Therapy
- Intensive Outpatient (OP)
- Day Treatment/Partial Hospitalization (PHP)
- Residential Treatment Center (RTC)
- In-patient Psychiatric Unit

Mental health services can be integrated at all levels of MTSS support, from Tier 1 to Tier 3, and should be accessed as needed, regardless of the tier. Support from both school-based mental health professionals and community partners can be provided in tandem to ensure timely and appropriate care for students.

# SBMH Services in Tier 1 (Universal Support)

**Goal: Promotion, prevention, and universal support for all students**

Help	Improve equitable access to services, academic achievement, and opportunities for every student.
Develop	Prevention programs and staff in-service training related to classroom management techniques, trauma-informed care, suicide warning signs and parent seminar topics required in Utah Code § 53G-9-703
Collaborate	School climate, behavior, safety and mental health data in order to develop positive behavior and school safety plans
Assess	With families, teachers, administrators, and community partners to promote student wellness.
Refer	Students after universal mental health screenings to evidence-based supports and to be assessed for mental health concerns through the SBMH therapist or community mental health partners.
Provide	Whole classroom lessons to help teach all students, interpersonal, behavioral, and emotional regulation skills as part of the Utah K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model.

# SBMH Services in Tier 2 (Targeted Support)

**Goal: Providing targeted services for students identified as needing additional support**

Help	Support responsive services through behavior, safety , and reintegration plans.
Develop	Supports and strategies to address students needs and promote student well-being.
Collaborate	With parents to facilitate support in accessing community resources to help alleviate family stressors.
Assess	Barriers to learning that may include, social, emotional, interpersonal, or those identified through screening with possible mental health concerns.
Refer	Identified students with behavior or truancy concerns to evidence-based supports and services.
Provide	Provide solution-focused group counseling to those that need additional support in developing coping strategies, problem solving, and interpersonal skills.

# SBMH Services in Tier 3 (Intensive Support)

**Goal: Providing intensive, individualized services for students with significant needs**

Help	Support students with significant mental health concerns and coordinate school & community resources to provide wrap-around services.
Develop	Reintegration or safety plans for students returning after serious offenses or those returning to learn after intensive medical or mental health treatment.
Collaborate	With the multidisciplinary team to determine which service should be provided by each team member to coordinate appropriate services and support.
Assess	Behavioral health needs of students within the purview of their licensure. Conduct threat assessments.
Refer	Students with mental health concerns to the SBMH Therapist or community partners to be further assessed.
Provide	Provide individual solution-focused counseling to address student specific needs.

# Integrating SBMH into MTSS

The multidisciplinary team may determine that the student requires services beyond their scope and connect them to a school-based mental health therapist to assess the need for school-based mental health therapy or make a referral to community resources to meet the student's mental health needs. Community resources may include services offered by the Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA) and/or other community Mental Health partners.



# Other Supports

The following supports are critical to student support, and can be provided by any trained staff member and do not require informed consent (parent awareness and notification are still advised):

- Teaching and implementing basic stress management
- Check & Connect
- Mental health promotion & resources
- Implementing behavior interventions (Check in/Check out)
- Suicide prevention (HOPE Squads, Sources of Strength)
- Crisis support (emotional support until appropriate personnel arrive)
- De-escalation strategies and/or emotional support during a behavioral/emotional crisis



# Who Should Provide Which Service Within Each Tier?

The answer is **it depends...**

- While school-based mental health service providers (including school social workers and school psychologists) are qualified to provide tier 1 activities to students, it is best practice to utilize their training to serve students needing tier 2 and 3 supports, when possible.
- Different LEAs have different needs, and resources vary within each community.
- USBE has created two resources to help LEAs answer this question.







Utah State  
Board of  
Education

Prevention and  
Student Services

# **SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH**

**STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE EDUCATION  
SETTING**

**A UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DOCUMENT**

# Behavioral Health Toolkit



# Overlapping Roles

## All school-based mental health professionals

- Collaborate with all stakeholders for student success.
- Advocate for students at all student-focused meetings.
- Analyze data to identify student needs, issues, and challenges.
- Act as a systems change agent to improve opportunities and outcomes for all students.
- Collaborate to design, implement, and evaluate services that support students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development.
- Implement, monitor, and evaluate multi-tiered programs and practices.
- Advocate for policies and procedures that promote a positive school climate and culture.



# Teamwork

School nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school-based mental health therapists can work more collaboratively by leveraging their unique strengths and focusing on shared goals.



# School Counselors

- Provide academic guidance to help students plan their courses and set goals. Support students facing academic challenges by working with teachers to develop strategies for student success.
- Assist students in developing coping skills, managing emotions, and resolving conflicts through classroom lessons and short-term solution focused counseling.
- Work with the entire student body to deliver a sequential school counseling curriculum aligned with the Utah K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling Program.







