

School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
(2/23/22)

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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>

For discussion and interchange:

>What about using mental health paraprofessionals in schools?

Request from a colleague:

I would like to hear perspectives regarding mental health paraprofessionals. I am on an inter-agency committee that is exploring issues [related to addressing the multiple challenges in schools today], and I am afraid there may be a rush to piece-meal an approach.

If you have a perspective paraprofessionals, please let us know so we can share the info widely.

Send to ltaylor@ucla.edu

Center Perspective:

The need for a well-embedded focus on mental health in schools has been widely supported, especially in light of the pandemic and the heightened concerns about social injustices. We regularly hear from teachers and student/learning support staff that they feel overwhelmed by the increase in the number of students experiencing emotional, learning, and behavior problems.

The first impulse is to think about adding more mental health resources (e.g., staff). But, the nature and scope of need underscores how essential it is to move from a narrow focus on enhancing “school mental health” to embedding mental health concerns into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports. Such a system involves transforming how schools play a key role in addressing barriers to learning and teaching and reengaging disconnected students and families. It encompasses a continuum ranging from positive mental health prevention/promotion through interventions for individuals. Properly trained and supervised paraprofessionals can play a useful role in such a system.

Here is what some researchers have noted about the roles that paraprofessional play:

1. From: *A qualitative study to explore paraprofessionals' role in school-based prevention and early intervention mental health services*
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jcop.22120>

“...Paraprofessional workforces offer a promising means through which to address the many barriers and disparities in mental health service use for ethnic minority youth and families in poverty. The paraprofessional role can refer to a variety of titles (e.g., community health workers, family advocates, family resource developers, school liaisons) that all share the characteristics of workforce members who generally do not have formal professional or advanced educational training in health and/or human services but have some degree of specific training, such as promoting access to health information and resources and/or helping clients navigate a service system. Paraprofessionals are often, but not always, members of the same community of the population they serve, enabling them to better engage clients in services. Indeed paraprofessionals' positionality as a near peer to the population they serve has been shown to be a prominent feature of how paraprofessionals engage clients in services. Given that paraprofessionals require less specialized professional training, they can also expand access to services by increasing service workforce capacity....”

2. From: *Dissemination Science in School Mental Health: A Framework for Future Research*
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12310-021-09446-6>

“... School Mental Health Professionals and Front Line Providers are the individuals within school buildings who interface with children and are in the position to adopt and deliver specific mental health services. This group consists of individuals with formal training in health (e.g., school nurses) or mental health (e.g., school social workers, counselors, and psychologists), as well as individuals without such training (e.g., teachers or paraprofessionals) who are expected to implement evidence based practices (e.g., universal social-emotional curricula and classroom management strategies).”

3. From: *Strengthening and Expanding Child Services in Low Resource Communities: The Role of Task-Shifting and Just-in-Time Training*
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ajcp.12314>

“... Until mental and behavioral healthcare infrastructure undergoes significant structural and economic changes, the public should not expect the supply for mental health prevention and intervention services to meet the demand. We suggest that, in conjunction with continued advocacy efforts to increase the number of skilled mental health workers and access to their care, systematic and thoughtful integration of task-shifting and just in time training may help alleviate some of this burden. We highlight a proof of concept example that involves shifting school counseling support services to paraprofessional volunteer mentors in the context of a time-limited mentoring program for middle school students in low resource urban environments....”

Implicit in the definition of task-shifting is the notion that practices which might routinely be provided by professionals are shifted (i.e., delegated) to someone else. This raises questions about the roles of the professional whose tasks have been shifted and the paraprofessional to whom tasks are being shifted. Given that the system within which task-shifting occurs retains responsibility for the integrity and quality of the service, the professional typically becomes the supervisor to the paraprofessional. Supervisors play a key role in the delivery of high-quality services.”

4. From: *Paraprofessional Youth Mentoring: A Framework for Integrating Youth Mentoring with Helping Institutions and Professions*
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ajcp.12546>

“The demand for child mental health services, including those provided by psychologists, counselors, and social workers, exceeds the supply. This trend is expected to continue or worsen unless there are substantial structural changes in how mental health services are provided. We propose a framework for paraprofessional youth mentors, defined as a subgroup of professionally supervised, non-expert volunteer or paid mentors to whom aspects of professional helping tasks are delegated. Our proposal is aligned with historical and modern solutions to scaling mental health services, and this framework could simultaneously increase the number of youth receiving evidence-based mental health services and reduce the burden on existing systems of care....”

Excerpt from New GOA Report:

***School Districts in Socially Vulnerable Communities
Faced Heightened Challenges after Recent Natural Disasters***

<https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-104606.pdf>

While this report cites findings from natural disasters (hurricanes, wildfires, flooding, etc.), many of the findings are useful for understanding the impact of the pandemic.

“... Research shows that socially vulnerable groups—including children who are low income, minorities, English learners, or living with disabilities—are particularly susceptible to the adverse effects of disasters....

Officials from five selected school districts in socially vulnerable communities described heightened challenges recovering from recent natural disasters. These challenges generally fell into four areas of recovery: emotional, academic, financial, and physical. For instance, officials said the disasters caused significant emotional trauma to students due to stressors including extended housing instability, food insecurity, parental job loss, and social disconnection. To address these needs, districts worked to obtain additional mental health and support services. But officials cited frequent challenges in doing so. For instance, officials in two rural districts said their communities lacked sufficient qualified mental health providers....

