Welcome!

Attendance Sign-in

Please sign-in, grab breakfast, and say hello to someone you haven’t met before!

https://bit.ly/NTXFS1A
Today’s Presenter

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Senior Director
School Behavioral Health

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Assistant Director for School Mental Health
Networking

Introduce yourself to someone new and discuss:

• What do you do to decompress?
Executive Learning Community Member Portals

The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute offers 12-month learning experience that equip district leaders with evidence-based tools to strengthen their school mental health systems. This opportunity is provided free of cost, thanks to the generous support of our partners. Join the Meadows Institute as we launch new School Mental Health Learning Communities across Texas that aim to address the growing mental and emotional health needs of students and educators. These learning communities provide a unique opportunity for executive school district leaders to learn from school mental health experts and collaborate with one another to improve
Directory

- Networking & Collaboration
- Internal Directory
- Input your information using the link or QR code

Cohort Norms

• Our base norms:
  o Participate
  o Be present
  o Vulnerability
  o Share
  o Give feedback

• Any additions?
North Texas ELC Learning Sequence

- **Action Planning**
- **Asset Mapping & Gap Analysis**
- **Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping**
- **Trauma & Grief**
- **Brain Science**
- **Foundations of School Mental Health**
- **MTSS Overview and Tier 1**
- **Tiers 2 & 3**
- **Adult Wellness**

**Additional Information**
- **Start Date:** February 14, 2024
- **End Date:** December 4, 2024
- **Break:** No sessions in July.
- **Virtual Sessions:** June & August
- **Each session is 2 hours with an optional third hour.**
Objectives

Learn why people act the way they do.

Learn how to respond more effectively to create a more positive and safe school climate.
Brain Smart Principles and The Brain State Model
Sources

1. Dr. Becky Bailey, founder of Conscious Discipline.
2. Dr. Dan Siegel, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine and Executive Director of the Mindsight Institute.
Four Brain Smart Principles

• The brain is pattern-seeking.
• The best exercise for the brain is exercise.
• Connections on the outside build neural connections on the inside.
• The brain functions optimally when we feel safe, both physically and psychologically.

The brain finishes developing and maturing in the mid-to-late 20s.
The brain is pattern-seeking.

When the brain finds a pattern, the world becomes safer and more predictable. Visual routines create safety.
Brain Smart Principle #2

The best exercise for the brain is exercise.

Exercise relieves depression, repairs cognitive disorders like ADHD, and enhances higher thinking skills.
Brain Smart Principle #3

Human connections on the outside build neural connections on the inside. Meaningful connections build bonds between people making each person in the interaction feel a sense of connection and belonging.
Brain Smart Principle #4

The brain functions optimally when we feel safe, both physically and psychologically.

This requires that adults control their upset.
Brain State Model

Executive State
Prefrontal Lobes

Emotional State
Limbic System

Survival State
Brain Stem

**KEY POINT:** Your internal brain state **DICTATES** your behavior.
The Three Brain States
The Survival State
Survival State: Represented by the Brain Stem

Facts & Functions:
- Online at birth
- Unconscious
- Survival systems
- Modulates states of arousal

Developmental Need:
- Safety
Survival State

• When a threat is perceived, a message is sent to the brain stem to react. The brain stem sends out adrenaline and cortisol and prepares the body to fight, flee, or freeze for protection.

• Most responses are **physical and unconscious**.

• In our survival state, we are asking: “Am I safe?”
Survival State Behaviors

**FIGHT**
- Hitting
- Pushing
- Slapping
- Throwing objects

**FLIGHT**
- Running
- Hiding
- Avoiding

**FREEZE**
- Shutting down/ Withdraw
- Surrendering

**Characteristics:** No eye contact. Usually non-verbal except for crying/screaming, physical aggression, or feeling resistant, tense, or powerless.
What Helps You Feel Safe?
## Active Calming Strategies

