



COLORADO
Department of Education

Colorado School-Based Mental Health Services Shared Core Induction Course Reference Guide

Colorado Department of Education
School-Based Mental Health Services Grant Program
August 2026

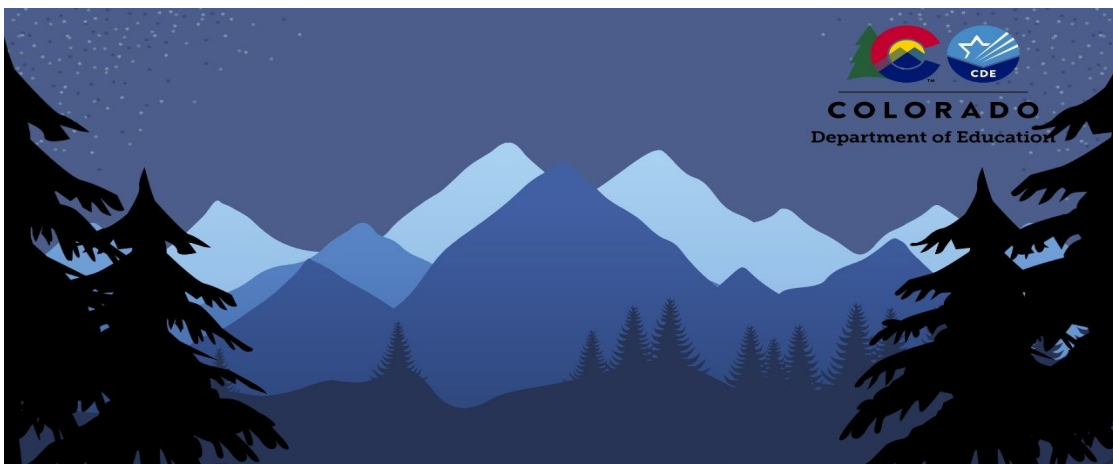


Table of Contents

Colorado School-Based Mental Health Services Shared Core Induction Course Reference Guide	1
Shared Core at a Glance	3
Guiding Principles	3
Common Terms & Definitions	4
Acronym Guide	11
Colorado Resource Library	12



Colorado School-Based Mental Health Services Shared Core Induction Course Reference Guide

The Shared Core Induction Course Reference Guide is a practical resource designed to support you throughout the course and in your professional practice. It includes a brief overview of each module, key terms and definitions, commonly used acronyms, and links to Colorado and national resources referenced throughout the course. Consider saving an electronic copy for easy access to embedded links or printing if you prefer a hard copy.

Shared Core at a Glance

Module	Topic
1	Beginning Your Career in Colorado's Public Schools
2	IEP's, Section 504 Plans, and the Role of School Mental Health Professionals
3	Why Student Mental Health Matters
4	How Colorado Schools Organize Behavioral Health Supports
5	Suicide Prevention, Intervention & Postvention
6	MTSS and Integrating School Mental Health
7	Supporting Every Student-Individual Differences and Effective Practice
8	School Safety, Crisis Response & Threat Assessment
9	Family Engagement & Community Partnerships
10	Professional Wellness, Boundaries & Sustainable Practice

Guiding Principles

- Build relationships before problems arise.
- Begin with curiosity before drawing conclusions.
- Recognize strengths and protective factors alongside needs.
- Match supports to identified student needs.
- Collaborate across disciplines.
- Engage families as valued partners.
- Seek consultation rather than working in isolation.
- Strengthen systems that support student success and professional well-being

Common Terms & Definitions

Definitions in this guide are intended to support the Shared Core Orientation Series. Participants should also refer to district policies, professional standards, and applicable state and federal laws when implementing school-based mental health practices.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

A written plan based on information from an FBA that identifies proactive strategies, replacement skills, environmental adjustments, and consistent adult responses to support student behavior.

