



# School Mental Health Training



**World Health  
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE **Eastern Mediterranean**

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## Lecture 5

# Mental health-promoting schools 2 (promotion and prevention)





# Learning objectives



**behavioural  
management  
strategies**

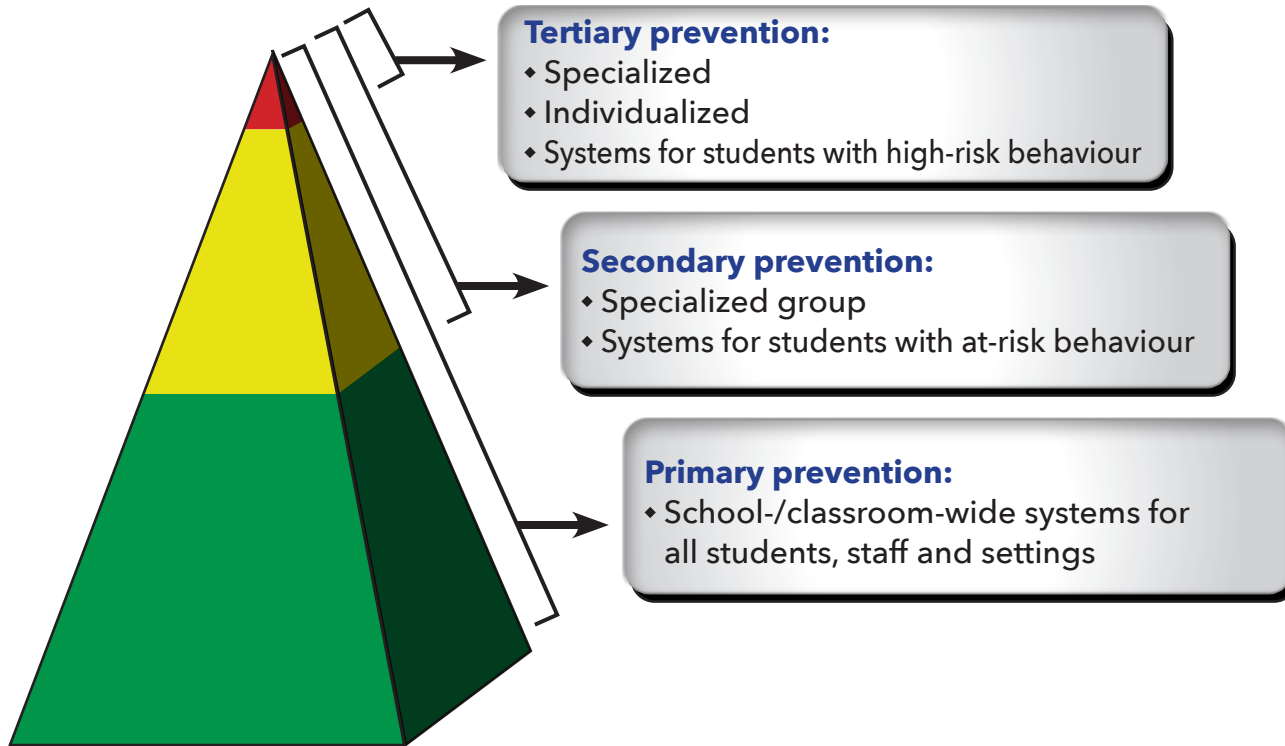


**basics of  
counselling**



**introduce techniques  
such as circle time and  
life skills education**

# Prevention is divided into several levels



# Behavioural management strategies for schools

## Discipline and management of disruptive behaviour

- Discipline is an important part of school life
- Different strategies should be used
- Negative discipline techniques like physical punishment, criticizing or threatening should never be used due to their harmful effects
- Use positive discipline techniques





# Exercise 1



Please divide yourself  
into groups of four

**Take 10 minutes to discuss the following topic**

Discuss strategies that can be used in class for **disruptive behaviour**

**Have a representative report back to the larger group**



# Practical steps to manage disruptive behaviour

- Take a **preventative** approach
- Set reasonable and fair limits
- Ignore unacceptable behaviour when appropriate. It is not appropriate to ignore behaviour when a child is causing damage or hurting themselves or others
- Redirect or distract behaviour when possible
- Point out the natural and logical consequences
- Help students develop decision-making skills
- Help students develop alternatives to disruptive behaviours such as doing a productive task







