

School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
Special Edition (4/2/20)

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(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>

Special Edition:

Sharing Requests and Information about Resources and Actions

>What student/learning supports are in place for students being taught at home during the crisis?

All sorts of staff at state and local education agencies and schools are busy focused on ways to enhance instruction for students at home. It's a demanding job, with many obstacles and concerns. And it involves family members who are expected to make it happen.

All this makes sense. But as always, there is a huge elephant in the room. It is the many students who have significant learning, behavior, and emotional problems and reluctance to recognize that current events are increasing the opportunity and achievement gaps.

As a superintendent of a large urban district states in discussing the efforts to connect with students:

"There is an urgent need to act, as the absence from school creates hardship for students, loss of stability and friendships, loss of learning and loss of a big part of their social safety net. Connecting [with] all students as soon as we can must be the goal.

Out of about 120,000 high school students, roughly 15,000 have had no online contact with their classrooms since schools were closed Almost 2,000 high school students were connected through the district's internet program in the past few days. But even with the technology upgrades, only about 68% of all high school students are participating in studies online, meaning about 40,000 are not.

[He noted that] many of the students not participating are from low- income households or foster families, students who have learning disabilities or students who had attendance problems before the coronavirus outbreak."

It has always been the case that such student need student/learning supports. The need is even greater when the stress of a crisis has exacerbated their problems. And now that all families are being called upon to do more, many family members need guidance and support in working with kids at home.

Implications: We need staff who understand addressing barriers to learning and teaching to focus on ways to use their expertise to bring student/learning supports into students' homes.

Here's a cautionary note from a veteran public school math teacher who has also been a home-schooler. Notice the focus is on reducing pressure and stress. That's good. Now we need to provide ways to help when students are not doing well.

From: *Ditch the desk, ignore the clock and more advice on helping your kids learn*
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/03/30/ditch-desk-ignore-clock-more-advice-helping-your-kids-learn-teacher-former-homeschooler/>

Excerpt: ... The coronavirus quarantine has thrown teachers and families alike into roles they were not prepared for, and many are reeling. This new learning structure is clearly not ideal. But it actually offers some ways to improve our kids' educational experience if we adjust our thinking about it....

Many schools are transitioning to distance learning, in which they are responsible for providing lessons and materials and continuing to teach.

Parents, you are not responsible for replicating school at home. Your role is to guide and provide support for your child through this new process. For those whose schools are not providing any teaching or materials, you should focus on finding ways to continue the learning process that feels right for you and your family.

This completely new situation is probably as stressful and frustrating for us educators as it is for families, so please be patient. Most of our teacher toolbox has just been chucked out the window, and we are working to find completely different ways to provide lessons, assess understanding, and individualize learning, all while maintaining our classroom community.

Please know that we are well aware of how difficult families are finding it to balance their own work requirements with this new and uncomfortable role.... Now is our chance to continue the process of learning at home, without some of the less-beneficial aspects of traditional school. Instead of trying to replicate the classroom, let's embrace the opportunity to get out from under some of its downsides that are holding some kids back....

A shift in how we support our kids in this new learning situation can make learning easier and give them additional skills they weren't getting in the classroom.

Ditch the desk... Adjust the pace... Ignore the clock... Allow choice. Studies show offering choice in the classroom

Go off-script. If a question or idea arises from the work at hand, follow it! ... Let your child lead.

... An increased degree of responsibility and choice will give students the chance to learn about how they best function....

These times are frightening and frustrating and fraught with uncertainty. Not all of this advice will be on target for everyone, but both teachers and families should work to adjust their expectations and perspectives. It might be what it takes to help us salvage the remaining school year and keep our kids learning.

Students may get behind by traditional standards, and they might not learn the same things they would have in school, but this can be a chance for them to learn in a different, positive and productive way.

>What we hear from student/learning supports' leaders who are working to address the need

- (1) "In terms of support for students and families we at the state department have shared quite a few resources... and continue to update those resources as additional ones become available. Then districts/charters send resources directly to their families and students. We have not created any additional websites as of yet, but do have a list of resource links at the top of our state department website.

One thing we have run into is a challenge with keeping our contractors working – our Social

Workers in Schools state block grant employs ~350 social workers or other licensed mental health workers in schools across the state. Many are now district/charter employees but we still have quite a few contractors, so the school closures mean they won't be getting a paycheck unless we can support LEAs in keeping them working. To that end we have created and continue to update a list of online training opportunities that LEAs could encourage all of their student support staff to participate in as an opportunity to expand capacity and expertise during times when they aren't in their buildings. We have also encouraged our student support staff and especially those that are funded by our grant to continue to reach out to students/families on their caseloads to check in and provide virtual/distance supports; this would also include responding to tips from our SafeVoice (anonymous tip reporting system) and Handle with Care (tips come from first responders) programs. Many of them are already supporting their schools with their distance learning plans and supporting educators with their own self-care needs too.

In terms of supports to students and families, I think anything we can get out there regarding the impacts of trauma and what types of reactions/behavior are normal during these times (for both kids AND adults) would be very helpful. And reminders that we will all get through it and get back to our normal someday – I think we have a lot of stressed out parents which we know will trickle down to kids as well. If we can help adults stay grounded and feeling supported I think it will go a long way to helping kids too.”

