

School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
(1/20/21)

Contents

- > **Psychological impact of multiple challenges: What should schools do?**
- > **Tackling the Pandemic's Mental Health Impact**
- > **Concerns about the push to "catch up"**
- > **Links to a few other relevant shared resources**

(Scroll down to read about the above and for hotlinks to resources)

Note: Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/> for links to other Center resources.

This resource is from the
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA

So please feel free to share with anyone you think might benefit (e.g.,
forward our resources to individuals and share on listservs and websites).

For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly,
send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

For previous postings of community of practice discussions, see
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>

For discussion and interchange:

> **Psychological impact of multiple challenges: What should schools do?**

A statement from the American Psychological Association captures the situation:

...Our nation has been emerging from a year dominated by trauma—a rapidly spreading virus, widespread divisiveness, and economic uncertainty. These layers of trauma are cumulative, and make it difficult to function. ... It is vital that our science and professional expertise are utilized to help heal. ... It is understandable if you are feeling shaken, angry, or emotionally exhausted. ...you are not alone. <https://www.apa.org/news/apa/2021/01/capitol>

Regardless of the views one holds about events such as what took place at the Capitol, the ongoing pandemic, and the state of the economy, the psychological impact on students and staff is clear. And schools are being asked to deal with it. This raises the following questions:

- *How should schools meet the immediate psychological, social, and educational needs of students and staff?*
- *At the same time, how should schools begin the necessary work of redesigning student and learning supports to be more effective in addressing the many factors that regularly interfere with learning and teaching?*

Let us know what local schools are doing so we can share the information
(send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

Below are excerpts from an article from the San Diego Tribune about how a student support staff member at one school is stepping up in this time of crisis. This is followed by a discussion of concerns that are arising about the call for "catching-up" students.

Tackling the Pandemic's Mental Health Impact

School counselor Bonnie Hayman is charged with taking care of 1,100 middle-school kids and almost 100 staff during a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. Hayman, who works at the currently closed La Mesa Arts Academy in the La Mesa-Spring Valley School District, is seeing up close how months of school closures, isolation and pandemic-induced stress are harming children.

Student anxiety and depression have been rising at the school. Teachers tell her about students who have lost family members to COVID-19, who don't have enough food to eat or who were crying or looking tired during a Zoom class.... The pandemic has caused many students to feel like they've lost a sense of control in their lives and suffer from anxiety over their uncertain futures, Hayman said.....

Campuses like La Mesa Arts Academy say they are doing what they can to help children's mental health while remaining closed to most of their students.... The school invites about 60 students to campus every week to receive support from staff. Some students come simply to have a space where they can use the internet and get their school work done with an adult supervising them. Others come for in-person individual or group counseling sessions with Hayman, where she teaches them coping skills, how to identify when their bodies are stressed, and invites them to share what they're going through. The school got a part-time social worker this school year, after the district tapped some of its federal stimulus money to hire about a dozen social workers to support the work of school counselors.

La Mesa Arts Academy has been focusing on allowing flexibility for students when it comes to academics. For example, if students are frequently absent or not participating in distance learning, the school's teachers are encouraged to treat those students with "compassion and curiosity" rather than treat them like they're in trouble. "Grace before grades" is kind of a mantra we have here," Hayman said. Hayman is leading half-hour Zoom lunch hangouts on Mondays and Wednesdays for groups of students she calls "Lunch Bunches." Each have different themes such as anime, pets, "looking for new friends" and "coping skills."

"We have to keep hope alive for them," Hayman said. "And so trying to provide those unstructured times where they can just play and laugh with one another like they would be normally at a lunch table ... we try to do that through Zoom."

For parents, Hayman holds online "coffee hours" on Friday mornings. Hayman has led discussions ranging from how to talk to kids about race and social justice to how to increase children's motivation. For 2021, she has planned sessions like "managing big emotions," resilience and helping kids with distance learning. Sometimes the coffee hour is simply a support session for parents, a space where parents can vent or cry, Hayman said.

Hayman is not only charged with supporting students and parents, but teachers, who are going through their own unique stress and anxiety. Many teachers are working longer hours as they adjust their practices and curriculum to a digital format. Many teachers are simultaneously trying to educate and care for their own children while teaching dozens of students from home. Several teachers have taken mental-health leave during the pandemic, Hayman noted."

