



Mental Health Universal Screener Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTION: Why is the district implementing a universal screener?

ANSWER: The district is implementing a Mental Health Universal Screener as a proactive approach to focusing on the social emotional needs of our students.

QUESTION: What is the purpose of implementing a Universal Screener?

ANSWER: The purpose of implementing a Universal Screener is to proactively address the social emotional needs of our students and if the outcome of a screener results in a student being 'at risk', the district will provide the parents with resources (e.g., list of counseling agencies, district-based sessions on a specific area of need/topic; anxiety) to seek assistance and support.

QUESTION: Why was the Behavior Intervention Monitoring Assessment System (BIMAS-2) chosen as the screener?

ANSWER: The BIMAS-2 was chosen because it includes a teacher and parent component and not only a student self-assessment. This allows the information to be triangulated and increases the validity of the outcome(s). It is used to identify students at-risk for common concerns of low adaptive skills. It is also a nationally recognized screening assessment that is utilized by some of the largest school districts in the U.S.

QUESTION: Is the information confidential?

ANSWER: The information is confidential and accessible only to the parents/guardians and student's teacher(s) and administrators, and school counselor. There will be a clinical counselor that will be supporting and assisting the district personnel with analyzing the data and communicating with parents about potential resources.

QUESTION: If the outcome of the screener indicates a student is at-risk, what resources will be provided/available to the student and/or parents?

ANSWER: The student's school counselor will contact the parents/guardians to discuss the outcome of the screener and discuss with the parents/guardians and students options to receive supports and/or strategies to address the identified areas of need.

QUESTION: What might the resources and/or support look like?

ANSWER: They may include providing parents/guardians with a list of community resources (e.g., counselor agency), in-district counselor supports/sessions (e.g., school guidance counselor). There will be a clinical counselor that with parent choice, students can receive direct counseling at school (e.g., during the school day, before or after school).

QUESTION: If my child is flagged due to the screener does that mean they are labeled, miss out on future academic opportunities, or their school day will be impacted in the future?

ANSWER: No, the screener is used to identify areas in behavioral or adaptive skills where students could be at risk. Meaning something (attention, focus, organization, anxiety, depression, anger management, socially, or academic functioning) could be affecting them to the level that it could be impeding their learning. If a student is flagged, their family will be notified and encouraged to take a closer look at the area of concern. Similarly to a vision screening at school, a notification from the school does not mean your child needs glasses, it means they should see an eye doctor to find out if there is a need for glasses or something else due to struggling on a vision test. Students will not be labeled or have their schedules changed due to this assessment, there will just be a conversation with families to look into the area that was flagged on the screener.

QUESTION: How can the screener identify issues or be reliable with such a short assessment in a small time frame?

ANSWER: This is a researched based assessment , which includes questions that have been identified as the most effective or statistically significant for identifying potential areas of need for students in each of the domains (Behavioral: Conduct, Negative Affect, Cognitive/Attention and Adaptive Scales: Social and Academic Functioning).

QUESTION: Does the BIMAS-2 Universal Screener Diagnose my child of having a disability or psychological condition?

ANSWER: No, this screener is designed to identify potential flags in the different domains that would suggest a need further conversation or testing by a specialist in the specific area. Similarly to getting a check-up that looks at an individual's overall health, it is a way to take a look at a variety of things that could impact the student, which would prevent them from achieving at school. If there is an area of concern it would indicate the need for further investigation in that specific area.

QUESTION: What are some of the questions/domains in the screener?

ANSWER: The domains that are assessed in the screener are:

CONCERNS SCALE

CONCERNS ASSESSED

Conduct	anti-social/aggressive behaviors, drug use, mental health problems
Negative Affect	depression/anxious symptoms, suicidal thoughts, mental health problems
Cognitive/Attention	Inattention, atypical thought, mental health problems

ADAPTIVE SCALES

ADAPTIVE BEHAVIORS ASSESSED

Social/Communication	Sharing, expressing one's self, friendship, positive youth development
Academic Functioning	Academic development, responsibility, organization/planning, positive youth development

QUESTION: What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)?

ANSWER: SEL is the process through which students/individuals acquire and effectively apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to understand and manage emotions and make responsible decisions. It also includes the ability to set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others and establish and maintain positive relationships.

QUESTION: How can schools support students' SEL?

ANSWER: Schools can foster student SEL through establishing safe and caring learning environments and working together with parents/families to provide supports and resources, improving classroom management, and through whole school community building activities. Some of the activities may include building positive behavioral interventions and supports, direct instruction on social and emotional skills, classroom routines and structures that build community and/or a combination of these approaches.

QUESTION: How does SEL instruction influence student outcomes?

ANSWER: Students that develop strong SEL skills increase their likelihood of academic and behavioral success throughout their education. The development of SEL skills and competencies provide a foundation for improved student adjustment and academic performance. The development of SEL skills and competencies also result in increased positive social behaviors, reduced conduct problems, reduced emotional distress, and improved test scores and grades.