Source: *CO Department of Education, [Functional Behavior Assessment Guidance Document](#), 2024 (PDF)*

Behavioral Health

An umbrella term that includes mental health, emotional well-being, substance use, and the thoughts, feelings, development, and behaviors that influence overall health and wellness.

Source: [Behavioral Health Administration](#)

Behavioral Health Screening

A brief, evidence-informed process used to identify students who may benefit from additional assessment or supports. Screening is not intended to diagnose mental health conditions and should follow district procedures and established protocols.

Source: [National Center for School Mental Health, 2023](#)

Child Find

The legal obligation of public schools to identify, locate, and evaluate students who may have a disability and need special education services.

Source: [Child Find and Preschool Special Education - Colorado Department of Education](#)

Colorado Multi-Tiered System of Supports (COMTSS)

Colorado's prevention-based framework for organizing academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and mental health supports across universal, targeted, and intensive levels of intervention to improve outcomes for every student.

Source: [Colorado Multi-Tiered System of Supports](#)

Community Partner

An organization or provider outside the school that collaborates with schools to support students and families, including community mental health agencies, healthcare providers, and social service organizations.

Source: [National Center for School Mental Health](#)

Comprehensive School Mental Health System (CSMHS)

A coordinated framework that promotes student well-being through prevention, early intervention, treatment, and collaboration among schools, families, and community partners.

Source: [National Center for School Mental Health](#)

Compassion Fatigue

The emotional and physical exhaustion that can develop from prolonged exposure to the suffering or trauma experienced by others.

Source: [*Compassion Resilience Toolkit - WISE Initiative for Stigma Elimination*](#)

Consultation

A collaborative process in which professionals seek guidance, share expertise, and problem-solve to support effective decision-making and student outcomes.

Source: [*National Association of School Psychologists*](#)

Crisis Response

The coordinated actions taken by a school following an event that significantly affects the safety or well-being of students, staff, or the school community.

Source: [*Colorado Office of School Safety*](#)

Data-Based Decision Making

The use of multiple sources of information—including observations, screening, progress monitoring, and other relevant data—to guide problem-solving, intervention planning, and evaluation.

Source: [*Colorado Multi-Tiered System of Supports*](#)

Early Intervention

Providing timely support when concerns first emerge to reduce the likelihood that problems become more significant.

Source: [*National Center for School Mental Health*](#)

Evidence-Based Practice

Professional practice informed by the best available research, professional expertise, and the student's individual needs, strengths, and circumstances.

Source: [*Evidence-Based Interventions \(EBI\) - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Exceptional Children's Educational Act

Colorado's state law and rules implementing IDEA requirements for special education.

Source: [*Special Education Guidance and Technical Assistance - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records and governs when information may be shared.

Source: [*FERPA | Protecting Student Privacy*](#)

Family Engagement

A collaborative partnership between schools and families that supports student learning, well-being, and shared decision-making.

Source: [*Family, School, and Community Partnerships - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

The right of eligible students with disabilities to receive appropriate educational services and supports at public expense. Under IDEA, FAPE is provided through an IEP; Section 504 also requires schools to provide FAPE to eligible students through accommodations, services, and other necessary supports.

Source: [*Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

A systematic process for identifying the purpose or function of a student's behavior so that interventions can be matched to identified needs.

Source: CO Department of Education, [*Functional Behavior Assessment Guidance Document, 2024 \(PDF\)*](#)

Health and Wellbeing Implementation Guide

A Colorado Department of Education resource within the Landscape of Wellbeing and Belonging that provides evidence-based and promising practices, implementation supports, and mental health resources for schools.

Source: [*Health and Wellbeing - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

A written plan developed for an eligible student under IDEA that describes the student's present levels of performance, measurable annual goals, special education and related services, accommodations, and educational placement.

Source: [*Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Federal special education law governing evaluation, eligibility, IEP's, FAPE, related services, and procedural protections for eligible students with disabilities.

Source: [*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)*](#)

Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF)

A structure that aligns school mental health services within an MTSS framework by integrating education and behavioral health systems.