- Take a least three belly breaths and use positive inner talk (“I can calm. I am safe. I can handle this.”).
- Say “STOP,” rub your hands together, and list 6 things you enjoy.
- Go to your safe place.
- Stretch in your chair.
- Imagine your safe/happy place and go there in your mind; breathe deeply and use positive inner talk.
- Draw or doodle.
- Develop a journal writing system for emotional expression.
- Take a drive or a walk. Being in nature helps.
- Talk to a friend or a caring, safe adult.
Structures or Skills to Use

S - Set up a safe place
A - Actively use an assertive tone – a voice of no doubt
F - Focus on yourself first
E - Engage in deep breathing
T - Try routines in pictures – show what TO DO
Y - Yawn
1 Minute Brain Break
The Emotional State
Emotional State: Represented by the Limbic System

Facts & Functions:
• Unconscious
• Emotional tone, flexible or rigid, positive or negative
• Tags events as internally important
• Stores highly charged emotional memories
• Controls appetite and sleep cycles

Developmental Need:
• Connection
Emotional State – Limbic System

• When things do not go our way, we become emotional. We feel mad, sad, frustrated, disappointed, embarrassed, etc.

• Our actions and words are often hurtful because we are reacting to how we feel.

• We need connection. We are asking: “Does anyone love or care about me?”
Emotional State Behaviors

- Hurtful words and actions
- Crying, yelling, arguing
- Name-calling, profanity
- Blaming, whining
- Social aggressiveness
- Spreading rumors, cyberbullying
- Impatient, snappy, irritable

**Characteristics:** Body relaxes. Eye contact present and helpful touch is welcome.
What Do You See?
What Do You See?
What Do You See?
What emotions have you felt in the last week?

happy  angry  jealous  scared  awesome  silly
frustrated  surprised  shy  disappointed  confused  impatient
nervous  proud  grumpy  excited  curious  sleepy
sad  sick  embarrassed  worried  hurt  confident
Sympathy vs Empathy
## Empathy, Encouragement, and Connection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide empathy</th>
<th>Be “the Bear.” Actively listen. Acknowledge feelings. Ask if there is anything you can do to be helpful.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide encouragement</td>
<td>Say, &quot;This is so hard, but you can do hard things and I will be right beside you all along the way.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Give children the opportunity to feel in control as much as possible and make decisions (choices).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Show interest in things/activities they enjoy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Leave notes (love, funny, or just “thinking of you” notes) in unusual places.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Create a special ritual or tradition with them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Give a child a job or some way to positively contribute to school, family, or home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structures or Skills to Use</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Empathize</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Manage emotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Band with close friends or someone you trust</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Relax and establish rituals</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Actively listen</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Clarify choices</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Encourage</td>
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Executive State: Represented by the Prefrontal Lobes

Facts & Functions:
- Impulse control/self-control
- Empathy
- Working memory
- Sustained attention
- Planning, prioritization, initiation
- Organization, time management
- Goal persistence, and more

Developmental Need:
- Problem-solving in social settings
Executive State – Prefrontal Lobes

• Behaviors exhibited in this state are problem-solving and learning.

• This is the only state when we are fully conscious of our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and able to access all the skills we have and respond appropriately, rather than react.

• We are asking: **What can I learn or solve?**

**Characteristics:** Willing, ready to learn, reflective, can see an impact on others, can problem solve or ask for help.
Executive Functioning Skills

- **Attention**: Staying focused in spite of distractibility, boredom, or fatigue.
- **Time management**: Estimating how much time one has and how to allocate it.
- **Organization**: Keeping track of information or materials.
- **Prioritization**: Seeing what is most important and making a plan to get it all done.
- **Working memory**: Remembering important details and drawing on past learning.
- **Impulse control**: Controlling urges and thinking before acting.
- **Flexibility**: Adapting to changing conditions.
- **Empathy**: Seeing from another’s point of view.
- **Emotional control**: Managing emotions.
- **Metacognition**: Seeing the big picture, reflecting, self-monitoring, and evaluating.
- **Goal achievement**: Setting goals and following through to completion.
- **Task initiation**: Beginning projects without undue procrastination.
Lend Your Executive Skills

Model executive functioning skills.

