

# **Bridging School & Community Partnerships for Student Well-Being & Success:**

**A Collaboration between  
Somerville High School & Cambridge Health Alliance**

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# Overview



## Introduction to CHA

Summary of CHA behavioral health services & history of school-based partnerships



## Challenges & Opportunities

Discuss barriers & facilitators for this type of work



## PBHUC Grant (funded by MAMH)

Goals of the grant & interventions offered

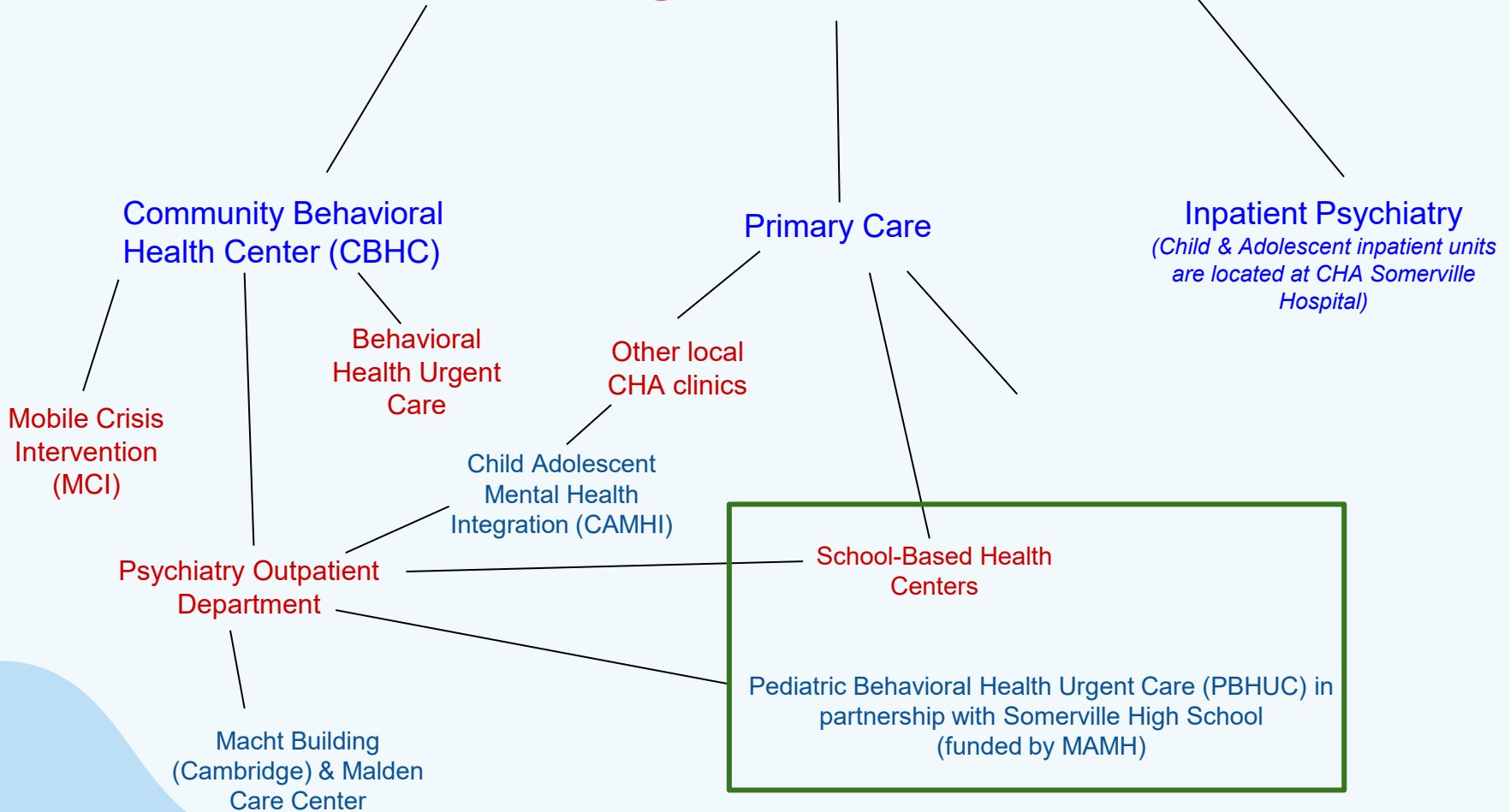


# 01

## Overview of Cambridge Health Alliance

CBHC, Inpatient, Outpatient, Integrated Care,  
School-Based Health Centers, and more!

