

School Practitioner Community of Practice

(A network for sharing & exchange)

April 17, 2019

Topics for discussion

>Are trends such as trauma-informed schooling contributing to overpathologizing?

Featured Resource

>Mapping hot spots in schools: Working to improve school climate and prevent violence

Links to a few other relevant resources & other topics of concern

Note: Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla> for links to other Center 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

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).

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>

Topic for Discussion –

>Are trends such as trauma-informed schooling contributing to overpathologizing?

Upon reading an email announcing a preconference webinar for the National Conference on Children Abuse and Neglect, we were struck by the title: *Are the Words "Toxic Stress" Toxic?* Here is an excerpt from the abstract:

The concepts of "toxic stress" and "adverse childhood experiences" (ACEs) have captured professional and public attention in recent years. While this has helped to bring more resources and interest to early childhood issues, it has also resulted in some harmful language and imagery that depicts children, families, or entire communities as "broken" or beyond healing and resilience. In our concern about adversity, are we selling short the capacity of individuals and communities to heal and grow? Are we doing more harm than good by inadvertently reinforcing stereotypes about children and families of color?

This preconference webinar presentation by Cailin O’Connor from the Center for the Study of Social Policy was described as *a conversation with other concerned professionals about how to shift the narrative around early life stress to one that focuses on root causes of stress and celebrates the resilience of children, families, and communities.*

[Note: The topic will be explored further at the 21st National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, April 24-26. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/calendar/cbconference/>]

Related to this concern, the Center for the Study of Social Policy emphasizes *The Strengthening Families Movement*. Here is an excerpt from an article by Selena Chavez posted on that Center’s website: <https://cssp.org/2019/01/looking-back-at-the-strengthening-families-movement/>

“The Strengthening Families initiative was based on four big ideas:

>*Focus on protective and promotive factors, not just risk factors.* Protective factors are described as “conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that mitigate or eliminate risk. Promotive factors are described as ‘conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that actively enhance well-being.’ In contrast to risk factors, protective factors open up a strengths-based conversation with parents and point the way toward action.

>*Strengthening Families is an approach, not a model.* It can be applied in everyday practice in any setting that serves young children and their families. Rather than an entirely new model or structured program, Strengthening Families guides providers to make small but significant changes in how they interact with families. This also means that providers from a variety of different systems, using different models in their own practice, can use the Protective Factors Framework as a unifying framework and common language.

>*A changed relationship with families.* Implementing Strengthening Families means viewing parents as partners in achieving positive outcomes for their children. Unfortunately, many child- and family-serving systems hadn’t been operating in this way—and many still don’t. Shifting to a strengths-based approach and true partnership means that providers and parents are members of the same team.

>*Alignment with developmental science.* Strengthening Families focuses on early childhood as a sensitive period of development, and on supporting the relationships that are critical to development in the early years. It also provides a pathway for responding to adverse childhood experiences and other trauma that children and parents may have experienced. In short, Strengthening Families helps providers, programs, and agencies to better align their practice to what we are learning every day from developmental science.”

A Few Comments from Our Center:

We have discussed this matter over the years to counteract the trend to overpathologize the problems students manifest at school. Early on, we chose the term *Addressing Barriers to Learning* as part of a strategy to emphasize that elements in the environment (e.g., neighborhood, family, school, peer) often are the primary factors interfering with student equity of opportunity and success. Understanding that external factors often cause and exacerbate student problems can help schools minimize “blaming victims” and counter the trend to take a crisis and ad hoc approach to working with students and families. Such an understanding also underscores the need for building a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of interventions that includes a potent focus on prevention, promoting healthy development, and enhancing resilience and other protective buffers.

(See the discussion of “Barriers to Learning and Teaching” in *Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*. Available as a free resource at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf>

Also see *Improving School Improvement*. Available as a free resource at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

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*Share with us your comments
about the above topic or other related matters!!*

Send your responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Featured Resource

>Mapping hot spots in schools: Working to improve school climate and prevent violence

Excerpt from “Hotspot Mapping ...”