Pay attention to patterns. Take notes each time a child blows up, shuts down, etc., and you will likely determine the trigger. You can then change how you redirect that child.

Focus on being the healthiest you. We can’t give what we don’t have.

Instead of assuming a child is choosing to do or not do something, change the question you ask.

Instead of, “What is wrong with you?” Say, “Tell me what is happening?”
Structures or Skills to Use

- Impose consequences
- Navigate your executive skills
- Find solutions
- Offer positive intent to self and others
Personal Growth and Development

• Practice identifying brain states in yourself and others.
• Find what helps you shift yourself to your executive state.
• Practice new skills with family, friends, and colleagues. **Shift yourself first. Then shift the other person by giving them what they need.** Remember the acronyms:
  – SAFETY
  – EMBRACE
  – INFO
• Strengthen your own executive functioning skills.
• Remember: You are not alone!
Let’s Practice
Collaboration

- We will count you off.
- Sit at a table with new districts.
- Collaborate to complete the worksheet
  Brain States: Practice
<p>| | | |</p>
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| 1 | Ms. Green addresses Sean for calling a peer names. Sean irritably exclaims that it wasn’t him and proceeds to blame a classmate. | Emotional (Blue) 
Name calling |
| 2 | Andre notices a peer struggling with a math problem and proceeds to help them solve it. | Executive (Green) 
Helpful |
| 3 | During class worktime, Anna has her head down and Ms. Reyes approaches her to kindly ask what’s wrong. Anna snaps and says she is tired because she didn’t sleep last night. | Emotional (Blue) 
Snappy/irritable |
| 4 | Mr. Reynolds hears a raucous in class and sees Fiona under the table with a furrowed brow. Each time Mr. Reynolds tries to speak with her, she growls. | Survival (Red) 
“Fight” & can’t speak |
| 5 | Cynthia is reading aloud and comes across a difficult word. She takes a deep breath, sounds out the word, and continues to read. | Executive (Green) 
Goal persistence and self-control |
| 6 | Ben tries to argue with his teacher each time he is given a directive during class. | Emotional (Blue) 
Arguing |
| 7 | Ms. Smith and Sarah go back and forth on Sarah needing to stay seated and quiet during testing. Sarah slams the desk, gets up, and walks out of the classroom. | Survival (Red) 
“Flight” & leave |
| 8 | Tim can recall last week’s lesson to inform his next steps. | Executive (Green) 
Working memory |
| 9 | Jimmy, normally engaged in class, hears a peer say something upsetting. He stops speaking to anyone and withdraws, keeping to himself for the rest of the class period. | Survival (Red) 
“Freeze” & withdraw |
Summary & Key Take-Aways
People's reactions are directly linked to which brain state they are in.

You can respond more effectively to create a more positive and safe school climate by identifying brain states.
Human connections on the outside build neural connections on the inside.

Rituals for younger children or moments of connection for older youth create bonding by providing the necessary ingredients of eye contact, touch, and presence in a playful and positive situation.

I Love You Rituals - Guide For Meaningful Connections

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3PtrlnUm4U
Key Take Aways

What learning from today will I share in my district?

What do I need more information on to implement?

What can I put into practice right away?
Action Plan
Action Plan: Next Session

School Mental Health Implementation Workbook

A Resource for the North Texas School Mental Health Executive Learning Community

2024 - 2025

- Next session you will receive the School Mental Health Implementation Workbook.

- The workbook will guide you to complete an action plan based on the year's learnings and your district's needs.

- We will be having time at the end of each session to work on your action plans.

- You will get a soft copy and hard copy.

- Please bring it to each session to work on.
Feedback Survey & What’s Coming Up Next

Please assist us in making the time you spend with us valuable by providing your feedback.

Coming up next…
April 24, 2024

MTSS Overview and Tier 1
An overview of the components of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports with a focus on Tier 1.

Community Partner:
UTSW and Children's Health
Texas Childrens Health Access Through Telemedicine (TCHATT)

Partner

Charles Butt Foundation
Thank You!

Questions? Email ehenderson@mmhpi.org