School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
February 21, 2018

Some Resource Updates From the Field
Links are provided to the following:
(1) About School Shootings
(2) Evidence based policy making
(3) Model to inform culturally responsive practices
(4) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
(5) Can there be too much emphasis on gathering more data?

Topical Exchange:
>School shooting raises concerns about enhancing school capacity to provide mental health assistance

Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

Note: *Go to* http://smhp.psych.ucla **for links to other resources including**
>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops
>Calls for grant proposals, presentations, and papers
>Training and job opportunities
>Upcoming webcasts & other professional development opportunities

This resource is from the
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA

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Given shrinking education budgets, we have been asked to increase our outreach to make our free resources more available (e.g., for planning, professional development, etc.).

So please feel free to share with anyone you think might benefit (e.g., forward our resources to individuals and share on listservs and websites).

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For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

For previous postings of community of practice discussions, see
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm

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Some Resource Updates From the Field

>*About School Shootings* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/shooting.pdf

>*Evidence based policy making* – http://forumfyi.org/evidence-based-policymaking

>*Model to inform culturally responsive practices* – https://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/assets/files/resources/Model%20to%20Inform%20Culturally%20Responsive%20Practices.pdf

>*Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Federal Agencies' Collaboration Generally Reflected Leading Practices, but Could Be Enhanced* – https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-171

>*Can there be too much emphasis on gathering more data?* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/assessitis.pdf

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Topical Exchange:

>School shooting raises concerns about enhancing school capacity to provide mental health assistance

As with other problems confronting schools, violence using guns is a major societal (and political) problem. Schools can't solve the problem alone, but they must play a significant role in addressing the problem and its impact.

Here's what that means.

(1) Prevention

(A) *Going Beyond Security Measures.* Schools must implement prevention efforts that go beyond enhancing security. In particular, they must do more to promote positive social and emotional development and address threats to such development. There is a movement for a great focu on social and emotional learning. But too little attention is being paid to reducing factors that undermine positive mental health. Schools need to examine the way vulnerable students are inappropriately treated each day at school in classrooms and school-wide by staff and peers. And then they must act to turn the situation around.

(B) *Providing Special Supports as Soon as a Problem Appears.* Schools have a range of student and learning supports. However, these supports are not well designed and developed to respond quickly and effectively in situations where there are many students who teachers readily identify as beginning to manifest behavior, learning, and emotional problems.

(C) *Ensuring that Students with Severe and Chronic Problems are Connected with Effective Help.* Few schools can provide intensive help, so they need to develop strong connections with community resources to facilitate appropriate referrals and follow-through.

(2) Aftermath Interventions for Students and Staff in all schools. See the following resources:

>*Talking to kids about tragedies (such as shootings and terror attacks) in the news* https://www.schoolcrisiscenter.org/resources/talking-kids-about-tragedies/

>*Talking to kids about school shootings* (from the American Psychology Assoc.) http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/crisis_qt/APAshooting.pdf

In our Center's Resource Aid Packet on

>*Responding to Crises at a School*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/crisis/crisis.pdf

see

>>Crisis Response Checklist

>>Psychological First Aid

>>Major Facets of Crisis Response

>>Responding to a Crisis: A Few General Principles

>>The School's Role in Addressing Psychological Reactions to Loss

>>Planning and Action for the MH Needs of Students and School Staff after a Major Disaster

From more, go to

>the Center's homepage (http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu) and click on the icon
Responding to a Crisis

>the Quick Find on *Crisis Prevention and Response* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2107_01.htm

Request from a colleague:

>Need more services – "In our district (county) we are drastically short in mental health providers and services. I would like for you to provide insight into what we can do in this case? We have far more needs than resources."

Center Comments: The need for more is true for most (if not all) communities. Unfortunately, schools will never have enough resources to meet the needs of the many who require specialized mental health help. So the focus must be on ways to use available resources more effectively (including school and community professionals, students, and families) and to embed concerns about mental health into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports. (See *Time for Straight Talk about Mental Health Services and MH in Schools* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mhinschools.pdf .)

Ultimately, if all students are to have an equal opportunity to succeed in school, there must be a focus on rethinking how schools use existing resources to counter youngsters' learning, behavioral, emotional, and health problems. From a practical perspective, one place to start is to map and analyze what is currently in operation. Then, the focus is on redesigning how the resources are used (including restructuring the work of such personnel as school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and others who provide student/learning supports). The aim is to design a system that focuses on promoting social emotional development, preventing problems, responding quickly when a problem arises, and playing an effective role related to severe and chronic problems. Accomplishing this requires unifying currently fragmented efforts and developing them over time into a comprehensive system of student/learning supports that has the capacity to address the needs of the many rather than just a few students. Such a system is intended to reduce the number of students in need of specialized mental health services and use the savings to enhance system capacity.

Here are some resources to help with this.