Officials said that emotionally, the disasters caused significant trauma to students, and accessing necessary services was difficult. Academic recovery generally could not take place until students and staff had begun their emotional recovery. Financial recoveries were often incomplete, requiring significant administrative effort. Finally, officials explained that physical recovery was still ongoing in most cases, and required use of improvised facilities that disrupted the learning process....

In the aftermath of a disaster, students can struggle with a number of stressors, including the loss of their home and belongings, extended housing instability, food insecurity, a parent’s job loss, and disconnection from their social networks....”

Listserv Participants: What does the response look like at your local schools and community for coping with the ongoing public health crisis? Ltaylor@ucla.edu

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

Overdiagnosis of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in Children and Adolescents
Systematic Scoping Review

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2778451>

Building student resilience

<https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/covid-19/building-student-resilience>

Addressing Chronic Absenteeism in Schools: A Meta-Analysis of Evidence-Based Interventions

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2372966X.2020.1789436>

What are social determinants of health? <https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/about.html>

National Guidelines for Behavioral Health Crisis Care, Best Practice Toolkit

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/national-guidelines-for-behavioral-health-crisis-care-02242020.pdf>

Creating Safe, Equitable, Engaging Schools: A Comprehensive, Evidence-Based Approach to Supporting Students

<https://www.air.org/resource/spotlight/creating-safe-equitable-engaging-schools-comprehensive-evidence-based-approach>

Fall 2021 COVID-19 Survey Results

<https://www.americanschooldistrictpanel.org/survey-results/2021-fall.html>

- RAND Survey: Enrollment decline, mental health top school leaders' concerns
<https://www.k12dive.com/news/enrollment-decline-mental-health-top-school-leaders-concerns/618651/>
- Guide: Helping Children Cope After a Traumatic Event
https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-after-a-traumatic-event/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=publ_ed_nl_2022-02-15&utm_content=cta6_helping-children-cope-after-a-traumatic-event
- 5 Edtech Opportunities That Will Emerge In 2022
<https://www.eschoolnews.com/2022/02/10/5-edtech-opportunities-that-will-emerge-in-2022/>
- Resources for Students With Eating Disorders
<https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/student-resources-eating-disorders/>
- HopefulFutures.us: America's School Mental Health Report Card.
https://hopefulfutures.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Final_Master_021522.pdf
- An Applied Research Agenda on Black Children and Families to Advance Practices and Policies That Promote Their Well-being
<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/an-applied-research-agenda-on-black-children-and-families-to-advance-practices-and-policies-that-promote-their-well-being>
- Has Inclusion Gone Too Far?
<https://www.educationnext.org/has-inclusion-gone-too-far-weighing-effects-students-with-disabilities-peers-teachers/>
- Disentangling the individual and contextual effects of math anxiety: A global perspective
<https://www.pnas.org/content/119/7/e2115855119>

A Few Upcoming Webinars

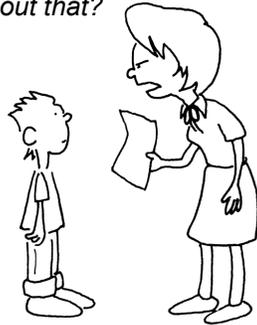
For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

- 2/28 Role of Families and Parents in Supporting School Safety
- 3/8 McKinney-Vento School Selection Rights
- 3/30 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility
- 3/2 National Summit on Youth Homelessness
- 3/8 Warmth and Support and Balanced Instruction
- 3/9 Navigating the new normal
- 3/10 Cultivating Compassionate School Communities
- 3/10 First Semester Attendance Data: How State and Local Education Agencies Can Respond
- 3/15 School Avoidance and Challenging Behaviors: The Role of Special Education and Section 504
- 3/15 Essential Tools for Effective Home visits
- 3/16 Equity, Race, Gender and the Assistant Principal
- 3/30 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility

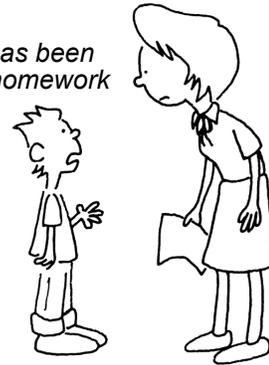
Series On: **Building a National Movement to Prevent Trauma and Foster Resilience**
https://psu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN__AYYzYIOT4yXthIOdDLBVw

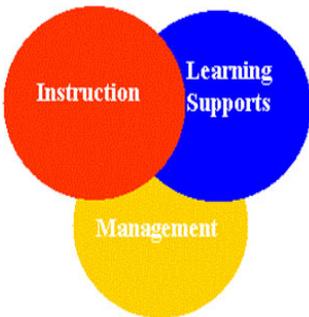
- ~~1/21: Building the Movement in the Education and Health Care~~
- ~~2/4: Building the Movement with Child Welfare and Justice Systems~~
- ~~2/18: Building the Movement through Transformative Justice and Faith-Based Communities~~
- 3/4: Building the Movement with Populations with High Prevalence of Trauma
- 3/18: Building the Movement with Foundations and the Private Sector
- 4/1: Building the Movement to Address Global Crises
- 4/15: Building the Movement through Policy and Advocacy

Your mom said that she never saw this report
I sent her about your work.
What do you know about that?



Gee, I guess the dog has been eating more than my homework





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/>)