Chapter 2

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School Safety, School Climate, and Student Mental Health: Interdependent Constructs Built Upon Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Planning

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While historical records indicate that violence occurred on school campuses throughout much of the 20th Century, it was not until the 1990s that it was broadly scrutinized in popular and scientific literature. In the decades hence, there has been an ebb and flow of public concern about school safety and the grounding principles that have guided predominant prevention and intervention strategies. In the mid-1990s, strategies were grounded in zero tolerance practices that emphasized enforcement and school exclusion for disciplinary infractions. These policies have shown not only to be ineffective (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008), but to incur negative effects — students excluded from school are more likely to

become involved with the juvenile justice system. This process has been called the "dark side of zero tolerance" (Morrison & D'Incau, 1997; Skiba & Peterson, 1999) and the "school to prison pipeline" (Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010).

After several school shootings in the late 1990s (e.g., Pearl, MS; Jonesboro, AR; and Columbine, CO), a shift in thinking emerged about factors that precipitate school violence and diminish school safety. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (O'Toole, 2000) and the U.S. Secret Service (U.S. Secret Service & U.S. Department of Education, 2002) issued postmortem reports showing that, although there is no definitive school-shooter profile, some of these events were linked to prior bullying victimization, disengagement, and low feelings of belonging at school. Among others, these reports have expanded the awareness of what interconnected factors are associated with school violence (Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence, 2013). These grounded principles of coordinated and multidisciplinary prevention approaches were illustrated in the *Early Warning Timely Response* issued by the U.S. Office of Education (Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998). More recently, shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, CT (2012) and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL (2018) increased public awareness of the need for mental health services to prevent school violence and minimize the detrimental effects of these traumatic events on students, their families, and school personnel. With more time spent on understanding these topics, it has become clear that school safety, school climate, and student mental health are interdependent constructs that must be considered together when working to enhance learning environments for all children.

This chapter unpacks the complex topics of school violence, school safety, and school climate and identifies models that schools and communities have used to fashion safe and supportive learning environments, specifically in an effort to foster welcoming school campuses and thriving student development. The following sections provide an overview of the interaction of school safety and school climate and how these constructs are directly linked to student mental and emotional well-being. We then discuss a multidisciplinary approach to addressing these constructs and share an existing model that can be used as a foundation to address school safety and mental health issues. We provide a process for moving toward action, which includes: selecting an appropriate model for organizing intervention efforts, building a multidisciplinary team, developing a plan for assessment, and creating a systematic process for intervention implementation. Finally, we include a case study to illustrate how a school district might interpret and implement some of these key components in the "real world."

School Safety and School Climate

Efforts to address school violence and safety are inevitably linked with concurrent efforts to promote positive school climates. In order to reduce school violence, a coordinated effort must be made to enhance school climate and improve the sense of safety on campus.

School violence as a general construct consists of aggression, delinquency, conduct disorders, criminal or antisocial behavior, and violent crimes that have a negative impact on students, schools, and community at individual, social, and environmental levels (Mayer & Leone, 1999; Zhang, Musu-Gillette, & Oudekerk, 2016). This impact is witnessed across the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of a school's population (Furlong, Pavelski, & Saxton, 2002).

School climate refers to the dynamics of physical and social features found in the school

context that are built on the interactions among staff and students as well as their subsequent perceptions of the school environment (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013; Lenzi et al., 2017). School climate has a clear and established role in the process of identifying risk factors, ensuring preventive practices, and fostering protective factors in students (Morrison, Furlong, & Morrison, 1994). Each individual school site possesses qualities and characteristics that contribute to a unique culture or climate. When schools take ownership of these dynamics while developing a safe environment, they proactively support staff members' and students' mental health while preventing future violence (Berg, Osher, Moroney, & Yoder, 2017; Furlong, Morrison, & Clontz, 1991).

Recent research out of the University of Virginia Youth Violence Project provides compelling evidence of the association between school climate and school safety. Employing a set of carefully validated school climate and safety surveys, schools characterized as having climates with an "authoritative" disciplinary style (i.e., clear school rules and expectations accompanied with positive, caring student-staff relationships) reported lower levels of bullying and other forms of victimization than schools characterized by zero tolerance or authoritarian style (i.e., rigid and controlling practices with an emphasis on punishment) (Cornell & Huang, 2016; Cornell, Shukla, & Konold, 2016).

The research of Cornell and colleagues compels schools to implement programs that decrease violence while simultaneously coordinate efforts to foster campus climates that are safe, both physically and psychologically (see Chapter 18, this volume). Within the school context, peace and security increases opportunities for personal growth and exploration, enhancing positive social and emotional experiences (Fredrickson, 2001; Stiglbauer, Gnambs, Gamsjäger, & Batinic, 2013). These are the characteristics of the self-efficacious, self-motivated learner that schools seek to nurture. Efforts to promote school safety and improve school climate, in turn, support students' mental wellness.

