

School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
(12/8/21)

Contents

- >About Expanding the Roles of Paraprofessionals During Staff Shortages
- >What are school staff saying about mental health resources and practices in their school?
- >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**

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:

>About Expanding the Roles of Paraprofessionals During Staff Shortages

School staffing disruptions have been among the many problems caused by the pandemic. Teacher shortages have resulted in calling on others to help cover the needs in classrooms and around the school. Here's an example related to paraprofessionals. *What do you think about such an expanded role for paraprofessionals?* Send comments for sharing to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Although paraprofessionals traditionally served as teacher assistants or classroom aides assigned to organizing learning materials and assisting in lesson set-up and clean-up, their role has shifted in light of teacher shortages.... Instead of working in the background of the classroom, paraprofessionals now work cooperatively with teachers to complete daily classroom activities. In elementary schools, it is common for paraprofessionals to support academic instruction and behavior management in individual, small group, and whole-class settings....

...parents and teachers often see paraprofessionals as essential in meeting student academic and behavioral needs in the classroom. Further, many parents accept and view the paraprofessional as an important team member who in some cases serves as a daily or weekly communication liaison between home and school... Although paraprofessionals have many support roles for students in the classroom, including home-school connector, instructor, or physical health support ..., they are most often charged with managing student engagement and behavior difficulties...

Despite the role of managing classroom behavior, paraprofessionals report limited knowledge of classroom standards and common behavior management practices in elementary school. Without sufficient training and support, paraprofessionals will utilize less effective strategies to foster learning and behaviors. For example, ... paraprofessionals are more likely to engage in reactive, consequent control strategies (e.g., reprimands, time outs) than proactive behavior management strategies (i.e., antecedent modifications, behavior praise). Research-based PD approaches are needed to further paraprofessional knowledge and behavior support skills for students with disruptive behaviors in classroom settings..."

From: *A mixed-method study of paraprofessional roles, professional development, and needs for training in elementary schools*
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pits.22589>

Center Comments: Given that this is happening, it is imperative to provide them with continuing educational development. This is another area where student/learning support staff can be called upon to help.

Here are some capacity building resource aids:

- >Title 1 non-regulatory guidance for paraprofessionals
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/paraguidance.pdf>
- >National Resource Center for Paraeducators <http://www.nrpara.org/>
- >A Guide to Schoolwide Planning for Paraeducator Supports
<http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/downloads/guide.pdf>
- >Paraeducator Resource and Learning Center
<http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/downloads/guide.pdf>
- >National Clearinghouse for Paraeducator Resources
<http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html>
- >Maximize paraprofessional services <http://www.ldonline.org/article/6184/>
- >Guidelines for training and support of paraprofessionals –
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/cali/guidelines_paraprofessionals.pdf
- >Best practices in utilizing special education assistants
http://isminc.com/pdf/research-free/general/2937_best-practices-in-utilizing-special-education-assistant

For discussion and interchange:

>What are school staff saying about MH resources and practices in their school?

From: *Educator perspectives on mental health resources and practices in their school*
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pits.22582>

Themes from the interviews that emerged ... fell into four categories:

- (1) Staff roles and knowledge impact their perspectives on and understanding of student mental health;
- (2) The school has limited mental health resources to meet student and staff needs;
- (3) Home and school environments affect student mental health; and
- (4) School staff express desire for additional support and training....

Within the theme *Staff roles and knowledge impact their perspectives on and understanding of student mental health*, the lack of consensus when defining and identifying student mental health issues reveals there is no consistent or universal language or training at any level within the school. This may have emerged because the varying roles within the school system may result in different interactions and relationships with students. Some staff conceptualized mental health needs as related to child welfare such as providing food, clothing, and wellness exams at the school. ...

The themes *school staff express desire for additional support and training* and *the school has limited mental health resources to meet student and staff needs* highlight the necessity and eagerness of teachers and staff to help their students to not only succeed academically but mentally and emotionally as well. Responses within this theme...emphasize the importance of mental health training and support. Like several general and special education teachers in our sample, teachers report they do not have adequate levels of knowledge to support the mental health needs of students.... Furthermore, because resources in schools are limited, we call upon teacher education programs to incorporate mental health content into the curriculum of preservice educators to provide them with the foundation needed before entering the workforce....

Within the theme *Home and school environments affect student mental health*, many educators shared sentiments regarding the impact the positive school climate has on student mental health. The school climate was described as one of caring and support from the teachers and administration.... In our sample, school personnel noted how supported they felt by the administration within the school and also how administrators attempt to provide support to students with mental health needs. ...

While the positive climate is a clear strength of the school, there are factors perceived to be

outside one's control that may act as a barrier to providing support to children in need. Several educators noted large classes and overall school size may make it difficult for teachers to identify every student who may be at risk for mental health concerns. Many participants expressed that while they do the best they can, they are sometimes "wearing too many hats" and simply do not have the time or resources available....

Finally, some staff discussed students whose mental health concerns are related to familial mental health or unstable home lives. When conceptualizing this theme, we feel it is important to note the need to take a strengths-based perspective with students and families. School staff should seek to understand the perspectives of families in relation to their beliefs about mental health. For instance, many families may be reluctant to share information related to a student's mental health because of the stigma associated with doing so....

