

Positive Mental Health Rubric: Background and Instructions

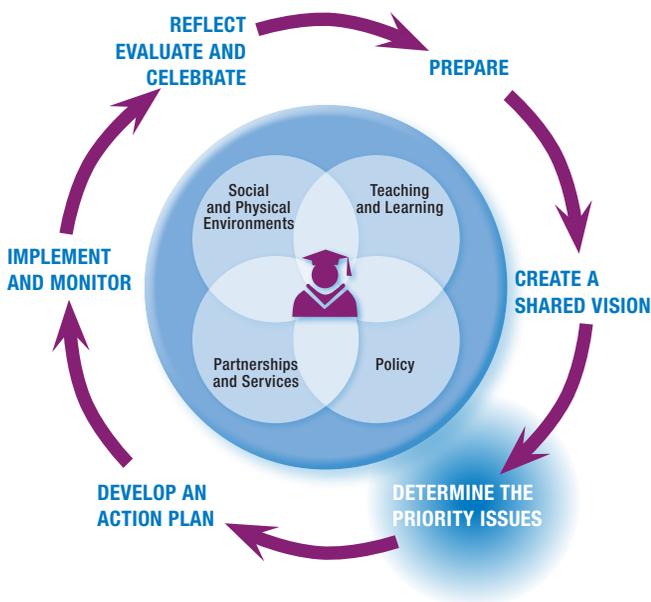
A rubric is one tool that can be used to assess the health of a school community.^a This user guide provides background information and instructions on how to conduct an assessment using the positive mental health rubric.

Materials

- Positive mental health rubric (included)

Purpose

The positive mental health rubric is an assessment tool designed to help a school community evaluate the factors that influence student mental health and well-being. The components of Comprehensive School Health (CSH) are embedded within this rubric to help identify mental health priorities within all areas of the school environment. Determining priority issues through school health assessments is one step in the process of building healthy school communities (see diagram). This rubric is one of several assessment tools available.^a



Process for Building Healthy School Communities using the Components of Comprehensive School Health

(Adapted from the Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund)

This assessment tool assists schools by

- offering insight into the overall quality of support for positive mental health in school environments
- helping identify priorities and set goals for improving mental health
- providing opportunities for collaborative assessment and planning
- identifying meaningful data to track as a measure of progress
- guiding the development, implementation and evaluation of positive mental health initiatives in schools
- initiating discussions related to positive mental health within the school community

All types of school community members (e.g., staff, students, parents, community representatives) can help complete the rubric. The rubric can be used in a variety of settings (e.g., health champion workshops, staff/parent council/administrator/student leadership meetings).

Method

1. It is recommended that you complete the healthy schools rubric^a prior to completing this positive mental health rubric. The healthy schools rubric may help identify other important focus areas for your school.
2. Review the “Positive Mental Health Rubric: Background and Instructions” form.
3. **Assessment #1:** Complete the positive mental health rubric and record the scores and related comments for each category on the results summary table.
4. **Identify priorities:** Use the results to determine areas that the school would like to improve. For example, if scores in the Policy component are lower, then the school may decide to initiate conversations with school community members about what types of policies are needed to support positive mental health among students.
5. **Action plan:** Create an action plan to address priorities related to positive mental health.^a The action plan should include goals, strategies, activities, outcomes and indicators to help track progress and ensure that improvements are being made.^b
6. **Assessment #2:** Complete the positive mental health rubric and results summary table at the end of the year to evaluate/celebrate successes and guide future planning related to positive mental health.

Notes

The rubric may be modified to suit the context of its use. However, it is strongly advised that any modifications are based on sound knowledge of the CSH approach, mental health in school environments and rubric development.

The content of this rubric is based on a number of evidence-based resources.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7}

Other rubrics that can be used to assess the health of school communities include the healthy schools rubric, healthy eating rubric and positive mental health rubric.^a

^a For more information about school health assessments and available assessment tools, including the healthy schools rubric, visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7123.asp>.

^b To find information about the process for building healthy school communities, information about action planning, an action plan template and the additional rubrics, visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7123.asp>.

Policy

Management practices, decision-making processes, rules, procedures and policies at all levels that promote health and well-being, and shape a respectful, welcoming and caring school environment.