Linking School Safety, Climate, and Mental Health

With continued efforts to decrease school violence and enhance school safety, it is important to consider the connection between a perpetrator's mental health and subsequent acts of violence. Focusing primarily on acts of mass violence, however, does not fully consider the broader negative impacts of common forms of school violence (e.g., bullying, social exclusion) on student mental health. Violence at school is a term that encompasses physical acts, verbal insults, social rejection, and other forms of victimization. Further, whether an act is experienced as "violent" may not depend solely on the specific nature of the act, but also on the meaning it has for the victim (Morrison, Furlong, & Morrison, 1994). A victim's perception of risk to their safety may involve direct physical victimization, witnessing the victimization of others, and/or indirect exposure to media and other reports of school violence (Williams, Schneider, Wornell, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2018).

Despite documented links between perceptions of safety and mental health indicators (e.g., emotional symptoms, peer problems, and conduct problems; Nijs et al., 2014), there is limited research regarding school victimization and indicators of positive well-being (e.g., life satisfaction, feelings of connectedness to others/schools). To gain perspective regarding student perception of school safety and its association with complete mental health (as defined in Chapter 1, this volume), we draw on an ongoing two-year survey of adolescent mental health

being conducted in California.[2] This survey offers access to unique information about high school students' perceptions of safety/violence, emotional distress experiences, and self-reported psychosocial well-being.

Table 2.1 shows the co-occurrence of students' perceptions of school safety and school victimization experiences, school climate perceptions, and mental health experiences. We note some generalizations and cautions about these relations. An important pattern is that most students feel safe at school. These students report being less likely to experience emotional distress, as well as more likely to have positive daily psychosocial experiences, positive affiliation with their schools, and high subjective well-being. For the majority of these students, schools are locations where their positive psychosocial development is being fostered, which is consistent with related research (Lester & Cross, 2015). Although these patterns are based on one diverse state sample, they demonstrate that a meaningful subgroup of students (up to one-third) report having direct school violence experiences (threats of personal harm). These victimized students are substantially more likely to report that they: feel unsafe at school; feel less happy at school; more frequently experience emotional distress; and experience lower levels of affective, psychological, and social well-being. When considering school safety, it is essential to consider both rare acts, as well as common, day-to-day forms of violence (physical and social), and the implications on student mental health.

[Insert Table 2.1 about here]

A Multidisciplinary Approach to Addressing School Safety, Climate, and Mental Health

The interactions among school safety, school climate, and school-based mental health have been recognized in coordinated multidisciplinary plans and strategies. The 2015 National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2015) position statement urged schools to join forces with students, families, staff, and community stakeholders when developing and implementing school safety programs. To be effective, the intervention components of these efforts rely on the collaboration of a multidisciplinary team composed of public and private mental health professionals, juvenile probation departments, local law enforcement, as well as school-based staff. The concept of school climate is intended to go beyond ensuring school safety and preventing violence by also focusing on the qualities and characteristics that foster respect, trust, and caring relationships in schools. Subsequently, school climate models have promoted a comprehensive approach that involves early screening, violence prevention tactics, evidence-based interventions, and systematic evaluations (Moore, Mayworm, Stein, Sharkey & Dowdy, 2019). These components encourage a multitiered framework to support the wellness of all students and staff.

The aim of school climate models is to promote campus conditions that reduce risk factors associated with violence and to build protective factors that enhance student well-being. It is vital to align this process with a school's unique qualities and characteristics. When a school takes ownership of these dynamics, they foster a safe and prosperous learning environment for students and staff. Given this need for coordinated efforts to address school safety, climate, and mental health, school professionals and key stakeholders need a step-by-step approach to

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[2] These data include the responses of 10,456 students attending 14 geographically dispersed California high schools (Grades 9-12) during January to May 2018. See Project Covitality (www.project-covitality.info).

effectively tackle all three areas in the school setting.

First, schools need to select a model that allows them to develop a structured way of thinking about these interrelated issues; this will involve organizing and planning the implementation of related interventions across established stakeholders. Next, a site-based multidisciplinary team must be established to coordinate and support these efforts. Necessary resources and limitations must be identified and developed. The team will then work together to design a data collection and management plan in order to evaluate needs, track progress, and identify next steps. After a thorough planning process, team members should then be ready to implement interventions, using a customized approach developed within their community by their multidisciplinary team.

In the following section we describe the Safe Supportive Schools (S3) model developed by the U.S. Office of Education as an example of a climate model linking school safety and mental health.[3] This model provides a framework that schools can use when integrating safety, climate, and mental health programs and services.

