

School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
(7/22/20)

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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:

>>What are teachers and student support staff reporting about their experiences with distance learning/student support?

From: *2 New Surveys Find Teachers Stressed by Shutdown, Unable to Contact Students and Feeling Their Confidence Drop*

<https://www.the74million.org/2-new-surveys-find-teachers-stressed-by-shutdown-unable-to-contact-students-and-feeling-their-confidence-drop/>

"Two new surveys of teachers and school administrators confirm some of the worst fears about the switch to distance learning since the pandemic struck: The vast majority of teachers could not teach all the material they were supposed to, teacher confidence plummeted in schools without supportive working conditions, and fewer than half of teachers in high schools, high-poverty schools and schools serving a majority of children of color were able to contact their students....

One-fourth of principals surveyed said students' lack of internet access was a major problem, while 62 percent said it was a minor obstacle. One-fifth of principals said they lacked access to high-quality materials, and 30 percent said they needed training on how to support teachers during distance learning....

In elementary schools, 71 percent of teachers said they were able to contact all or nearly all of their students, versus 47.5 percent of secondary teachers. Educators were more likely to report being able to communicate with students and families in low-poverty and majority-white schools....

By far the largest need cited by teachers was strategies to keep students engaged and motivated during distance learning...

Overall, researchers found that the percentage of teachers who feel successful dropped from 96 percent to 73 percent during distance learning, but with wide variations depending on how supportive they perceived their schools to be. In schools seen as supportive, the percentage of teachers who felt successful after the shift to remote learning dropped from 99 percent to 93 percent. In unsupportive schools, it plummeted from 90 percent to 48 percent...."

A colleague shared this:

I've been a School Social Worker in an urban school setting for the past 25 years. I've consulted with my colleagues about how distance learning has been extremely challenging in light of two crises - the Covid19 pandemic coupled with the heightened social unrest after George Floyd's death. ... Our school district is very diverse. I work with students in grades 6-12. This spring our graduates had a 100% college acceptance rate. However, our school is also very unique - we are a small school with 450 students and we focus on maintaining positive relationships with our students and families.

Myself and the other school social worker in my building meet with students who receive special education services, have at least one mental health diagnosis and/or trauma background. Some of the students who work with our two school counselors have 504 plans (plans for students with mental health diagnosis, medical challenges or physical disabilities that incorporate accommodations into the classroom), and/or trauma backgrounds....some of our students and families were greatly impacted and traumatized. What students needed the *most* was consistent mental health support (i.e. weekly calls/checkins/in person visits if allowed). During distance learning, my social work colleagues felt "academics" needed to be put on the back burner because of what we heard from students and families - they had spotty hotspots (some students got hotspots weeks into distance learning, and some did not have them), parents had no job, parents worked outside the home, parents worked from home, parents did not speak English and did not have the tools to be supportive of academics/emotional challenges, students had multiple other responsibilities (child care, chores, etc), families were homeless/mobile, parents weren't able to help their children with school work or maintain schedules/routines, and students (and parents) struggled with mental health.

These are all things that have happened to students/families as a result of living through our crisis. Also, some of our students "slept in" until 2-3pm in the afternoon, played video games all day on their school iPads and "checked out" of learning - many of these things may have been signs of avoidance, mental health struggles (anxiety and depression), and exhaustion. Therefore, it was difficult to maintain "regular" contact with students and because of the different and for some, uncomfortable format (google meets/phone conversations, completing social/emotional lessons online), they clearly were unable to have the opportunity to process their feelings with school support staff, like myself. I know that unless student's mental health is addressed and supported, learning often takes a back seat.

The following behaviors were common amongst some of our students from week to week - students not logging into school, not completing work, falling behind in work, failing classes, shutting down when we did google meets, were unmotivated, did not attend google meet or office hour sessions with teachers and/or support staff. All of these "signs" communicate students may not have been doing well emotionally.

Second, our school social work staff (two of us) felt students were being given too much academic work and in some situations where students were sixth graders, EL learners, struggling with mental health, trauma and/or a disability, parents had to step in. Some parents were able to help their child(ren), and some were not. At our school students got multiple "one size fits all" assignments from eight different classes each week. While there were some cushion to lighten stress load like turning in work the week of and doing activity based lessons, it was still extremely challenging for some students to continue to find the motivation to complete work, ask for help and take the lead on their own learning (i.e. self starters).

Third, it would have been most helpful if we could have utilized more school staff in an effort to support students and families "emotionally" during this crisis. For example, our school psychologists typically have training and experience in mental health counseling. However, that's not their role in our district. Another example - teachers and other staff could have joined support staff in consistently contacting families and students to check in and learn about their basic needs - like financial, food, emotional and safety needs. If this happened, families and students may have felt more supported and could then regain balance in their lives. We could then continue to allow for space for conversations about feelings and emotions, and slowly reintegrate academic learning. Furthermore, this would massively strengthen those staff, student/family relationships.

As school social workers we are constantly reminded that unless people feel safe and cared for while basic needs are being met, they aren't able to bounce back, learn, be empowered and have the emotional strength to resume their regular day to day activities. Crisis events are defined by people experiencing the crisis. It's not ethical for anyone to define what a crisis is for others. When in the midst of a crisis, it's my belief that all normal (academic/day to day) activities be put on hold.

