ENews: A Monthly Forum for Sharing and Interchange

May, 2007 (Vol. 11 #8)

Source: UCLA School Mental Health Project/ Center for Mental Health in Schools

ENews is one of the many resources our Center offers to those concerned with enhancing policies, programs, and practices related to addressing barriers to student learning and to promoting mental health in schools. For more on what our federally supported Center can provide, see http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

<>>>>>
Feel Free to Forward this to Anyone
<>>>>>

WHAT’S HERE THIS MONTH

**Emerging Issue
  >Response to Intervention

**News from around the country

**Recent publications relevant to
  >Children’s mental and physical health
  >Family, school & community
  >Policy, systems, law, ethics, finances & statistics

**This month’s focus for schools to address barriers to learning
  >May – Time to help students and families plan successful transitions to a new grade or a new school

**Other helpful internet resources

**Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops

**Calls for grant proposals, presentations & papers

**UCLA Center Activities and Resources Update

**Training & job opportunities

**Comments, requests, information, questions from the field
  >Re: the Virginia Tech Tragedy
  >Re: Last months emerging issue
  >Re: readergirlz

<<<<<<<>
To post messages to ENews, email them to ltaylor@ucla.edu

To subscribe/unsubscribe to ENews, go to http://lists.ucla.edu/cti-bin/mailman/listinfo/mentalhealth-l and follow the directions. Alternatively, you can send an email request to smhp@ucla.edu asking to be added to the ENews listserv.

<<<<<<
**EMERGING ISSUE

>Response to Intervention (RtI)

By now, most people working in and with schools have heard about "Response to Intervention." However, there are considerable differences in how the concept is being discussed by school policy makers and practitioners. With respect to operationalizing the process, two extremes can be identified. One mainly stresses the introduction of better (i.e., evidence-based) instruction and using the new findings as an indication of whether or not a disability has to be assessed. This defines the problem simply as a teaching deficit. At the other extreme, the emphasis is on proceeding in stages beginning with personalized instruction designed to enhance a better match with the learner’s current motivation and capabilities and, as necessary, sequencing on in a hierarchical way to (a) develop missing learning and performance prerequisites and/or (b) provide needed specialized interventions that can address other existing barriers to learning (both external and internal barriers).

>How is the term being used in schools in your locale?
>Which approach are you advocating and why?

Send your comments, ideas, suggestions, concerns to ltaylor@ucla.edu

*See the Center Online Clearinghouse Quick Find topic on Response to Intervention for examples of various views of the concept; go to http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/responsetointervention.htm

**********

**NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

A CHALLENGE TO ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES IN TEXAS
“Students from some Texas school districts are far more likely to end up in alternative schools or other disciplinary programs, especially if those students are minorities or have learning disabilities.... Children in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs have five times the dropout rate of mainstream disciplinary programs.” 4/9/07 Houston Chronicle. http://search.chron.com/chronicle/openDocument.do?docRef=archive_2007_4321270&selectedPath=Archives

RESPONDING TO DISPARITIES IN SPECIAL ED IN WISCONSIN
“School districts that have been identified by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction as having a ‘significant disproportionality’ of minorities in special education [25 last year] are required to draft plans addressing the issue. In addition, those districts are required to spend 15% of their federal special education dollars on so-called early intervention efforts.... That comes to hundreds of thousands of dollars for many of the large school systems.” 3/29/07 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=584344

MISSISSIPPI WORKS TO COMBAT HIGH STUDENT DROPOUT RATE
“Until now, each school district has dealt with dropouts in its own way, but that’s in flux after the Mississippi Department of Education approved a plan in March to cut the state’s 26.6 percent dropout rate in half by 2013. The plan includes 15 strategies that have been proven effective.” 49/07 Clarion Ledger. http://www.clarionledger.com

MANY DIAGNOSES OF DEPRESSION MAY BE MISGUIDED, STUDY SAYS
“About one in four people who appear to be depressed are in fact struggling with the normal mental fallout from a recent emotional blow.... ‘Larger and larger numbers of people are reporting symptoms on these checklists, and there’s no way to know whether we’re finding normal sadness responses or real depression.’ said the study’s lead author.” See 4/3/07 Archives of General Psychiatry. New York Times.
N.C. SCHOOLS OVERRUN WITH MENTAL HEALTH OPTIONS
“Some school districts are taking steps to shield students from the mostly private, for-profit mental health companies that are lining up to send mental health aides into public schools. The surge in private companies interested in serving students struggling emotionally and mentally began last year when North Carolina privatized the service.” 3/28/07. Associated Press. http://www.wcnc.com/sharedcontent/APStories/stories/D8O59BJO1.html