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/story/2020-12-27/how-one-school-counselor-is-trying-to-tackle-a-pandemic-mental-health-crisis>

For discussion and interchange:

>Concerns about the push to "catch up"

The call for "catching-up" students by extending the school year is related to the general calls for getting kids back in school. As such, the discussion needs to focus on what schools need if they are to be effective in doing more than being a repository for the young.

The discussion should be carried out in the context of understanding that there will be an increase in the number of students manifesting learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

Moreover, the students will vary considerably in the academic and social-emotional help they need. In addition, a school will need to continue the process of finding and reengaging the many students who have "disappeared" from its rolls. And all this probably will have to be done with a reduced budget.

These realities mean that, in too many schools, even the most expert teachers with the best curricula cannot be expected to be successful with quality instruction alone. Schools that were struggling before will find it even harder to

- (1) ensure a safe environment (safe from COVID-19 and other all too familiar problems)
- (2) provide personalized instruction
- (3) enhance the ability to address the variety of other factors that will interfere with learning and teaching. And, the difficulty here is that many of these factors are the result of long standing, unresolved structural and systemic barriers that require transformative school improvements.

Educators, families, and students are eager for school to go "back to normal." We all want to make up for learning-loss. In doing so, it is essential to avoid widening the opportunity gap. Any agenda for schools must include enhancing equity of opportunity for all students to succeed at school and beyond.

To better appreciate the above points, you might find the following useful:

- (1) Our Center's recent policy brief prepared at the request of PACE:
Restructuring California Schools to Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching in the COVID 19 Context and Beyond

<https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/restructuring-california-schools-address-barriers-learning-and-teaching-covid-19>

While the brief was prepared for California, it has relevance for every state.

- (2) *Finding and Reengaging Students who Went Missing During the COVID Pandemic*
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Findingdisconnectedstudents.pdf>

- (3) Three recent free books from the Center that stress ways to move forward:

>*Improving School Improvement*

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

>*Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*

All three can be accessed at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.htm

From: *Educator pleads to let go of 'catching up' at school*

https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Family/educator-pleads-catching-school-viral-post/story?id=74987310&cid=clicksource_4380645_2_heads_hero_live_headlines_hed

After months of remote, hybrid and distance learning, parents are justifiably concerned about their children's educations. But one life-long educator thinks "catching up" is an idea that should be reconsidered. ... Teresa Thayer Snyder wrote, "After a lifetime of working among the young, I feel compelled to address the concerns that are being expressed by so many of my peers about the deficits the children will demonstrate when they finally return to school. My goodness, what a disconcerting thing to be concerned about in the face of a pandemic which is affecting millions of people around the country and the world.... It speaks to one of my biggest fears for the children when they return. In our determination to 'catch them up,' I fear that we will lose who they are and what they have learned during this unprecedented era. What on earth are we trying to catch them up on?...[Children] have endured a year that has no parallel in modern times... There is no assessment that applies to who they are or what they have learned.... Remember, their brains did not go into hibernation during this year. Their brains may not have been focused on traditional school material, but they did not stop either. Their brains may have been focused on where their next meal is coming from, or how to care for a younger sibling, or how to deal with missing grandma, or how it feels to have to surrender a beloved pet, or how to deal with death. Our job is to welcome them back and help them write that history."

Is “catching up” being discussed in your locale?

Please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

An Inauguration Day like few before it provides ample curricular topics

<https://www.k12dive.com/news/an-inauguration-day-like-few-before-it-provides-ample-curricular-topics/593126/>

Help Children Learn at Home: Keep Children Engaged During Virtual Learning or While School’s Out

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/learning.html>

Broad band access and the digital divide

https://www.ecs.org/broadband-access-and-the-digital-divides/?utm_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm_campaign=c5a7baef1e-NEW_from_2021_01_05&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a2b00b930-c5a7baef1e-53611723

How to Help Your Kids Handle Disappointment

https://childmind.org/article/how-to-help-your-kids-handle-disappointment/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=How%20to%20Help%20Your%20Kids%20Handle%20Disappointment&utm_campaign=Public-Education-Newsletter