Source: [*Center on PBIS | Practice Briefs: Interconnected Systems Framework \(ISF\): Teaching and Learning Stories, A Demonstration Brief*](#)

Landscape of Wellbeing and Belonging

Colorado's statewide framework supports healthy learning environments through evidence-informed practices that promote student well-being, belonging, and positive school climates.

Source: [*Landscape of Wellbeing and Belonging - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

The requirement that students with disabilities be educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate, with removal from the general education setting occurring only when the student's needs cannot be appropriately met there with supports and services.

Source: [*Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Multidisciplinary Team

A group of professionals from different disciplines who collaborate through shared expertise and coordinated planning.

Source: [*National Center for School Mental Health - School Mental Health Teaming*](#)

Problem-Solving Process

A structured approach used by multidisciplinary teams to identify concerns, analyze data, select interventions, monitor progress, and adjust supports.

Source: [*Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision-Making - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Progress Monitoring

The ongoing collection and review of data to evaluate student response to interventions.

Source: [*Office of Learning Supports - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Protective Factors

Conditions or characteristics that reduce the impact of adversity and increase the likelihood of positive outcomes.

Source: [*Risk Factors, Protective Factors, and Warning Signs | SAMHSA*](#)

Psychological First Aid (PFA)

An evidence-informed approach used after a crisis to promote safety, calm, connectedness, self-efficacy, and hope.

Source: [*Psychological First Aid for Schools \(PFA-S\) Field Operations Guide | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network*](#)

Referral

Connecting a student or family with additional school-based or community-based services.

Source: [*National Center for School Mental Health*](#)

Related Services

Supportive services, including psychological, social work, and counseling services, that a student may need to benefit from special education.

Source: [*Related Services - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Reflective Practice

The ongoing process of evaluating professional decisions and experiences to improve future practice.

Source: [*National Center for School Mental Health*](#)

Resilience

The ability to adapt and recover following adversity or significant life challenges.

Source: [*American Psychological Association - Resilience*](#)

Risk Factors

Characteristics or experiences associated with an increased likelihood of concern.

Source: [*Risk Factors, Protective Factors, and Warning Signs | SAMHSA*](#)

School-Based Mental Health

Policies, practices, services, and supports provided within schools to promote student well-being and academic success.

Source: [*National Center for School Mental Health*](#)

School Climate

The quality and character of school life, including relationships, safety, teaching and learning practices, and the overall environment.

Source: [*Relationships - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

School Connectedness

Students' belief that adults and peers at school care about their learning, well-being, and success.

Source: [*School Connectedness Helps Students Thrive | Reducing Health Risks Among Youth | CDC*](#)

School Safety

Policies, practices, and systems that promote physically and emotionally safe learning environments.

Source: [*Colorado Office of School Safety*](#)

Section 504 Plan

A written Plan describing the accommodations, services, and supports an eligible student with a disability needs to access the educational program and school activities.

Source: [*Targeted Student Supports - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Serious Emotional Disability (SED)

Colorado's term for the IDEA eligibility disability category of Emotional Disturbance (ED), for students whose significant social-emotional or behavioral needs adversely affect educational performance and require specially designed instruction.

Source: [*Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Special Education for Students with Serious Emotional Disability*](#)

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Emotional distress resulting from indirect exposure to another person's traumatic experiences.

Source: [*Secondary Traumatic Stress*](#)

Shared Decision-Making

A collaborative process in which professionals, families, and students work together to make informed decisions.

Source: [*Team-Driven Shared Leadership - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Specially Designed Instruction

Instruction adapted to address the unique educational needs of an eligible student with a disability. This term is particularly useful because it helps participants understand the fundamental IDEA/504 distinction.

Source: [*Specially Designed Instruction \(SDI\) - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

An IDEA/ECEA disability category involving difficulties in specific areas of academic learning that may require specially designed instruction. Colorado eligibility decisions incorporate evidence from intervention and progress-monitoring data.

