

Opportunities for Restorative and Comprehensive School Mental Health in CT

September 2026



A bridge to better behavioral health

The Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI) provides a bridge to better behavioral health and well-being for children, youth, and families in Connecticut and beyond.

Introductions



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Objectives

1

Participants will learn to apply the key elements of a **Comprehensive School Mental Health framework** to assess and strengthen student and staff well-being.

2

Participants will learn to access free **technical assistance and support** for implementation and quality improvement best practices.

3

Participants will learn about how to connect with their **local service array** and the importance of collaborative partnerships for sustainability.

4

Participants will learn how to **utilize and integrate the resources** provided in this session to implement them in their school settings.

Visit our website: CHDI.org



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Back to School Mental Health: Resources Schools and Providers Need to Know for 2026–2027

[Blog](#)

August 20, 2026

SHARE



To help schools, behavioral health providers, and families start the new school year ready to support their students, we've compiled this list of **free school mental health programs and resources** developed by CHDI, our partners, and colleagues from around the country.

Some examples of how this resource list can be used:

- **School-based clinicians** can share fact sheets and resources with teachers, school staff, and families
- **Administrators** can utilize resources to address student mental health in professional development or develop school mental health policy
- **Private practice or community-based providers** can share information with the children and families they treat or incorporate resources into back-to-school discussions in session
- **Teachers** can implement restorative practices, grounding activities, or discussion strategies into development of norms or classroom protocols
- **Parents and caregivers** can learn about common youth behavioral health conditions and treatments and find a provider

CHDI Comprehensive School Mental Health Resources

Assessment and Planning: The SHAPE System

CSMH System Building: CONNECTing to Care; Rural Health Transformation Project

Peer Support Pilot Program: Students Supporting Students

Trauma Treatment: CBITS and Bounce Back

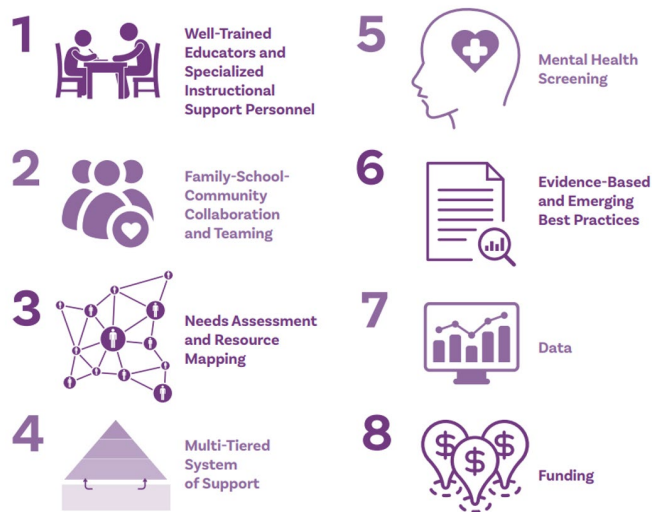
Diversion of Arrests: School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI and SBDI-E)



Comprehensive School Mental Health (CSMH) Core Components

- CSMH systems provide a **full array** of supports and services that promote a positive school climate, social-emotional learning, mental health, and wellbeing while reducing the prevalence and severity of mental illness

Figure 3. Core Features of a Comprehensive School Mental Health System



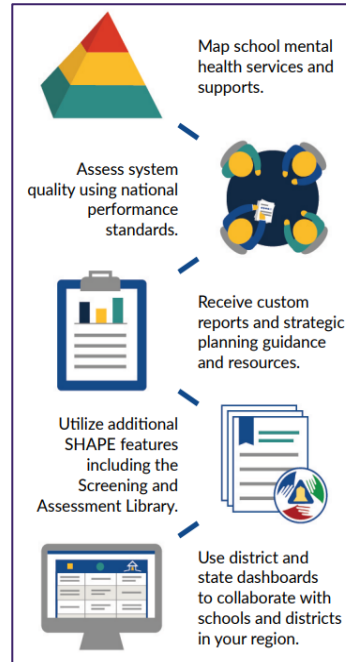
Source: Hoover, S., Lever, N., Sachdev, N., Bravo, N., Schlitt, J., Acosta Price, O., Sheriff, L. & Cashman, J. (2019). Advancing Comprehensive School Mental Health: Guidance From the Field. Baltimore, MD: National Center for School Mental Health. University of Maryland School of Medicine

School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation (SHAPE) system



School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation (SHAPE)

The School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation (SHAPE) System is a **public-access, web-based** platform that offers schools, districts, and states a workspace and targeted resources to support school mental health quality improvement.



Assess. Complete the School Mental Health Quality Assessment.

A grid of eight assessment modules, each represented by a blue square icon with a white triangle and a specific icon inside. Each module has a 'Take Survey' and 'View Report' button below it.