U.S. National School Climate, Safety, Mental Health Model

In 1999, the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice established the Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) initiative to support best practices regarding student safety and mental health (Modzeleski et al., 2012). By 2009, 365 local education agencies received SS/HS funding to address risk factors and promote protective factors related to student mental health and safety. This initiative is recognized as a milestone in the progress toward implementing multitiered, comprehensive school safety programs in the country (Furlong, Paige, & Osher, 2003). By focusing on best practice methods from the fields of education, mental health, and justice/legal services, the SS/HS mission was to address the violence, safety, and climate of U.S. schools. Embedded within this concept was a focus on preventing: school discipline problems, alcohol and related substance abuse, student bullying and harassment, and further violent or criminal behaviors. In turn, an emphasis was placed on promoting healthy, respectful learning environments through evidence-based practices that support a safe environment for all students (Furlong et al., 2003).

School programs were asked to develop an understanding of their specific community and school-based needs and provide services across diverse and inclusive demographics with various methods of support. Specifications for SS/HS funding required that schools uphold and support six common factors relevant to the missions of funding federal agencies (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). These methods are to be evidence-based, regularly evaluated for progress, collaborative, and targeted towards prevention, strengthening protective factors, and minimizing risk factors (Furlong et al., 2003). The SS/HS federal model recognized the diversity behind violence, safety, and climate in schools, and was intended to be adapted to the needs of each education agency. Figure 2.1 presents the foundation of this model, along with its six common factors and additional emphasis on school climate.

[Insert Figure 2.1 about here]

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[3] In October 2010 the U.S. Office of Education funded 11 states to develop methods to measure, monitor, and evaluate school climate based on the S3 federal model. Other information about these 11 initiatives and other state initiative related to school safety is available from the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. (https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/stategrantee-profile).

Since the conclusion of the SS/HS initiative, and in an effort to help other education agencies learn from the experiences of the grantees, the National Center for Healthy Safe Children (NCHSC; https://healthysafechildren.org/about-us) was funded by the federal government and managed by the American Institutes for Research. In support of multi-disciplinary efforts, this center provides resources and technical assistance to communities and education agencies designing and implementing comprehensive school safety programs that also consider students overall well-being. Table 2.2 lists the comprehensive range of resources that support planning, implementing, and sustaining/expanding school safety and student wellness programs and services.

[Insert Table 2.2 about here]

Moving Toward Action

Once there is a conceptual understanding of the interplay between safe, supportive school environments and school climate, a team can be developed to address areas of need. As reflected in the main theme of this chapter, an initial step in this process is to develop a multidisciplinary stakeholder group. This may build upon already existing relationships and identify other key members in the community who should participate. Although there is flexibility in the composition of the group, it may include decision makers from a variety of fields (e.g., educators, family members, youth, university faculty, school-based screening experts, social service providers, juvenile justice providers, elected officials).

Identified stakeholders must collaborate during this initial planning phase by surveying existing efforts in the community that focus on the needs of youth, documenting the need for a comprehensive intervention approach, committing to attend meetings and provide resources, and developing a clear vision. When school and community needs and resources are established, stakeholders may proceed by simply sharing information, data, resources, as well as decision-making (Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2005).

In addition to the core stakeholder group, a multidisciplinary team within each school setting should be developed. Table 2.3 illustrates possible team members and their roles in creating safe and supportive school climates (O'Brennan, Furlong, & Yang, 2018; Smith, Connolly, & Pryseski, 2014). These members will vary across school sites depending on the structure and the needs of each school. An initial obstacle decelerating the focus on school climate may be a school's narrow priorities; which are often focused on alternative matters, most commonly involving test scores and academic achievement. Initial buy-in from stakeholders, including site and districted administration, is critical to direct the allocation of resources. Additional challenges involve maintaining the efforts and resources, as well as overcoming collaborative differences that may occur. These factors are best met by establishing accountability measures, providing opportunities for involvement, and reinforcing the participation of those involved. Throughout the implementation process it is important to maintain a positive focus on human connection and relationships (Smith et al., 2014).

[Insert Table 2.3 about here]

Developing a Comprehensive Plan

A resource that coordinates efforts with the National Center for Healthy Safe Children is the National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) housed at the University of Maryland,

which offers school planning teams a structured resource to use to organize school mental health services. As part of the National Quality Initiative on School Health Services, the NCSMH carried out an intensive, stakeholder-driven process to create the first National School Mental Health Quality and Sustainability Performance Measures. These measures, or domains, inform best practices in school mental health, from development of evidence-based school mental health services to maintaining these supports within a multitiered system of supports (MTSS) framework. To support the implementation of these performance standards within schools and districts, as well as improve and sustain quality, the School Health Assessment and Performance Evaluation (SHAPE) System provides resources for each domain in the form of a public access (no monetary costs), web-based platform (www.theSHAPEsystem.com).

Within the SHAPE System, the Screening and Assessment Library allows stakeholders to search and identify measures to support screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring efforts. Users of the SHAPE System can find appropriate measures based on various screening objectives, including screening for academic difficulties, overall school climate, and social, emotional, and behavioral strengths and concerns. Additional screening tools are available to gauge students' resilience and quality of life. Searches can also be narrowed down by student age, language, intended informant, and cost. Users are highly encouraged to document and monitor their screening efforts within the platform to receive customized reports of school- and district-level data.