LEGISLATIVE PANEL IN MAINE CALLS FOR CUTBACK IN NUMBER OF DISTRICTS
“A panel of legislators formed with a goal of slashing school administration costs without directly impacting students wants Maine’s 290 districts reduced to 80 by July 1, 2008.... The savings are projected to come from administrative savings, special education, building and facilities maintenance, and transportation.” 4/10/07. Kennebec Journal. http://kennebecjournal.mainetoday.com/news/local/3796436.html

Each week the Center highlights a newsworthy story online at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/newsitems.htm

Also access other news stories relevant to mental health in schools through links at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/whatsnew/linkstolatest.htm

@#@#@#@#@#
“We make 85 percent of our policy decisions on anecdotes: ‘My grandmother lives next door to a guy who does three things, and he’s terrific, and I think we should do these three things statewide.’ And depending on the popularity of that legislator, often that becomes state law with state resources behind him. That’s not a particularly strategic way to make policy decisions.”
Governor Kathleen Sebelius
@#@#@#@#@#@#

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS (IN PRINT AND ON THE WEB)**

*Children’s Mental and Physical Health*


*Family, School & Community*

>In California, Senate Bill 288, a “Comprehensive Pupil Learning Support System,” passed through the Education Committee and will move on to the Appropriations Committee to
determine if funding will be allocated. http://www.legislature.ca.gov/cgi-bin/port-postquery?bill_number=sb_288&sess=CUR&house=S&author=yee


*Policy, Systems, Law, Ethics, Finances & Statistics*


Note: The Quick Find online clearinghouse at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu is updated regularly with new reports and publications such as those listed above. Currently there are over 100 alphabetized topic pages with direct links to Center materials and to other online resources and related centers. Let us know about publications and reports that should be included in this dedicated online clearinghouse. Ltaylor@ucla.edu

“*A prime function of a leader is to keep hope alive.”* 
John W. Gardner
MONTHLY FOCUS FOR SCHOOLS TO ADDRESS BARRIERS TO LEARNING

May Theme – Time to help students and families plan successful transitions to a new grade or a new school

Transitions are risky opportunities. From the grade-to-grade change, the move to middle school and to high school, planning for after high school – all call for well-conceived programs to prepare students and families and to follow-up to ensure the transition has been successful. Interventions to enable successful transitions make a significant difference in how motivationally ready and able students are to benefit from the next step in their schooling.

Programs need to include plans that

- provide closure and appreciation related to what the student is leaving behind
- enhance articulation between the old and the new so students feel connected
- welcome newcomers and ensure they have the type of social support that facilitates positive acceptance and adjustment in the new setting
- assess transition success and implement timely corrective interventions when transitions are not successful

Planning for transitions is a great opportunity to involved students. For example:

- For those who are moving, what do they say would help them feel more confident in the move to a new school?
- For those at a school, what do they wish had been in place when they made the transition?
- How would they like to be involved in welcoming students who are new to their school?

For a range of resources related to facilitating transitions, see the online clearinghouse Quick Find on “Transition Programs/Grade Articulation/Welcome” at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2101_01.htm You will see Center resources, including a self-study of ideas for strengthening transition programs. You will also see links to other online resources and centers focused on this topic.

Note: For more on anticipating natural opportunities for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and promoting healthy development over the course of the school year, see “Ideas for Enhancing Support at School this Month” at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu

"Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another. It is the only means.”

Albert Einstein

OTHER HELPFUL INTERNET RESOURCES

Success in the Middle: A policymaker’s guide to achieving quality middle level education http://www.nmsa.org/advocacy/policyguide/tabid/784/default.aspx

Impacts of a summer learning program http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411350

Understanding recent changes in child poverty http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=311356


Medicaid: Health promotion and disease prevention for school readiness http://www.cmwf.org

**A FEW UPCOMING INITIATIVES, CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS**

Below is just a small sample. For additional and ongoing information about conferences, refer to our website Conferences section at [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/upconf.htm)

>School Readiness and Success: Improving Children's Social and Emotional Development  
Date: May 17 -- Time: 1 - 2 p.m. EDT -- Location: Online – Register  
[https://chapinhall.webex.com/ec0509l/eventcenter/event/eventAction.do?](https://chapinhall.webex.com/ec0509l/eventcenter/event/eventAction.do?)


>Office of University-School Partnerships, Arizona State University: Community and Education” June 1-2, Tempe, AZ.  
[Http://www.asu.edu/ssc/summerinstituteoncommunity/secondsummer.htm](http://www.asu.edu/ssc/summerinstituteoncommunity/secondsummer.htm)


>Sustainable, Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning Implementation Workshops, August 6-7, Chicago, IL. http://www.casel.org

>Communities In Schools: Leadership for Change: A Nation without Dropouts, October 31-November 4, Atlanta, GA. Http://www.cisnationalconference.com/

Note: If you want to list your conference, please email information to ltaylor@ucla.edu

“Some people have a way with words, others not have way.”

