

School Practitioner Community of Practice

(A network for sharing & exchange)

November 20, 2019

Topics for discussion –

>How effective is youth mental health support?

>Is poverty a risk factor for learning, behavior, and emotional problems?

What colleagues are sharing

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

About the aftermath of a school shooting

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 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 effective is youth mental health support?

Excerpt from: “An Upper Limit to Youth Psychotherapy Benefit?” (2019)

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2167702619858424>

“...outcome of youth psychotherapy is highly overdetermined, with substantial variance accounted for by an array of additional factors ... that impact the lives of young people. In addition to psychotherapy, factors encompassing genetic endowment, biological makeup, family context, and the broader social environment may exert strong influence, in some cases eclipsing the influence exerted by psychotherapy. This may be especially true for young people, whose ability to control life events and living conditions is more constrained than is the case with adults; youth outcomes may be impacted by family financial resources, parents’ behavior, sibling relationships, peer influence, neighborhood conditions, events at school, and a variety of other forces the young person may have little or no capacity to alter. Ultimately, an hour of psychotherapy per week is in a kind of competition with all that happens during the other 110+ waking hours, and many of the forces that can contribute to psychological distress and dysfunction during those hours may not be readily altered by therapy. From this perspective, it may make sense to construe youth psychotherapy as but one of many forces that can impact youth mental health and functioning and in many cases not the most powerful

of those forces.... One logical implication of this view is that there must be a natural upper limit to the influence psychotherapy alone can exert

....The traditional office-visit psychotherapy model carries certain limitations. Given the modest results of our estimated limits of psychotherapy outcome, psychotherapy cannot be considered to represent a complete solution to mental illness. Moreover, the psychotherapy model is unsustainable on a large scale; there are simply not enough therapists to do the job or funds to compensate them for all the care that may be needed. Scalable mental health promotion and prevention efforts may hold promise to alleviate the burden of mental illness. In addition, much of the variance in mental illness can be explained by social and occupational factors, such as socioeconomic status, job stress, academic stress...

Rather than working separately, psychotherapists could collaborate within teams of general practitioners, psychiatrists, social workers, sociologists, and others to address factors that are often unaddressed by psychotherapy...." (i.e., *social and occupational factors, such as socioeconomic status*)

Given this, consider the school's role in addressing the impact of deep poverty on students.

Topic for Discussion

>Is poverty a risk factor for learning, behavior, and emotional problems?

[It is important] *not to mistake risk indicators for risk mechanisms. On the whole, at any one point in time, poverty and social disadvantage are accompanied by an increased risk of psychopathology. The secular trend data, however, are persuasive in showing that it is most unlikely that the risk mechanism lies in either poverty or poor living conditions per se. Rather, the evidence suggests that the effect comes about because poverty is, in turn associated with family disorganization and breakup, which are rather nearer to the relevant risk mechanisms.*

Michael Rutter

This year the American Psychology Association inaugurated a *Deep Poverty Initiative*. It provides guidance for schools in addressing the social/socioeconomic factors impacting students, families, and communities. See:

>*Deep poverty Initiative toolkit* – <https://www.apa.org/about/governance/president/action-guide>

Here's some excerpts to stimulate discussion:

"Deep poverty occurs when an individual's household income falls below fifty percent of the poverty line. More than 18.5 million people within the United States live in deep poverty. Research has shown that living in deep poverty can have profound effects on an individual's behavioral, physical, and emotional well-being ..." <https://www.apa.org/about/governance/president/lived-experience-town-hall-guide.pdf>

"...Explore your school's absence and tardy policies (if any). Determine what accommodations you can make in your own classroom for students dealing with structural factors that may inhibit their full and timely participation (e.g., public transportation, childcare, required case management appointments). If evidence is needed to justify an absence or tardy, consider accepting non-standard forms of "proof" (e.g., notes from "eyewitnesses," pictures, or video) and work with department and school administration (if necessary) to accept these as "legitimate." documentation. ...

Spend time getting to know your students. Learn about them and where they are coming from. Consult the student demographics at your institution to get a sense of the communities and cultures from which your students are coming. Tell stories that allow your students to get to know you and where you are coming from. Practice active listening and follow through with resources that address issues students bring to you.

Become familiar with the transportation available to students – is it free, accessible, and reliable? Is there support for students as part of either campus resources or within the community (i.e., vouchers, free/reduced fares with student IDs, carpools)....

What is your school's policy on lunch time and costs associated with meals – can the students in your classes afford to eat at school? Are students and families aware of any free/reduced price lunch

programs and how to apply for them (if applicable)? Consider donating regularly to the school's food pantry or providing food as part of course activities.. If a food pantry doesn't exist, mobilize faculty/staff/administrators to create a food pantry. Familiarize yourself with available, affordable, and ample food options for students when schools are closed.

