MHAT FAQ and Acronym Glossary

* **Q: What is MHAT?**
  + Mental Health Assistance Team. The MHAT is made up of social workers, school psychologists, and school counselors who support the delivery of the signs of suicide curriculum in the classroom, screen students for possible social, emotional, and behavioral challenges, follow up with students in need, and provide direct mental health services for individuals and groups of students, during school.
* **Q: What does the MHAT process look like?**
  + Very Briefly, and very simplified:
  + SOS and screening schedule will be determined in advance by the SOS coordinator, teachers, and team
  + MHAT counselor (or middle school counselor) supports the teacher with delivering the SOS lesson (this year, this will happen in science classes for 7th-10th grade students)
  + Following the lesson, in the same class period, the MHAT counselor conducts the BIMAS2 well-being screening for each student in the class
  + MHAT counselors and school counselors (when available) provide timely follow-up for students who indicate recent thoughts of self-harm
  + In the next few weeks, the MHAT counselor(s) follow up with additional students who may need MHAT services, and offers services to students who may need them
  + MHAT counselors typically meet with students 1x/week for 12-16 weeks and provide evidence-based mental health services in groups or as individuals.
  + As students exit MHAT services, the MHAT counselor will move down the need list and offer services to additional students, as space becomes available.
* **How is this different from school counseling services?**
  + Typically, school counselors are not able to provide consistent, weekly mental health counseling. School counselors provide solution-focused and brief counseling interventions for students, suicide risk screening, AND a huge host of other important counseling tasks. MHAT counselors provide almost solely mental health counseling for individuals and groups, and do not do the other whole host of things school counselors do, in order to preserve their time for mental health counseling services.
* **How do I refer a student who I think might need mental health services to MHAT?**
  + A: The best process for identifying a student for whom you have a mental health concern is to speak to that student's school counselor first. In some cases, the student may be a good fit for MHAT services, and the school counselor can work with MHAT to get it going. In other cases, the student is either not a good fit for MHAT, is already receiving mental health services, or is not in the current grade level being served by MHAT. In those cases, the school counselor can work to connect the student to other mental health resources or support them in whatever way the individual student may need.
  + If the concern is about self-harm or suicide, speak to any counselor or MHAT counselor immediately and ensure that you follow up to make sure the student has been supported ASAP (see BSD procedure 2145P)
  + DO NOT promise MHAT services to students or families without first connecting with the school counselor and the MHAT counselor in the building
* **Q: Can an MHAT counselor provide special education services to a student on an IEP?**
  + A: No. The MHAT service model does not include providing special education services as outlined on a student's IEP. If an IEP team has completed an evaluation, and has determined that a student needs counseling support, they need to speak to a special education supervisor about that student receiving special education social worker minutes on the IEP.
* **Q: Can an MHAT counselor work with a student who is receiving special education supports?**
  + A: Yes, under certain conditions.
    - YES: If the student does not currently have social-emotional or behavior goals on their IEP, they may be eligible for MHAT services. For example, a student receiving IEP services in math and reading who is screened using the BIMAS2 and flagged as possibly needing counseling supports, could access MHAT services. After completing a course of MHAT services, if the team sees sufficient progress, no further action would be needed. If the student completes a course of MHAT services and does not make sufficient progress, and/or their social-emotional needs are adversely impacting their education, a referral to MDT may be appropriate to consider if the current services are sufficient.
    - MAYBE: There may be circumstances in which students who do have social-emotional and/or behavior goals MAY be eligible for MHAT services, but these circumstances are unusual and require MHAT Lead consultation (i.e., Jared Taylor or Alyssa Symmes). See below.
    - NO: If the student already has counseling minutes on their IEP, the MHAT would not be an appropriate intervention (see above), as the MHAT may not provide special education services.
* **Q: Can MHAT counselors attend MDT/GT/504/IEP/MTSS meetings?**
  + A: Yes, as an MHAT counselor only (not as the school counselor or psych). MHAT counselors can be a valuable part of teams supporting students. If a student who is receiving MHAT services is having a GT/MDT/504/IEP meeting, the MHAT counselor may attend and provide mental health input where needed. The MHAT counselor should not be responsible for delivering ANY of the student's IEP minutes. Also, please be mindful of the limits to confidentiality. MHAT counselors may not be able to share personal information about what they are working on with the student in a GT/MDT/504/IEP meeting.
* **Q: Can MHAT work with an elementary student or a student at a different school?**
  + A: No. Elementary MHAT services are being developed and there is more information to come, but there are no direct MHAT services available for elementary students right now.
  + A: No, with exceptions: MHAT counselors need to provide services to students in their assigned school as a general rule. There are some possible exceptions (i.e. doing a middle school virtual anxiety group for kids in all the middle schools or serving a student who cannot work with the MHAT counselor at their school because of a conflict of interest or inappropriate match).
* **Q: Who funds MHAT?**
  + A: MHAT is funded by BSD funds, and this year, has received some additional funds from the federal dollars for Covid recovery. The Signs of Suicide coordinator and curriculum and some of our use of the BIMAS2 are partially funded by a grant from the Bellevue Schools Foundation.
* **Q: Can students who work with MHAT be referred for special education or 504?**
  + A: Yes. If the MHAT counselor, school team members, or parent/guardians believe that a student who is receiving or has received MHAT services may have a disability that either a) substantially limits a major life activity (504) or b) adversely impacts their education and may require special education services (MDT), you should consider making a referral for 504 or MDT. If you have these kinds of concerns, you should consult the student's school counselor and/or the school psychologist at your school to get the process going.
* **Q: What makes a student ineligible for MHAT services?**
  + 1: If a student has social/emotional/behavioral goals on their IEP. MHAT is not allowed to provide special education services, so a student who already has an identified educational need in this area should be served by their IEP. If the IEP is not adequately meeting their needs, and the team wants to consider adding counseling services, they need to convene an IEP meeting and consider it. In that case, the services would not be provided by the MHAT.
  + 2: Student already has outside of school mental health services that are sufficient. In some cases, a student already receiving outside mental health services may access a MHAT group, or in rare cases, occasional check-ins with the MHAT counselor.
  + 3: Student has challenges beyond the expertise and training of MHAT counselors or what is appropriate to deliver in schools. Some examples: the primary concern is substance abuse, student has significant and persistent suicidality, student’s presenting concern is personality disorder/psychosis/eating disorder/etc.
* **Acronyms - what do these letters and numbers mean?**
  + MHAT – Mental Health Assistance Team – BSD team providing individual and group mental health services to students. MHAT team members are BSD certificated staff.
  + SOS- Signs of Suicide - the BSD curriculum, offered this year to 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th grade students, teaching suicide prevention skills. Layne Barker is the SOS coordinator, and Wendy Powell is the SEL curriculum leader in charge of training staff on delivering the SOS lesson
  + Item #24- Refers to the 24th question on the BIMAS that indicates recent thoughts of harming oneself
  + NA- Negative Affect - a subscale on the BIMAS2 that indicates challenges with internalizing (symptoms of anxiety and depression). The NA subscale is a key piece of data in identifying students who may need MHAT counseling services
  + EWI- Early Warning Indicator - district-wide data collected for each student about attendance, office discipline referrals, grades, credit deficiency, etc. EWIs are used in a variety of ways in BSD to determine which students or groups of students may need additional supports, as part of the MTSS process
  + BIMAS2- Behavior Intervention Monitoring Assessment System Second Edition - the screener used by the MHAT to identify students who may need mental health services. Edumetrisis is the website that we use to deliver the screener