Source: [*Specific Learning Disability \(SLD\) - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Strength-Based Approach

An approach that recognizes and builds upon a student's strengths while addressing identified needs.

Source: [*Developmental Relationships Framework | Search Institute*](#)

Structured Supervision

A planned, ongoing process in which an experienced professional provides guidance, support, and feedback.

Source: [*National Association of School Psychologists \(NASP\)*](#)

Systems-Level Practice

Activities that improve policies, procedures, collaboration, or organizational structures.

Source: [*National Association of School Psychologists \(NASP\) - Professional Ethics*](#)

Threat Assessment

A structured, multidisciplinary process used to evaluate and respond to behaviors that may indicate a risk of targeted violence.

Source: [*Threat Assessment | The Office of School Safety*](#)

Trauma-Informed Practice

An approach that recognizes the potential impact of trauma and emphasizes safety, trust, collaboration, empowerment, and predictable environments.

Source: [*Interagency Task Force on Trauma-Informed Care | SAMHSA*](#)

Trusted Adult

A school staff member with whom a student has a positive, supportive relationship and feels comfortable seeking help.

Source: [*Healthy Kids Colorado Survey*](#)

Universal Supports (Tier 1)

Supports and practices provided to all students.

Source: [*Colorado Multi-Tiered System of Supports*](#)

Vicarious Trauma

The cumulative emotional impact of prolonged exposure to others' traumatic experiences.

Source: [*What is Vicarious Trauma? | OVC*](#)

Wellbeing

A positive state of physical, emotional, social, and psychological health.

Source: [*Landscape of Wellbeing and Belonging - Colorado Department of Education*](#)

Wellness

The ongoing process of maintaining physical, emotional, psychological, and professional well-being.

Source: [*Creating a Healthier Life: A Step-By-Step Guide to Wellness | SAMHSA Library*](#)

Acronym Guide

The following acronyms are referenced throughout the Shared Core Orientation and commonly used in Colorado school-based mental health practice.

Acronym	Definition
988	Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
ASCA	American School Counselor Association
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan
CDE	Colorado Department of Education
CDPHE	Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
COMTSS	Colorado Multi-Tiered System of Supports
CSMHS	Comprehensive School Mental Health System
CSSRC	Colorado School Safety Resource Center
CTAMP	Colorado Threat Assessment and Management Protocol
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
ECEA	Exceptional Children's Educational Act
FBA	Functional Behavior Assessment
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FSCP	Family, School, and Community Partnerships
HKCS	Healthy Kids Colorado Survey
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
ISF	Interconnected Systems Framework
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MHFA	Mental Health First Aid
MTSS	Multi-Tiered System of Supports
NASN	National Association of School Nurses
OSS	Office of School Safety
PBIS	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
PFA	Psychological First Aid
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PREPaRE	National Association of School Psychologists' school crisis prevention and intervention curriculum
SED	Serious Emotional Disability
SDI	Specially Designed Instruction
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SSP	Specialized Service Professional
SWF	Second Wind Fund
WSCC	Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child

Colorado Resource Library

The following Colorado and national resources are referenced throughout the Shared Core Orientation. Participants are encouraged to explore these resources to strengthen their knowledge, support implementation, and identify evidence-informed practices.

Colorado Department of Education

- [Landscape of Wellbeing and Belonging](#) - Provides a statewide framework that supports student wellbeing, belonging, engagement, and positive school climates through evidence-informed practices and implementation resources.
- [Health and Wellbeing Implementation Guide](#) - Provides evidence-based and promising practices, implementation resources, and mental health screening tools to support school-based mental health services.
- [Colorado Multi-Tiered System of Supports \(COMTSS\) Online Academy](#) - Professional learning modules and implementation resources designed to support effective COMTSS implementation.
- [Family, School, and Community Partnerships \(FSCP\)](#) - Resources and tools that strengthen partnerships among families, schools, and communities to improve student outcomes.
- [Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community \(WSCC\)](#) - A Colorado Department of Education framework for promoting student health, safety, engagement, support, and academic success through coordinated policies, practices, and partnerships across ten components of school health.
- [Mental Health Education Literacy Resource Bank](#) - A Colorado Department of Education resource that helps schools identify evidence-based, research-based, and promising mental health education and suicide prevention programs appropriate for school settings.
- [CDE Mental Health Resources](#) - Statewide information and resources related to student mental health, school mental health professionals, professional learning, and school-based supports.

