



**School Practitioner  
Listserv**



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

**December 14, 2015**

**Center Info from the Field**

- >Using the holidays to launch a set of year round opportunities for social-emotional learning**
- >Supporting students during the holidays: Suggestions for families**

**Featured Set of Center Resources:**

- >Social-Emotional and Youth Development, Peer Relationships, Resilience**

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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](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

**For previous recent postings of this community of practice, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>**  
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**Note:** In keeping with the *National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports*,\* this community of practice network has expanded in number of participants and topics discussed.\* The thematic emphasis is on (1) daily concerns confronting those working in and with schools, (2) the transformation of student and learning supports, and (3) promoting whole child development and positive school climate.

## **C**enter Info from the Field

### **>Using the holidays to launch a set of year round opportunities for social-emotional learning**

The holiday season inspires many schools to do something for others (e.g., toy drives, food drives, outreach to the homeless). Such activities are another set of natural opportunities for schools to promote social-emotional learning. And they can become the kick-off for planning similar year round ways for students to be involved in helping others and in the process provide ways to further enhance social-emotional learning.

Here are some examples:

(1) From: Punanou School –

<http://www.punahou.edu/luke-center-for-public-service/service-learning-program/index.aspx>

“Highlights several themes throughout the course of the school year, focusing the entire campus on particular areas of need. Within these themes, students of all ages get involved in a variety of ways, including direct service projects, classroom activities, education and advocacy.

- >*September: Learning About Community Resources* – As part of the United Way campaign, students have the opportunity to learn more about the many agencies serving our community every day.
- >*October/November: Exploring Issues of Hunger and Homelessness* – Students learn about root causes of hunger and homelessness and consider long-term solutions to these local and global problems.
- >*December: Giving Back During the Holidays* – Through annual holiday service activities like Alternative Gift Giving and the Holiday Adoption Program, students are reminded that giving is often better than receiving.
- >*February/March: Advancing Literacy* – Students learn about the value of reading and writing in daily life, and the importance of advancing opportunities for literacy in the broader community.
- >*April/May: Stewardship of the Environment*”

(2) From: The Indiana Youth Institute

<http://s3.amazonaws.com/iyi-website/issue-briefs/June-6-2011-Volunteering.pdf?mtime=20151110111102>

“Youth who volunteer not only help others, they also help themselves. They are less likely to feel alienated, and are more likely to experience self-acceptance, undergo moral development, and assume responsibility for their actions...

By 12th grade, nearly one out of three high school students in Indiana say their courses are dull, and most students who drop out say that boring classes were a major reason for their decision to quit school. However, four out of five dropouts say that real-world or experiential learning opportunities would have helped them complete school. In fact, both students involved in volunteering through service-learning programs and at-risk students who were not involved in such programs agree that service-learning classes are more interesting than other classes. When asked directly about service-learning courses, 80% of at-risk

students say attending high school would be more positive as a result of service-learning, and two thirds say that those courses would significantly improve their motivation to work hard in school....”

(3) From: Effective Practices for Engaging at-risk Youth in Service Guide

<http://gradnation.org/resource/effective-practices-engaging-risk-youth-service>

This guide from Youth Service America is designed to provide “an overview of the underlying theory and effective practices for engaging at-risk youth in service by examining the roles young people played — and can play — in serving their communities.”

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### >Supporting students during the holidays

From: **headspace** -- the Australian National Youth Mental Health Foundation – providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds.

<http://www.headspace.org.au>

“Holidays can take students away from friends and their usual school supports. Changes to routine can cause some young people to feel stressed, isolated and alone. Parent support is very important at this time. Below is some information to help you support young people to stay in a healthy headspace in school holidays. There is also some information that may help you to identify when your young person might need some extra support and where to go for help.

There are a number of ways you can support your young person’s mental health and wellbeing in the holidays:

#### **1. Encourage them to stay connected**

Social relationships are important to your young person’s general wellbeing. It is okay if they take time out for themselves at times, but encourage them to keep in contact with friends over the holidays. Friends can provide both play and support, and spending time with friends is also important for keeping and building on existing friendships.

If your young person is not feeling up to going out, even a phone call, email, text message or Facebook message can help them to feel connected to friends and family.

#### **2. Encourage them to stay involved**

Encourage involvement with volunteer work, hobbies, clubs or committees, or sports — these can help young people feel connected to their wider community. Participate with them when you can. Involve them in decisions and give them responsibility at home (e.g. deciding what to eat for dinner and helping to prepare it). Help them to identify and set realistic goals. Setting and achieving realistic goals can be incredibly motivating and can help build self-confidence.

### **3. Encourage physical activity**

Physical activity is important for everyone’s health and wellbeing. If your young person is feeling down or finding things are difficult, physical activity may be the last thing they feel like doing. But even small activities, like walking around the block, can help relieve stress and frustration, provide a good distraction from worrying thoughts, improve concentration and improve mood. If your young person is struggling to get active, find a physical activity that you both enjoy and can do together (e.g. swimming, playing sports with friends or cycling) and make a plan to do it regularly.

### **4. Encourage a regular routine**

Getting a good night’s sleep helps young people to feel energized, focused and motivated.

Adolescence is a time when a number of changes to the “body clock” impact on sleeping patterns and young people are more likely to have problems with sleep. Developing a sleeping routine can help. Encourage your young person to wake up around the same time each day, get out of bed when they wake up, and go to bed around the same time each night. Avoiding caffeine after lunchtime, having a quiet, dark and uncluttered bedroom and shutting down electronic devices before bed can also help them to get a good night’s sleep.

### **5. Encourage healthy eating habits**

Eating well doesn’t only reduce the risk of physical health problems, like heart disease and diabetes, but it can also help with sleeping patterns, energy levels, mood, and general health and wellbeing. A good balanced diet with less junk food/ lots of sugars and more vegies, fruit, whole grains and plenty of water will ensure your young person has all of the vitamins and minerals to help their body and brain function well.

### **6. Encourage play!**

Devoting time to just having fun can help to recharge your young person’s battery, revitalise their social networks and reduce stress and anxiety.”

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## **F**eatured set of center resources:

**>Social-Emotional and Youth Development,  
Peer Relationships, Resilience**

See our online clearinghouse Quick Finds on:

>Social and Emotional Development – [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2102\\_05.htm](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2102_05.htm)

>Youth Development – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/youthdev.htm>

>Peer Relationships – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/peersupport.htm>

>Resilience – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/resilience.html>

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\*For information about the *2015 National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports*, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

***Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights;  
transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to  
enabling equity of opportunity and promoting whole child development.***

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***THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND  
INTERESTING THIS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE BECOMES!***

**Send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences to  
[ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

**We 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 home page**

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