# Cambridge Health Alliance





02

# Grant: Pediatric Behavioral Health Urgent Care

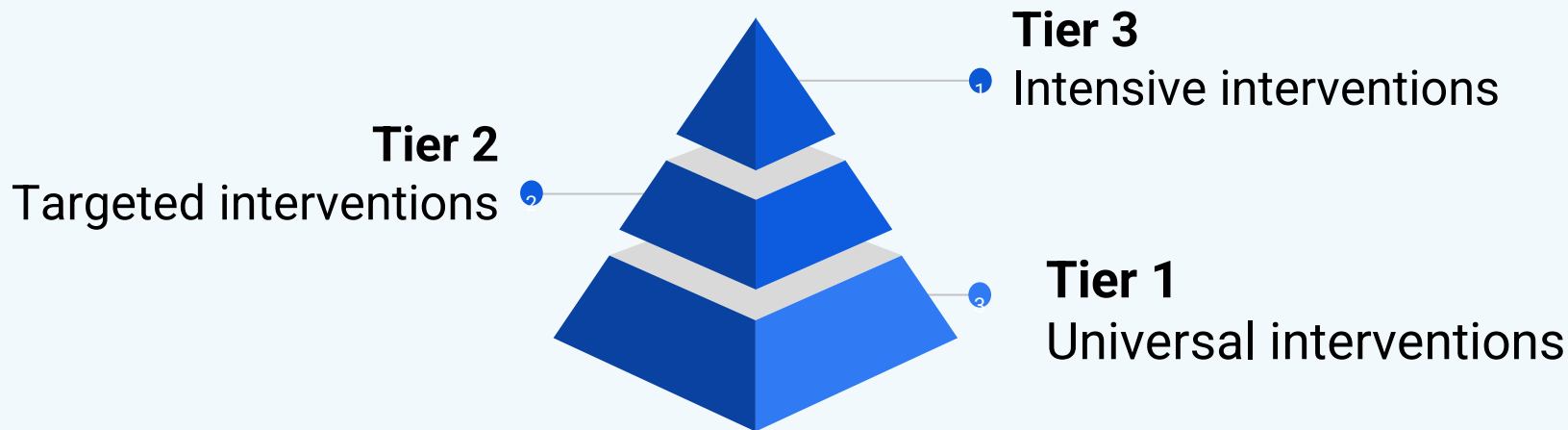
Funded by MAMH  
in partnership with Somerville High School

# Goals of the Grant

- 1) Provide an alternative to using 911 for mental health concerns & behavioral dysregulation
- 2) Minimize emergency room visits that can be more effectively managed with earlier, less intensive interventions
- 3) Reduce school expulsions, suspensions, and chronic absences

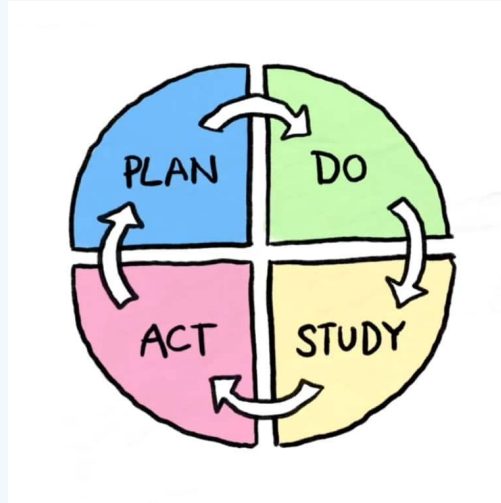
# Our Approach

To balance crisis intervention with prevention/early intervention



“When you spend years responding to problems, you can sometimes overlook the fact that you could be preventing them.” -Dan Heath

# Feedback Loops



“Systems can’t be controlled, but they can be designed and redesigned. We can’t surge forward with certainty into a world of no surprises, but we can expect surprises and learn from them”

-Donella Meadows



# Interventions

01

## Assessments

Mental Health, Safety, & “Strengths and Needs”

02

## Family Support Specialist

Provides psychoeducation and assists families with care coordination & connection to services

03

## Group Counseling

School avoidance, anxiety, healthy relationships; Seeking Safety (upcoming in January)

04

## The Comeback

Therapeutic re-entry following suspension

05

## Training & Consultation

Provide trainings on risk & threat assessment & as needed clinical consultation

06

## Care coordination

Referral form for UC/MCI, transportation funds, etc.

# Chronic Absences

Where we  
started...

- School Refusal  
Assessment Scale

Where we  
landed

- SKIP group  
within in-school  
suspension  
programming

# The Comeback

## Strengths

*We're here because you were recently suspended and I am interested in hearing more about that problem but before I do that I would like to find out more about you. I'd like to leave the problem to the side to start. Is that ok with you?"*

*1) Tell me a few things that are wonderful about you. (\*student writes on their action plan\*)*

- a) What are some of your positive qualities? What do your friends like about you?*
- b) What kinds of things do you like to do? How do you spend your free time? What are you good at?*
- 2) What would you guess I (or the principal, or a teacher, or another counselor) respect most about you?*
  - a) If not sure how to answer, what's important to you that people might not know about you, if they only saw you as the kid who (insert cause of disciplinary action)?*
- 3) What do you stand for? Believe in? Care about? What are you known for? How did what happened when you were suspended express that?*

# The Comeback

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE COMEBACK

– Action Plan –

Three wonderful things about you:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

