The Strengths, Hope and Resourcefulness Program for School Mental Health (SHARP-SMH)
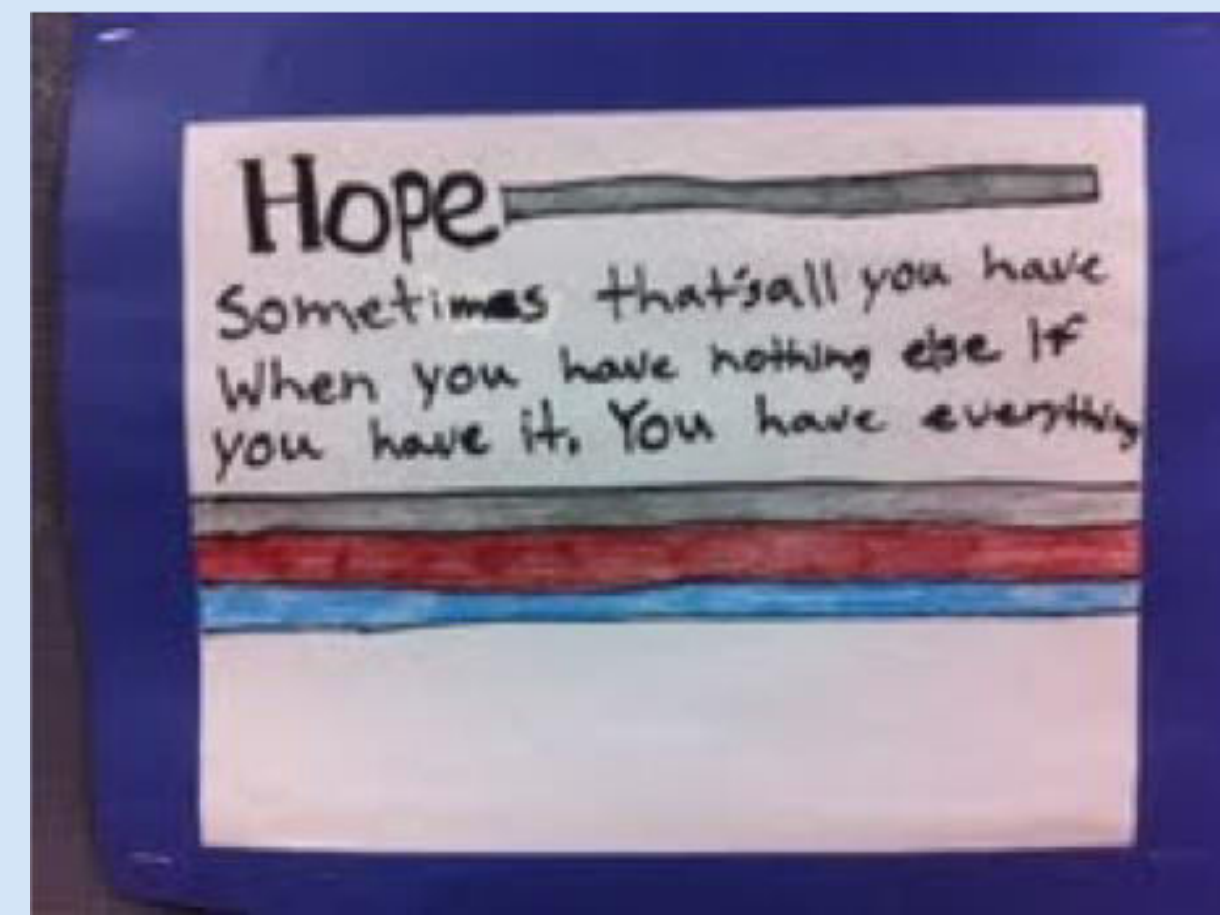
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Background

- Teaching is a complex and demanding profession, with many teachers experiencing high stress and burnout (Gray, Wilcox, & Nordstokke, 2017). Teacher well-being is essential in creating a positive learning community.
- As highlighted in Alberta's new Teaching Quality Standard, teachers play a central role in supporting children's development, including mental health, learning, and emerging citizenship (Alberta Education, 2018).
- Hope is "a process of anticipation that involves the interaction of thinking, acting, feeling, and relating, and is directed toward a future fulfillment that is personally meaningful". (Stephenson, 1991, p. 1459).

