

## **Everyone's Talking About Students' Mental Health: Schools Need to Avoid Five Potential Pitfalls**

It is widely recognized that the pandemic has increased the number of students experiencing emotional, learning, and behavioral problems. Schools must plan to meet the challenge.

However, schools will make serious errors if their plans are based on false assumptions. Here are five assumptions to avoid:

DON'T ASSUME THAT

(1) the majority of students are suffering from ailments that require mental health treatment

DON'T ASSUME THAT

(2) just adding a few more personnel is the best approach in addressing the many needs of students

DON'T ASSUME THAT

(3) teacher and parent identification of youngsters experiencing problems is inadequate and therefore the school should

expend sparse resources on a universal screening program

DON'T ASSUME THAT

(4) referring students to a mental health provider should be the first step in helping them address mental health concerns

DON'T ASSUME THAT

(5) a multi-tiered model (MTSS) is a sufficient intervention framework to improve how schools (and communities) help students.

For clarification of these matters and as an aid in planning, access the following free resource”

*>Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*

[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

Also relevant is the Center commentary:

*>Here We Go Again: In the Rush to Spend Federal Stimulus Funds Schools are Attending to Immediate Individual Needs Without Addressing the Opportunity to Make Necessary Systemic Improvements* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/3-24-21.pdf>

And for a better understanding of the context for helping all students at school, see

*>Improving School Improvement* <https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/improve.pdf>

*>Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*

<https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf>

Finally, as schools move forward to address emotional, learning, and behavior problems, please share what's happening to stimulate broad-based discussion of new and better approaches.

Send your responses to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