**CALLS FOR GRANT PROPOSALS, PRESENTATIONS & PAPERS**

Below is just a sample. If you want to Surf the Internet for Funds, go to http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu. Click on Quick Find, scroll down Center Responses to Financing and Funding. You will find links to funding sources and to Quick Training Aid on Financing Strategies to Address Barriers to Learning.

For updated info on federal grants, see the electronic storefront at http://www.grants.gov There you can double check due dates and access applications

A Few Examples of Current Grant Opportunities

   >>Center on Response to Intervention (CFDA 84.326E. Deadline May 4, 2007

      >>Technical Assistance Center for Evidence-based Practices to Improve the Social-Emotional Development of Young Children with or at-risk of disabilities (CFDA 84.326B) Deadline May 7, 2007

      >>Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities Program (CFDA 84.326B) Deadline May 7, 2007

      >>Grants for the Integration of Schools and Mental Health Systems (CFDA 84.215M) Deadline May 15, 2007

      >>Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Grant Program. (CFDA 84.184E) Due May 21, 2007

      >>Mentoring Programs. (CFDA 84.184) Due May 23, 2007

>National Institute of Mental Health with the Center for Mental Health Services, SAMHSA. (Due 6/5, 10/5)


   >>Refining and Testing Mental Health Interventions and Services for Youth with Mental
Illness who are Transitioning to Adulthood

>>Research on the Reduction and Prevention of Suicidality

>>Research on Rural Mental Health and Drug Abuse Disorders

>Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration
   >>Drug Free Communities Support Mentoring Programs. Due May 11, 2007
   >>Knowledge Dissemination Conference Grants. Applications due on the recurring dates of January 31 and October 31 each year.

@#@#@#@#
“Warning: Dates on calendar are closer than they appear.”
@#@#@#@#

** UCLA CENTER ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES UPDATE

> New Center Policy & Practice Analysis Brief
   >>Youth Gangs and Schools

> New Quick Find
   >>Response to Intervention
   http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/responsetointervention.htm

> Leadership Institutes for New Directions for Student Support
   >>New Orleans on May 7

> Responding to tragedies such as occurred at Virginia Tech – After every school shooting, we are asked about how schools should assess students who may be a threat. See “Assessing Whether a Student Might Commit a Violent Act”
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/shootings.pdf for a brief information resource.

The number of visits and downloads to our website related to crisis response provides an indication of the degree to which Center users sought out resources in the aftermath of the campus shooting at Virginia Tech. Between Monday (4/16) and Thursday (4/19), there were 6,263 distinct users (Monday = 1,806, Tuesday = 2,442, Wednesday = 3,147, Thursday = 3,240.

With respect to downloads of specific resources between Monday and Wednesday –
   >>Violence Prevention and Safe Schools = 1297 downloads
   >>Responding to Crisis at a School = 1175
   >>Conduct and Behavior Problems: Intervention and Resources for School Aged Youth = 1078
   >>Assessing Whether a Student Might Commit a Violent Act = 945
   >>Common Psychosocial Problems of School Aged Youth = 930
   >>Screening/Assessing Students: Indicators and Tools = 827
   >>Social and Interpersonal Problems Related to School Aged Youth = 700
   >>School Interventions to Prevent Youth Suicide = 661

Note: For more information on the UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools, go to the website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu or contact
"First things first, but not necessarily in that order."

**TRAINING AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

Note: For info on employment opportunities, see [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/job.htm)

Following the list of current openings, you will see links to HRSA, SAMHSA, and other relevant job sites.

Below are a few opportunities that have been brought directly to our attention this month:

**Research**
After school evaluation research positions at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. Contact Bart Hirsch at bhirsch@northwestern.edu

**Postdoctoral**
The Division of Prevention and Community Research, Department of Psychiatry, Yale University School of Medicine has re-opened its search for applications to a two-year postdoctoral fellowship as part of the NIDA-funded reach training program on the prevention of substance abuse. Contact Jacob Tebes at jacob.tebes@yale.edu

**Clinical and Research**
The Community Schools Program at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, PA has several positions: Therapist for school-based group intervention, clinical coordinator position, research coordinator position. Contact Stephen Leff at leff@email.chop.edu

**Administrator**

"All I ask is the chance to prove that money can’t make me happy."

