



Center For Mental Health in Schools*

Update



Who are we?

In our role as a national center, we approach MH and psychosocial concerns from the broad perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. A major emphasis is on comprehensive, multifaceted, and cohesive frameworks and practices to deal with the many external and internal barriers that interfere with learning and teaching.

To offset institutional inequities, specific attention is given policies and strategies that can counter marginalization and fragmentation of essential interventions and enhance collaboration between schools and communities. Particular emphasis is on (1) coalescing interventions under the unifying concept of a comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and (2) fully integrating the focus on psychosocial and mental health concerns into school improvement planning. From this perspective, we do research, analyses, and development and offer capacity building assistance to a wide range of stakeholders, including school and public health policy makers, administrators, and staff, primary care physical and mental health providers, and consumers.

What We Offer You

We provide a variety of free and readily accessible resources and technical assistance. We also engage in strategic training (at a distance and face-to-face), facilitate networking, and pursue several major initiatives for moving the field forward. For example:

> **Website Features** - <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>
Our continuously developing website provides free and easy access to resources, information, and assistance. Log on and go to the icon labeled *First Visit* or go to the site map's *Table of Contents* for an overview of what's available (e.g., resources, materials, technical assistance, consultation cadre, news updates, upcoming events, networking, interaction around issues, continuing education, links to related sites).

Quick Find searches ease the process of locating and accessing a wide range of info and resources relevant to MH, psychosocial problems, addressing barriers to learning and teaching, and promoting social and emotional development.

Other special website features include *What's New*, *Hot Topics and Issues*, a special *Gateway to a World of Resources*, aids for crisis response, *Ideas for Enhancing Support at Your School This Month*, and

Networking Opportunities. You can also access all issues of our quarterly topical newsletter/journal *Addressing Barriers to Learning*.

> **Many Online Resource Aids** – In addition to policy and program analyses, we have guidebooks and guidance notes, fact and information resources, introductions to specific practices, resource aids, samplers, continuing education modules, Quick Training Aids, Training Tutorials, special reports, newsletters, policy and program analysis briefs, and selected reprints. all are online to make them immediately accessible at no cost and with no restrictions on use.

Some recent examples of issues briefs, practice guides, and training aids include:

Frameworks for Systemic Transformation of Student and Learning Supports
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/systemic/frameworksforsystemictransformation.pdf>

Understanding and Minimizing Staff Burnout
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/burnout/burn1.pdf>

Transitions: Turning Risks into Opportunities for Student Support
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/transitions/transitions.pdf>

Learning Problems and Learning Disabilities
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/ldprobs/ldprobs.pdf>

Confidentiality and Informed Consent
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/confid/confid.pdf>

Early Development and Learning from the Perspective of Addressing Barriers
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/earlydevelop/earlydev.pdf>

With specific respect to mental health in schools, see

"The Current Status of Mental Health in Schools: A Policy and Practice Analysis"
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/currentstatusmh.htm>

> **Listserv for School MH Practitioners and the Center's Consultation Cadre** – *Want to exchange info on MH practices in school and network with colleagues across the country? Join the practitioners' listserv. Sign up by e-mail: smhp@ucla.edu*



Online, see "What's New" or go to the complete list of materials at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu> and download whatever you want or contact us for hard copies

> **Electronic Monthly News** – Focusing on mental health in schools, our free ENEWS highlights major news items and emerging issues, provides info about recent reports, publications, resources, funding opportunities, and much more. (See the box for how to subscribe.)

> **Quarterly Topical Newsletter/Journal** – We call it *Addressing Barriers to Learning*. Each issue includes a feature article. Other features related to daily work in school settings include “Lessons Learned” and “Ideas into Practice” and an occasional commentary. All this is capped off with info about resources from our Center and around the country. Past issues are on our website; let us know if you want to be on the mailing list for this free resource.

> **On-site Across The Country** – In response to state and local needs, we travel to wherever it appears we can make a *strategic* contribution. This work ranges from consultation sessions to leadership workshops and presentations designed to advance the work of schools, districts, local and state agencies, pioneering initiatives, and school-community collaboratives.