>*Organizing, Mapping, and Analyzing the Work* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/organizing.pdf

>*Schools, Families, and Community Working Together:*
Building an Effective Collaborative –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/buildingeffectivecollab.pdf

>Self-Study Survey for *General Overview of Student & Learning Supports Activity, Processes, and Mechanisms at a School* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/general.pdf

>*Opening the Classroom Door* –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/hottopic/hottopic(openingtheclassroomdoor).htm

>Quick Find on *Volunteers in Schools* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/volunteers.html

Note about volunteers and mental health concerns: At UCLA, the need for student counseling exceeded the capacity of the staff available, so the counseling director set up a peer resilience program for volunteer students to learn skills for helping each other. See http://www.resilience.ucla.edu/

Request from a colleague:

>*Need professional development to meet the mental health challenges of students* – "Our school nurses are in need of tools to help our students with mental health challenges. Our special education programs are overwhelmed with students that are E/BD, emotionally and behaviorally disturbed. Our state pioneered the charter school and school choice movement and what we are seeing is the cherry picking of students that can perform in the classroom without challenges and the challenging kids are told to go to the public schools. And, the state and feds do not fully fund the special needs kids and our school budgets are overwhelmed and broken and we face greater and greater budget cuts. It is a very vicious cycle. A group of us are planning a professional development course for our nurse cohort that would focus on mental health in the schools. After surveying our colleagues, we found that one of the most pressing issues for our health offices is handling the mental health issues of our students. I found your Center's continuing education modules on *Mental Health in Schools: New Roles for School Nurses*. It was exciting to find this. Are there other resources your would recommend?"

Center Comments:
In addition to the *Mental Health in Schools: New Roles for School Nurses* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/nurses/unit1.pdf, the Center has a variety of resources for continuing education. With specific reference to MH in schools, see the online toolbox http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/toolbox.htm . It compiles a sample of various brief resources developed by our Center. The Sections of the Toolbox are:

>Framing Mental Health in Schools
>Concerns and Controversies
>Challenges and Opportunities in the Classroom
>About Behavior Problems and Social and Emotional Learning
>Mental Health Assistance for Students at School
>Focusing on the Well-being of School Staff
>On-line Clearinghouse Quick Finds and Fact & Information Resources
>Online Continuing Education Modules & Guidebooks
>Quick Training Aids & Tutorials
>Tools for Facilitating Triage, Referral, & Quality of Care

The contents are intended as resources for any school practitioner and for those involved in pre-and inservice professional development programs. The toolbox reflects a broad view of mental health in schools and of the role mental health plays in the well-being of students, their families, and their teachers. Also stressed is the value of embedding mental health into a comprehensive classroom and school-wide system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students as an essential facet of ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school.

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Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives
What's interfering with your local school/district transforming how barriers to learning and teaching are countered?
What would be helpful in overcoming such challenges?
Send your responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Finally, a Note of Caution

<p style="text-align:center; color:red;">Not Another Ad Hoc Set of School Interventions</p>

It is unlikely that a safe and nurturing learning environment will emerge simply by developing a better violence prevention program. Such programs can help, but ultimately what a school needs is a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system for addressing barriers to development and learning and re-engaging disconnected students.(For more on this, see *Violence Prevention and Safe Schools* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/violence/violence.pdf)

That is why we say the time has come for schools to move away from stand-alone programs for addressing problems such as violence, bullying, substance abuse, and so forth. Just adding another program worsens the marginalized, fragmented, and piecemeal status of student and learning supports.

Rather than reacting with yet another discrete program, it is essential to focus some of the current discussion on catalyzing and leveraging systemic change. For schools, we suggest that the aim should be to take another step toward transforming how schools go about ensuring that all students are safe, develop fully, and have an equal opportunity to succeed at school and beyond.

It is time to embed advocacy for discrete programs into advocacy for unifying and developing a comprehensive and equitable system. Addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students is a school improvement imperative. Developing and implementing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student and learning supports is the next evolutionary stage in meeting this imperative.

See the information and call to action related to the National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

Let us know what you think about this.

Did you miss?

The new report: ***ESSA and Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching:***
   ***Is there Movement toward Transforming Student/Learning Supports?***
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/2018%20report.pdf

Also if you missed any of the following, you can access them and more from the Center's homepage – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/

>The February *ENEWS'* discussion of improving graduation rates

>The *quarterly ejournal* for Winter 2018 articles on

1. *Evolving School Improvement Plans to Better Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching*
2. *Updates on Advancing Efforts to Transform Student & Learning Supports*
3. *Who Else is Working to Transform Student/learning Supports*
4. *Two Cautionary Notes:*
        >About Piecemeal Approaches
        >About Settling for an Integrated Services Initiative
5. *Center Assistance for Transforming Student/ Learning Supports*

>The new free book on   ***Addressing Barriers to Learning:***
              In the Classroom and Schoolwide
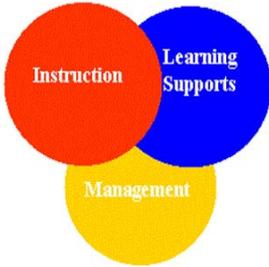
For information about the
National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
go to http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

Just published:
>*Transforming Student and Learning Supports:*
  Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System –
https://titles.cognella.com/transforming-student -and learning -supports -
9781516512782.html

**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND
INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!**
For new sign-ups – email Ltaylor@ucla.edu
Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.
We post a broad range of issues and responses to the *Net Exchange*
on our website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm
and on *Facebook* (access from the Center's home page http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/)