Assessing School Climate and Safety

An integral component to each school safety model, although often neglected, is the use of valid and reliable measures to assess and monitor school climate and student psychosocial needs. In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, Public Law 114-95) prompted schools not only to evaluate the quality of school climate and safety, but to ensure that the implementation of prevention programs and models are addressing areas of identified need. Ongoing evaluation is intended to analyze suspensions and expulsion rates, referrals to law enforcement, chronic absenteeism, incidents of bullying or harassment, and to determine the level of improvement and efficacy of programs being implemented (Cornell & Huang, 2018).

Common methods of measuring school climate frequently include teacher reports and office disciplinary referrals. Unfortunately, these referrals can be subject to reporter biases, rendering them inconsistent and unreliable, and the referrals may decrease over time without an actual reduction of problem behaviors (Cornell & Huang, 2018). Variables of school climate that are useful in its evaluation include teacher-student relations, student-peer relations, teacher-home communications, respect for diversity, school safety, clarity of expectations, and fairness of rules (Bear et al., 2014). Additionally, Zullig, Koopman, Patton, and Ubbes (2010) identified several common domains of school climate, including order, safety, discipline, academic support, social relationships, school facilities, and school connectedness.

Numerous methods and various instruments have been suggested for conducting school climate evaluations (Furlong et al., 2005; Zullig et al., 2010), yet, a majority of common tools lack strong evidence to support their validity or reliability (Bear et al., 2014). Locating an effective assessment procedure for a school's unique climate should be fitted to the unique needs and inherent systems of a school. Here, we highlight a school climate and safety suite that was developed as part of the federal S3 school climate initiative (http://wh1.oet.udel.edu/pbs/) that funded 11 state education agencies to develop assessments based upon the school climate model

illustrated in Figure 2.1. The Delaware School Surveys (a) have been successfully implemented; (b) provide online administration, reporting, and tracking dashboards; (c) are embedded within a multitier Positive Behavior Intervention Service model; and (d) most critically, are validated in peer-reviewed studies (e.g., Bear et al., 2014). The portfolio of Delaware School Surveys (DSS) is comprised of the following four separate scales:

1. *Delaware School Climate Scale (DSCS):* Teacher-student and student-student relations; respect for diversity; clarity of expectations; fairness of rules; school safety; student engagement-schoolwide; teacher-home communications; teacher-staff relations; and bullying schoolwide;

2. *Delaware Positive, Punitive, and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Techniques Scale*: Positive behavior techniques; punitive techniques; and social emotional learning techniques;

3. *Delaware Bullying Victimization Scale:* Physical bullying; verbal bullying; social/relational bullying; and cyberbullying; and

4. *Delaware Student Engagement Scale:* Cognitive and behavioral; and emotional domains.

Despite the strengths of these assessments and school professionals' ability to assess risky behaviors, victimization, bullying, and other concerning behaviors, our field continues to struggle with systematically assessing mental distress, diminished well-being, and quality of life indicators of students. Teams must take all of these variables into account. As shown in the preceding section, building evidence should motivate communities and their schools to consider and integrate efforts that monitor and foster student mental wellness with comprehensive, interdisciplinary strategies that promote safe and welcoming school campuses.

Intervention Implementation

Once schoolwide data are collected and needs are identified, school teams can move toward selecting a specific intervention model. In this step, it is important for school teams to utilize their data collected throughout the screening and needs assessment process to help determine the model with the best fit. This is illustrated in a case study in Laguna Beach Unified School District (see Insert 2.1). This example also demonstrates the incorporation of student wellness screening and monitoring as a part of comprehensive intervention planning and implementation (Moore et al., 2016).

Regardless of the specific strategies chosen by a school, most intervention models incorporate a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) model in which student needs are met with an appropriate level of intervention across three tiers. The Tier 1 level includes universal prevention strategies and schoolwide practices and procedures that impact all students. In a school safety framework, universal prevention strategies may include Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS; see Chapter 4, this volume), Restorative Practices (see Chapter 22, this volume), Olweus Bullying Prevention (see Chapter 19, this volume), and other strategies that help build positive discipline and academic success for all students. These interventions often build the foundation for a safe school and are essential in developing a healthy school climate and decreasing the prevalence of schoolwide safety concerns.

Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, which require additional coordination among school

teams, students, and families, provide a more intensive or individualized level of support. With universal prevention and student screening efforts, schools can better identify the specific student needs that necessitate Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports (see Chapter 17, this volume). In a school safety framework, Tier 2 interventions often include group-level support (e.g., group counseling, targeted social-emotional learning, social skills training for at-risk youth). Tier 3 interventions, which are more individualized, may include individual counseling or interventions that target more specific student needs.