> **School Improvement: Resources, Policy, and Practice Focused on New Directions for Student/Learning Supports** – We develop resources and conduct analyses of policy and practice designed to enhance how schools address barriers to learning and teaching (including psychosocial and MH concerns).

These resources have been developed with a view to how to proceed in stages and without allocations of additional funds. Many of these resources are designed to enhance readiness and momentum for new directions for student support; others are aids for building capacity. They all are relevant to sustainability of initiatives and innovations begun as projects, pilots, and demonstrations.

See the special resource list at:
[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/
NewDirectionsSomeResources.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/NewDirectionsSomeResources.pdf)
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We just missed the school bus.



Want resources? Need technical assistance?

Contact us at:

E-mail: smhp@ucla.edu

Phone: (310) 825-3634

Write: Center for Mental Health in Schools
Department of Psychology, UCLA
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563

Or use our website: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

If you're not receiving our monthly electronic newsletter (ENEWS), send an E-mail request to:

smhp@ucla.edu

or subscribe online @ –

<http://lists.ucla.edu/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/mentalhealth-L>

For access to the latest
Center developed resources, go to:

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/JustPutOnline.htm>

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/otherresources.htm>

**FOR THOSE WITHOUT INTERNET ACCESS,
ALL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE
BY CONTACTING THE CENTER.**

Exchange info on MH practices in school and network with colleagues across the country by joining (1) the **Weekly Listserv for School MH Practitioners** and/or (2) **the Center's Consultation Cadre**. Sign up by email at smhp@ucla.edu or by phone (310) 825-3634.

Also, if you want to submit comments and info for us to circulate, use the insert form in this newsletter or contact us directly by mail, phone, or E-mail.

Revamped Tool Kit for Rebuilding a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/toolkit.htm>

Building a system of supports for learning requires blueprint guides, materials, tools and other resources for strategic planning, implementation, and capacity building. Such resources also help to deepen learning about the substance and processes of the work to be done. With this in mind, this online, evolving toolkit provides a wide range of detailed resource materials (e.g., exemplars, guides, aids, tools).

**You can get
there from here.**
(Bumper Sticker)

Center Staff:

Howard Adelman, Co-Director

Linda Taylor, Co-Director

Perry Nelson, Coordinator

... and a host of graduate and
undergraduate students

Strategic Initiatives to Advance the Field

National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support – In October 2002, a national Summit on New Directions for Student Support was convened and spawned the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*, which is facilitated by our Center. The national summit generated a series of regional summits and currently is pursuing Statewide Summits and Leadership Institutes.

The goal is to revolutionize what schools do to address barriers to learning and teaching. To this end, the Initiative stresses that new directions means rethinking *all* support programs, resources, and personnel. Besides traditional support staff, learning support is provided by compensatory education personnel (e.g., Title I staff), personnel who focus on Response to Intervention and prereferral interventions, and those who provide a variety of school-wide programs (e.g., after school, safe and drug free school programs). New Directions stem from rethinking how *all* these resources are used.

The initiative's growing impact is seen in the involvement of increasing numbers of states and localities and initiative co-sponsors. The staff at the UCLA Center provides facilitative support and leadership. Listservs have been established to facilitate communications. Legislative action has been stimulated. The first-ever *Guidelines for a Student Support Component* has been developed to provide schools with a template for rethinking learning supports. Corwin Press has published two books that support the initiative, and these may be the beginning of a New Directions series.

Stakeholders in each state, of course, differ in how they relate to and support the National Initiative and pursue work in their own states and localities. What is common across venues is that increasing numbers of stakeholders want to go in new directions through making systemic changes to develop comprehensive approaches. And, what is becoming clearer is that opportunities to move forward occur every time school improvement is an agenda item. ***Interested in learning more about this?*** Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/ndannouncement.htm> and/or contact the Center.

