



To: District Directors, Circuit Managers, Teachers, Parents

Topic: Achieving health and well-being through schools

Message Objective(s): For school managers and district officials to build schools that provide psychosocial needs for all learners.

Message: Build positive school psychosocial environment

Research has shown that 63% of young South African children who attend school, live below the poverty line. Poverty affects these children's physical, cognitive and emotional development (Hall, Sambu, Berry, Giese, Almeleh & Rosa ,2016). Millions of children and orphans who live below the poverty line attend schools in South Africa to find education. These children are also affected by conflict and violence. Because health and educational outcomes are inextricably linked schools must therefore provide ideal positive psychosocial environment where these children can thrive.

Schools have a central role to play in supporting the emotional, social, and cognitive learning of children and youth in an integrated way. School managers and district officials must endeavour to build positive psychosocial environment at their schools. PSS provision improves academic and school success for all learners and in particular for those in contexts of adversity, risk, and stress.

Recognizing the contexts in which education is provided is very critical. Many schools in South Africa provide education mainly to children from households that are situated in communities overwhelmed by a host of social and economic inequalities.

Positive social environment at school

- can influence the behaviour of learners
- can affect the mental health and well-being of young people
- can improve learners learning outcomes.

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References: Basic Psychosocial Skills: A COVID-19 Responder's Guide, Psychosocial Support: A model for South African Schools. (Download resources on our website (www.nect.org.za)