

School Practitioner Community of Practice

(A network for sharing & exchange)

October 3, 2018

Topic for Discussion:

>How Best to Enhance Behavioral Health/Mental Health in Schools

Links to some Center resources on the topic

>Improving School Improvement

>Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide

>Transforming Student and Learning Supports:

Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System

>Powerpoints on improving how schools address barriers to learning and teaching

Invitation to listserv participants to share perspectives

Learning from Others:

>NASP's Policy Recommendations for Safe Schools

Links to a few other relevant resources & other topics of concern

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

>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops

>Calls for grant proposals, presentations, and papers

>Training and job opportunities

>Upcoming webcasts & other professional development opportunities

This resource is from the

Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA

Given shrinking education budgets, we have been asked to increase our outreach to make our free resources more available (e.g., for planning, professional development, etc.).

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>

Topic for Discussion

>How Best to Enhance Behavioral Health/Mental Health in Schools

The Federal Commission on School Safety hosted a meeting on July 11, 2018, entitled "Creating a Healthier & Safer Approach: Issues of Mental Health and Counseling for our Young." Secretary of Health and Human Services Azar said in his opening remarks "We're here to focus on the question of our children's mental health, Many children struggle with what are known as serious emotional disturbances, which are severe mental health challenges that interfere with their daily lives. Despite having diagnosable disorders that can be treated, many do not receive adequate care. Addressing this public health crisis requires a concerted multi-dimensional approach."

Here are a few excerpts from the written expert statements to the Commission:

(1) Sheryl Kataoka, UCLA Psychiatrist

<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/20180711-sheryl-kataoka-testimony.pdf>

Assure that all stakeholders in the school environment are equipped to understand and support the social and emotional development of children. This includes not only educating parents and family members, teachers and administrators, but also bus drivers, coaches, cafeteria workers, and school resource officers. The school community has a critical role to play in ensuring that our young people thrive and that to the extent possible, we all work toward preventing mental disorders and suicide from impacting our children."

Her recommendations: (1) Expand the mental health workforce in schools. (2) Provide training and technical assistance for school based clinicians. (3) Assure that all stakeholders in the school environment are equipped to understand and support the social and emotional development of children.

(2) Jennifer Mathis, Bazelon Center

<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/20180711-jennifer-mathis-testimony.pdf>

... encouraging students to seek help or treatment that they may need, making reasonable accommodations to enable students to continue their education as normally as possible, and ensuring the confidentiality of mental health information are all important strategies. Our schools must have the capacity to offer students with mental health disabilities the services they need to succeed, both at the elementary and secondary school level as well as for college and university students.

(3) Doris Fuller, Mental Health Advocate

<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/20180711-doris-fuller-testimony.pdf>

... the mental health treatment narrative for young people in general has moved emphatically to the position that family members play a critical role in recovery. Family engagement is a cornerstone of the coordinated care model.... Child and adolescent mental health care has become firmly anchored in a model of leaving children with serious emotional disorders or mental illness in their natural settings – home and school – whenever possible and engaging all the players around them in their mental health development.

(4) Sonja Trainor, National School Boards Association

<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/20180711-sonja-trainor-testimony.pdf>

School personnel know and care about their students and their school communities. They know the school climate, community concerns, the history of student interactions, and their needs. They are in a unique position to share information about a student contained in an education record that could be necessary to maintain a safe school environment.... what is needed is a federal system that supports limited information sharing without unfunded mandates and provides much-needed funding and technical assistance to encourage coordination of services.

(5) John Verdi, Future of Privacy Forum

<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/20180711-john-verdi-testimony.pdf>

The National Association for School Psychologists reports that school surveillance can corrode learning environments by instilling an implicit sense that children are untrustworthy, and has also been linked to increased future criminality. With increased surveillance, minor offenses can be escalated, leading to arrests and court trials, in effective criminalizing normal adolescent behavior. Paradoxically, when schools increase surveillance in an effort to enhance safety, students' sense of safety can be undermined - leading to a perception that big brother is always watching. Without clear pathways for how surveillance data will be shared with schools, families and law enforcement, data collection can also put students at risk for abuse within their homes. Studies of messaging to parents have found that, for parents already prone to aggressive and abusive behavior, messages from schools increase the likelihood of domestic violence, and the anxiety over this messaging negatively impacts students' performance...As the National Association of School Psychologists noted in their 2013 recommendations for school safety policies, trust between students and adults is crucial in ensuring that students reach out to get the help they need and report concerns about other students when they have them. Appropriate student privacy safeguards create that trust and promote school safety.*

**NASP's Policy Recommendations for Implementing the Framework for Safe and Successful Schools*
<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/a-framework-for-safe-and-successful-schools/policy-recommendations-for-implementing-the-framework-for-safe-and-successful-schools>

Center Comments – Our immediate reaction was to send out a commentary entitled: *Safe Schools and Mental Health: More of the Same or an Opportunity to Really Improve Schools* (see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/9-9-18.pdf>).

