

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

School health services shall be a part of a comprehensive approach to caring for students with mental health issues.

AUTHORIZATION/LEGAL REFERENCE:

16 V.S.A. § 2902 - Tiered system of supports and educational support team
<http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/16/099/02902>

16 V.S.A. § 2943 Secretary of Education for children with disabilities; powers
<http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/16/101/02943>

33 V.S.A. § 4305 – Coordinated system of care
<http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/33/043/04305>

Vermont Agency of Education – VT Standards Board for Professional Educators 5440-65/65A School Nurse/ Associate School Nurse (April 12, 2017) <http://education.vermont.gov/documents/educator-quality-licensing-rules#page34> pg. 132- 137

DEFINITIONS/CONTEXT

“Emotional and psychiatric health is necessary for optimal academic success (Stevenson, 2010). Mental health is a key component in children’s healthy development; children need to be healthy in order to learn, grow, and lead productive lives. Understanding the relationship between frequent health office visits or somatic complaints as a sign of underlying problems, which may be organic or psycho emotional in origin, requires the unique skill set of the school nurse”. ([National Association of School Nurses \(NASN\), 2013, ¶ 20](#))

The term “mental” when used in this document is intended to encompass “behavioral,” “neurodevelopmental,” “psychiatric,” “psychological,” “emotional,” and “substance abuse,” as well as family context¹⁻⁶ and community-related concerns such as child abuse and neglect, separation or divorce of parents, domestic violence, parental or family mental health issues, natural disasters, school crises, military deployment of children's loved ones, and the grief and loss accompanying any of these issues or the illness or death of family members ([American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)- Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health Task Force on Mental Health \(COPACFH\) 2014, p.1.](#))

To avoid confusion with the work of clinicians trained and educated in the diagnosis and treatment of mental health disorders, the terms emotional and behavioral health are preferred when describing the scope and practice of school nursing in Vermont.

REQUIRED SCHOOL NURSE/ASSOCIATE SCHOOL NURSE ROLES:

- Health care services must be provided for students who qualify for services under IDEA or Section 504 to meet requirements of federal laws. The school nurse has an important role in interpreting a student’s health status, in explaining the impairment, and in interpreting medical and other health information in relation to the expanded standards for eligibility under Section 504 (Zirkel, 2009). This includes mental health disabilities.

- Development of individualized health care plans (IHP) is a nursing responsibility and is based on standards of care that are regulated by State Nurse Practice Acts and cannot be delegated to unlicensed individuals ([National Council of State Boards of Nursing \[NCSBN\], 2015](#)).
- Encourage and support medication compliance, therapy, related treatments and follow-up care.

SUGGESTED SCHOOL NURSE/ASSOCIATE SCHOOL NURSE ROLES:

- Collaborate with and serves as a resource for school staff, students, families and community health care professionals in the assessment, identification, intervention, referral, and follow-up of students with identified or emerging mental health needs.
- Promote family-centered care by facilitating between the school, parents and students with school and community resources for mental health services.
- Serve as a member of interdisciplinary teams on issues that involve mental health, including, but not limited to, IEP, 504, EST, Crisis Intervention teams.
- Participate in school interdisciplinary teams whose responsibility it is to create safe school environments, including issues of bullying, harassment and interpersonal violence, i.e. [PBIS](#), [MTSS](#)

RESOURCES:

American Academy of Pediatrics, Clinical Report. *Pediatrics*, February 2015, VOLUME 135 / ISSUE 2, Promoting Optimal Development: Screening for Behavioral and Emotional Problems
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/135/2/384>

American Academy of Pediatrics

- The Future of Pediatrics: Mental Health Competencies for Pediatric Primary Care Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health and Task Force on Mental Health (2009 and reaffirmed 2013-2014) <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/124/1/410>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Children's Mental Health

<https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/> and <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/basics.html>

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit (CHADD) /Hyperactivity Disorder www.chadd.org

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–5). Washington DC, American Psychiatric Association, 200013 <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm>

National Alliance on Mental Illness - <http://www.nami.org/>

National Association of School Nurses (NASN) –

- Mental Health of Students (Revised June 2013) <https://schoolnursenet.nasn.org/blogs/nasn-profile/2017/03/13/mental-health-of-students>
- Mental Health NASN Resources to Reduce Excessive Anxiety in Children on the Horizon NASN ... <https://www.nasn.org/nasn-resources/practice-topics/mental-health>

- The Role of the 21st Century School Nurse (Adopted June 2016) <https://schoolnursenet.nasn.org/blogs/nasn-profile/2017/03/13/the-role-of-the-21st-century-school-nurse>

National Mental Health Association (NMHA) - <http://www.nmha.org/>

- Back To School: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/back-school>

Vermont Agency of Education

- Interagency Coordination -- <http://education.vermont.gov/vermont-schools/school-operations/interagency-coordination>

Vermont Agency of Human Services

- Department of Mental Health - <http://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/>
- Act 264 – Flow Chart: <http://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/children-youth-and-family-services/act-264-interagency-agreement>

Zirkel, P., Granthom, M. & Lovato, L. (2012). Section 504 and student health problems: The pivotal position of the school nurse. *Journal of School Nursing*, 28, 423-432. Published online before print May 31, 2012. doi: 10.1177/1059840512449358