Positive Mental Health Rubric

This rubric has been developed to assess the factors that influence student mental health and well-being within the context of school communities. Refer to the “Positive Mental Health Rubric: Background and Instructions” form for more information. The components of CSH have been embedded in this rubric to support the mental health, well-being and learning needs of all students. Circle the indicator in each row that best describes your school’s current level of achievement in that area.

	4: Keep it up!	3: Getting closer	2: On the road	1: Just beginning
WELLNESS POLICIES Are there school-wide policies that contribute to the physical and emotional safety of all students?	Wellness policies that promote a healthy, safe, caring and inclusive social environment have been fully implemented .	Wellness policies that promote a healthy, safe, caring and inclusive social environment are being developed and/or partially implemented .	The school supports a healthy, safe, caring and inclusive environment in an informal way , and is considering more formal methods of support.	The school has just begun to raise awareness of the importance of developing policies that promote a healthy, safe, caring and inclusive social environment.
EDUCATION POLICIES Do education policies support the learning and social needs of all students?	Education policies accommodate the diverse learning and social needs of all students.	Education policies accommodate the diverse learning and social needs of most students.	Education policies accommodate the diverse learning and social needs of some students; additional strategies are being developed to better support all learners.	We have just begun to think about strategies that will better support the diverse learning and social needs of students.
CODE OF CONDUCT Is there a code of conduct outlining the expectations of student behaviour?	A code of conduct that clearly outlines how students are expected to behave is fully implemented and visible to all members of the school community.	A code of conduct that clearly outlines how students are expected to behave has been developed and/or partially implemented and shared with some members of the school community.	The school does not have a formal written code of conduct, but expectations for student behaviour are addressed informally .	We have just begun to consider expectations for student behaviour in our school.
DISCIPLINE POLICIES Do discipline policies restore and reconnect students to school?	Solution-focused alternatives to zero-tolerance methods are always applied to resolve areas of student difficulty or challenge.	Solution-focused alternatives to zero-tolerance methods are usually applied to resolve areas of student difficulty or challenge.	Solution-focused alternatives to zero-tolerance methods are sometimes applied to resolve areas of student difficulty or challenge.	We rely on zero-tolerance methods to resolve areas of student difficulty or challenge, and rarely use solution-focused alternatives. We are starting to develop strategies that are more solution focused.
BULLYING Does the school have a policy in place to address all forms of bullying?	The school has implemented and publicized a policy that addresses bullying behaviours, which is openly shared with the school community.	The school has developed and/or partially implemented a policy that addresses bullying behaviours, but it is not widely shared with the school community.	The school does not have a formal written policy, but bullying is addressed informally .	We have just begun to raise awareness of the need to address bullying.
LEADERSHIP SUPPORT Does the school administration drive the development and implementation of positive mental health practices?	Administration provides leadership for positive mental health practices that support the well-being, inclusion and connectedness of all students.	Administration supports positive mental health practices that promote the well-being, inclusion, and connectedness of all students.	Administration offers some support for positive mental health practices that promote the well-being, inclusion and connectedness of all students, but leadership in this area is limited.	Administrators are just beginning to offer support for positive mental health practices that promote the well-being, inclusion and connectedness of all students.
SHARED DECISION MAKING Do administrators in the school demonstrate positive interactions and behaviours with others that promote a culture of shared decision making?	Administration always demonstrates positive interactions that promote a culture of shared decision making among students, staff and families.	Administration usually demonstrates positive interactions that promote a culture of shared decision making among students, staff and families.	Administration sometimes demonstrates positive interactions that promote a culture of shared decision making among students, staff and families.	Administration is just beginning to demonstrate positive interactions that promote a culture of shared decision making among students, staff and families.