Familiarize yourself with what options are available for emergency housing for students facing eviction... Know the resources available to students to support their physical and mental health, including free or reduced cost access to medical doctors (including dentists and ophthalmologists) and mental health providers....." <https://www.apa.org/about/governance/president/teachers-guide.pdf>

For more on these matters and specifically on how schools can promote healthy development and implement prevention, early intervention, and treatment, see the links provided to resources from our Center and from others on the following Center Quick Finds:

Barriers to learning <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/barriers.htm>

Mapping school and community resources to address barriers to learning
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p2312_06.htm

Prevention for at risk students <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/prevention.html>

Children and poverty http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p1102_01.htm

Engagement/reengagement <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/motiv.htm>

With specific respect to promoting equity and opportunity and addressing problems at school, see the recent free books we have developed:

>*Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

>*Improving School Improvement* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

Finally, we stress that a key concern in all this is promoting student engagement in schooling. Positive feelings can payoff both for academic performance and reducing problems at schools. Helpful guidelines are found in research clarifying normal trends for school-age youngsters' efforts to **feel** competent, self-determining, and connected with significant others. (See the work of Ed Deci and Richard Ryan cited below.) Measurement of such feelings can provide indicators of the impact of a school on students. For example, in assessing school climate, positive findings are expected to correlate with school engagement and academic progress. Negative findings are expected to correlate with student anxiety, fear, anger, alienation, a sense of losing control, a sense of impotence, hopelessness, powerlessness. In turn, these negative thoughts, feelings, and attitudes can lead to externalizing (aggressive, "acting out") or internalizing (withdrawal, self-punishing, delusional) behaviors. And, of course, promoting healthy development, well-being, and a value-based life are important ends unto themselves. Therefore, an enhanced commitment to enhancing positive feelings toward and engagement in school should be a core focus in school improvement efforts.

#####

Please let us hear from you!

**Share your perspective about
promoting equity and opportunity and addressing problems at school.**

And send them and any other comments to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

#####

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

>More on Engagement/Intrinsic Motivation

- >> *When rewards compete with nature: The undermining of intrinsic motivation (e.g., browse "Extrinsic Rewards and Intrinsic Motivation in Education: Reconsidered Once Again," Review of Educational Research (2001) online at <http://rer.sagepub.com/content/71/1/1.full.pdf+html>)*
- >> *Intrinsic Motivation, Student Engagement, and the Work of Deci and Ryan <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/deciinforesource.pdf>*
- >> *About Intrinsic Motivation from the Perspective of Self-determination Theory <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/selfdeter.pdf>*
- >> *Deci has a 14 minute Youtube presentation at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGrcets0E6I#t=19>*
- > *How to Help Children Calm Down https://childmind.org/article/how-to-help-children-calm-down/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=READ%20MORE&utm_campaign=Weekly-11-12-19*
- > *Our Impoverished View of Educational Reform <http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=12106>*
- > *How Anxiety Leads to Disruptive Behavior https://childmind.org/article/how-anxiety-leads-to-disruptive-behavior/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=READ%20MORE&utm_campaign=Weekly-11-12-19*
- > *Want Equity of Opportunity for All Students? Move Beyond Tweaking School Improvement Policy and Practice <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/fall15.pdf>*
- > *Teacher morale has 'reached a tipping point,' new survey shows <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/low-teacher-morale-has-reached-a-tipping-point-study-142620535.html?.tsrc=fauxdal>*

A Few Upcoming Webinars:

- 11/21 - School Selection Rights
- 11/26 - Student and Families' Attitudes about Career Technical Education
- 12/3 - Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Students Experiencing Homelessness
- 12/5 - National Summer Learning Project
- 12/10 - Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching & Re-engaging Disconnected Students: Transforming Student & Learning Supports by Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, & Equitable System of Learning Supports
- 12/11 - Paving the Way to College for Students Experiencing Homelessness
- 12/17 - Taking Action for Service Learning
- 12/18 - Emotional Poverty in All Demographics: How to Reduce Anger, Anxiety, and Violence in the Classroom
- 12/19 - Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services
- 1/8/20 - Absenteeism and Truancy: What Works in Schools and What Doesn't?

For links to register to the above and for other relevant webinars, see

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

About the Aftermath of a School Shooting

Excerpted from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

<https://injury.research.chop.edu/violence-prevention-initiative/types-violence-involving-youth/school-shootings#.Xc28XNWIZc8>

It is difficult for most of us to understand how anyone-- regardless of their age, relationships, or grievance-- could shoot a child or youth, especially on school grounds.

The most common shootings on school grounds rarely involve large numbers of victims, but even a shooting of just one student at school has ramifications far beyond those directly involved. Students and staff that witness school shootings are likely to suffer from traumatic stress symptoms, become anxious or depressed and have general concerns about their safety. While many witnesses will have temporary symptoms, others will be symptomatic for a much longer period of time and even develop chronic psychiatric disorders. Even short-term impairments can cause severe distress and have profound effects on academic achievement and the social and emotional growth of impacted students.

Perhaps the most disturbing effects of school shootings are the feeling of on-going danger that permeates schools where they have occurred. The school's climate and sense of community are profoundly damaged....

Here are key things to consider when developing a response to a mass casualty event:

Each school and community has its own culture that should be understood before effective responses are employed.

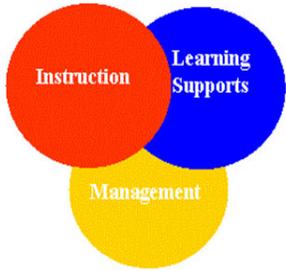
A return to prior routines as quickly as possible is one of the most important interventions in the aftermath of mass shootings and other traumatic events. It is not uncommon for students, families and school staff to be offered special opportunities over the ensuing months and year. Yet, this show of support may intentionally keep the traumatic experience at the forefront of victims' minds rather than relieve them of the burden. Too many, too varied and too protracted responses may interfere with victim's opportunity to recover.

Effective intervention and support around school shootings needs to be local. The best way to support the community members' needs is to work through the local providers and agencies that have prior relationships and will be in the community for the long haul...."

Given the frequency of community crisis events, we urge a review of the 7/17/19 practitioner discussion of *plans for schools after a crisis event*.

[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mhpractitioner/practitioner\(7-17-19\).pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mhpractitioner/practitioner(7-17-19).pdf)

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



For information about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports

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

Also online are two related free books

Improving School Improvement

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.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/>)