Although implementing a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach to intervention can provide students with the appropriate level of services in a coordinated fashion, there are challenges that arise. For example, adding a universal assessment process may lead to a high volume of referrals for services, which a school may or may not be able to support with the current structure and funding of their resources. Coordination across multiple agencies, and even team members, can also be challenging and requires a strong foundation of communication, data distribution, and clear resource prioritization, sharing, and allocation. Finally, there are often concerns with the long-term sustainability of such comprehensive and coordinated efforts (Ryst, Rock, Albers, & Everheart, 2016).

Conclusion

As the promotion of school safety and student well-being continues to become a priority, it is important for school systems to create settings that foster a safe, positive, healthy, and inclusive learning environment for all students and staff. Recognizing the connections between school safety, climate, and student mental health, school systems can design and implement a comprehensive model to promote overall student well-being. Steps such as developing a multidisciplinary stakeholder group and multidisciplinary school-based team, surveying existing efforts in the local community that support students, evaluating school climate and student needs (particularly focused on mental and emotional well-being), and developing a clear vision for implementation that links identified needs to specific interventions along a continuum of support can be fundamental in the promotion of a safe and supportive school community.

As this chapter highlighted, there are various models, measures, and case examples that districts can use to guide their efforts to develop and implement such a process. As Morrison and colleagues (1994) stressed, school safety is a form of resilience, and without the promotion of a safe and supportive school environment, we are in effect threatening the development and well-being of students. We must aid in student resiliency by fostering safe and supportive school communities.

[Insert the Insert 2.1 about here]

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Table 2.1

Illustrative Associations Between High School Students' Perceptions of School Safety, Psychosocial Distress, and Psychosocial Well-Being

	How safe do you feel when you are at school? [a]		
Items	Unsafe *n* = 875 (8%)	Neutral *n* = 3710 (36%)	Safe *n* = 5871 (56%)
DISTRESS INDICATORS			
Direct school violence (past 12 months) [a]			
…pushed, shoved, slapped, hit, or kicked by someone who wasn't just kidding around. (yes)	40%	19%	11%
Emotional distress (past 12 months) [a]			
…felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks so stopped doing usual activities? (yes)	57%	45%	26%
WELL-BEING INDICATORS			
School connectedness [b]			
I am happy to be at this school. (agree/strongly agree)	23%	35%	72%
Affective well-being (past month) [c]			
…felt satisfied with life. (almost every day/every day)	31%	41%	64%
Psychological well-being (past month) [c]			
…life had a sense of direction and meaning to it. (almost every day/every day)	34%	45%	66%
Social well-being (past month) [c]			
…society is a good place, or is becoming a better place for all. (almost every day/every day)	17%	20%	42%

[a] California Healthy Kids Survey (Austin et al., 2018). [b] School Connectedness Scale (Furlong et al., 2011). [c] Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (Keyes, 2006) (www.project-covitality.info).

Table 2.2

National Center for Healthy Safe Children Safe Schools Healthy Students Model Resources

Planning	Implementing	Sustaining & Expanding
- Needs assessment & environmental scan - Managing programs & initiatives - Developing disparities impact statement - Developing logic models - Strategic communications - Selecting evidence-based programs - Examining comprehensive school mental health programs - Developing evaluation plans	- Evidence-based programs - Comprehensive school mental health programs - Engaging families & youths - Strategic communications - Creating safety infographics	- At school level - At community and state levels - Learning from peers - State of local successes - Aligning safety, prevention, and mental health promotion

Source: *SS/HS Framework*, National Center for Healthy Children. https://healthysafechildren.org/sshs-framework

Table 2.3

Roles of Safe and Healthy Students Multidisciplinary Team Members

Group	Roles and Responsibilities
Students	**Role in school safety**: Students are often the targets or perpetrators of school violence through direct (e.g., hitting, verbal abuse, physical attacking with a weapon) or indirect (e.g., relational aggression, witnessing violence, supporting the aggressor) forms of aggressive behavior during school hours or on their way to/from school. Students should be encouraged to become partners in enhancing their school's climate. This can be demonstrated through practicing leadership skills, becoming informed about school climate and related policies, advocating for student needs, engaging in peer mentoring, taking part in climate assessments, leading peer groups and programs, and emphasizing positive efforts through daily behavior and interactions.
Families	**May include**: Parents, caregivers, and extended families. **Role in school safety**: Family members witness school climate in a unique way, as a student may feel most comfortable reporting information to them. Families look to the school to take action to prevent and appropriately intervene before, during, and after incidents that may impact their child's experience at school. Families play a crucial role in modeling the expectations they have for their child to contribute towards a safe school and positive climate. Families should be strongly encouraged to participate in school roles to enhance their involvement and relationship with their school. Communicating directly with school staff and responding to surveys is an important method of relaying family and community needs related to the safety and well-being of a school.
Educators	**May include**: General and special education teachers. **Role in school safety**: Being the most likely to witness student-student and student-staff engagement, educators play a critical role in enhancing positive school climate. Opportunities to build and maintain a positive school climate may include actively reducing discrimination; promoting inclusion; encouraging student efficacy and instilling confidence in students' abilities (interpersonal and academic); emphasizing high expectations; creating opportunities for student leadership; teaching, modeling, and upholding school values with consistency; developing positive relationships with students; increasing social emotional learning; collaborating with other staff; pursuing further training and education; and responding to surveys and regularly communicating staff and student needs.
Administrative and District Support	**May include**: Principals, assistant principals, superintendent, district curriculum coordinators, and other intervention coordinators. **Role in school safety**: As a school's primary decision-makers, administration play an important role in determining the definition and direction of a school's safety and climate. Across students and staff, administrative staff are charged with emphasizing the importance of school climate; ensuring appropriate training and opportunities for building awareness; instilling efficacy across academic and interpersonal arenas; recognizing and addressing barriers to school climate; choosing programs, curriculum, and discipline models to implement; facilitating methods of communication; and surveying of a site's direct and indirect needs.