Social and Physical Environment

The social environment is

- the quality of relationships among and between staff and students in the school
- the emotional well-being of students
- influenced by relationships with families and the wider community

The physical environment is

- the buildings, grounds, play spaces and equipment in and surrounding the school
- basic amenities (e.g., sanitation and air cleanliness)

	4: Keep it up!	3: Getting closer	2: On the road	1: Just beginning
MODELLING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS Are positive interactions encouraged between all members of the school community (e.g., staff, students and parents)?	Positive and respectful interactions are always modelled. Strategies to promote cooperative behaviours are continually reinforced through active modeling and guidance.	Positive and respectful interactions are modelled most of the time . Strategies to promote cooperative behaviours among students are taught.	Positive and respectful interactions are sometimes modelled. The school informally promotes cooperative behaviour among students.	We have just begun developing strategies to support positive interactions among all members of the school community.
SCHOOL INITIATIVES Do school-wide initiatives foster safe and caring school environments?	All school-wide initiatives contribute to the social, emotional and learning needs of all students.	Most school-wide initiatives contribute to the social, emotional and learning needs of all students.	Some school-wide initiatives contribute to the social, emotional and learning needs of all students.	We have just begun considering how school-wide initiatives contribute to the social, emotional and learning needs of all students.
SOCIAL SPACES Are there accessible meeting places that facilitate the connectedness of all students with the school and community?	Meeting places that provide students with opportunities to develop positive relationships with caring peers and adults are always available and accessible throughout the school.	Meeting places that provide students with opportunities to develop positive relationships with caring peers and adults are usually available and accessible throughout the school.	Meeting places that provide students with opportunities to develop positive relationships with caring peers and adults exist, but have limited availability and/or accessibility.	We have just begun considering designing more meeting places to facilitate the development of positive relationships among students and adults.
STUDENT RECOGNITION Are students' positive contributions and achievements acknowledged and applauded?	The school always recognizes the involvement, achievements and contributions of all students. Recognition goes beyond academic and athletic achievements like to accomplishments like community service.	The school usually recognizes the involvement and achievements of students, but recognition is often limited to academic and athletic contributions.	The school sometimes recognizes students for academic or athletic achievements.	We have just begun considering more ways of recognizing student contributions.

Social and Physical Environment Continued...

The social environment is

- the quality of relationships among and between staff and students in the school
- the emotional well-being of students
- influenced by relationships with families and the wider community

The physical environment is

- the buildings, grounds, play spaces and equipment in and surrounding the school
- basic amenities (e.g., sanitation and air cleanliness)

	4: Keep it up!	3: Getting closer	2: On the road	1: Just beginning
STUDENT CONNECTEDNESS Are there opportunities for students to be involved in a variety of extra-curricular activities and programs?	A broad range of extracurricular opportunities are available and accessible to all students.	A broad range of extracurricular opportunities are available, but the programs may be limited in accessibility or availability .	Several different types of extracurricular activities programs are offered, but most of them have a limited focus (e.g., athletics, arts or academics only).	We have just begun considering offering a wider variety of extracurricular programs.
CULTURAL RELEVANCE Are there opportunities for students, families and community members to express/celebrate their individual differences?	Students, families and community members have frequent opportunities to share and celebrate their cultural traditions, beliefs and values.	Students, families and community members have occasional opportunities to share their cultural traditions, beliefs and values.	Students, families and community members have limited opportunities to share their traditions, beliefs and values.	We have just begun considering opportunities for students, families and community members to share cultural traditions, beliefs and values.
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT Does the school provide a healthy, safe and inclusive learning environment (e.g., buildings, grounds, play spaces, air/water)?	All aspects of the physical environment (quality, safety and design) are maintained to ensure that the emotional, physical and learning needs of all students are fully supported.	Most aspects of the physical environment of the school are maintained to meet the emotional, physical and learning needs of the students.	Some aspects of the physical environment of the school are maintained to meet the emotional, physical and learning needs of all students.	We have just begun considering how the physical environment of the school can be addressed to meet the emotional, physical and learning needs of all students.
STUDENT LEADERSHIP Does the school value students' voices and engage students as leaders and decision makers?	Students are always actively involved in determining important directions and decisions within the school.	Students are usually involved in making decisions within the school.	Students sometimes have opportunities to provide input, but these opportunities may be limited.	We have just begun considering involving students in decision making within the school.