Collaboration with Scholastic Inc. – We have established a collaboration with the Community Affairs unit of *Scholastic Inc.* to establish an initiative to help school policy makers and administrators respond to the imperative for rebuilding supports for learning. The emphasis is on how schools can directly and systematically deal with factors that keep too many students from connecting effectively with good instruction. The initiative reflects pioneering work from across the country that is moving learning supports to a prominent place in enhancing school improvement and student outcomes. As a first phase, we worked together to draft a set of introductory leadership materials. Currently, we are working with the Louisiana Department of Education and with CCSSO and soon with AASA to help states and districts build leadership capacity for developing comprehensive systems of learning supports. This initiative will enhance the work being done with respect to the *National Initiative: New Directions for Student Support*.

National Initiative to Improve Adolescent Health (NIAH) – We have spent considerable time working with the Leadership Group for this federal initiative and also have been an integral part of a work group on ways to enhance *diffusion* of efforts to improve adolescent health. If you are interested in learning more about all this, let us know. General information on the initiative can be accessed from our home page.

Policy Leadership Cadre for Mental Health in Schools – To advance MH in schools, the Center has facilitated the work of this leadership group. The focus is on expanding, linking, and building the capacity of the pool of persons who can provide policy leadership in this arena across the country. – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/policy.htm>

Coalition for Cohesive Policy in Addressing Barriers to Development and Learning – This is a broad-based policy-oriented coalition of organizations, all of whom have a stake in addressing barriers, as well as concern for promoting healthy development. The aim is to stimulate strategic efforts to foster policy integration and close policy gaps as ways to deal with the marginalization and fragmentation that dominates a great deal of prevailing practice – see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/coalitin.htm>

How We Approach MH in Schools

Because we know that schools are not in the mental health business, all our work approaches mental health and psychosocial concerns in ways that integrally connect such efforts with school reform and improvement. We do this by integrating health and related concerns into the broad perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. Our policy and practice analyses have clarified the need to restructure current policy, practice, research, and training to enable development of a comprehensive and cohesive approach that is an essential and primary component at every school. We stress that without a comprehensive component for addressing barriers to learning many students cannot benefit from instructional reforms, and thus, achievement scores will not rise in the way current accountability pressures demand.

The guiding principles and frameworks for the work of the Center emphasize ensuring (1) mental health is understood in terms of psychosocial problems as well as disorders and in terms of strengths as well as deficits, (2) the roles of schools, communities, and homes are enhanced and pursued jointly, (3) equity considerations are confronted, (4) the marginalization and fragmentation of policy, organizations, and daily practice are countered, and (5) the challenges of evidence-based strategies and achieving results are addressed. From this perspective and through collaboration, the Center strives not only to improve practitioners' competence, but to foster changes in the systems with which they work. Such activity also addresses the varying needs of locales and the problems of accommodating diversity among interveners and among populations served.

Specific attention is given to enhancing policy, practice, theory, research, and training to

- (a) reduce marginalization, fragmentation, counterproductive competition, and inequities with respect to how school districts and school sites address psychosocial and mental health concerns and
- (b) increase productive collaboration between schools and communities (including families) in addressing such concerns.

The work encompasses

- advancing efforts designed to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate school-based programs in ways that enhance coordination, integration, and equity and reduce marginalization;
- analyzing and facilitating discussion of current systems, practices, needs, and trends in ways that contribute to systemic advances;
- developing new models for school-based policy, practice, research, and training and participating in their development, implementation and evaluation;
- demonstrating the value of school-university collaboration in developing, enhancing, and evaluating advancements in the field.

In accomplishing the above, the emphasis is on strategic activity that

- meshes with and facilitates the systemic reform movements reshaping the role of schools and their community partners in addressing mental health, psychosocial, and related concerns;
- enhances current and emerging stakeholder roles, functions, and competence (always with a view to benefitting the large number of children and youth in need)
- assists individuals, groups, and localities in ways that increase their access to available resources and support for enhancing policy, practice, research, basic training, and continuing education relevant to mental health in schools.

For more about the Center's work, see the Evaluation of Impact update report – online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/evaluation/evaluationupdate07-08.pdf>

*The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Dept. of Psychology, UCLA.