GOAL: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION(S): \_\_\_\_\_

Two **people** who can help me reach my goal

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Notes from (circle)	Tori	Vanessa	Ellie

Follow Up Meeting Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Ok to share a copy of your action plan with your assistant principal & community

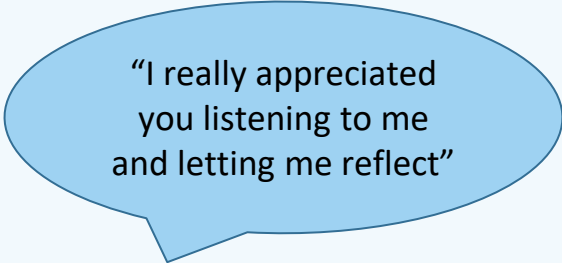
staff?

Yes

No

# Feedback from Students

- 60.6% of students felt the Comeback was 'Very Much' or 'Mostly' helpful to deal with their identified problem
- 72.8% felt the Comeback 'Very Much' or 'Mostly' helped develop an action plan to deal with their problem
- 69.7% felt 'Very Much' or 'Mostly' motivated to use their action plan



"I really appreciated  
you listening to me  
and letting me reflect"

# Discipline

- In 2023-2024 school year, of the 25 kids who participated in the Comeback after their first suspension, 5 were suspended a second time
- In October 2023, there were 12 short-term suspensions vs 1 suspension in October 2024

# Referral Form from School to Urgent Care/MCI

## Recommendations (completed by UC/MCI Clinicians):

- ☐ Follow up appointment at Urgent Care scheduled (Appointment date/time: \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ Follow up with outpatient mental health care provider
  - ☐ Referral made for new outpatient treatment (Agency/provider name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_)
  - ☐ Continue with established provider (Name: \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ Reviewed Safety Plan with:
  - ☐ Student & family
  - ☐ School personnel
  - ☐ Healthcare provider
- ☐ Copy of Safety Plan provided to
  - ☐ Student & family
  - ☐ School personnel
- ☐ Enroll in a partial hospitalization day program. Referral made to:  
Agency: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Transferred to CHA Emergency Department (1493 Cambridge St, Cambridge, MA 02139)
- ☐ Family consented to MCI 7-day follow-up
- ☐ Family declined recommendations

*For more information about urgent care, please contact CHA CBHC at (833) 222-2030.*

Signature below indicates that a medical provider may share information collected on this form with the referring school professional(s) and/or the appropriate school staff administrator listed below for coordination of care and follow up.

Parent/Guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# 03

## Challenges & Opportunities

What lessons have we learned?

Where do we go from here?

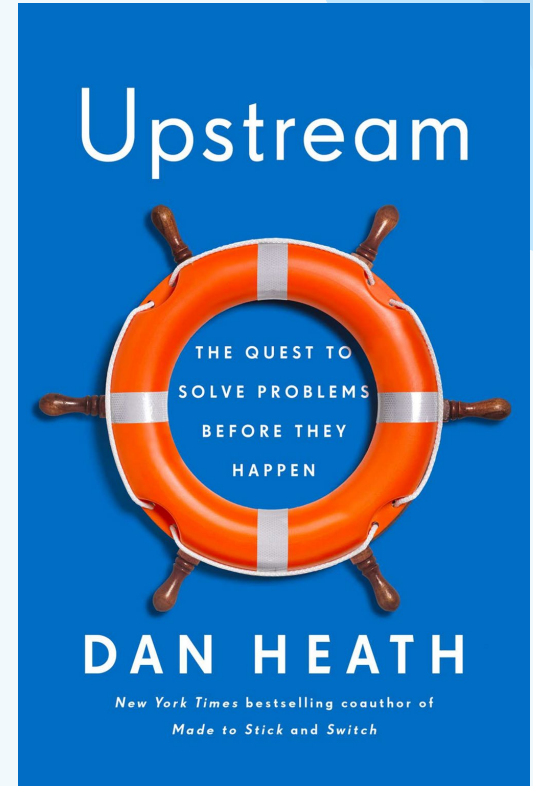


# We Must Prioritize Prevention

*“Part of every social-sector organization’s mission should be to push upstream. To prevent wounds as well as bandage them; to eliminate injustices as well as assisting those who suffered them.”*

***But it is challenging...***

*“That’s one reason why we tend to favor reaction: Because it’s more tangible. Downstream work is easier to see. Easier to measure. There is a maddening ambiguity about upstream efforts.”*



# Additional Challenges & Opportunities

- *Sustainability — working within CPT codes & needing a diagnosis to bill insurance*
- *Long waitlists for therapeutic care demands innovation & creativity*
- *Determining collaboratively what is in scope vs. out of scope*
- *Working towards the same goals (i.e. student well-being & success) is mutually beneficial for school-community partnerships*

# Thank You!

We would love your questions, comments, & feedback



Materials for The Comeback



Urgent Care Referral Form

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