# Practical steps to manage disruptive behaviour

- Reward successes during the school day
- Develop with students a multi-step plan to help them wait patiently
- Teach and reinforce **positive strategies** like sharing, negotiation, and cooperation
- Do a countdown for the last several minutes of an activity to help with transitions
- Praise students often for specific things they have done
- When the student resists following direction shift the conversation to student choices and consequences





# Practical steps to manage disruptive behaviour

- Set limits against aggression and communicate your expectations clearly
- Be consistent, predictable, and fair
- Teach children to control anger by giving them information about anger and teach them to use words to convey feelings
- If a student becomes oppositional or upset, first recognize the reaction and then invite them to consider alternatives





## Remember

- Do not overdo any of the techniques
- Be consistent and systematic
- Do not humiliate or embarrass the student, criticize their personality or family, but rather talk about the behaviour
- Your tone of voice and attitude should remain friendly
- Reinforce desirable behaviour at every opportunity
- Model positive behaviour and show students how you can handle frustration



# Basics of counselling



Relationship building	Active listening	Interviewing skills	Observation skills	Providing information
Establishing a relationship based on empathy, trust and respect	Use skills such as maintaining eye contact, appropriate body language, nodding one's head, modulating tone to indicate empathy	Ask open ended questions: "Can you tell me more about.....?"  Ask questions in a non-judgmental way  Use questions appropriate for the child's age  Reflective listening demonstrates the teacher has understood the child's experience	Observe the child's verbal and non-verbal behaviour	Provide factual information and challenge misconceptions

# Counselling

Teachers are **not** expected to be trained counsellors and should refer students who need counselling for professional help

However, teachers can use **basic counselling** skills in working with children



# Circle time

(sometimes referred to as group thinking time)

Increasingly popular technique used to facilitate students' communication of their feelings and concerns at school



# How to implement circle time

A facilitator encourages students to explore issues important to the group (classroom rules, bullying, etc.)

Students should ideally sit in a circle to give the feeling they are in a **safe and equal** environment



Ideally, the group should consist of  
**no more than 25 students**

# How to implement circle time

Rules should be presented by the facilitator

- **Respect** the opinions of others
- Allow each student a chance to participate
- No one should be forced to share their opinion
- Respect each other's **confidentiality**





# How to implement circle time

The agenda for each meeting should be defined clearly

## Session structure

**Beginning:** review the rules and present the discussion topic

**Middle:** key issues are discussed

**Closure:** counsellor summarizes the discussions



# How to implement circle time

## **The facilitator's role**

Actively listen, encourage participation and allow solutions to emerge

## **For younger children**

The facilitator may sit on a small chair or on the floor to be at the same level as students

## **Discussion topics**

Can include identifying feelings, managing emotions, and building self-esteem





# Life skills education

An important part of prevention and promotion efforts

Managing conflict  
Dealing with authority  
Problem solving  
Making and keeping friends  
Cooperation  
Self-awareness  
Creative thinking  
Decision-making  
Critical thinking  
Managing stress  
Trust  
Sharing  
Sympathy

Compassion  
Sociability  
Self-esteem  
Planning ahead  
Empathy  
Dealing with emotions  
Assertiveness  
Active listening  
Respect  
Tolerance





# Life skills education techniques



- Hear an explanation of the skill in question
- Observation of the skill (modelling)
- Practice the skill in selected situations in a supportive learning environment
- Feedback about individual performance of skill
- Practice of skill facilitated by role-playing in typical scenarios
- Using skills learning tools, e.g. by working through the steps in the decision-making process
- Practice should start with skills learning in non-threatening, low-risk everyday situations and progressively transition to their application in threatening, high-risk situations.
- Important methods used to facilitate life skills learning include group discussion and story-telling



**Thank you**