Education Support Professionals (ESP)	**May include**: Paraprofessionals, clerical staff, transportation staff, maintenance, and food services. **Role in school safety**: ESPs often work in the unstructured settings such as the cafeteria, playground, and school busses, where students engage in a more unstructured way. Unfortunately, these staff are seldom included as part of the prevention programming. ESPs have a unique position to enhance and monitor school climate and may benefit from professional development trainings focused on schoolwide safety promotion.
Mental Health Professionals	**May include**: School psychologists, school counselors, school social workers, and school nurses. May also include community-based mental health professionals (e.g., psychologists, nurses, psychiatrists). **Role in school safety**: Mental health professionals tend to be the most knowledgeable about best practices in school violence prevention and intervention, consequently these individuals are the go-to resource for other members of the school community when school crises occur. Apart from providing psychological and counseling supports to students and families, mental health professionals are intended to disseminate knowledge and resources regarding school climate and promotion of student and staff wellness.
Law Enforcement and Related Support Staff	**May include**: School resource officer, probation officer, and local law enforcement. **Role in school safety**: Fostering school climate is directly linked to safety and often relies on prevention of contraband items and activities on school campuses. As zero tolerance methods (e.g., metal detectors and armed personnel) often have a negative impact on school climate, it is crucial to maintain a positive relationship and connection to law enforcement staff who uphold legal matters necessary to sustain safety. In addition to maintaining safety, it is important to foster positive relationships with staff and students and develop strategies when resolving conflict; these three components comprise a "triad concept" model considered appropriate for school resource officers.

Note. Table adapted from Roles and Responsibilities of the Members of the School Community in School Safety Planning (O'Brennan, Furlong, & Yang, 2018).
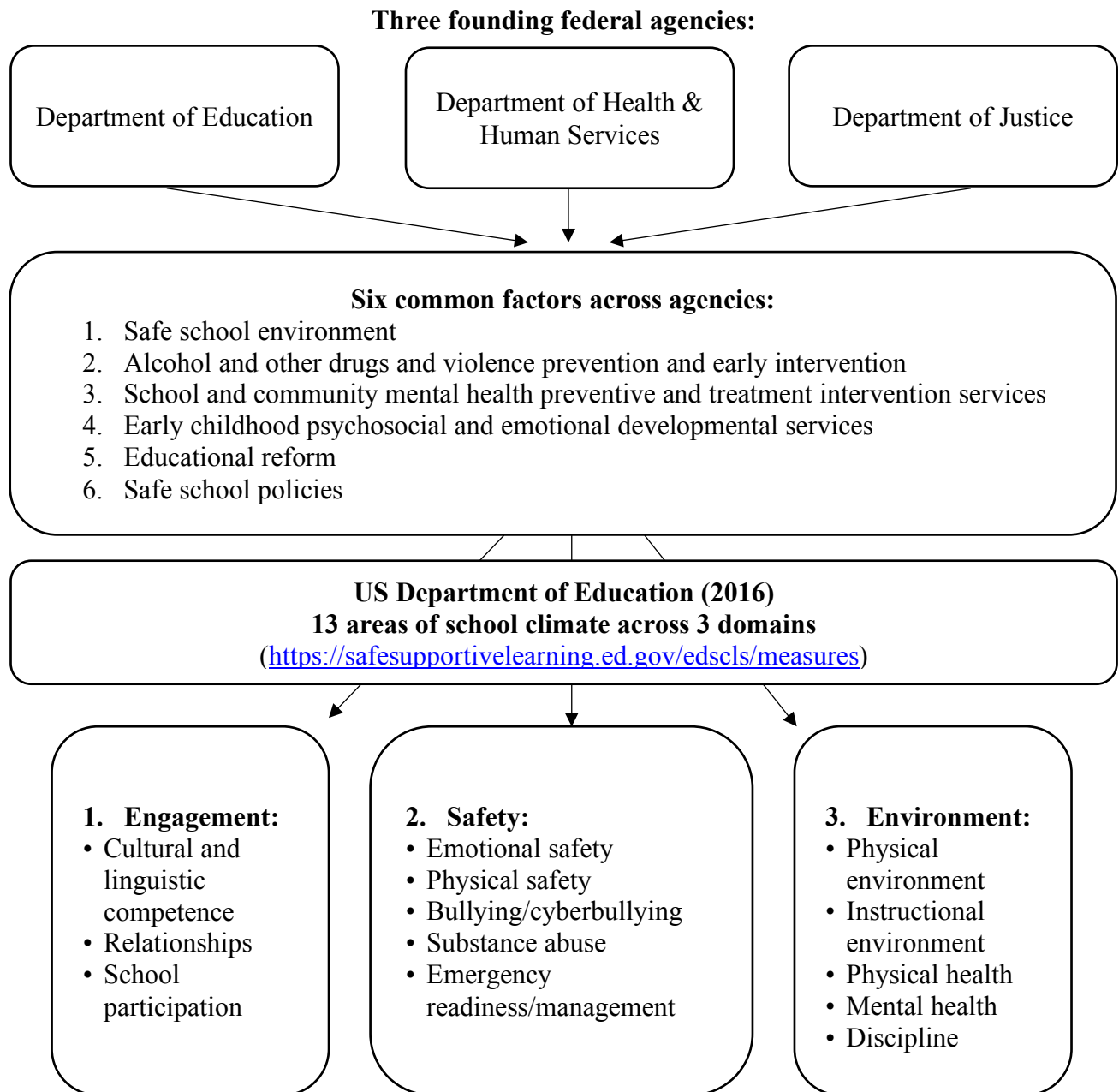
Figure 2.1