Invitation to Listserv Participants:

We hope you will share your experiences and suggestions as we all work in new ways to support all students, their families, colleagues, and ourselves. Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu (We will share student perspectives in a future community of practice.)

>Links to a few other relevant shared resource

District CareConnect program aims to support students – CareConnect, a program used in a Michigan school district to offer mental and behavioral health support to students, had to adjust its methods during remote instruction. CareConnect now is taking online referrals and offering support for challenges students are facing at home, rather than on campus.
<https://www.9and10news.com/2020/07/13/maps-careconnect-program-serves-students-during-covid-19/>

School reopening policy tracker – <https://equityschoolplus.jhu.edu/reopening-policy-tracker/>

Recovery for Schools and School Districts
https://rems.ed.gov/Docs/Recovery_Fact_Sheet_508C.pdf

Massachusetts Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance
<https://d279m997dpfwgl.cloudfront.net/wp/2020/06/DESE-Initial-Fall-Reopening-Guidance-vFF.pdf>

No One is the Same: Supporting Students' Mental Health as We Return to School
<https://www.weareteachers.com/mental-health-return-to-school/>

eSchool+ Initiative – Ensuring ethics and equity in the pandemic response, K-12 Tools and resources <https://equityschoolplus.jhu.edu/>

Parenting Disagreements During COVID – <https://t.e2ma.net/click/fmm6hg/r7alew/zthj1ed>

How to Help Siblings Get Along – Navigating challenges as summer goes on
<https://t.e2ma.net/click/fmm6hg/r7alew/rzkj1ed>

8 ways teachers can continue supporting students during the COVID-19 era
<https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/teachers-supporting-students>

Racism, Bias, and Discrimination Resources <https://www.apa.org/topics/racism-bias-discrimination>

Applying a racial justice lens to mental health and wellbeing
<https://soundcloud.com/user-676580582/applying-a-racial-justice-lens-to-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

Communities build strengths, assets, and resilience into their pandemic response
<https://www.preventioninstitute.org/blog/communities-build-strengths-assets-and-resilience-their-pandemic-response>

Every Moment Counts – a mental health promotion initiative developed to help all children and youth become mentally healthy in order to succeed in school, at home and in the community.
www.everymomentcounts.org

In case you missed it, the latest Quarterly eJournal is now online. See

>*Schools Re-opening: Safety Plus Enhancing Equity of Opportunity and Social Justice*

>*The Role of Schools in Promoting Whole Child Development and Learning?*

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

NEW BOOK JUST PUT ONLINE FOR FREE ACCESS

Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change

Access from the Center homepage at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>
or through the direct link provided at

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

As plans for schools to re-open progress, discussion is increasing about the mental health needs of students. Some Departments of Education have placed a high priority on the matter - even to the point of noting that attention to mental health should come first.

To make certain that planners are aware of the need not to just pursue old ways of thinking about mental health in schools, we have accelerated the time line for circulating our book on *Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*. We sent an early draft for feedback to a group that expressed interest. We have been making many changes since then. More feedback is always welcome, and appropriate changes will be made in subsequent drafts.

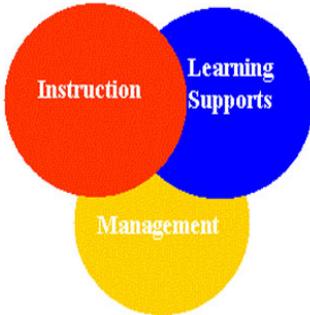
Webinars

- >A series from the National Youth League Council https://www.nylc.org/events/event_list.asp
- >*The Well-Being Series: Connections During COVID-19: Mental Wellness Webinars For Families & Educators* <https://mhccnetwork.org/centers/northwest-mhcc/well-being-series>
- >Series on Homeless Students and McKinney-Vento act
- >7/23 – *Distance Learning Up Close: Teaching for Engagement and Impact in Any Setting*
- >7/23 – *The Connected Educator: Why Collaboration Is Key in Distance, Blended, and Classroom Learning*
- >7/23 – *Childrens Cabinets: an Essential Community Infrastructure in Times of Crisis*
- >7/24 – *COVID-19 and Historical Trauma: Navigating Collective Emotional and Individual Responses for American Indians and Other Oppressed Populations*
- >7/28 – *Minimizing Risk for Conflict/Coercion in Families with School-age Children*
- >7/30 – *Safety matters: Helping families affected by substance use disorders and domestic violence*
- >8/11 – *When the Monsters Live with Us: Structural Inequities, COVID-19, and Intimate Partner Violence in Latin American Families* (in Spanish)
Cuando los Monstruos Viven con Nosotros: Reflexiones sobre el Impacto de la Intersección de las Inequidades Estructurales, el COVID-19 y la Violencia de Pareja en los Niños Pequeños en Familias Latinoamericanas
- >8/18 – *Determining Eligibility for Mckinney-vento Rights and Services*
- >8/19 – *Addressing Environmental Challenges through Service-Learning: Could Large-Scale Tutoring Address COVID-Related Learning Loss?* (Podcast)
- >8/19 – *Addressing Environmental Challenges through Service-Learning*
- >9/17 – *Meeting the needs of adolescent youth*

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>
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

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.

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 as schools reopen.

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/>)