Adopting a strengths-based perspective to family engagement focusing on collaboration, positive reframing, respect, and empowerment, helps students develop skills and knowledge to succeed, feel valued and have a sense of purpose Furthermore, the strengths-based perspective may help to close the communication gap between families and the school By treating parents and caregivers with respect and care, along with recognizing them as valuable assets and allies in their children's education, families may be more willing to participate in school-based activities and communicate regularly with school staff and teachers...."

Is this topic being discussed in your locale?

How are teachers being supported as they deal with the above concerns?

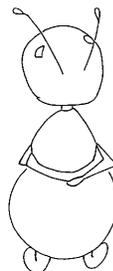
Please let us know so we can share the info widely. Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

NOTE: Our Center emphasizes the opportunity to start now to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students. The aim is to develop a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable Student/Learning Support System that fully embeds mental health concerns. See Part III: "New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching" in *Improving School Improvement* at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

For more on improving student/learning supports, see the ***National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports*** <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html>



Portland riot?



No ... a school board meeting!



(Adapted from Dana Summers' work)

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

Parent Participation in Early Intervention/Prevention Services: The Case for Flexible Paraprofessional-led Services
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15374416.2019.1689823>

Racism and Poverty are Barriers to the Treatment of Youth Mental Health Concerns
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15374416.2021.1941058>

Leaders in the Tumult: Schooling Innovations and New Perspectives From a Year Interrupted
<https://www.naesp.org/lwnn-leaders-in-tumult/>

Leaders of Tomorrow: Immigrant & Refugee Youth - A Guidebook on Leadership Development
https://iel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Guidebook-Final_accessible-version.pdf

From Producing to Reducing Trauma: A Call for “Trauma-Informed” Research(ers) to Interrogate How Schools Harm Students
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.3102/0013189X211014850>

20 Years of Data Shows What Works for LGBTQ Students
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/20-years-data-shows-what-works-lgbtq-students>

Why Schools Can’t Talk About Family Engagement Without Talking About Race
<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2021-11-17-why-schools-can-t-talk-about-family-engagement-without-talking-about-race>

Social and Emotional Climate and Learning <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sec.htm>

How Families Can Support Social and Emotional Climate and Learning
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sec/sec_families.htm

Toolkit for Schools: Engaging Parents and Families to Support Social and Emotional Climate and Learning https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sec/sec_toolkit.htm

Social-Emotional Learning and the Perils of Teaching as Therapy
<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-sel-and-the-perils-of-teaching-as-therapy/2021/11>

Violence, Hate Crimes in Schools Surged in Pre-COVID Period, Federal Watchdog Finds
<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/violence-hate-crimes-in-schools-surged-in-pre-covid-period-federal-watchdog-finds/2021/11>

Supporting the well-being of educators and students
<https://oraus.gov/HSC/SHB/healthy-schools-toolkit/index.html>

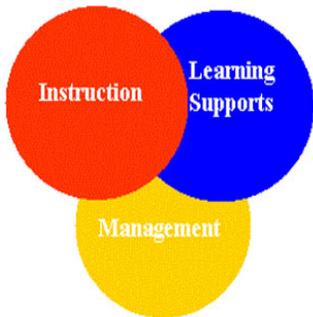
For more, see the Center’s Quick Find Menu at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm>. The menu encompasses over 130 topics. Each topic offers a fast and convenient way to access links to selected materials from our Center and others and to related agencies and websites. Here is a sample of the topics:

- >Volunteers in Schools
- >Peer Tutoring
- >Attendance
- >Crisis Prevention and Response
- >Psychological First Aid
- >Stress and Anxiety
- >Resilience/Protective Factors
- >Grief and Bereavement
- >Accommodations/Inclusion
- >Professional Development Resources Prepared by the Center
- >School and Community Collaboration

A Few Upcoming Webinars

For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

- 12/8 Navigating the Ins and Outs of Community Resources
 - 12/8 Learning Heroes Parents 2021
 - 12/9 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility
 - 12/9 Community Violence Intervention? Addressing Gangs: Essential Partnerships for Leading a Community-Based Response
 - 12/9 Building Better Blended Learning in K-12 Schools
 - 12/9 Making the case for out of school time
 - 12/15 McKinney-Vento School Selection Rights
 - 12/15 Tackling the Motivation Crisis
 - 12/15 Empowering assistant principals to lead learning communities
 - 12/16 Co-Creating Leadership Development Opportunities for Immigrant & Refugee Youth
 - 12/16 Preventing youth hate crimes in schools and communities
 - 12/16 The ABCs of the IEP: Making the Individualized Education Program work for your child
 - 12/16 Creating a Safe School and Community Environment for Youth, Part 1: Strategies and Solutions
 - 12/16 Effectively Implementing an Evidence-Based Practice
 - 1/11 McKinney-Vento 101: Basic Requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act
 - 1/13 Assessing Equity in Your Student Activities
- Webinar recording: Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on Youth
<https://preventioninstitute.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4bf5a36bd9f72789255d49a&id=17f472fea9&e=b6757fd9d7>



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.

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/>)**