> **Featured**
>
> *>What's your Take on Promoting Positive Mental Health?*
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> *>More on Reengaging Students*
>
> *>Links to a few other relevant shared resources*

For discussion and interchange:

>*What's your Take on Promoting Positive Mental Health?*

Promotion of positive mental health encompasses enhancing knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to foster social and emotional development, a healthy lifestyle, and personal well-being. Interventions to promote mental health encompass not only strengthening individuals, but also enhancing nurturing and supportive conditions at school, at home, and in the neighborhood. This includes a particular emphasis on increasing opportunities for personal development and empowerment by promoting conditions that foster and strengthen positive attitudes and behaviors (e.g., enhancing motivation and capability to pursue positive goals, resist negative influences, and overcome barriers). It also includes efforts to maintain and enhance physical health and safety and inoculate against problems (e.g., providing positive and negative information, skill instruction, and fostering attitudes that build resistance and resilience).

> Also see the following Center resources
> >*About Positive Psychology*
>
> >*Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Problems at School*

And here are a couple of recent articles:

From: *Changes in the network structure of well-being components in adolescents in the school context*

"...If the goal is to pursue efficient paths of intervention that promote adolescents' mental health, then it may be tenable to focus on the specific connectors between subjective and psychological well-being. By way of example, including activities that induce positive emotions (e.g., happiness, satisfaction) can facilitate social and personal features (e.g., relationships, self-growth) that promote well-being...

   Helping adolescents specifically focus on the things they have achieved and on building a positive future (i.e., domain-based life satisfaction) may contribute to their happiness and satisfaction (i.e., positive affect)....

   School practitioners should be aware of the relevance of well-being in the school context and engage in positive education practices that enhance, in particular, positive emotions and relationships, socioemotional competencies, engagement, and life meaning. As an ultimate goal, school curriculums should not only incorporate strategies that assure academic achievement, but also consider well-being as a protective factor that facilitates a healthy, meaningful youth development. Examples include designing class activities that address the psychological needs of adolescents as part of the curricula, or providing a space for individual- and group-based discussions to encourage the reflection about how adolescents feel with and in their life..."

From: ***Long-term factors associated with positive mental health outcomes for early adolescents***

"...The present study was a 6-month follow-up aimed at identifying protective factors associated with better mental health and well-being for 11 to 14-year-olds, following the second COVID-19 lockdown.... Of particular note in the present study is the seemingly vital role of peer support in promoting mental health and well-being... in the later stages of the pandemic, with it being a significant protective factor for all three outcomes....

   While the provision of support from multiple sources spanning school, family, and the wider community was more important for adolescents' mental health during the early days of the pandemic, it was peers who were seemingly more important in promoting positive mental health outcomes in the longer term....

   Schools provide adolescents with access to peers and opportunities for socialization and may be a useful place for them to foster social relationships and access peer support... Mental health initiatives may be overshadowed by "catch up" on learning for pupils who missed school due to the lockdown, such as instituting a longer school day While academically beneficial, these initiatives may put additional strain on pupils and reduce opportunities for engagement with peers. Instead, some advocate for the extended school days provide a safe space for students to focus on play and socialization, rather than concentrating on enhanced learning. Given the potential importance of peers to adolescents' longer-term mental health, it is essential that schools provide pupils with opportunities to maintain a strong sense of peer connection, to promote positive reintegration into school and reduce internalizing and externalizing difficulties. One way to do this may be through the introduction of peer support initiatives into the classroom, which have been shown promote wellbeing and positive mental health. These types of initiatives not directly benefit mental health outcomes, but also facilitate appropriate and quality access to help and signposting for further support. Given that adolescents have a preference for help-seeking from informal sources, such as peers, if they are experiencing mental health difficulties these initiatives may be particularly valuable for this age group..."

For discussion and interchange:

>Transition Back from the Winter Break: An Opportunity to Reengage Students

In the last issue of the Center's monthly ***ENEWS***, we discussed reengaging students. Here we stress the importance of transition back from school breaks and the opportunities transitions play in general for promoting healthy development, addressing barriers to learning, and preventing learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

From: ***Helping Students Cope With Returning to School After Winter Break***

"The holiday season is wonderful for many, but like all anticipated events, good things come to an end. Vacations are over, exciting activities are behind us, and it is time to move forward....
  For teachers: Start their first day back with something the children like to do. If they have varying things in which they have a strong interest, give them 2-3 choices of an activity that they do well and prefer.   Remember that children had a different schedule when they were off, so it will be hard to get them back into the school routine.....   Many children will be glad to be back in the structure, routine, and comfort you provide them. Let them know that you are glad they are back and that you are there to help them get back into the swing of school activities....
    For families: The winter holiday break for students is always a happy time because it means no school for two whole weeks!... The following are suggestions for families to help prepare for the return to school after the long break. To help with the transition, it is essential to talk with any school personnel involved with your child..... Let them know the difficulties the student has after a long break. This is also important to discuss with your child's teachers...   For a student with a mental health issue, discuss how best to support the child while at school. Be patient while they navigate the overwhelming pressure to settle back into their routine. Make a plan for going back to school. What does your first day back look like?..."

For more on *Transitions Supports* , see our Center resources

>*Supports for Transitions*

>*Transitions are critical times; Addressing transitions present opportunities to prevent prolbems and enable learning*

>*Support for transitions survey: What we have, what we need*

>**Links to a few other relevant shared resources**

Promoting and protecting mental health and psychosocial well-being in schools and learning environments

Mental health promotion in schools

Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools: An Action Guide for School and District Leaders

Stress and the Mental Health of Populations of Color: Advancing Our Understanding of Race-related Stressors

With a Little Help from My Friends: Profiles of Perceived Social Support and Their Associations with Adolescent Mental Health

Teacher stress and supports, classroom practices and student outcomes in high poverty urban elementary schools

Emphasizing Growth, Not Grades, in Parent-Teacher Conferences

A Few Upcoming Webinars

For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – **https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm**

1/10 Bullying prevention
1/17 Staff recruitment and retainment
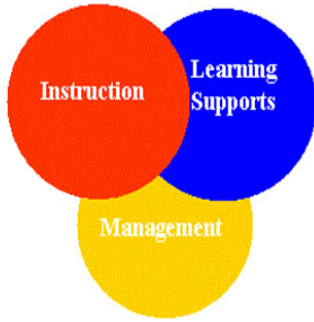1/17 Promoting positive mental health in schools
1/17 Mediating Conflicts
1/18 Strengthening your workforce
1/18 Culturally Responsive & Sustaining Education
1/18 Building Your Program: Empowering Grassroots Mentoring
1/23 Trauma recovery
1/30 Anxiety and stress

For information about the
National Initiative for Transforming
Student and Learning Supports
go to https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights, transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to promoting whole child development, advancing social justice and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.

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To Listserv Participants

- Please share this resource with others. (Everyone has a stake in the future of public education and this is a critical time for action.)

- Let us know your views about the topics shared and about what's going on to improve how schools address barriers to learning & teaching and reengage disconnected students and families. (We can share the info with the over 130,000 on our listserv.)

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

- Looking for information? (We usually can help.)

- Have a suggestion for improving our efforts? (We welcome your feedback.)

We look forward to hearing from you!

Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!

For new sign-ups – Send to 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
https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm
and on Facebook (access from the Center's home page https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/)