

THE SCHOOL NURSE ROLE IN MENTAL HEALTH AND SCHOOL SAFETY IN NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOLS

NC Legislature School Safety Committee, 4/23/18

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Immediate Past President of the

School Nurse Association of North Carolina (*SNANC*)

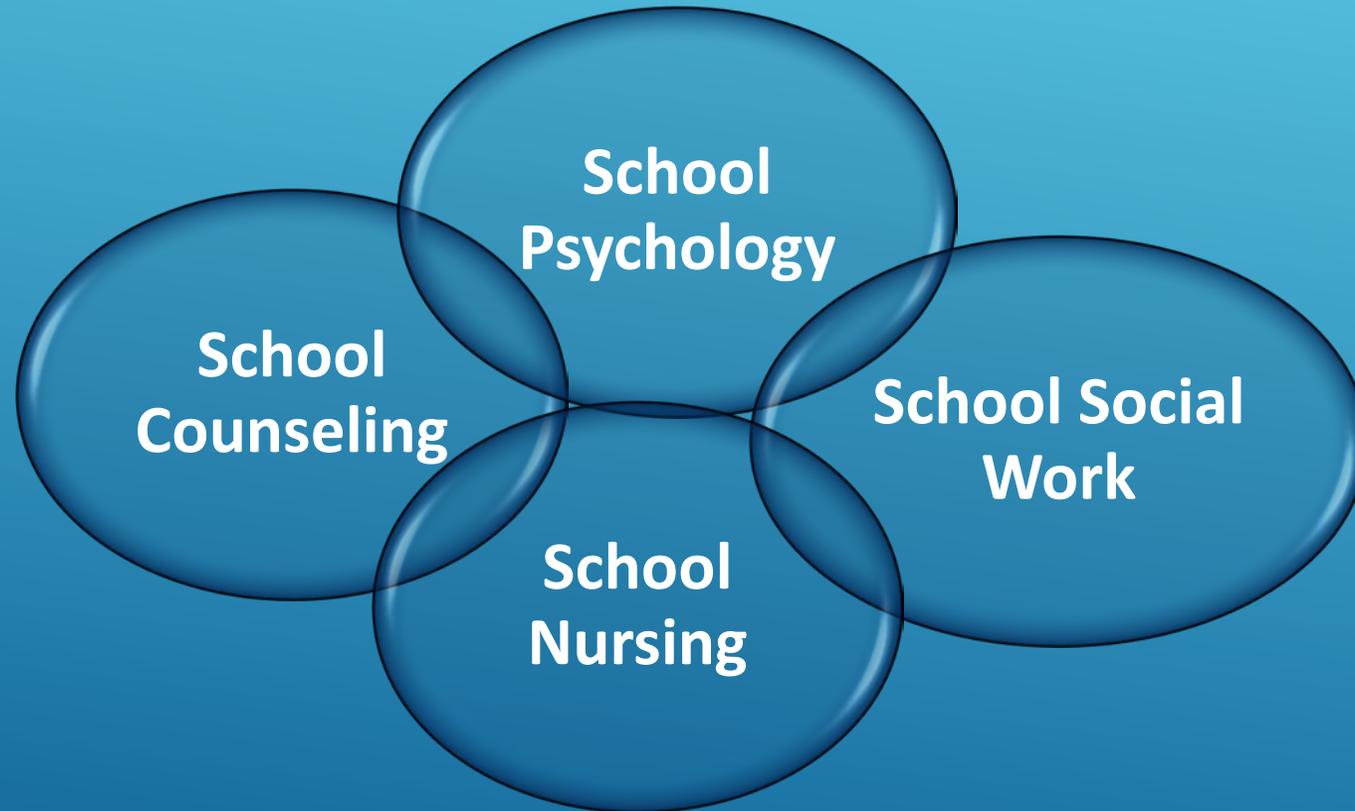
School nursing, a specialized practice of nursing, protects and promotes student health, facilitates optimal development, and advances academic success. School nurses, grounded in ethical and evidence-based practice, are the leaders who bridge health care and education, provide care coordination, advocate for quality student-centered care, and collaborate to design systems that allow individuals and communities to develop their full potential. *NASN Board of Directors February 2017.*

-The School Nurse is the only clinical health professional in the education setting.

SCHOOL NURSING

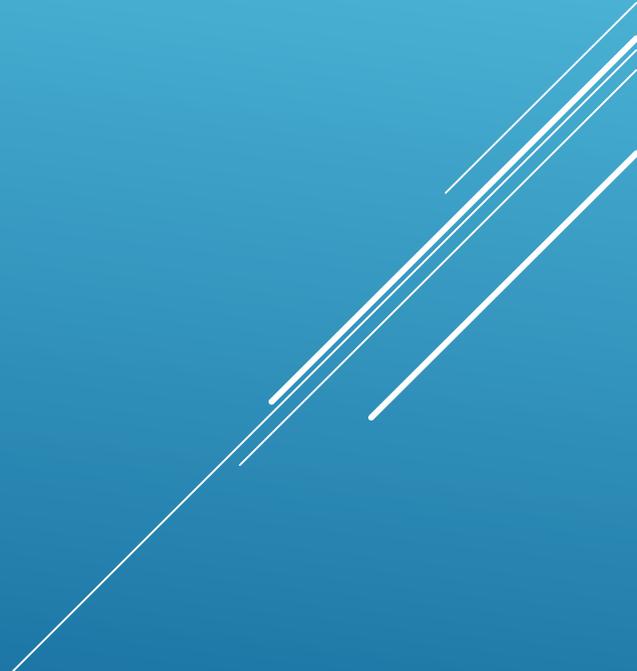
INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL/ BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS

School Mental Health Team of Professionals



- ▶ School nurses are the most accessible professional with mental health training when present in school every day. They are viewed as 'safe'. Students do not need an appointment, they can request to go to the nurse. Physical complaints are often related to nonphysical causes.
- ▶ In NC many schools do not have a school nurse every day where they are regularly assigned to anywhere from one to six schools.