**COMMENTS, REQUESTS, INFO, QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD**

(1) Regarding the Virginia Tech Tragedy

"As a licensed Clinical and School Psychologist who has worked with children and adolescents in treatment facilities and schools for 17 years, I have a very specific concern regarding what contributes to outbreaks of violence. Since the advent of administratively managed mental health
benefits, children and adolescents identified as a risk to self and others are not getting the
treatment they need. The desire to cut costs in health care is directly impacting the lives of the
mentally ill and those who are in their environment. We are well aware in Colorado that the
students involved in the Columbine shootings were known to mental health but were not
receiving regular care. Similarly, the Virginia Tech student had been known to mental health
providers. I have personally witnessed how children who do not receive the appropriate mental
health treatment turn to violence. Many children who I saw prematurely discharged from mental
health facilities, due to pressures from Insurance Companies, later committed violent crimes.
They finally get the treatment they need in correctional facilities. These crimes could be
prevented. We will not make any dent in assisting our schools with recovery from these crimes
unless we contribute to their prevention."

"Perhaps you could ask what colleagues are doing in schools of an EDUCATIONAL nature to
help students develop and use healthy and safe coping skills to deal with their anger, stress,
sadness and sense of powerlessness when they experience everyday emotionally wounding
events. There are education programs around the world addressing these issues. Neither schools,
the media or mental health professionals seem to take the lead in rallying public opinion to
consider "primary prevention" opportunities today that work in the classroom. This is
particularly critical when a national tragedy of mass murder occurs on a school or college
campus. Public response becomes preoccupied with searching to place blame rather than train
and mobilize emotional health educators to introduce in classrooms proven, proactive student
coping skills education programs."

"I hesitate to comment in such a terrible time lest I seem unsympathetic, but it seems us
‘outsiders’ from England that a key issue in all this is the US gun laws. Over here when a young
person as disturbed as that goes on the rampage they knife one person- it happens repeatedly and
is terrible but relatively contained. Over with you one person can shoot scores. The underlying
problem of disturbed individuals is the same, and will always be with us probably, but the means
of destruction at your disposal amplify the problem in a hideous way —— but gun law feels like
an issue your society is not seriously confronting."

(2) Regarding last months Emerging Issue: Engagement (and Re-engagement of all stakeholders
in Enhancing Student/Learning Supports

“... From my perspective I think we must focus our efforts on building the capacity of the school
district to develop and manage comprehensive systems of learning supports. I believe that the
focus of this work must remain on schools. A focus on schools and their intrinsic motivation,
developing schools capacity to lead reforms seems central. I find that student support staff,
special education and counseling staff are so mired in compliance and crisis that staff simply
lack the knowledge needed to conceive of and implement best practices in the area of school
based mental health. Generally, this is why there are so many agencies trying to help from the
outside in, and also why these efforts falter. I see no problems with school leaders deciding to
use a collaborative structure to accomplish their objectives, but to be full partners in such efforts,
school leaders need help.”

(3) We were asked to share the following:

“Readergirlz (www.readergirlz.com) is a new online book community celebrating gutsy girls in
life and literature. Their mission is to get teen girls to read, reflect deeply, and reach out——and
be tomorrow’’s history. Not only will the four readergirlz founders——young adult novelists
Dia Calhoun, Lorie Ann Grover, Janet Lee Carey, and Justina Chen Headley, feature a different
young adult novel each month, they will also feature a community service project related to that
novel. For the months of April and May, readergirlz will be focusing on books surrounding
mental health and body health issues.

In April, readergirlz will showcase Lorie Ann Grover’s young adult novel On Pointe (Simon and
Shuster 2004 ——A Bank Street College Best Children's Book of the Year). As a ballerina, Lorie
Ann was exposed to the harsh realities of dance, including eating disorders among the students. Her novel in verse shares the broad difficulties and pressures that teens often face—including how in some cases anorexia can even be ignored or encouraged by parents. This novel is sure to raise pertinent discussions. *On Pointe* is a wonderful tool for eating disorder bibliotherapy.

In May, for National Mental Health Month, readergirlz will feature Dia Calhoun’s young adult novel *The Phoenix Dance* (Farrar Straus & Giroux 2005——A New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age), which is a retelling of the Twelve Dancing Princesses fairy tale. Her main character is bipolar and comes to terms with her condition and treatment. Dia writes from her own experience as a woman who lives with bipolar illness. For the community service project related to the book, readergirlz will highlight NAMI’s Take Action page where teen girls can get involved with StigmaBusters.

Girls can dialogue with both Dia and Lorie Ann by dropping by [http://groups.myspace.com/readergirlz](http://groups.myspace.com/readergirlz) or by writing to them at divas@readergirlz.com. Or for a group session, send e-mail to divas@readergirlz.com to schedule a forum meeting. Full Issues centering around each novel, can be found at [www.readergirlz.com](http://www.readergirlz.com) under Current Issue or Archive.

Thank you so much for helping us to reach more girls about these important issues.”