



Evaluating the Tri-County Regional Centre for Education Health Promoting Schools Model: A Qualitative Case Study

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Abstract

Background: The Health Promoting Schools (HPS) model fosters supportive environments that enhance student health and learning (World Health Organization & UNESCO, 2021). Since 2005, HPS has been implemented in Nova Scotia, across seven Regional Centres for Education (RCEs) and one French-language school board (CSAP) (Kontak et al., 2023). The Tri-County RCE (TCRCE), a rural region serving approximately 5,800 students across 22 schools in three counties has a unique HPS model involving an appointed HPS lead in each school in addition to public health supports. To aid in model advancement, TCRCE collaborated with our team to conduct a multi-method case study evaluation of HPS implementation and effectiveness. This presentation focuses on the methods and findings from the perspectives of health and education partners involved in HPS within TCRCE.

Methodology: Guided by a pragmatic paradigm and an integrated knowledge translation (iKT) approach (Gagliardi et al., 2016), this research adopted a single-case study design, with TCRCE serving as the bounded case. A case study allows for an in-depth exploration of how HPS is implemented within a specific regional context (Creswell & Kasmad, 2020). Data collection comprised of interviews and focus groups with HPS partners, including students, teachers, and administrative staff from both health and education sectors. To date, 13 interviews and three focus groups (two student groups and one adult partner group) have been completed. Data are being analyzed through thematic analysis using a qualitative descriptive approach (Sandelowski, 2000).

Results & Conclusion: Preliminary findings indicate that HPS partners offer diverse insights into factors influencing implementation in a rural region, including role and responsibility clarity, time and resource allocation, cross-sector dynamics, reporting structures, HPS understanding and capacity, and the importance of student engagement. This evaluation provides TCRCE with updated insights into the current implementation, integration, and outcomes of HPS within the region. Findings will inform future strategic planning of HPS in TCRCE and will provide transferable lessons to other jurisdictions with a similar context.

Keywords: Comprehensive School Health; Qualitative; Evaluation



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