Partnerships and Services

Partnerships are

- connections between the school and students' families
- supportive working relationships within schools (for staff and students), between schools and other community organizations and representative groups
- health, education and other sectors working together to advance school health

Services are

- community- and school-based services that support and promote student and staff health and well-being

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FAMILY INVOLVEMENT Are collaborative home-school relationships fostered through ongoing parent and caregiver involvement?	Parents/caregivers are active partners in all areas of school life and are encouraged to participate in school improvement initiatives and as volunteers in student learning activities.	Parents/caregivers are invited to be involved in most areas of school life through participation in school improvement initiatives and/or as volunteers in student learning activities.	Parent/caregiver involvement is not heavily promoted; some opportunities for parent involvement exist, but are usually at the parents' request.	We have just begun considering how to involve parents/caregivers in the school.
COMMUNICATION Is there regular and meaningful communication between the home and school to facilitate the understanding of students' learning profiles?	Frequent opportunities for formal and informal communications shape positive interactions between the home and school to facilitate understanding of students' learning profiles.	Occasional opportunities for formal and informal communications shape positive interactions between the home and school to facilitate understanding of students' learning profiles.	Limited opportunities for formal and/or informal communication between the home and school exist, and more frequent interaction between the home and school is needed to understand students' learning profiles.	We have just begun considering opportunities for formal and informal communication between the home and school to facilitate the understanding of students' learning profiles.
MENTORSHIP Do all students have access to a trusted adult in the school who they can approach for support?	All students have access to a trusted adult who they can approach for help through a formal mentorship or teacher advisor program.	Most students have access to a trusted adult in the school who they can approach for support.	Some students have access to a trusted adult in the school who they can approach.	We have just begun raising awareness of the importance of having teacher/adult mentors for students.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS Do the school and community work together to address important issues?	Partnerships have been fostered within the community to address priority issues in a collaborative and coordinated way in both school and community contexts.	Partnerships are being developed within the community to address priority issues within the context of the school.	We have started communicating with potential partners in the community who may be able to help address priority issues.	We have just begun identifying community partners who may be able to support our school and strengthen community connections.
COORDINATED SERVICE DELIVERY APPROACHES Are services for students and their families integrated within and beyond the school context (e.g., assessments, referrals)?	A coordinated approach is always used to connect students and their families to appropriate school- and community-based resources that support their emotional well-being.	A coordinated approach is used most of the time to connect students and their families to appropriate school- and community-based resources that support their emotional well-being.	A coordinated approach is sometimes used to connect students and their families to appropriate school- and community-based resources that support their emotional well-being.	We have just begun developing a more coordinated approach to connect students and their families to appropriate school- and community-based resources that support their emotional well-being.

Teaching and Learning

Resources, activities and provincial/territorial curriculum where students gain age-appropriate knowledge and experiences, helping build the skills to improve their health and well-being.

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EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS Are evidence-based resources used to support the delivery of wellness-related programs (e.g., mentoring programs, peer mediation, credible websites, student leadership programs)?	Evidence-based resources to support school wellness programs are regularly accessed and integrated to enrich student learning.	Evidence-based resources to support school wellness programs are accessed occasionally to enrich student learning.	Evidence-based resources to support school wellness programs are accessed on an inconsistent basis to enrich student learning.	We have just begun learning more about evidence-based resources that support student well-being.
DIVERSITY Are there opportunities for students to learn about and appreciate diversity in the classroom (e.g., learning strengths/needs, preferences, gender, sexual orientation, culture)?	There are a broad range of opportunities for students to explore and understand individual differences.	There are several different types of opportunities for students to explore and understand individual differences.	There are a few different types of opportunities for students to explore and understand individual differences.	We have just begun considering how to provide opportunities for students to explore and understand individual differences.
SOCIAL SKILLS Do students practice social skills that contribute to working cooperatively, problem-solving and building relationships?	Regular opportunities to learn and apply social skills are embedded in all formal and informal school/classroom activities.	Occasional opportunities to learn and apply social skills are integrated into most formal and informal school/classroom activities.	Opportunities to learn and apply social skills are offered inconsistently in some formal and/or informal school/classroom activities.	We have just begun considering how to provide students with opportunities to learn and apply social skills in either formal and/or informal school/classroom activities.
STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING Are autonomy-supportive practices used to increase student engagement and learning?	Autonomy-supportive practices are integrated in all learning activities and curriculum approaches to provide students with choice and link their strengths and interests with academic content.	Autonomy-supportive practices are integrated into most learning activities and curriculum approaches to provide students with choice and link their strengths and interests with academic content.	Autonomy-supportive practices are integrated in some learning activities and curriculum approaches to provide students with choice and link their strengths and interests with academic content.	Learning activities and curriculum approaches that link students' strengths and interests with academic content and provide choice are limited . Awareness of differentiated instruction techniques is being generated.
CURRICULUM Is mental health and wellness integrated into and reinforced within subject areas using a coordinated approach (e.g., science, language arts, social studies)?	Mental health and well-being is integrated and reinforced in all subject areas in a coordinated way.	Mental health and well-being is integrated into most subject areas in a coordinated way.	Mental health and well-being is integrated into some subjects, and we are working on a more coordinated approach.	We have just begun considering ways of integrating mental health and well-being into subject areas.
STAFF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES Are staff members provided with appropriate training and resources to promote positive mental health among students?	Regularly scheduled training/information/PD opportunities related to the promotion of positive mental health are available to all staff members.	Occasional training/information/PD opportunities related to the promotion of positive mental health are available to all staff members.	Inconsistent training/information/PD opportunities related to the promotion of positive mental health are available to all staff members.	We have just begun considering the importance of providing training/information/PD opportunities related to the promotion of positive mental health for staff members.