We pointed out that the emphasis in the Commission's work once again demonstrated the prevalence of limited thinking about mental health in schools, with the policy focus mainly on "serious emotional disturbance." We noted that most of the testimony focused on "improving access to mental health treatment." In general, the recommendations brought nothing new to the table, and the sad truth is that more of the same is a recipe for ongoing system failure. We suggested that those approaching safe schools as a mental health concern read *Time for Straight Talk about Mental Health Services and MH in Schools* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mhinschools.pdf>

Here are two comments we received after we circulated our commentary:

(1) *The psychiatrist's statement [see Sheryl Kataoka above] and most of the documents you cite miss the most important element in school mental health: Students helping other students. Without this model of delivery, all of the professional initiatives will fail to reach students in a timely and effective manner. I'm distressed at the number of documents that fail to mention the significant role that students themselves can play in helping their peers identify concerns, find a compassionate ear to talk to, consider referrals to professionals and do so in a way without stigma and quickly. All professionals know that the earlier these concerns are vocalized and helping resources are connected to students, the more likely the concerns will not debilitate the student's emotional health, relationships and academic success. Where such services do get mentioned they are often construed as something "nice" to have, if possible. Student-to-student peer support for mental health is an essential and necessary aspect of Mental Health in Schools, not an add-on.*

(2) *I read your email, white paper and comments/criticisms of the recommendations made at the FCSS hearing with interest. I would like help understanding your recommendations. Other than scaling up to increase funding/staffing/resources, I couldn't really discern what you think districts should be doing differently. As a school board member and gubernatorial appointee to the CA Board of Behavioral Sciences, I am passionate about mental health in our schools, always looking for ways to address our students' well-being. Here is an op-ed I wrote this year published in the OC Register and Press-Enterprise. I list some of the things we have put in place.*
<https://www.pe.com/2018/03/09/suicides-and-shootings-a-school-districts-responsibility-grows/>

Links to some Center resources on the topic

For more on our perspective about mental health in schools, go to
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/aboutmh/aboutmhover.htm>

For a quick discussion, see *Embedding Mental Health into a Learning Supports Component: An Essential Step for the Field to Take Now* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/embeddingmh.pdf>

For additional resources and our call to action, see also the *National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>. At this URL, you will find links to in-depth discussions and resources to help schools move forward in addressing barriers to learning and teaching. For example, over the past year we have pulled together three small books to be shared with state and district superintendents; principals; board members; state, district and school staff; and all other concerned parties.

To ensure free and immediate access, two of the books can be downloaded from our Center's website. See

>*Improving School Improvement*

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

Both can be readily accessed at: http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

The third book has been published by Cognella. See

>*Transforming Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System*

<https://titles.cognella.com/transforming-student-and-learning-supports-9781516512782.html>

As states, districts, and schools move to improve how they address barriers to learning and teaching, they are adopting and adapting the free powerpoint presentations that can be accessed from our Center's website at UCLA. For example, we have just added Jane Todey's presentation to the Connecticut School Association. To access it and other powerpoint presentations, go to our website <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>, click on Catalogue of Resources, scroll down to Training, at the bottom of the page are presentations.

Please take steps to share this information with everyone you think is concerned about moving school improvement forward. And please let us know about anything you see happening to *transform* student and learning supports.

Finally, if anyone is thinking about increasing the capacity of a district or school with respect to developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports, let them know we offer free distance coaching <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/coach.pdf>.

Send all comments, info, and requests to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Invitation to listserv participants to share perspectives

***Let us hear whatever you want to share
about the above or other related matters!!***

Send your responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Learning from Others

[Excerpt from the NASP's Policy Recommendations for Implementing the Framework for Safe and Successful Schools (referred to above in comments from John Verdi)]

“Implementing the Framework for Safe and Successful Schools requires policies and practices that support ongoing efforts to establish comprehensive school safety programming. Following are policy and practice recommendations to consider when developing your action plan. ...

Integration of Services and Initiatives

- >Provide ongoing, high quality, relevant, and job embedded professional development to all school staff.
- >Encourage the use of professional learning communities or other structured avenues to foster collaboration among school staff.
- >Ensure that district and school building teams have representation of diverse stakeholders, including principals, teachers (general and special education), parents, school security professionals and school resource officers (SROs), school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school psychologists), and other specialized instructional support personnel.
- >Engage in resource mapping to better understand available resources and how they are utilized through the school or district to support: Instruction, Organization and management, Learning supports (e.g., mental and behavioral health services)
- >Develop a process for regular examination of school initiatives to improve student outcomes. Are any initiatives redundant? Are all initiatives directly related to the school improvement plan? Do you have staff buy-in?
- >Effectively engage parents and families in school improvement and school safety efforts...”
<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/a-framework-for-safe-and-successful-schools/policy-recommendations-for-implementing-the-framework-for-safe-and-successful-schools>

Links to a few other relevant resources & other topics of concern

- >*Resilience and child traumatic stress*
https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/resilience_and_child_traumatic_stress.pdf
- >*Building community resilience for communities and families*
https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/building_community_resilience_for_children_families.pdf
- >*Suicide Prevention in Schools: What Are States Doing to Prevent Youth Suicide?*
<https://www.ecs.org/suicide-prevention-in-schools-what-are-states-doing-to-prevent-youth-suicide/>
- >*Comprehensive system of learning supports (Canada Mental Health)*
<https://eenet.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/Comprehensive-System-of-Learning-Supports.pdf>
- >*Gallup 2018 survey of K-12 district superintendents*
<https://www.gallup.com/education/241151/gallup-k-12-superintendent-report-2018.aspx>
- >*Fixing Chronic Disinvestment in K-12 Schools*
<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2018/09/20/457750/fixing-chronic-disinvestment-k-12-schools/>



For information about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>

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/>)

What goes around comes around. The social context for adults affects the social context for students. Teachers who feel respected, trusted, and cared about as individuals are in a much better position to offer the same support to students.

Deborah Stipek

I hear they've been using a carrot and stick approach to improve your teaching.



Well, I never saw a carrot, but the stick felt like a 2X4, and I'm leaving before they hit me with it again!