

(2/7/24) This continuing education resource is from the national
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Featured

(1) *Students' concerns about seeking mental health help*

(2) *After school programs are essential transition supports*

(3) *Valentine's day: a great opportunity to give to others*

(4) *Links to a few other relevant shared resources*

For discussion and interchange:

>Students' concerns about seeking mental health help

From: [Students' reasons for being reluctant to seek help for mental health concerns in secondary schools](#)

"The reluctance of young people to seek help for their mental health has been recognized as a key barrier to effective early identification and intervention efforts ... Different reluctant classes point to unique strategies to improve help seeking in the school context among adolescents.

>*Go it alone*: in both females and males, and the largest of the more reluctant classes, was defined by knowing where to access support, but preferring to handle problems themselves, as well as perceptions that adults at school would not be able to help and a lack of trust that their concerns would be kept private. This class may partly reflect adolescent developmental tendencies of growing autonomy....

Strategies that may prove valuable to reduce reluctance in these students include efforts to protect student confidentiality and privacy, and to ensure adolescents understand privacy and confidentiality and their limits, as they pertain to school mental health support. Also, providing positive examples of when seeking help has been effective may help improve student perceptions....

>*Don't know who to approach*: continued efforts to increase awareness of the availability of school mental health professionals and how to access them are needed....

>*No one at school that they would feel comfortable talking to about their mental health concerns*: strategies to improve comfort expressing mental health concerns and normalizing help seeking may be particularly beneficial, as well as ensuring that there are adults available that students would feel comfortable approaching....

Mental health stigma remains a concern for some students: continued efforts to normalize help seeking are needed. Peer-led initiatives show some promise..."

From: [Youth Mental Health Help-Seeking Information Needs and Experiences](#)

"...With the rise of digital technology use, youth are increasingly turning to online sources for mental health information and support...Analysis of Reddit posts revealed a diverse range of mental health experiences and information needs. Youth expressed experiences and information needs in terms of navigating mental health issues, disclosing to others, and barriers to seeking care and experiences seeking care....

Posts revealed youth's difficulties managing and understanding their mental health issues as well as those of close others. Youth commonly sought to understand what encompasses mental health illnesses (e.g., what qualifies as having an illness, what are the symptoms) and expressed uncertainty in managing these illnesses (e.g., when to get help, how to manage symptoms). These knowledge gaps illustrate low mental health literacy as a barrier to effectively understanding mental health issues and recognizing a need to seek help....

Youth expressed concerns about the reactions and perceptions of others. Youth were also concerned about how they appeared in front of others. This led to individuals attempting to hide their mental health struggles and avoiding disclosing their issues to others....

Negative perceptions regarding mental health services can serve as a significant barrier during the help-seeking process. Most of the sentiments expressed on Reddit were negative and largely focused on doctors and medications....Barriers related to perceptions of mental health professionals and noted trust and confidence, quality service, consequences of services, effectiveness of services, fear of treatment, and fear of dismissal and blame are all barriers youth and parents have faced when seeking care....

Many youths commented on less positive experiences with mental health resources and services. Several youths noted feeling dismissed and ignored. These types of experiences may reinforce youths' fear of being dismissed and blamed, as mentioned above. Another problematic pattern observed was hesitancy to seek further help due to a previous negative experience. ...

Center Comments

In addition to mental health concerns, students may need help whenever they experience problems with doing well at school. Every school is confronted with how to provide information and assistance to connect students with needed help, as well as working to lower social stigma about such help, and taking steps to enhance student help seeking (e.g., enhancing awareness and interest, facilitating access, gathering student input about use).

Here are a few online resources:

- >[Breaking down barriers to help-seeking](#)
- >[Facilitating factors and barriers in help-seeking behaviour in adolescents and young adults with depressive symptoms](#)
- >[Reducing mental health stigma in schools](#)

Beyond these concerns, it is essential for education policy makers and administrators to facilitate development of a system of student and learning supports at schools. Such a system is designed to enhance equity of opportunity for every student to succeed at school by addressing barriers to learning and teaching and reengaging disconnected students. *We have resources to aid in the development of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports.*

While our website is down, we can send you copies of relevant Center resources as email attachments; send requests to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

And access to our free books on these matters is still available online; see

- >[Addressing barriers to learning: In the classroom and schoolwide](#)
- >[Improving School Improvement](#)

Not online but available on request:

- >[Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change](#)

For discussion and interchange:

>After-school programs are essential transition supports

A primary emphasis of school-based after-school programs is on providing a safe environment and support for academics. Some also focus on social-emotional learning, especially with a view to reducing misbehavior at school. Some focus on promoting health and well-being and on offering a variety of extra-curricular enrichment, service, and career/vocation-related activities. For many parents, especially working parents, the programs also provide after-school daycare.

After-school and non-school days are facets of the many transitions that arise daily and throughout the year for which students often need support. Such transitions often are missed opportunities for promoting healthy development, addressing barriers to learning, and preventing learning, behavior, and emotional problems. Our Center discusses after-school programs as a “support for transitions” in the context of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports. See Chapter 6 in *Addressing barriers to learning: In the classroom and schoolwide*.

From: **The Majority of K-12 Public Schools Offer Academically Focused Summer and After-School Programs**

“The National Center for Education Statistics releases findings on after-school program offerings during the 2023-24 school year as reported by school leaders in U.S. public schools.

Eighty-seven percent of U.S. public schools offer some type of after-school programming during the 2023-24 school year.

Sixty-four percent offer academically focused after-school programming, which includes academic assistance, academic enrichment, and other after-school programs. Twenty-two percent of public school students who have the opportunity to participate in these programs are anticipated to do so this school year, which equates to 13 percent of all public school students across the country.

