School Health Index: A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide

School Health Index Team Meeting #1
Sample Agenda

- Why should schools focus on health and safety?
- What is the purpose of the School Health Index?
- Coordinated School Health Program model
- School Health Index format
- Implementation process
- Complete all 8 self-assessment modules
- Set timelines and next meeting date

Why should schools promote health and safety?

- Our society values good health and safety.
- Good health, safety, and management are necessary for effective learning.
- Healthy and safe students become healthy, productive citizens.
- Disease and injury prevention are more cost-effective than treatment.
- The school system is the one place where most of our nation's youth can be reached.

Why focus on health and safety?

- Unhealthy behaviors or poor health management can lead to heart disease, cancer, stroke, obesity, diabetes, and respiratory disease.
- Physical activity builds bones and muscles and helps control weight.
- Healthy eating helps youth grow, develop, and do well in school, allowing them to avoid obesity and eating disorders.
- Not using tobacco promotes physical fitness, normal lung growth and heart rate, and helps prevent respiratory symptoms.
- Preventing unintentional injuries works to eliminate the leading causes of death and disability among young people.
- Effective asthma management can reduce hospitalization and school absences which leads to a healthier and more productive life-style.

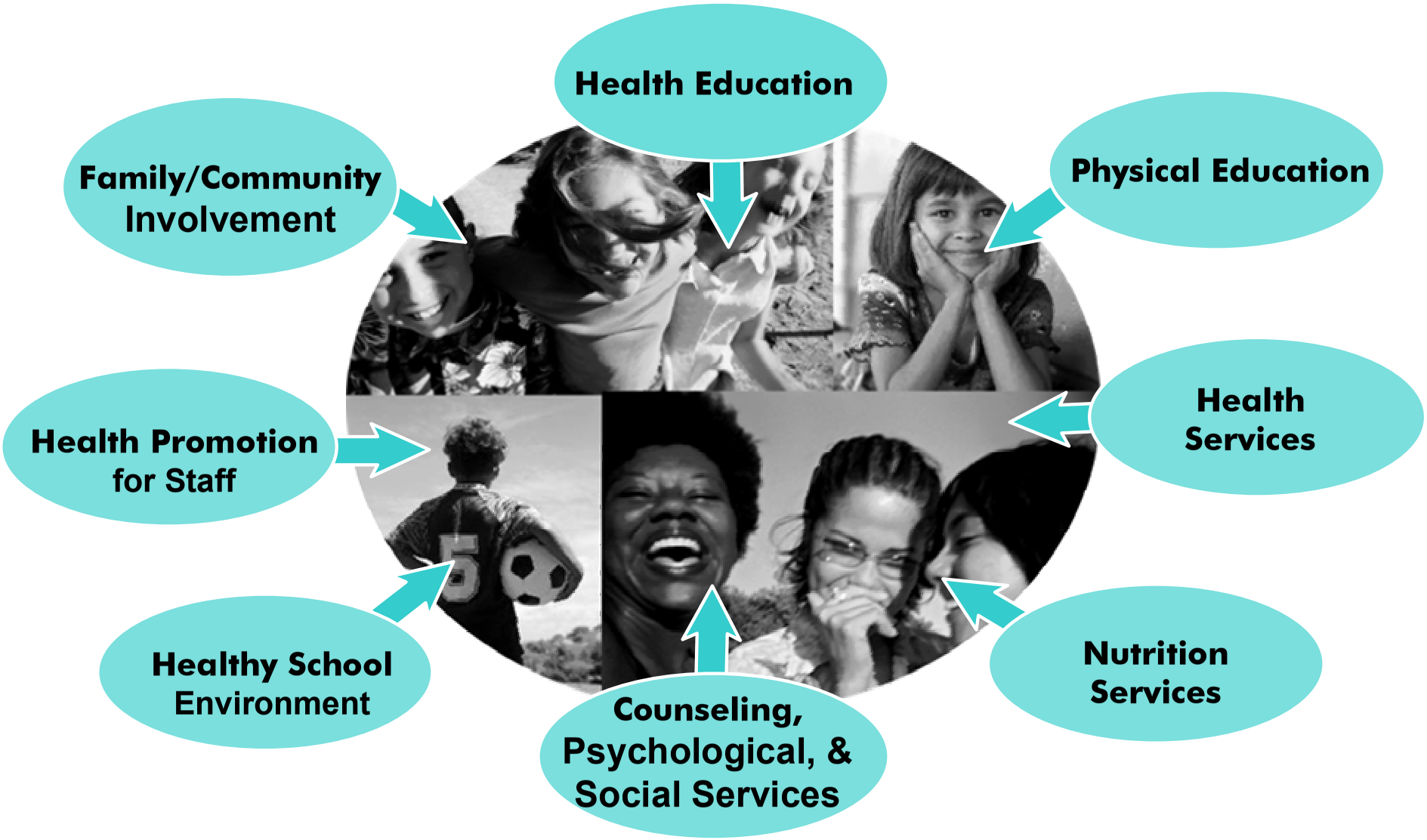
Purpose of the School Health Index

- Enables schools to identify strengths and weaknesses of health promotion policies and programs
- Enables schools to develop an action plan for improving student health
- Engages teachers, parents, students, and the community in promoting health enhancing behaviors and better health

Health Topics Addressed in SHI

- Physical education and physical activity
- Healthy eating
- Tobacco use prevention
- Unintentional injuries and violence prevention (safety)
- Asthma

SHI Modules Based on CDC's Coordinated School Health Program Model



School Health Index Format

- Completed by school health teams
- Two separate versions
  - Elementary School
  - Middle School / High School
- Self-Assessment: 8 modules to follow the Coordinated School Health Program model
- Planning: Planning for Improvement section

Implementing School Health Index

- Site coordinator assigns modules.
- Self-assessment
  - Teams answer Discussion Questions from 8 modules, then develop and rate recommended actions.
- Planning for Improvement
  - Review recommendations,
  - Select a manageable number of top priority actions,
  - Complete the School Health Improvement Plan.

When Completing Self-Assessment Modules, Keep in Mind:

- *Answer questions as accurately as possible*. This is a self-help tool, not an instrument for evaluating staff.

- *There is no passing grade*. This is designed to help you understand your school, not to compare your school with other schools.

- *Expect to get at least some low scores*. Low scores can help you build awareness of areas that need improvement.

School Health Index Team Meeting #2
Sample Agenda

- Review progress.
- Review and discuss SHI findings for each module:
  - Strengths and weaknesses,
  - Module scores,
  - Recommended priority actions.
- Select the top priority actions for your school to implement this year.
- Discuss resources needed for implementation.

School Health Index Team Meeting #2
Sample Agenda

- Complete School Health Improvement Plan:
  - Decide on action steps,
  - Assign responsibilities,
  - Set timelines for action.
- Discuss how to present the plan to school leadership and the community.
- Discuss how to monitor progress.
- Set future meeting date.

When Completing Planning for Improvement, Keep in Mind:

- Some recommended actions will require additional resources; others will involve simply making better use of existing resources.
- Keep the team together to monitor progress; schedule annual assessments.