Special Education Resources

- [CDE Office of Special Education](#) - Primary statewide resource for IDEA/ECEA, evaluation and eligibility, IEP's, related services, and special education guidance.
- [CDE Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) Resources](#) - Guidance and practical resources for professionals serving on or contributing to the IEP teams.
- [CDE FBA/BIP Technical Assistance and Online Training](#) - Guidance and professional learning related to Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan development and implementation.
- [CDE Special Education Rules and Regulations](#) - Provides access to Colorado's ECEA Rules and other state and federal special education requirements.
- [CDE Section 504 Resources](#) - Information and guidance related to Section 504 protections, eligibility, accommodations, and school responsibilities.

Data & Prevention Resources

- [Healthy Kids Colorado Survey \(HKCS\)](#) - Statewide survey that provides data on youth health behaviors, protective factors, school connectedness, and mental health to support school improvement planning.
- [Smart Source](#) - Online planning tool that helps schools use data to identify priorities, select evidence-informed strategies, and support continuous improvement.
- [Youth Risk Behavior Survey \(YRBS\)](#) - National survey that monitors health-related behaviors and experiences among high school students.

School Safety & Crisis Resources

- [Colorado School Safety Resource Center \(CSSRC\)](#) - Provides training, guidance, technical assistance, and resources related to school safety, crisis response, suicide prevention, and threat assessment.
- [Colorado Threat Assessment and Management Protocol \(CTAMP\)](#) - Provides training and implementation guidance for multidisciplinary threat assessment teams.
- [Office of School Safety](#) - Provides statewide leadership, guidance, and resources that promote safe, supportive, and prepared learning environments.
- [PREPaRE Curriculum](#) - NASP school crisis prevention, preparedness, intervention, and recovery curriculum.
- [After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools](#) - Provides practical guidance for schools following a suicide death, including crisis response, communication, supporting students and staff, and reducing suicide contagion risk.

Crisis & Student Mental Health Resources

- [Colorado Crisis Services](#) - Colorado's statewide behavioral health crisis system providing 24-hour support through phone, text, walk-in crisis centers, and mobile crisis response.
- [988 Colorado Mental Health Line](#) - National three-digit crisis line connecting individuals with trained crisis counselors.
- [Second Wind Fund](#) - Connects youth at risk for suicide with licensed mental health providers by removing financial barriers to care.
- [IMatter Colorado](#) - Provides free behavioral health services for Colorado youth, helping children and adolescents access therapy and other mental health supports regardless of insurance status.
- [Safe2Tell Colorado](#) - Colorado's anonymous reporting program that allows students, parents, school staff, and community members to report concerns about student safety, including threats of violence, suicide concerns, bullying, substance use, abuse, and other behaviors that may place students or schools at risk. Reports are reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate school and local authorities for follow-up.

Professional Organizations

- [American School Counselor Association \(ASCA\)](#) - Professional organization supporting school counselors through ethical standards, professional learning, advocacy, and practice resources.
- [National Association of School Nurses \(NASN\)](#) - Professional organization providing resources, standards, and professional development for school nurses.
- [National Association of School Psychologists \(NASP\)](#) - Professional organization providing professional standards, practice guidance, research, advocacy, and continuing education for school psychologists.
- [School Social Work Association of America \(SSWAA\)](#) - Professional organization supporting school social workers through practice resources, advocacy, and professional development