

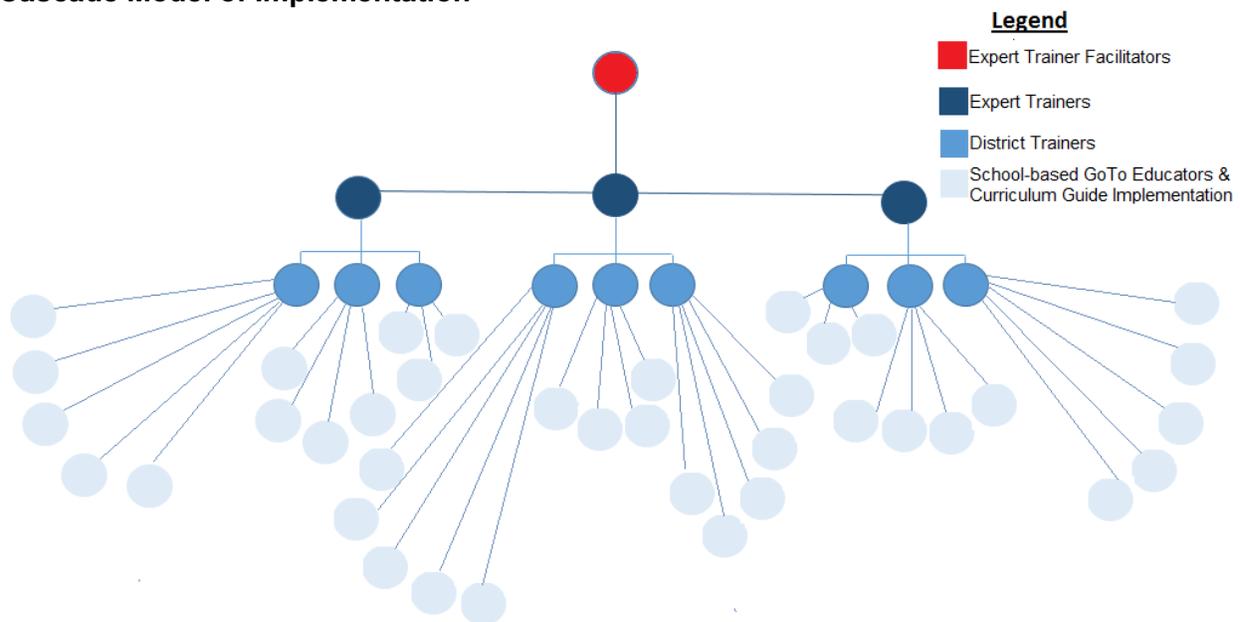
# Implementing a BC Mental Health Literacy Strategy for Schools: A 3-Stage Professional Development Program

## Proposed Provincial Funding for Stage 1: Building Capacity at the School District Level

It is time to build on the considerable work in developing [mental health literacy](#) (MHL) already underway in BC school districts – catalyzed in large part by recent MHL in-service sessions led by nationally and internationally known experts and scholars, [Dr. Kutcher](#) and [Dr. Wei](#). In 2015, an introductory two-day session was attended by district leaders, educators and counsellors from 9 Lower Mainland BC school districts, and many of these participants have since led school- and district-based sessions for colleagues and students. In 2017, North and West Vancouver leaders, educators, staff and parents participated in a one-week intensive in-service, and followed up with a successful implementation of the program applied in both districts. Richmond educators attended a summer [Go-To Educator](#) in-service in Nova Scotia and are now implementing a district MHL strategy with a recent hire and programs in two pilot schools.

Given the demonstrated success of the implementation in improving meaningful outcomes for students and teachers, a meeting of committed stakeholders (see appendix 1) and representatives from the Ministry of Education was convened by the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia to develop, frugally deploy and properly evaluate the best available evidence-based ProD program widely across the province. The outcome of the meeting was a decision to move ahead as quickly as possible to implement this program using a cascade model, systematically applied and evaluated.

### Cascade Model of Implementation



This proposal maps out a three-stage professional development program:

- 1) Expert Trainers from each district are trained in an intensive 3-day institute,
- 2) Expert Trainers from each District provide in-service to develop District Trainers, and
- 3) District Trainers train school-based Go-To Educators as well as regular classroom teachers.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

### *Stage 1 - Building Capacity at the Provincial Level*

- a) Creation of a **BC Mental Health Literacy Implementation Steering Committee** (representatives from the committed stakeholders group (appendix 1) and Ministry of Education) and development of an implementation, communication and evaluation plan.
- b) Training of **Expert Trainers** (2 or 3 selected representatives from participating school districts, comprised of a school mental health clinician and a lead administrator and/or senior educator).

### EXPERT TRAINER TRAINING

#### **Embedding Mental Health Literacy and Identification and Support to Students With Mental Disorders in School Setting (Grades 7-12)**

**PURPOSE:** To train participants as Expert Trainers who then return to their districts and train a group of District Trainers who then train school-based Go-To Educators in their districts (to identify, triage, refer and support students with mental health problems and mental disorders in the school setting) and also train others in the use of the Guide (the classroom mental health literacy resource) as part of a district-developed implementation strategy.