Strengthening Resilience: Promoting Positive School Mental Health Among Indigenous Youth

<https://mhtcnetwork.org/centers/mountain-plains-mhtc/product/strengthening-resilience-promoting-positive-school-mental>

Kids, Families and COVID-19 <https://www.aecf.org/resources/kids-families-and-covid-19/>

Aged Out: How We're Failing Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care

<https://www.thinkof-us.org/aged-out-report>

Preventing, Identifying, and Treating Substance Use Among Youth in Foster Care

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/bulletins-youthsud/>

Every Summer Counts: A Longitudinal Analysis of Outcomes from the National Summer Learning Project

<https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/every-summer-counts-a-longitudinal-analysis-of-outcomes-from-the-national-summer-learning-project.aspx>

Making Connections for Mental Health and Wellbeing Among Men and Boys

<https://www.preventioninstitute.org/projects/making-connections-mental-health-and-wellbeing-among-men-and-boys>

We were sent the following and asked to share it.

Compassion Resilience Toolkits <https://compassionresiliencetoolkit.org/>

“The CR Toolkits provide information, activities, and resources for educators to understand, recognize, and minimize the experience of compassion fatigue and to increase compassion resilience perspectives and skills. The authors of the CR Toolkits are a collaborative team made up of educators, community mental health practitioners and parents. ...

The toolkits (schools, health and human services and parents/caregivers) are free and accessible to all in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Training for facilitators is offered virtually to educators in the US and internationally.

Recent research conducted with 135 trained facilitators showed: 95% gained strategies to help themselves and their co-workers to build resilience and 75% reported increased self-compassion and compassion for others in the context of the school environment.”

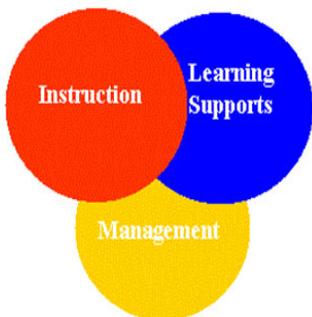
A Few Upcoming Webinars

- 1/21 – Basic Requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act
- 1/21 – Digital literacy strategies to promote equity
- 1/21 – Bounce back training
- 1/21 – Barriers, Detours, and Practices to Create Equitable Inclusive Engagements
- 1/22 – Catching Kids Up at a Distance
- 1/22 – Delinquency Prevention Program Solicitation
- 1/22 – Who Gets to Thrive? Accelerating Equity for All Learners in All Settings
- 1/27 – McKinney-Vento School Selection Rights
- 1/27 – How to make learning more interactive from anywhere
- 1/27 – Building resiliency
- 1/27 – Exploring cultural awareness
- 1/28 – Student Agency: Creativity Lab
- 1/28 – Leading resilient teams
- 2/9 – Educating your Child with Mental Health Needs: Special Education
- 2/10 – Mental Health Awareness
- 2/10 – Transforming Your Leadership And Those You Lead
- 2/11 – How Parents Can Effectively Communicate with the IEP Team
- 2/16 – Build a Positive School Culture via a Student Leadership Team
- 2/16 – Stakeholder and Family Engagement
- 2/23 – Beyond Equity - the Lens Through Which We Lead
- 2/23 – The Resiliency Journey

How Learning Happens (Edutopia’s updated series of videos explores how educators can guide all students, regardless of their developmental starting points, to become productive and engaged learners.
<https://www.edutopia.org/how-learning-happens>

Webinar recording: Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on Youth
<https://preventioninstitute.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4bf5a36bd9f72789255d49a&id=17f472fa9&e=b6757fd9d7>

For more webinars, go to the our Center’s links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts –
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>



For information about the
National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to promoting whole child development, advancing social justice, and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.

Do you think the teacher
would punish me for
something I didn't do?



Of course not.



That's good, because I
didn't do my homework!



Invitation to Listserv Participants:

Everyone has a stake in the future of public education. This is a critical time for action. Send this resource on to others. Think about sharing with the growing number who are receiving it. AND Let us know about what we should be including.

Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!

For new sign-ups – email Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.

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 on Facebook (access from the Center's home page <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>)