# School Nurses

- Provide direct care for emergent, episodic, and chronic mental health needs
- Collaborate with families, school communities, and mental health teams to connect student and family to available resources and help facilitate continuity of care with families
- Conduct comprehensive health assessments, including mental health screenings
- Develop and implement health education programs addressing physical and mental health

# School Psychologists

- Implement varied models and strategies for consultation, collaboration, and communication with individuals, families, groups, and systems that promote social-emotional functioning, behavioral and mental health for students
- Collect and analyze data for evaluation and support of effective practices at the individual, group, and systems levels.
- Plan and manage a program of psychological services, including psychological counseling for students and assisting in developing positive behavior intervention strategies.



# School Social Worker



- Provide evidence-based education in social and interpersonal skills, emotional regulation, and behavioral topics by implementing multi-tiered programs and practices, monitoring progress, and evaluating service effectiveness
- Implement theoretical social work concepts and practical skills when providing individual, group, and family counseling.
- Contribute to the professional capacity of school personnel related to behavioral health issues.
- Maximize access to school-based and community-based resources through promoting a continuum of services, mobilizing resources and promoting assets, and providing interdisciplinary collaboration, systems coordination, and professional consultation.



# School-based Mental Health Therapist

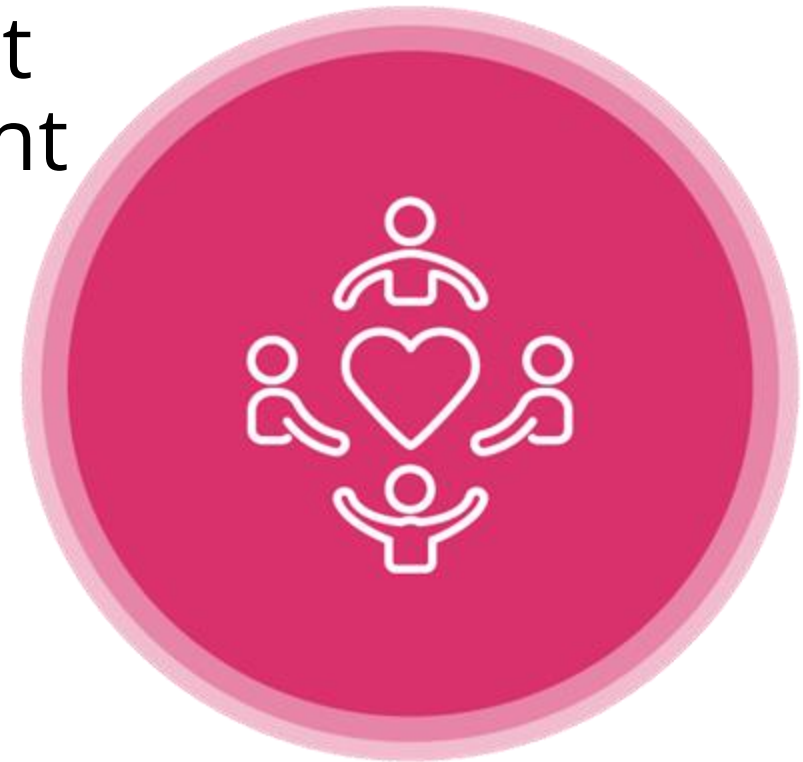
Mental health therapist means an individual who is practicing within the scope of practice defined in the individual's respective licensing act (Utah Code 58-60-102(17):

- Physician, surgeon, osteopathic physician or physician assistant (specializing in mental health care)
- Advanced practice registered nurse or nurse intern (specialized in psychiatric mental health)
- Psychologist or resident psychologist
- Licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), certified social worker (CSW)
- Clinical mental health counselor (CMHC), associate clinical mental health counselor (ACMHC)
- Marriage and family therapist (MFT), associate marriage and family therapist (AMFT)
- Master addiction counselor (MAC), Associate master addiction counselor (AMAC).



# Strategies to Enhance Collaboration

- Regular communication
- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Joint professional development
- Collaborative case management
- Shared resources
- Team-building activities





By focusing on these strategies, we can create a more cohesive and effective support system for students.

# Students Benefit from Collaboration

- Improved academic performance
- Increased attendance
- Reduced behavior issues
- Stronger family and community engagement



# Conclusion

Integrating SBMH into MTSS,  
along with encouraging  
collaboration among SBMH  
staff, families, and  
community partners, leads to  
comprehensive support and a  
safer, more supportive  
environment for all students.





# Resources

- [2025 USBE Parent Consent and Disclosure Guidance for School-based Mental Health](#)
- [2025 USBE Parent Permission for School-based Mental Health Therapy Services Model Form](#)
- [Utah's School Behavioral Health Toolkit Collaborating to Address Mental and Emotional Wellness for School Aged Children](#)
- [SBMH Requirements Rules and Statutes: School Safety, Student Services & Prevention](#)
- [Utah K-12 Comprehensive School Counseling Program Model](#)
- [Equal Rights for all Students \(Aug 2024\)](#)
- [Effective-School-Comm-Partnerships-to-support-SMH-Final.pdf](#)
- [Making the Time: Relationships Among the School Specialists](#)
- [School Mental Health Quality Assessment-School Version](#)
- [School Mental Health Quality Assessment-District Version](#)

# Thank You!

Please provide feedback