Three founding federal agencies:

| Department of Education | Department of Health & Human Services | Department of Justice |

Six common factors across agencies:
1. Safe school environment
2. Alcohol and other drugs and violence prevention and early intervention
3. School and community mental health preventive and treatment intervention services
4. Early childhood psychosocial and emotional developmental services
5. Educational reform
6. Safe school policies

US Department of Education (2016)
13 areas of school climate across 3 domains
(https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls/measures)

1. Engagement:
• Cultural and linguistic competence
• Relationships
• School participation

2. Safety:
• Emotional safety
• Physical safety
• Bullying/cyberbullying
• Substance abuse
• Emergency readiness/management

3. Environment:
• Physical environment
• Instructional environment
• Physical health
• Mental health
• Discipline

Figure 1. Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) initiative.
Sources: (Cornell & Huang, 2018; Furlong, Jones, Lilles, & Derzon, 2010; Furlong, Paige, & Osher, 2003).

Insert 2,1. School District Plans and Implements Schoolwide Climate and Well-being Monitoring and Support Services

In the 2017-2018 school year, Laguna Beach Unified School District (LBUSD; K-12 school district located in Orange County, California serving approximately 3,000 students across two elementary schools, one middle school, and one comprehensive high school) embarked on a journey to implement social and emotional learning (SEL) programs as part of its efforts to enhance school climate and to foster positive student development. Previously administered anonymous school climate surveys, including the California Healthy Kids Survey (2014, 2016) and Hanover Research's School Climate Survey (2017), identified substantial student-level concerns in the areas of school connectedness, relatively high rates of risk behavior, and comparably high rates of social and emotional distress. In response, the LBUSD expanded the instructional services team with a director of social emotional support to lead districtwide SEL programs, and added two new school social workers to provide direct program and student services to the team of seven school counselors and four school psychologists.

During the summer of 2017, under the guidance of the director of social and emotional support, a multidisciplinary SEL advisory group was formed to guide the alignment of districtwide prevention and intervention services with best practice models. After reviewing existing school climate surveys, the stakeholder team concluded that an essential on-going practice would be the utilization of universal SEL screening. The three goals for universal SEL screening were to provide actionable data on students who may need immediate support, provide schoolwide and district level climate insights over time, and to inform professional development priorities to support the development of social and emotional health.

The multidisciplinary advisory team evaluated multiple universal screening instruments for potential use as SEL universal screeners and ultimately selected two instruments: (a) Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS; Drummond, 1994) for kindergarten through Grade 3, and (b) the CoVitality survey (see, www.project-covitality.info), an online self-report consisting of the Social Emotional Health Survey (You, Furlong, Dowdy, Renshaw, Smith, & O'Malley, 2014), Social Emotional Distress Survey (Dowdy, Furlong, Nylund-Gibson, Moore, & Moffa, 2018), and additional measures of school connectedness (Furlong et al., 2011; You et al., 2014) and subjective well-being (Seligson, Huebner, & Valois, 2003) administered to students for students in Grades 4-12.