Positive Mental Health Rubric Results Summary Table

Rubric components	Assessment #1 (beginning of school year)		Is this a priority area for your school? (Check if yes)	Assessment #2 (end of the school year)		Additional comments
	Score (1-4)	What are you doing well?		Score (1-4)	What actions were taken in this area?	
Policy						
Wellness policies			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Education policies			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Code of conduct			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Discipline policies			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Bullying			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Leadership support			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Shared decision making			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Total (out of 28)						

Positive Mental Health Rubric Results Summary Table

Rubric components	Assessment #1 (beginning of school year)		Is this a priority area for your school? (Check if yes)	Assessment #2 (end of the school year)		Additional comments
	Score (1-4)	What are you doing well? / What could you improve?		Score (1-4)	What actions were taken in this area?	
Social and Physical Environments						
Modelling healthy relationships			<input type="checkbox"/>			
School initiatives			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Social spaces			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Student recognition			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Student connectedness			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Cultural relevance			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Physical environment			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Student leadership			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Total (out of 32)						

Positive Mental Health Rubric Results Summary Table

Rubric components	Assessment #1 (beginning of school year)		Is this a priority area for your school? (Check if yes)	Assessment #2 (end of the school year)		Additional comments
	Score (1-4)	What are you doing well?		Score (1-4)	What actions were taken in this area?	
Partnerships and Services						
Family involvement			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Communication			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Mentorship			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Community partnerships			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Coordinated service delivery approaches			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Total (out of 20)						

Positive Mental Health Rubric Results Summary Table

Rubric components	Assessment #1 (beginning of school year)		Is this a priority area for your school? (Check if yes)	Assessment #2 (end of the school year)		Additional comments
	Score (1-4)	What are you doing well? / What could you improve?		Score (1-4)	What actions were taken in this area?	
Teaching and Learning						
Education resources and supports			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Diversity			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Social skills			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Student-centred learning			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Curriculum			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Staff learning opportunities			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Total (out of 24)						
		Assessment #1		Assessment #2		Additional comments
Total score for all four components (out of 104)						

References

This resource was adapted from the “Healthy Students Learn Better Health Champion” tool binder, Alberta Health Services, Central Zone Comprehensive School Health Program, 2009.

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² Osterman, K. F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, 70, 323–367.

³ The Joint Consortium for School Health. (2010). *Schools as a Setting for Promoting Positive Mental Health: Better Practices and Perspectives*. Retrieved from <http://eng.jcsh-cces.ca/upload/JCSH%20Positive%20Mental%20Health%20Perspectives%20Better%20Practices.pdf>

⁴ The Joint Consortium for School Health. (2009). *Investigating Positive Psychology Themes In School Health*. Retrieved from <http://eng.jcsh-cces.ca/upload/Positive%20Psychology%20in%20Schools%20April%202009.pdf>.

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⁷ Center for Social and Emotional Education. (n.d.). *The 12 Dimensions of School Climate*. Retrieved from www.csee.net/climate/pdfNew/dimensions_chart_pagebars.pdf.