<http://preventioninstitute.org/sites/default/files/uploads/PreventConnect-Guest-Profile-Hotspot-Mapping.pdf>

Hotspot mapping is an evidence-informed approach used to not only pinpoint where students feel safe or unsafe, but also propose recommendations for change. Identifying spaces as “hot” or “cold” is the first step in a community shifting their environment through policy, physical, and norm changes. Hotspot mapping is an ongoing process to build capacity in communities, allowing them to continue assessing and improving safety overtime. The Colorado state public health department is using hot spot mapping activity guides from an evidence-based curriculum for teen dating and sexual violence.

Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, grantees in Colorado are delving deeper into the notion of safety and the various aspects that can affect whether or not a person feels safe in an area. Hotspot mapping can impact a range of community- and relationship-level risk and protective factors including community disorganization, community and school connectedness and youth and adult connectedness...

Colorado is focused on positive youth development through building skills, opportunities, and authentic relationships with young people across the state. Through the hotspot mapping work, partners recognize that youth leadership, community engagement and shared decision-making are crucial to creating positive social change. In addition to taking part in mapping, students bring their community-specific experiences into discussions to better understand the data and what they see as strengths and needs. They assist in the planning process, develop their own recommendations and present results to their administrators. These sorts of activities help youth build their skills as change makers as they decide on appropriate solutions....

Hotspot mapping has also helped school officials recognize that students may feel unsafe in a lot of shared spaces outside of the school – parks, fast food restaurants, walking paths, and gas stations were some of the spaces named. Understanding the experiences of students both inside and outside the school has shown schools the importance of forming partnerships with other entities that students may interact with outside of the school property. These partnerships can be used to promote a climate of safety both within schools and the larger community....

Links to a few other relevant resources & other topics of concern

Working Toward Well-Being: Community Approaches to Toxic Stress

<https://cssp.org/resource/working-toward-well-being-community-approaches-to-toxic-stress-2/>

Adverse childhood experiences are different than child trauma, and it's critical to understand why

<https://www.childtrends.org/adverse-childhood-experiences-different-than-child-trauma-critical-to-understand-why>

Youth Thrive: Research briefs and Action Sheets

<https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Research-Briefs-and-Action-Sheets-YT-CW.pdf>

Strengthening Families

<https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Research-Briefs-and-Action-Sheets-SF-CW.pdf>

Communicating Connecting with Parents

<https://view.joomag.com/leadership-magazine-nov-dec-2016-v46-no-2/0724900001477601922?short>

Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success
<https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/educating-whole-child-brief>

Findings from the School Finance Indicators Database School Year 2015-16
https://www.dropbox.com/s/lwunwk22x98pg9a/EMBARGOED%20until%204-2-19%20-%20SFID_AnnualReport_2019.pdf?dl=0

From Our Center:

For resources related to *home involvement*, see our Center's online clearinghouse Quick Find:

> *Parent/Home Involvement and Engagement in Schools* (Center Quick Find)
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/homework.htm>

[Note: As with all our over 130 Quick Finds, the above provides links to a range of resources from our Center and from others.]

For resources related to *strengthening resilience*, see our Center's online clearinghouse Quick Find:

> *Resilience/Protective Factors* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/resilience.html>

Here's a sample of the resources on this topic developed by the Center:

>> *Protective Factors (Resiliency)*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/sampler/resiliency/resilien.pdf>

>> *Engaging the Strengths of Families, Youth, and Communities in Rebuilding Learning Supports* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/spring07.pdf>

>> *Promoting Youth Development and Addressing Barriers*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/fall99.pdf>

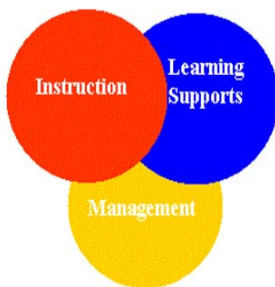
>> *About Resilience and Schools* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/resili.pdf>

About a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports, see:

Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide —
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

On embedding student/learning supports into school improvement, see
Improving School Improvement

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html



For information about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

*Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights;
transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to
enabling equity of opportunity, promoting whole child development,
and enhancing school climate.*

Because of your disability? ?

I'm thinking of suing
the school for unfair
practices.



No, because the teacher gave him a "D"

**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/>)**