- Hope serves as an essential and sustaining factor when facing difficult and stressful workplace conditions (Flesaker & Larsen, 2010; Snyder, 2005), and is especially necessary in overcoming difficulties and challenges in an educational context (Nolan & Stitzlein, 2011).
- Further, hope is linked with both academic success and overall wellbeing in children (Pedrotti, 2018).

Purpose & Research Questions

Purpose:
1) To increase teacher well-being and satisfaction through the development the of hope and purpose.
2) To teach strengths, hope, and resourcefulness skills to teachers and students.
3) To foster hopeful experiences of students so they experience greater resiliency, wellbeing and academic achievement.
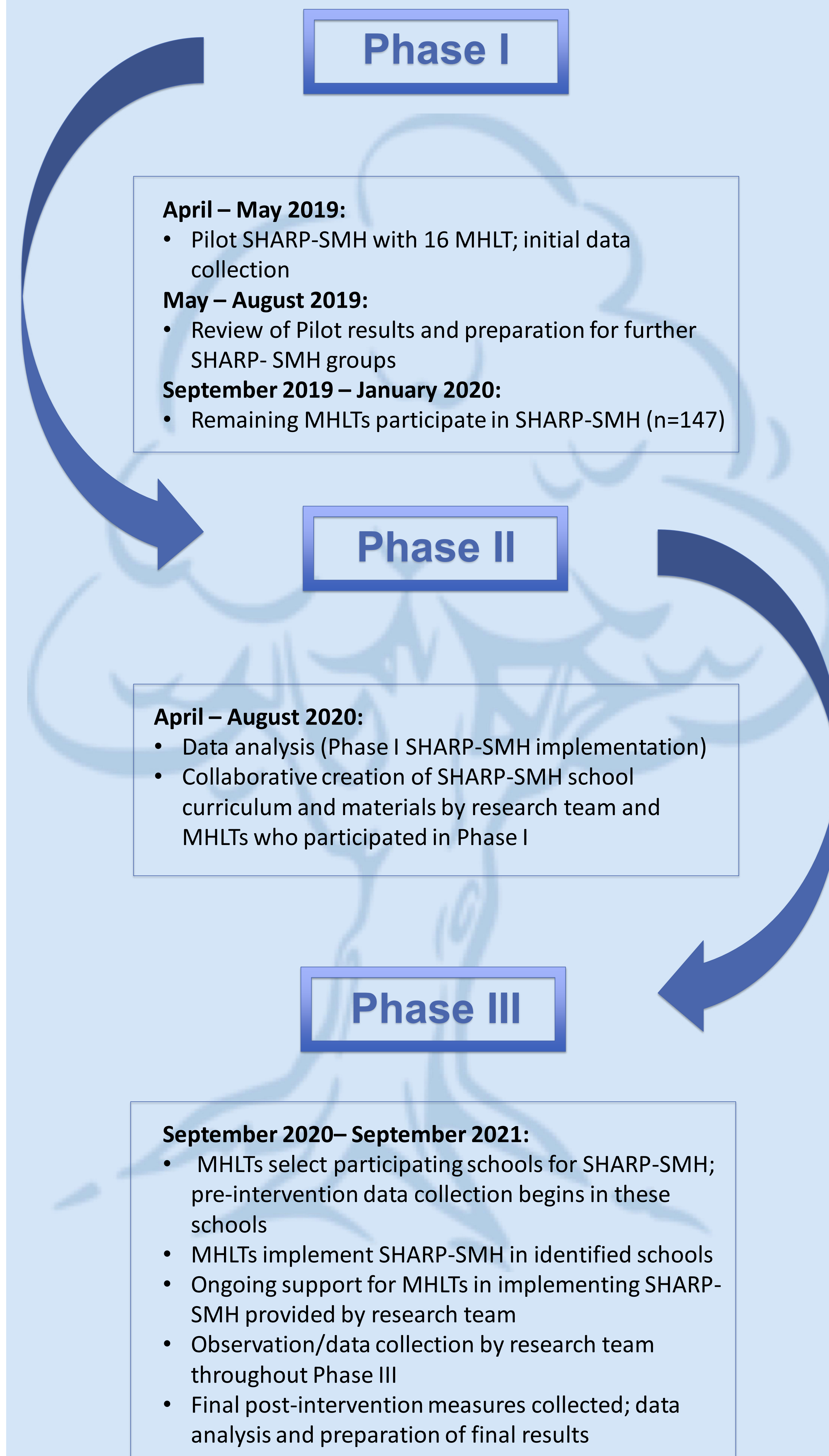
Research Questions:
- **Phase I:** What is the impact of a short-term strengths, hope, and resources psychoeducational group program (SHARP-SMH) for teacher leaders on teacher health and wellbeing?
- **Phase II: (1)** How do MHLTs choose to implement structured strengths, hope, and resource materials (SHARP-SMH) in the catchment schools, with classroom teachers and students? **(2)** What supports are deemed useful for use in classroom settings by the MHLTs?
- **Phase III: (1)** How do MHLTs choose to implement structured strengths, hope, and resources materials (SHARP-SMH) in their schools, with classroom teachers and students? **(2)** What is the impact on students, teachers, and schools of teacher leaders' implementation of SHARP-SMG at the school level?