- Training
- Needs Assessment/Resource Mapping
- Screening
- Mental Health Promotion Services & Supports
- Early Intervention and Treatment Services & Supports
- Planning and Sustainability
- Support

Improve. The SHAPE Resource Center houses free resources to help your team advance school mental health.

Support. State and district dashboards provide leaders with the opportunity to view the landscape of school mental health to guide technical assistance and quality improvement.

SHAPE Assessments

School Mental Health
Profile

School Mental Health
Quality Assessment
(SMHQA)

Trauma-Responsive
Schools
Implementation
Assessment (TRS-IA)

Organizational Well-
Being for Schools
(OWBI-S)

School Mental Health
Quality Assessment for
Family Engagement
(SMHQA-FE)

Culturally Responsive,
Anti-Racist and
Equitable Schools
Assessment (CARE)

Preschool School
Mental Health Quality
Assessment (SMHQA-
PS)

CONNECTing Schools to Care IV Students (CONNECT IV)



Partnerships



Funded by a Systems of Care Expansion and Sustainability Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

CONNECT IV Purpose

- **A system of care (SOC)** is a variety of effective, community-based services and supports for children and youth with/or at risk for mental health or other challenges and their families.
- **Purpose of CONNECT**
 - To blend and integrate all child-serving systems into a Network of Care which will equally and effectively serve all children and families.
 - Offer additional support to schools through expansion and integration of trauma-informed comprehensive school mental health supports with the existing community-based network of care.

CONNECT IV goals



Expand the infrastructure for an integrated school- and community-based behavioral health network of care



Expand **school and family awareness**, knowledge and access to information about behavioral health, trauma, and crisis response



Build capacity of Connecticut's schools to access and utilize community-based behavioral health resources and supports for school mental health



Implement and sustain **equitable and comprehensive school mental health** supports

Websites

Plan4Children

Connecticut's roadmap for children's behavioral health

Guiding our state's efforts to
build a behavioral health
system **that benefits all
children.**

Learn More →

SCAN HERE



Supports & Services

Training & Info

About Us

Get Involved

English



Connecting Connecticut Children & Families
to Behavioral Health Care

The State of Connecticut is working on improving Children's Behavioral Health supports and services. On Connecting to Care CT you will find information that will help you better understand, navigate, and find children's behavioral health services near you.

SCAN HERE



Toolkits

The Connect4Families Toolkit helps families, schools, and pediatric providers collaborate and connect children to behavioral health services and supports in Connecticut.

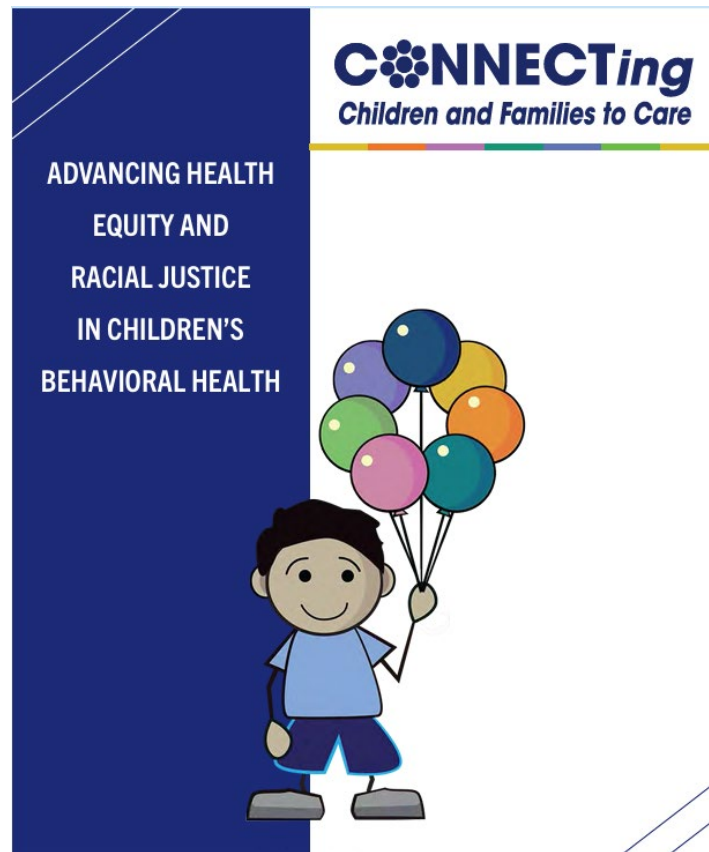
The toolkit includes a comprehensive service directory to facilitate referrals, along with best practices, tips, strategies, customizable communication forms, and more.