- (2) Regarding 3/31 practitioner discussion of at risk student support – “... like many states, ours is a local control state, so there's lots of variation in protocols, personnel and resources across the state which is an added challenge with state-wide procedures.

In general, we're not comfortable with the idea of journal prompts to elicit potential abuse situations for multiple reasons such as teachers not knowing what to do with the information, we currently have escalated concerns of safety and response time, the potentially abusive parents seeing the entries, etc.

The following are some examples of some of what we're seeing -

School social workers doing check ins on students they believe may be at risk.

School counselors and school social workers helping at food distribution sites or with delivery and assessing student situations.

Hotline numbers and webforms being given along with instructional materials for students who face safety or food challenges while at home.

Encouraging teachers to do a simple check in during one on one time that informally assesses how students are doing and making referrals as needed.

I'll let you know if I get more information from my other colleagues.”

Listserve participants: Are you advocating for greater attention to students who are not ready in terms of their motivation and developed capabilities to benefit from at-home instructional demands?

Let us know what is happening. Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

From colleagues:

- (1) “Re: the request from NY below, I wanted to share this site from Coalition for Grieving Students that AFT helped found: <https://grievingstudents.org/>
- (2) “I saw the request for resources to talk about grief for New York. I have attached two documents that I have shared with student support staff and administrators when there is a need for staff and student reflection upon tragedies, sad events and trauma that effect the school community. Besides these two documents, I also offer the manual, Circle Forward: Building Restorative School Community, by Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015. Living Justice Press and the Institute for Restorative Initiatives (6.5, Bereavement Circle, page 151).

Here are further ideas for Circle for the Adult Community: This guide provides ideas for using the circle process to engage and strengthen relationships with the adults in the school community”

Excerpted from attachment:

Talking to students about grief

“...Talk and Listen. Find out what students' fears and concerns are and address

them as directly and calmly as possible. Reassure them that adults are there to help and to protect. Circles are ways to help students talk about their feelings and to help identify what they can do to cope. Acircle also gives adults time to look at and listen to each student, and note how they are coping.

Share any concern about non-verbal communication or extreme behavior—very quiet or very upset—to the student support staff before the end of the day....

Use your resources. School staff should remember that there are community groups and organizations that are willing and able to help you talk to children, including counselors, members of the faith community, mental health agencies, public health, and sexual assault and domestic abuse programs. Pay attention to your needs, and to the needs of the students...”

Webinars related to current situation

>*COVID-19 Podcasts and Webinars, University of MN*
<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/covid-19/podcasts-webinars>

>*COVID-19 Webinar Video for Clinicians, Johns Hopkins*
https://www.hopkinsguides.com/hopkins/view/Message_Center_-_Hopkins_Guides/2015003/all/Coronavirus_Webinar

>*Mental Health Amid the Coronavirus Pandemic*
<https://www.activeminds.org/about-mental-health/be-there/coronavirus/>

>*Upcoming and Recorded Coronavirus Webinars from Child Care*
<https://www.childcareaware.org/coronavirus/coronavirus-webinars/>

Other Online Resources

Adjusting to a New ‘Normal’ in Education

https://ednote.ecs.org/adjusting-to-a-new-normal-in-education/?utm_source=ECS+Subscribers&utm_campaign=fc60cde611-ED_CLIPS_03_30_2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1a2b00b930-fc60cde611-53599575

Language Access Resources for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians & Pacific Islanders

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScGoK4YmJR1Lz6K7684Ko6qbn77Sud1T6Hq14dCSjY8wHFu-Q/viewform>

For links to activities to pursue while schools are closed, see

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/homeactivity.pdf>

and previous special editions of the Community of Practice.

Here’s a couple more activity resources:

100 things to do while stuck inside due to a pandemic

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/health-wellness/2020/03/16/coronavirus-quarantine-100-things-do-while-trapped-inside/5054632002/>

Make Any Room a Classroom

https://www.brainpop.com/?fbclid=IwAR3yZTIEr_2UUTv23ssot_QmIxLzqwz_FqXOorey3lz0xYfiG62edPTYeg

Activity for today

Visit the Zoos: Tune in to various zoo cams

San Diego Zoo – <https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/videos>

Houston Zoo -- <https://www.houstonzoo.org/explore/webcams/>

Atlanta Zoo Pana Cam -- <https://zooatlanta.org/panda-cam/>

DEAR READER:

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.

For those who are employed by state and local education agencies and schools, we know you are busy. It would be great to share what actions you are taking to address immediate concerns and how you are anticipating the problems that will arise when schools reopen.

What should we do today?



With my school lessons and all the activities my folks have scheduled for me, I'm too exhausted to do anything but take a nap.

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>

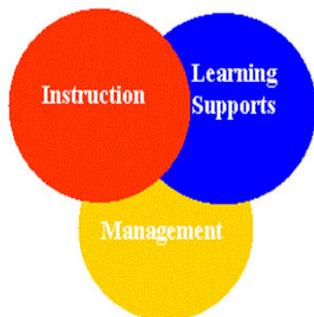
Also online are two related free books

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/>)