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# Mental Health Advocacy Day

## School Mental Health

January 31, 2018

Every day in schools across VT there are students who arrive in classrooms with more than what they carry in their backpacks. Too many students come to school feeling hungry, tired, frustrated and alone. Many have been exposed to trauma and just as many are living with in chronic chaos and uncertainty of safety. These students who are impacted by alcohol and drugs, are homeless, have physical or mental health- related issues, are in danger of dropping out of school, or are struggling with a learning disability often lack vital connections to their family, their school and their communities.

Our local schools are the centralized location where all of these different life experiences come together for 6.5 to 7 hours a day. It is in our schools where the manifestation and ramification of trauma and lack of safety in the lives of our youth is displayed daily. Mental health supports and services for these developing youth is not only critical, it is necessary and neglectful if not provided. Understanding the importance of education, and one's ability to be educated, means understanding the necessity of mental wellness. Without the ability to self- regulate and control emotional and behavioral responses our capacity to learn new information is compromised and limited at best.

Integrated mental health supports are a necessary part of the MTSS system of supports and intervention. Offering mental health support at the universal level, secondary level and the tertiary level assists in meeting the social and emotional education needs of students. What WCMHS we have created services to support student and schools in all levels of intervention.

The numbers of students attending school who are in need of mental health supports is quite significant. Washington County Mental Health offers a number of programs to our local systems to assist with the mental health needs of the students. The number of students involved in these programs is large and consistently there waiting list for students in need of the service in order to achieve success or at a minimum maintain placement in their local school.

## **WCMHS Schools Based Services Programs:**

**Tier I supports or Universal level: All students**

**Tier II support or Secondary level: Targeted students, specialized instruction for students at risk of academic or social failure. Specialized group intervention.**

**Tier III or Tertiary Intensive level: Individualized interventions for students with intense and chronic behavior challenges. Student specific intervention.**

**Tier I and Tier II: School Based- PBIS Clinician Program (PBIS analyst):** The PBIS Behavior Clinician Program provides collaborative educational and mental health supports in schools serving up to 10 identified and 10-25 “unidentified” students in collaboration with the student’s educational team.

**Currently: 13 Behavior Analyst in 13 schools**

**Each analyst supports 10 “identified” (active clients) for a total of 130 students**

**On average each analyst supports approximately 20 additional youth ( not active clients) for a total of 260 students.**

**Tier II: Positive Behavior Classroom (PBC):** the Positive Behavior Classroom provides collaborative educational and mental health supports to children with intensive social, emotional, and behavioral needs in collaboration with Barre City Elementary and Middle School (BCEMS).

**Capacity: 12 students**

**Current enrollment: 10 students**

**Referrals/waitlist: 9 students**

**Tier II and Tier III: STARS: Specialized Treatments And Reaching Success:** The STARS Program of WCMHS offers a center based program for children and youth experiencing an Autism Spectrum Disorder and or Development Delay.

**Current enrollment: 23 students**

**Referrals/waitlist: 3 students**

**Tier III: School Based Behavioral Intervention Services Program ( SBBIS):** provides 1 on 1 support to identified youth at risk for “out of school” placement due to their mental health and behavioral needs.

**Current Enrollment: 67 youth**

**Referrals/ waitlist: 6 youth**

**Tier III: Beckley Day Program (BDP):** is a short-term tutorial program available for students served (or willing to be served) by the WCMHS SBBIS Program in grades K-6 that are having acute difficulties accessing their education in a mainstream environment.

**Currently enrollment and capacity: 12 students (at capacity)**

**Referrals/waitlist: 3 students**

Collectively the School Based Services Programs at WCMHS serve

**244 active students**

**227 “unidentified” students**

**Total of approximately 471 students**