A higher percentage of public schools in high-poverty neighborhoods (73 percent), with a student body comprising 76 percent or more students of color (75 percent), and with more than 1,000 students (75 percent) offer these programs compared to the national estimate.

Considering all public school students across the country, a higher percentage of those attending schools in a high-poverty neighborhood (18 percent), in schools comprising 76 percent or more students of color (19 percent), and in cities (17 percent) are anticipated to participate in these programs compared to the national estimate.

Seventy-two percent of schools offering academic assistance programs and 67 percent offering academic enrichment programs are able to provide services to most or all students who want to participate in their academically focused after-school programs.

Most public schools offering academic assistance or academic enrichment after-school programs do so at no cost to families (96 and 88 percent, respectively).

More than a third of public schools utilized district or school finances to fund their academically focused after-school programs (academic assistance, 38 percent; academic enrichment, 39 percent), while less than a third used ESSER I or ESSER II COVID relief funds (academic assistance, 24 percent; academic enrichment, 17 percent).

Forty-two percent of public schools offering academic assistance and 48 percent offering academic enrichment programs do so at least 4 days per week during the 2023-24 school year.

Most public schools offering academic assistance or academic enrichment programs have full-time teachers working in these programs (90 and 80 percent, respectively).

NCES defined after-school programs for respondents as follows:

Academic assistance program: After-school programs or services whose primary purpose is to provide instruction to students who need academic assistance

Academic enrichment program: After-school programs or services whose primary purpose is to provide instruction to students who seek academic enrichment

Extended-day care

School-related activities and clubs (e.g., athletics, student government, yearbook club, etc.)

Data are on the [School Pulse Panel dashboard](#).

Valentine’s day: a great opportunity to give to others

Those concerned with promoting social-emotional learning can capitalize on natural opportunities at schools to show empathy and compassion. Valentine’s day is such an opportunity.

From: **Valentine’s day acts of kindness**

“How we can use this ‘Day of Love’ to love people who might not always feel loved and appreciated? ... Make the holiday a Valentine’s Day Acts of Kindness day

>While you’re already making Valentines for the classroom, make a second set for your local nursing home. Many of the people living there may not have any family or anyone to make their Valentine’s Day special. Don’t address them, just write a nice message and sign it (first name only!) and let your kids go with you to take them to the nursing home to drop them off....

>There is no wrong time of year to put together small packs to hand out to those in need and those who are homeless. In a small bag, put necessities like food/snacks, quarters for laundry, gloves/socks, disposable hand warmers, a fleece blanket, etc. Add in a Valentine’s Day card and then hand them out! You can just head to a spot in your city where you know there are people to hand them to, or head to your local shelter and let them decide who to hand them out to....

> Many people work in a school who do not get appreciated at Valentine’s Day (or Christmas or any other time)? There are the aides, the paraprofessionals, cooks, janitors, and office staff, just to name a few. Make Valentines and your kids deliver to all the support. Let them know you love and appreciate everything they do for your family and kids!”

In some form or another, every school has goals that emphasize a desire to enhance students' personal and social functioning. Such goals can be seen as reflecting views that social and emotional growth has an important role to play in: (1) enhancing the daily smooth functioning of schools and the emergence of a safe, caring, and supportive school climate, (2) facilitating students' holistic development, (3) enabling student motivation and capability for academic learning, (4) optimizing life beyond schooling. To highlight ways to do this, the Center has a resource entitled:

>*Natural Opportunities to Promote Social-Emotional Learning and MH*. While our website is down, you can request a copy by emailing Ltaylor@ucla.edu .

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

The effects of a free universal after-school program on child academic outcomes

Starting, operating, and sustaining afterschool programs

Sparking Virtuous Cycles: A Longitudinal Study of Subjective Well-Being and Grit During Early Adolescence

Does changing learning environments affect student motivation?

Culturally responsive problem solving

Education Could Enhance Oversight of School Improvement Activities

How and Why Does Peer Support Work for Young People

Transforming Youth Justice Systems to Eliminate Disparities & Better Support Young People

A Few upcoming Webinars

- 2/7 [Paving the Way to College for Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- 2/7 [Preventing depression](#)
- 2/8 [Artificial intelligence and school policies](#)
- 2/13 [Technology, bias, careers](#)
- 2/13 [Basic Requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act](#)
- 2/14 [Planning an IEP Team Meeting When Your Child has Mental Health Challenges](#)
- 2/14 [Providing targeted support](#)
- 2/15 [Wellness & Resilience](#)
- 2/15 [Equity focused alignment](#)
- 2/21 [Threat assessment](#)
- 2/21 [Social skills and how to build them](#)
- 2/26 [Multicultural orientation to therapy](#)

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 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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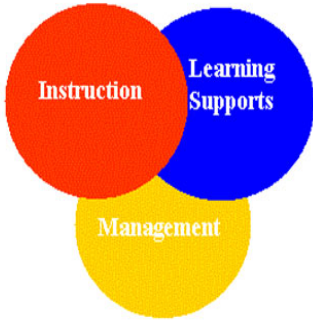
>[Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change](#)

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

Our Center emphasizes the opportunity to start now to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students.

Let Us Know about what ideas are being proposed for moving in new directions for transforming how schools address barriers to learning and teaching.

And if anyone is thinking about increasing the capacity of a district or school with respect to developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports, we can help. Send all info to ltaylor@ucla.edu



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.

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.

THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF THE PRACTITIONER

Who Are We? Recently renamed the Center for MH in Schools and Student/Learning Supports, our national Center was established in 1995 under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project (which was established in 1986). We are part of the Department of Psychology at UCLA. The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.