



**28 years
& counting**

**School Practitioner
Listserv**

**A Weekly Community of Practice Network
for Sharing and Interchange**



August 11, 2014

Request

>Needed: Measures to evaluate mental health in schools

For Your Inspiration (FYI)

>Mobilizing the community to provide school supplies for students-in-need as they return to school

Follow-Up

About threat assessment

Featured Center Resource

>Publications list on MH in schools: Updated & reorganized

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**Please forward this to a few colleagues you think might be interested.
The more who join, the more we are likely to receive to share.**

**For those who have been forwarded this and want to be part of
the weekly exchange, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu**

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Request

"Looking for information on assessment measures and evaluation tools used in school-based mental health programs. Any information on the use of assessment and evaluation at the clinician level and program level would be helpful. How programs utilize outcome measures for program improvements would also be helpful."

Center Response

Mental health in schools encompasses a comprehensive continuum (from promoting healthy development and prevention of problems, through responding as soon as problems are noted, to interventions for chronic and severe problems). To address this continuum, schools must rework their operational infrastructure, and the effectiveness of the infrastructure must be evaluated in interpreting intervention outcomes. (Poor infrastructures produce poor overall results.)

Schools need a broad range of measures to evaluate (a) how well they provide essential interventions, (b) the outcomes for individuals and subgroups, and (c) the impact on the school. With respect to outcomes and impact, the focus is on:

>*Promoting healthy development and preventing problems.* (Helpful here are measures of social emotional development and wellness and some indices from school climate measures.)

>*Responding quickly to address common problems.* (Of use here are measures related to effectiveness of interventions to address student transition and adjustment problems and strategies for immediately assessing and correcting learning and behavior problems.)

>*Handling severe and chronic problems.* (Measures of symptom/problem reduction, enhanced positive relationships with peers and adults at school, and increased engagement/success in learning.)

As a resource aid, see:

>*Evaluation and Accountability: Related to Mental Health in Schools*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/evalaccount/evalmh.pdf>

While mostly focused on a narrow set of student outcomes, the literature on mental health in schools is a source for identifying measures. See recent articles in our updated bibliography on mental health in schools – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/references.htm>

Finally, see the set of quality indicators appended to our work on *Common Core Standards for a Learning Supports Component* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/commcore.pdf>

Listserv Participants

What measures are used locally to evaluate prevention, early-after-onset intervention, and treatment? How is the infrastructure for mental health in schools evaluated? This is important information to share with colleagues. Please send info to ltaylor@ucla.edu.

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For your inspiration (FYI)

>Mobilizing the community to provide school supplies for students-in-need as they return to school

From Gainesville, GA – 7/23/14

"In stores, the back-to-school banners are up, advertising clothes, shoes, backpacks, markers, notebooks and a long list of other supplies. The costs of these supplies can add up quickly, so local charities and churches are working to provide school supplies to students in need. ... The Adopt-a-Backpack program provides backpacks filled with school supplies directly to school counselors, who then distribute them to the students who need them most. United Way's goal is to provide 470 backpacks. A local church hosts a 'Bags and Cuts' day when children can receive free haircuts, school supplies, book bags and dental screenings."

Listserv Participants

This is a great opportunity for the community to show its support for students, families and schools. Let us share what's happening in your locale. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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Follow up

>About threat assessment

Reflection from a colleague in Uruguay:

"There is something I would like to share with you. ... the reality here at the high school where I am working ... is that there are many mental illnesses among students to such a point that we have to tell their parents to give them their medicine or else they won't be able to come to high school because of their violent reactions. There are students with personality problems who walk alone talking to themselves during breaks and warn everybody that one day they are going to explode (although we have been told that they are under medical assistance)"

We responded:

In addition to the resources shared in the previous school practitioner listserv related to threat assessment, see the following from the National Association of School Psychology

>Responding to the mental health needs of students
http://www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/School_Based_Mental_Health_Services.pdf

Here is an excerpt:

"...Responding to the need for comprehensive, coordinated mental health services begins with strong leadership. Principals and central school administrators should publicly acknowledge and promote school climates that support positive mental health and take steps to demonstrate support.

Step 1: Build the capacity of staff members to respond to the mental health needs of students. Building capacity begins with being aware of and providing the professional development and training needed to help staff members respond to student needs. It is important that all staff members (including teachers, bus drivers, and paraprofessionals) be able to interact positively with all students, including those with severe emotional and behavioral needs. Principals must ask specific questions, such as, Are staff members familiar with the early warning signs of emotional and behavioral health problems? Do staff members know how to respond when students share sensitive personal information? Do staff members know who the mental health professionals in their building are and how they can help students? Do the policies and procedures of the school help teachers and students respond to mental health needs, including those that reach crisis proportions?

Step 2: Hire adequate numbers of school mental health professionals and empower them to take leadership roles in the provision of mental health services in the school. The National Association of School Psychologists, the American School Counselor Association, and the School Social Work Association of America all have recommended ratios for the maximum number of students to each professional. ...

Step 3: Promote a continuum of services that includes schoolwide mental health prevention programming and intensive interventions. Research demonstrates that students in schools that use schoolwide positive behavior interventions and supports show reduced problem behaviors, improved social skills, and improved academic performance.

Prevention programs that reach all students and target students at risk for failure are crucial to any school mental health program. Examples of these universal prevention programs include school violence prevention, bullying prevention, social skills training, developmental asset building, conflict resolution, and social norming campaigns....

When the severity and intensity of student needs exceed the capacity of the school staff, schools must partner with community professionals to adequately meet student needs. The UCLA Center for Mental Health in the Schools suggests that policymakers and school staff members work together with community providers and families to build integrated interventions and supports that will meet student needs no matter where they fall on the mental health continuum...

Step 4: Create opportunities to regularly assess the mental health needs of students and the effectiveness of school-based services. Assessing the mental health needs of students involves both informal and formal methods. Informal approaches can be as simple as checking in with students of concern daily, observing and listening to student interactions in the lunchroom and hallways to determine how people are doing, or setting aside a specific time in weekly leadership meetings to discuss student needs and issues...."

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Center Featured Resource

>Publications list on MH in schools: Updated & reorganized

We have recently updated and organized an extensive sample of references related to mental health in schools. To show the progression of practice and research over time, we have grouped books, chapters, and articles by a wide range of authors into time spans: 2010 to the present; 2000 to 2009; before 2000.

See <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/references.htm>

Please let us know about any important recent references that should be added.

Send the information to ltaylor@ucla.edu

*Please share relevant resources ideas, requests,
comments, and experiences!*

Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

**Note: Responses come only to the
Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA for
possible inclusion in the next week's message.**

**We also post a broad range of issues and responses to the
Net Exchange on our website at**

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

and to *Facebook* (access from the Center's homepage

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