Toolkit sections include:

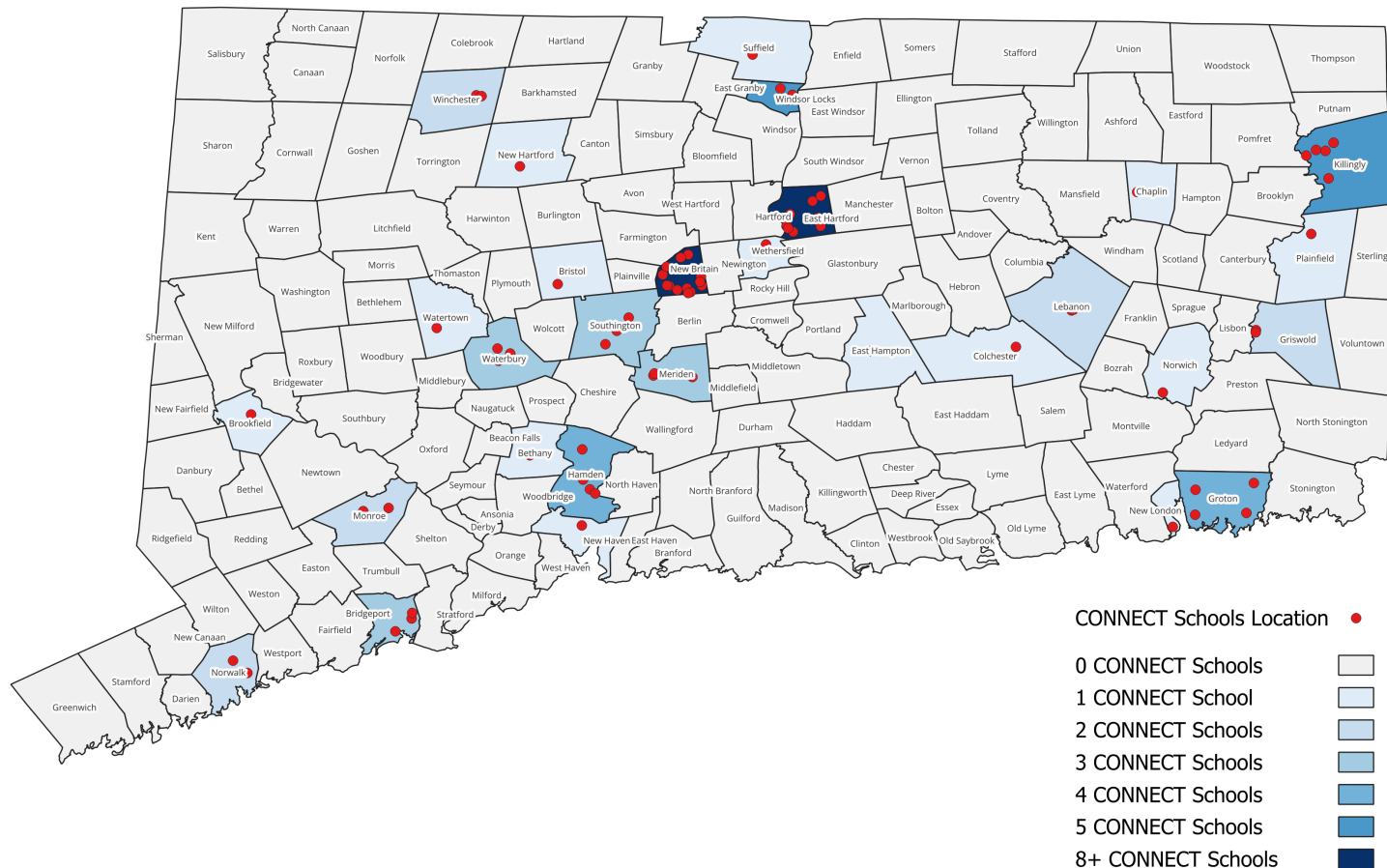
1. [Find Behavioral Health Services and Supports](#)
2. [The Why, What, How, and When of Effective Collaboration](#)
3. [Electronic Tools to Support Collaboration](#)
4. [Confidentiality Protections and Consent to Share](#)
5. [Collaboration Tips from Parents, Youth, and Providers](#)
6. [The Evolving Coding and Billing Landscape for Providers](#)



[View CONNECT4Families Online Toolkit](#)



CONNECT IV Enrolled Schools- 79 Schools





Listen & Learn Sessions

Strengthen your school's behavioral health programming!

Join a session to learn about a **free opportunity to enhance student behavioral health** through the CONNECT IV initiative!

- Connection to community providers
- Financial incentives for completing grant activities
- Flexible participation options

Session 1: 9/23/2026
3:30 - 4:00 PM

Session 2: 9/29/2026
9:00 - 9:30 AM

Visit plan4children.com/calendar or click the link in the caption to register.