THE SCHOOL NURSE IS ACCESSIBLE

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a blue background.

Programs supported by NASN/SNANC

See Something, Say Something...The School Nurse Role in Bullying Prevention

Approximately 20% of students are bullied, bully others, or both

-This equates to approximately 160,000 students on any given day

Youths who are bullied often have:

-Negative psychological and physical consequences

-Increased school absenteeism

-Worsening academic performance

[SchoolNurseRoleBullying](#)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL NURSES
(NASN)

Programs supported by NASN/SNANC

Disaster and Crisis Preparedness

The school nurse is often the first health professional who responds to an emergency. The school nurse has the education and knowledge to identify emergent situations, manage the emergency until relieved by emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, communicate the assessment and interventions to EMS personnel, and follow up with the health care provider.

[SchoolNurseCrisis/Disaster](#)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL NURSES
(NASN)

The first signs of mental illness or emotional distress can emerge in the school environment. It's well known that mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and family problems often are the root causes of poor academic performance, disciplinary issues, and truancy.

North Carolina School Nurses provided 17,737 individual student counseling sessions during the 2016-17 school years for issues related to mental health issues.

Behavioral health disorders that school-age children commonly experience include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ attention deficit
- ▶ hyperactivity disorders
- ▶ mood disorders
- ▶ depression
- ▶ bipolar disorders
- ▶ conduct disorders,
- ▶ anxiety disorders
- ▶ panic disorders,
- ▶ eating disorders
- ▶ psychotic disorders

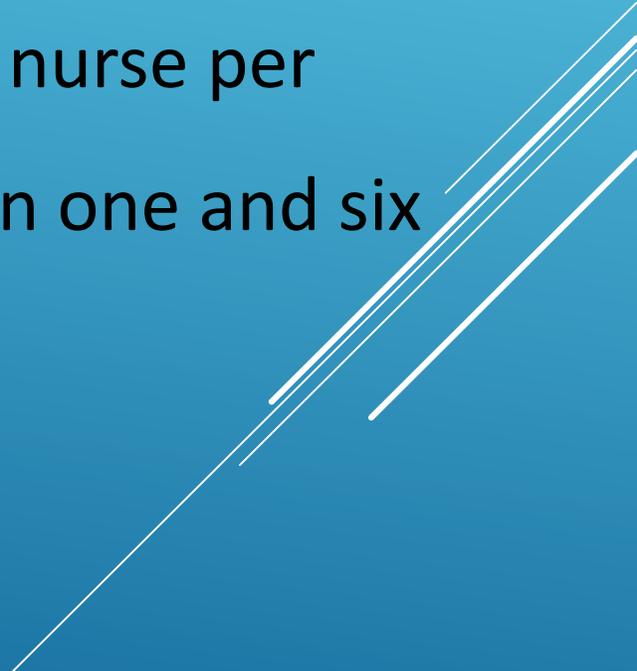
SCHOOL NURSES:

- Are the front line health professionals who is educated to recognize warning signs / changes in school performance and mood, complaints of illness, self-harm, and suicidality.
- Adhere to appropriate guidelines regarding confidentiality.
- Assist in the re-entry of students into the school environment following homebound instruction or hospitalization.
- Serve as a care coordinator among community behavioral health and primary care providers, the family, and school personnel.

- ▶ It is the position of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) that registered professional school nurses (hereinafter referred to as school nurses) advance and encourage safe school environments by promoting the prevention and reduction of school violence. **School nurses serve on the front line and are readily able to identify potential violence and intervene to diminish the effects of violence on both school children as individuals and populations in schools and the community (King, 2014).** School nurses collaborate with school personnel, healthcare providers, parents, and community members to identify and implement evidence-based programs promoting violence prevention. These evidence-based programs promote violence prevention through early intervention, communication, positive behavior management and conflict resolution.

SCHOOL VIOLENCE - THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL NURSE

School nurse ability to be engaged with students who are experiencing crisis in mental health is limited by not being present on a daily basis. 10% of NC LEAs provide a nurse per school. School nurses in NC were assigned between one and six schools to serve.

The image features a solid blue background. In the bottom right corner, there are several white, parallel diagonal lines that create a sense of movement or a graphic element.

CONCLUSION

School Nurses are integral partners in creating and supporting a positive school climate, identifying and intervening with students in need of support and referring as needed to mental health professionals.

School nurses are in a unique position to play an active role in mental wellness promotion, mental health screening, and early intervention programs and to assist in managing the ongoing treatment of mental health and substance use disorders in the school setting.

School nurses are educated to identify somatic complaints and co-occurring behavioral health concerns . Thus, school nurses are often a student's first point of entry into behavioral health services. School nurses are also part of the normal school experience and are easily accessible to students seeking assistance with behavioral health issues. Visiting the school nurse may be viewed as less stigmatizing for students than seeking a school behavioral health provider It has been reported that school nurses spend approximately one third of their time providing mental health services