

APPENDIX D: SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH (SBMH) REFERRAL PATHWAY EXAMPLE

The SBMH services flowchart outlines the general process for responding to student mental health concerns within a school-based mental health framework. The process begins when a referral is received or a concern is identified, followed by an initial assessment to evaluate symptoms, level of risk, and student needs. Students experiencing an immediate crisis should follow established crisis response protocols. Based on the level of concern, students may receive universal, targeted, or intensive supports. If concerns persist, students may move to higher levels of intervention and support. Schools should continue coordinating services and monitoring student progress to ensure supports remain appropriate and responsive to student needs. This referral pathway is an example. LEAs should adapt it to their policies, procedures, services, and community resources.

SBMH SERVICES FLOWCHART PROCESS

1. A referral is received or a concern is identified
2. An initial assessment is conducted to evaluate symptoms, risk, and student needs
3. Determine whether the student is experiencing an immediate crisis
 - i. If yes, activate crisis response protocols
 - ii. If no, continue determining the appropriate level of support
4. Determine the severity of the student's concern, match the student with the appropriate SBMH professional, and decide whether outside mental health services should be recommended.
5. Students with lower levels of concern may receive universal Tier 1 supports, including prevention supports and classroom interventions
6. Students requiring additional intervention may receive targeted Tier 2 supports, including small group supports, skill development, and barrier reduction strategies
7. Students with persistent or elevated concerns may receive targeted Tier 3 supports, including individualized interventions, safety planning, and individual counseling or therapy
8. Students with significant or ongoing needs may receive intensive Tier 3 supports, including individual therapy, wraparound supports, threat assessments, and Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs)

9. Students may also be referred to a multidisciplinary team or community mental health supports when appropriate
10. Schools should continue coordinating services, monitoring progress, and adjusting supports based on student needs
11. A safety plan may be needed after a crisis or significant intervention
12. Return-to-learn planning should be implemented after an extended absence due to physical or mental illness