**Scan code to register
for either session**

Students Supporting Students



Triple S Pilot Program

Peer Support in Schools

- **Purpose:**
 - To train middle and high school students to become part of a peer support team that recognizes mental health signs and symptoms in peers.
 - Help reduce the stigma in talking about mental health.
 - Encourage help-seeking from a trusted adult.



Outcomes and Resources

Students Supporting Students (TRIPLE S)

2025-2026 School Year Outcomes

4 Participating Schools

Peer Team Advisors 8



61 Peer Team Members

1,782

Students trained in NAMI Ending the Silence



Students Supporting Students:
A School-based Peer Support Program
ADVISOR GUIDE



Students Supporting Students:
A School-based Peer Support Program
PEER SUPPORT TEAM MEMBER GUIDE

Trauma Screening and Intervention

Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in
Schools (CBITS), Bounce Back, Trauma ScreenTIME
Schools Course

CBITS and BB Goals

- Short-term, evidence-based, manualized group interventions for youth reporting post-traumatic reactions due to exposure to violence, abuse, and other forms of trauma.

Goals:

- 1) Serve **as many eligible children** as possible
- 2) Ensure **high-quality** CBITS/BB is provided
- 3) Children demonstrate **positive outcomes**

KEY FINDINGS OF FY25:



1,575

students were screened for trauma exposure and associated symptoms, a decrease from 2,120 the previous year.

There was High satisfaction with CBITS/BB treatment among children **(85%)** and caregivers **(95%)**.



47 new clinicians were trained in CBITS and **35** new clinicians in BB.

652

students received CBITS or BB across **87 CBITS** and **76 BB** groups.

Most youth receiving CBITS and BB experienced reliable PTSD symptom reduction (**59.4%** and **68.6%** of children, respectively)



Children receiving CBITS and BB were more likely than the general child population and the CT school population to be Black/ African-American or Hispanic descent.

78.4% of children receiving CBITS and **86.6%** of children receiving BB successfully completed treatment.



100 schools and **12** other community-based organizations offered CBITS and/or BB.

For both CBITS and BB, older youth experienced greater improvement in trauma symptoms, and for CBITS, Hispanic youth experienced greater improvement.



**Schools really do
have a vested
interest in assessing
kids' well-being,
because mental
health is **inextricably
linked to learning.****

*Sharon Hoover, PhD, Co-Director
National Center for School
Mental Health*



Trauma
**SCREEN
TIME**

A PROGRAM OF



Child Health and
Development Institute

www.traumascreentime.org



The School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI)

SBDI Goals

- **Reduce** the number of discretionary arrests in school; reduce expulsions and out-of-school suspensions



Build knowledge and skills among teachers, school staff, and school resource officers to recognize and manage behavioral health crises in the school, and access needed community resources

- **Link** youth who are at-risk of arrest to appropriate school and community-based services and supports



Restorative Practices



Offer group training to SBDI cohort staff on:

- Intro to Restorative Practices
- Intro to Circles
- Intro to Restorative Conferencing

Individual school consultation and technical assistance provided for discipline policy and practice implementation

RP Implementation plan provided to each school at the end of the year

Responsive to Public Act 23-167, effective July 2025 that requires CT schools to respond to nonviolence incidents with RP



SCHOOL
BASED
DIVERSION
INITIATIVE

SBDI Outcomes 2009-2026

150+

SROs and
police officers

5,500+

teachers
and school staff

91,000+

students*

*enrolled during SBDI participation



82 schools



29 districts



28%

decrease in
court referrals



22%

increase in
Mobile Crisis calls



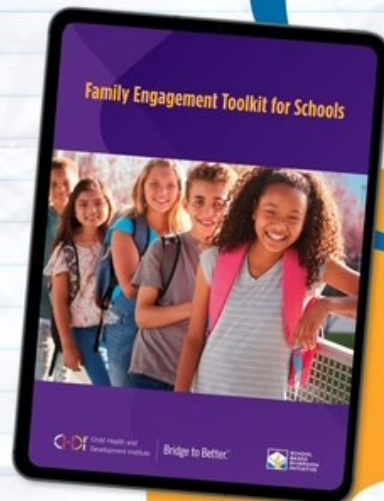
6%

decrease in
out-of-school suspensions

NEW RESOURCE

Family Engagement Toolkit for Schools

Strengthen
**school-family
partnerships**
with **practical
strategies** and
**ready-to-share
resources.**



Download at CHDI.org

School mental health is a team sport



Slide used with permission from Elizabeth Connors,
Associate Professor at Yale University



Keep in touch

For publications and resources on solutions that improve outcomes for children and their families, visit us at www.chdi.org, follow us on social media, and sign up for our email list!