**EXPERT TRAINERS:** Should comprise 2-3 individuals per district and be a combination of school services providers with expertise in youth mental health (such as counselors, psychologists, etc.), a district administrator and a teacher-leader. One Expert Trainers group will be trained for each participating district. They will then train a larger District Trainers group selected by district administration.

### *Stage 2. Building Capacity at the District Level*

- a) Expert Trainers return to their districts and implement the ProD Program by first training **District Trainers** (comprised of school mental health clinicians, teacher-leaders, counsellors, local health/mental health care providers)
- b) District Trainers train **Go-To Educators** in every school; they also conduct inservice sessions for **teachers** on the use of the [Guide resource](#).
- c) An evaluation of the impact of the ProD Program is conducted, and the results are provided to the Ministry of Education and other identified stakeholders.
- d) A knowledge mobilization plan reporting on the outcomes and process of the implementation is created and delivered provincially and nationally.

The ProD Program consists of two separate but related components, [the Guide](#) and the [Go-To Educator training](#). Both of these have been thoroughly evaluated and researched with significant, substantial and sustained positive results for both students and teachers reported in publically available evaluations and in the peer-reviewed literature (Appendix 2). The recent and ongoing application of this intervention in North and West Vancouver has been the focus of recent laudatory media reports addressing the positive impact of the program (<https://globalnews.ca/news/3876529/north-vancouver-mental-health-course/> )

## **TRAIN THE DISTRICT TRAINER SESSIONS (conducted by trained Expert Trainers)**

**PURPOSE:** To train participants as District Trainers for the implementation of the ProD Program (the Guide and Go-To Educator training) in their district.

**DISTRICT TRAINERS:** Should be lead educators and student service providers identified by administration. Ideally, they should have some formal mental health education or work experience, e.g., previous mental health training, volunteer work with mental health service, etc. A small number of key local health/mental health providers should, whenever possible, be invited to participate. They will not necessarily become District Trainers but will become aware of the ProD Program and get to know key district representatives and members of the District Trainer teams, thus facilitating communication between education and health sectors.

**DISTRICT TRAINER TEAMS:** School districts are encouraged to create and maintain teams of District Trainers of 4-6 individuals who will provide the training for the ProD Program to teachers and other in-school personnel and who will become the support group for classroom teachers who are implementing the Guide resource in their classrooms.

### ***Stage 3: Building Capacity at the School Level***

## **TRAINING OF SELECTED GO-TO EDUCATORS AND CLASSROOM TEACHERS**

**PURPOSE:** To train classroom teachers who will be using the Guide resource in their classrooms and to train Go-To Educators in each school. To train Go-To Educators in each school as well as classroom teachers who will be using the Guide.

**PROCESS:** The District Trainers will work with district administration to create a district-wide implementation and evaluation plan. They will then conduct the Go-To Educator training for those educators and other school personnel selected to receive this training. They will also conduct ProD sessions on the use of the Guide resource for those classroom teachers who will be applying it in their classrooms. An evaluation plan will also be developed and implemented. Information from the process and evaluation will be reported to the Implementation Steering Committee.

## **EDUCATOR-DIRECTED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

School-based teams of educators and/or individuals may direct their own professional learning. One way of focusing this work is accessing the [Mental Health Literacy MOOC](#), an online, modular mental health curriculum resource with built-in inservice for secondary educators. One form of ProD is already taking place in some BC schools wherein groups of educators, counsellors, leaders form communities of practice using the MOOC as focal point for professional learning. Other options are possible. These decisions are best left to educators, schools and districts.

## **EVALUATION OF PRO D PROGRAM**

Embedding state-of-the-art evaluations into the rollout of this work is an excellent opportunity to both “know” and “learn” as you go. The “know”ing is obtained through quantitative study and identifies the impact of the work on key outcomes measures and the “learn”ing is obtained through qualitative study and identifies how different districts achieved success and overcame barriers to do so. The evaluations can be tailored to the needs of the entire rollout process and also to unique interests from each participating district. The quantitative component can be applied using well-established outcome measures (knowledge, stigma, help-seeking efficacy, wellness), which can be augmented by others of interest (for example, perceived stress, school connectedness, etc.). These can be applied for both teachers and students alike. The qualitative aspects can be applied using components derived from a theory of change framework and can be obtained using well established techniques, such as key informant interviews, focus groups, etc.

A Provincial Mental Health Literacy Implementation Steering Committee, comprised of key stakeholders (BCTF, BCSSA, BCPVPA, Ministry of Education, BC School Counsellors, UBC Faculties of Education and Medicine, and others) will work with Dr. Kutcher and Dr. Wei to develop and deploy an evaluation framework and analysis of the results that can address key questions related to the implementation of this application. The information gleaned from this will be mobilized through the activities of the collaborators on this project and be made available across British Columbia to all interested districts and beyond, across Canada and interested educators globally.

