



Spotlight on Mental Health

through an MTSS lens

Despite the need for services, mental health has not traditionally been seen as the core business of schools. In recent years that belief has shifted, and many schools see the inclusion of social/emotional and mental health in basic services as necessary as language arts and math. More than half of youth that received mental health services were identified in a school setting (Farmer, 2003). Educators and their community partners share an interest in addressing the mental health needs of young people by encouraging youth to cope with stress, work and learn productively, and contribute to their communities. (World Health Organization, 2014). The Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol (WISSP) is being developed to assist schools with collaborating with community providers to make sure barriers to academic success are eliminated.

- Read more about WISSP <http://www.k12.wa.us/Workgroups/ISS.aspx>
- Read more about Project AWARE's school mental health efforts <http://www.k12.wa.us/SecondaryEducation/AWARE.aspx>

The FACTS

- In Washington, over 30% of youth in grades 10 and 12 reported depressive feelings, including feeling sad or hopeless for at least two weeks in the last year. Over 25% of 8th graders reported depressive feelings (2014).
- 20% of youth ages 13-18 have, or will have a serious mental illness.
- Nearly 50% of students age 14 and older with a mental illness drop out of high school.

Why address mental health in schools?

- Reduces barriers to access to mental health services and supports
- Early identification and treatment is vital for improved quality of life
- Provides schools with the resources necessary to meet the needs of students within an MTSS