SHARP Program

- The Strengths, Hope and Resources Program (SHARP) is a 6-week psychoeducational program originally designed for working with individuals in health settings.
- Based on previous research, the SHARP group shows evidence for enhancing mental health and wellness by targeting emotional well-being (e.g., strengths), resourcefulness and hopefulness.
- Previous research demonstrates the program to be suitably flexible in response to context, and to enhance participants' hope, emotional well-being and life engagement (Howell, Jacobson, & Larsen, 2015; Murdoch, Larsen, Miyasaki, et al., 2019)

Research Timeline Overview

Phase I

April – May 2019:
- Pilot SHARP-SMH with 16 MHLT; initial data collection

May – August 2019:
- Review of Pilot results and preparation for further SHARP- SMH groups

September 2019 – January 2020:
- Remaining MHLTs participate in SHARP-SMH (n=147)

Phase II

April – August 2020:
- Data analysis (Phase I SHARP-SMH implementation)
- Collaborative creation of SHARP-SMH school curriculum and materials by research team and MHLTs who participated in Phase I

Phase III

September 2020– September 2021:
- MHLTs select participating schools for SHARP-SMH; pre-intervention data collection begins in these schools
- MHLTs implement SHARP-SMH in identified schools
- Ongoing support for MHLTs in implementing SHARP-SMH provided by research team
- Observation/data collection by research team throughout Phase III
- Final post-intervention measures collected; data analysis and preparation of final results

Methodology

Phase I:
- SHARP SMH pilot group will be delivered in a two full-day professional development format.
- **Design:** Concurrent nested (embedded) mixed method
- **Quantitative Data:** Assess pre/post group measure score differences in trait and state hope and selected scales
- **Qualitative Data:** Semi-structured interviews with 10-12 participants. Constant comparative analysis will be used to determine initial impact/effectiveness of the program
- **Measures:** (1) Satisfactions with Life Scale (SWLS), and (2) Adult Hope Scale

Phase II: Creation of Collaborative SHARP- SMH Materials - qualitative data collection

Phase III:
- Targeted intensive case studies will form the final results in this phase.
- **Design:** Concurrent nested (embedded) mixed method
- **Quantitative Data:** Assess pre/post group measure score differences and questionnaires for teachers and students.
- **Qualitative Data:** Semi-structured interviews and focus groups will be conducted and teacher feedback will be collected.

- **Measures:** (1) SWLS, (2) Adult Hope Scale, (3) Children's Hope Scale (CHS), (4) Students Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS), and (5) Kidsceen-10
- Qualitative data will be triangulated with quantitative results and research team observations to create intensive Case Studies for selected schools.

Implications for Teachers

- Support teacher positive mental health and satisfaction in the face of challenging teaching contexts.
- Educate teachers about specific, evidence-supported, practical strategies for teacher self-care and mental health via a focus on strengths, hope, and resources.
- Provide teachers with research and tools regarding role modeling strengths, hope and resources.
- Help teachers develop cross-cultural understanding of hope.
- Collaborate with Mental Health Lead Teachers to develop context appropriate strengths, hope, and resources teaching materials for comprehensive School Mental Health.

Affiliations

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