Scotland Chikwawa Health Initiative

Health Promoting School Orientation

School Social Environment

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“A positive culture for health would facilitate higher levels of health literacy by helping individuals tackle the determinants of health better as they build the personal, cognitive and social skills for maintaining good health.”
Why do we need to establish Health Promoting Schools?

Who will do this?
Remember the Purpose of HPS

- To enhance educational outcomes
- To facilitate action for health by building health knowledge and skills in the cognitive, social and behavioural domains
Health Promoting School

- School Health Policy
- School Based Health Services
- School Physical Environment
- School Social Environment
- Individual Skills and Competencies
- Community Links
Objectives of this new session

Now that we know all about HPS and the need for it, we need to take action. We should be able to:

- Describe a school social environment
- Understand the importance of a school social environment and consequences due to lack of
- Develop action steps for creating a school social setting
- Know how this element will contribute to the other HPS elements by other teams
- Check if it is working (M&E)
- Keep records and track success
What it means to say a school social environment

- We have all been students, or have seen others haven’t we?
- What do school aged children look forward to when at school?
- Large part of school free time will be beneficial if it is invested in “School Bonding”

- freedom from abuse and violence
- a climate of care, trust and respect
- social support and mental health promotion
- opportunities for physical education and recreation
- Opportunities for mentoring and role models
Lets briefly look at how we can address the following

• Freedom from abuse and violence

• A climate of care, trust and respect
Let's briefly look at how we can address the following:

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What are we doing so far...
Requirements for the schools

• An organisational structure should be set up to lead in creating a positive psycho-social environment
• The psycho-social school environment encompasses
  – Attitudes,
  – Feelings and values of students and staff
  – Physical and psychological safety
  – Positive interpersonal relationships
  – Recognition of the needs and success of the individual
  – Support for learning
Benefits of a positive school social environment

• Greater well-being and happiness,
• An improved sense of belonging and better quality of life for those engaged
Benefits of a positive school social environment

Indirectly

- It may result in better levels of academic achievement.
- It can also alter some of the more negative aspects of school life by reducing bullying and harassment, injury, truancy and absenteeism.
- It has the potential to diminish stereotyping and prejudice, fear, anxiety, depression and loss of motivation.

*Feelings of well-being during childhood provide sound foundations for positive health in later adolescence and adulthood*

*Students working in a supportive school environment where they feel a sense of attachment are more likely to respect their surroundings.*
When students’ basic psychological needs (safety, belonging, autonomy, and competence) are satisfied, they are more likely to:

- Become engaged in school (school bonding)
- Act in accord with school goals and values
- Develop social skills and understanding
- Contribute to the school and the community
- And have control and positive health behaviours
When schools fail to meet students’ needs for belonging, competence, and autonomy, students are more likely to become:

Students are:
- Less motivated
- More alienated
- Poorer academic performers
- Make poor health and life choices in general
In a positive school social environment we want the happy face

• Why???
• Students will care about schools that care about them
• Students will work harder to achieve academically in a context of safety, connection, and shared purpose
As students become more capable and inclined to contribute to the supportive school context, they in effect promote, along with the school’s faculty, an “upward spiral” by which community is strengthened and those involved in it are further benefited.
Way to go?

• Schools will identify problems, then analyse them and make necessary changes.

• A school’s attention to the healthfulness of its environment will evolve and adapt to changing circumstances, while never losing sight of educating their students.
Step by step action for schools

• Provide leadership and administrative support
• Conduct an exercise to determine the school’s needs
• Establish a set of measurable goals and objectives and design activities around improving the school’s social environment
• Develop and use a data collection system for assessing and monitoring the school social environment
• Create a school environmental health and safety team, that includes PTA members, school officials, teachers, custodians, business and community leaders, and law enforcement officials
Step by step action for schools

• Contribute to policy aligned to designed implementation measures
• Develop, implement and enforce policies and a plan that clearly define acceptable and unacceptable school conditions
• Help teachers develop activities for students that emphasise the importance of an overall healthy school social environment
• Interlinking teams to support related activities
• Emphasise the importance of communication between teachers and students which includes issues of listening to feelings and physical ailments
• Empower students by involving them in planning, creating, and sustaining a school culture of safety and respect and overall organising and implementing social activities.
Let's try this in pairs

• Pick an issue under social school environment
• Make some goals on how to address it
• Design a possible activity
• List how this activity contribute to school social environment
• How can we connect it to other HPS Elements?
How are we going to know its working?

- Evaluate healthy school activities periodically to assess progress toward achieving your goals and objectives and use results to revise, improve and strengthen your program.
- Recap from the main session on means of verifying progress.
REMEMBER

• Caring School Community helps students to develop their empathy for others, their social skills and social understanding, and their understanding of the values of the community.

• Students in high-community schools are more likely to become thoughtful and reflective, to be self-directing but also to accept the authority of others, to be concerned for and respectful of others, to avoid courses of action that are harmful to themselves or others, and to maintain higher standards of ethical conduct.