The advisory group concluded that the benefits of using the SRSS were that the instrument provided a reliable, valid, efficient, and cost-effective teacher completed rating of student risk on externalizing and internalizing behavior factors. Additionally, the SRSS was capable of being programmed into the district's student assessment information system to facilitate staff training, to survey administration, to report scores, and to maintain student records over time. The advisory group concluded that the benefit of using the CoVitality survey was that the instrument provided a reliable and valid student self-report of a dual-factor model of mental health. This included measuring social-emotional distress from normal to high, and a profile of social-emotional strength across four strength constructs (gratitude, zest, optimism, and persistence) on the primary version (Grades 4-5) and 12 factors (self-efficacy, persistence, self-awareness, peer support, school support, family support, empathy, self-control, emotional regulation, gratitude, zest, and optimism) for the secondary version (Grades 6-12). The term CoVitality refers to the positive combined influences of youths' social and emotional strengths, all of which can be nurtured to higher levels of development. In addition to individual student information, the CoVitality survey also provided sitewide aggregate climate data on student-identified social emotional strength factors to help school leaders and staff focus school-based initiatives and instructional activities to increase students' SEL strengths.

Prior to the first administration in the fall of the 2017-2018 school year, the advisory group planned and communicated to district leaders, parents, and staff to inform stakeholders of the purpose of universal SEL screening, the full survey implementation schedule for the year, and the parent notification and opt-in/opt-out process. Additionally, the advisory group provided leadership on training teachers and staff on survey administration and coordinated optimal survey administration windows. Lastly, the advisory group designed and implemented the

process for survey scoring, validation of scores, and the critical process for student follow-up for all students identified in the high-risk categories.

At the student level, students identified in the high-risk categories of the SRSS or CoVitality survey were provided direct follow up from a school counselor assigned to each elementary site, or to the school social workers assigned to the middle school or high school. The purpose of the direct student contact was to validate the data captured in the universal screening, communicate with parents about notable results, and offer or provide action planning with school-based counseling interventions or external referrals. All direct student contacts were recorded within the district's student information system for on-going progress monitoring.

The aggregate universal SEL screening data provided additional insights for stakeholders. For example, the SRSS findings indicated that students' externalizing behaviors were greatest in kindergarten and lowest in Grade 3, and conversely, students' internalizing behaviors were the lowest in kindergarten and greatest in Grade 3. Through three administration cycles (fall 2017, spring 2018, and fall 2018), both factors of externalizing and internalizing behaviors were trending towards increasing low risk behaviors and reducing moderate and high-risk behaviors.

The CoVitality aggregate climate data provided multiple insights across self-identified student strength factors through the first three cycles of implementation from fall 2017 to fall 2018. Most notably, students in Grades 4-5 had the greatest strength in the factor of gratitude, with the factors of zest and optimism as two of the lowest strength factors. Similarly, students in Grades 6-12 had greatest strengths in the factors of empathy, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy. The lowest strengths in Grades 6-12 were in the factors of zest and optimism. All data were shared back with staff members in follow up staff meetings following survey administration. The SRSS and CoVitality surveys provided staff and site leaders with evidence to support the continued implementation SEL curriculum with fidelity in kindergarten through ninth grade to enhance established student strengths and improve factors identified as weaknesses. Additionally, site teams were able to use the data to inform and enhance schoolwide SEL goals, prioritize SEL related professional development, and refine school-based counseling interventions for students identified as high risk.

There are multiple lessons that LBUSD has learned from embarking on a regular cycle of universal SEL survey administration K-12. First, the fall screening in year two of implementation was moved from mid-November, approximately 60 calendar days past the start of the school year, to mid-October, approximately 45 school days past the start of the regular school year. This shift provided additional opportunities for staff to deliver interventions for students and for teachers to use the screening data in fall parent-teacher conferences and student study team (SST) meetings. Second, the spring administration window was moved from approximately 20 days prior to the end of the regular school year to approximately 70 days prior to the end of the year to provide for more in depth student follow up and planning for the end of the regular school year. The final lesson learned was the importance of continuous communication about the purpose of universal SEL screening with all stakeholders. In year two of screening, the student participation rates increased on average from 75% of all students K-12 to 85% of students K-12 due to increased parent consent; this shift was largely attributed to positive messaging to parents and staff about the importance of screening to enable immediate supports for students in need.

As the universal SEL screening continues, the LBUSD SEL advisory group will regularly evaluate the impact of prevention and intervention activities on student survey outcomes with the aim to continue to reduce student risk and enhance student social-emotional strengths. Additionally, the universal SEL data will be included as an additional data source as the district refines its student early warning system (EWS) using data from student attendance, discipline, school mobility, and academic achievement measures using formative and summative assessments. Ultimately, universal SEL screening using the SRSS and CoVitality survey instruments have proved to be essential tools to enhance timely, data-informed response services for students and has helped to add richness to the school climate data story.