## Appendix 1

### Books

- Kutcher, S., Wei, Y., & Weist, M.D. (Eds.). (2015). *School mental health: Global challenges and opportunities*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, NY.

### Book Chapters

- Kutcher, S., Wei, Y., & Hashish, M. (2016). Mental health literacy for students and teachers: A “school friendly” approach. In M. Hodes (Ed.), *Positive mental health for children and adolescents*.
- Wei, Y. & Kutcher S. (2015). International school mental health: Global lessons. In S. Kutcher, Y. Wei, & Weist, M. (Eds.), *School mental health: Global challenges and opportunities*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wei, Y., Kutcher, S., Blackwood, A., Glover, D., et al. (2015). A collaborative and sustainable approach to address mental health promotion and early identification in schools in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia and beyond. In S Kutcher, Y. Wei, & M. Weist (Eds), *School mental health: Global challenges and opportunities*. Cambridge University Press.

### Journal Articles

- Carr, W., Wei, Y., Kutcher, S., & Heffernan, A. (2017). Preparing for the classroom: Mental health knowledge improvement and stigma reduction and their retention with enhanced help-seeking efficacy in Canadian pre-service education. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*. [doi: 10.1177/0829573516688596](https://doi.org/10.1177/0829573516688596)
- Kutcher, S. (2017). Child and youth mental health: Investing in the front end. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry/La Revue canadienne de psychiatrie*, 62(4), 232-234. [DOI:10.1177/0706743717698670](https://doi.org/10.1177/0706743717698670)
- Kutcher, S., Wei, Y., & Coniglio, C. (2016). Mental health literacy: Past, present and future. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 61(3), 154-158.
- Kutcher, S., Bagnell, A., & Wei, Y. (2015). Mental health literacy in secondary schools: A Canadian approach. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America* 24(2), 233-244.
- Kutcher, S., Wei, Y., & Morgan, C. (2015). Successful application of a Canadian mental health curriculum resource by regular classroom teachers in significantly and sustainably improving student mental health literacy. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry/La Revue canadienne de psychiatrie*, 60(12), 580-586.
- Kutcher, S. & Wei, Y. (2014) School mental health literacy: A national curriculum guide shows promising results. *Education Canada*. March. [www.cea-ace.ca/educationcanada](http://www.cea-ace.ca/educationcanada)
- Kutcher, S., Wei, Y., McLuckie, A., & Bullock, L. (2013). Educator mental health literacy: a program evaluation of the teacher training education on the Mental Health & High School Curriculum Guide. *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*, 6(2), 83-93.
- Kutcher, S., Doucet, L., & Wei, Y. (2012). Mental health guide for schools: A mental health literacy program for Canadian educators and youth. *The Register*. Winter.

- Kutcher, S., & Wei, Y. (2012). Mental health and the school environment: secondary schools, promotions and pathways to care. *Curr Opin Psychiatry*, 25(4), 311-316.
- McLuckie, A., Kutcher, S., Wei, Y., & Weaver, C. (2014). Sustained improvements in students' mental health literacy with use of a mental health curriculum in Canadian schools. *BMC Psychiatry*, 14(1),1694.
- Milin, R., Kutcher, S., Lewis, S.P., Walker, S., Wei, Y., Ferrill, N., & Armstrong, M.A. (2016). Impact of a mental health curriculum on knowledge and stigma among high school students: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 55(5), 383-391.
- Wei ,Y., Kutcher, S., Hines, H., & MacKay, A. (2014) Successfully embedding mental health literacy into Canadian classroom curriculum by building on existing educator competencies and school structures: The Mental Health and High School Curriculum Guide for Secondary Schools. *Nova Scotia Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal (LICEJ)*, 5(3), 1158-1163.
- Wei, Y. & Kutcher, S. (2014). Innovations in practice: “Go-To” Educator training on the mental health competencies of educators in the secondary school setting: a program evaluation. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 19(3), 219-222.
- Wei, Y., Hayden, J., Kutcher, S., Zygmunt, A., & McGrath, P. (2013). The effectiveness of school mental health literacy programs to address knowledge, attitudes, and help-seeking among youth: A systematic review. *Early Intervention in Psychiatry*, 7(2), 109-21.
- Wei, Y., & Kutcher, S. (2011). International school mental health: Global approaches, global challenges, and global opportunities. *Child Adolesc Psychiatr Clin N Am*, 102(1), 11-27.

Additional information about the Guide and GoTo Educator Training model, including research on its implementation in other provinces:

Alberta:

<http://teenmentalhealth.org/alberta/literacy-and-training/>

Nova Scotia:

[http://teenmentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Go-ToTeacherTraining\\_InterimReportforNovaScotia-2.pdf](http://teenmentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Go-ToTeacherTraining_InterimReportforNovaScotia-2.pdf)

Additional information about MHL Trainer of Trainer model:

<http://teenmentalhealth.org/product-tag/evaluations-and-reports/>

More about TeenMentalHealth

<https://educhatter.wordpress.com/2017/07/25/teen-mental-health-programs-what-works-and-why-in-the-classroom/>