

**Featured**

**>A school's socialization agenda can produce problems for families**

**>Youth share recommendations about supporting their MH needs**

**>Links to a few other relevant shared resources**

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**For discussion and interchange:**

**>A school's socialization agenda can produce problems for families**

**Concern raised by a colleague:**

"I work as a case manager at a local community based organization that mostly serves Korean immigrants. I facilitate a parenting workshop ("Parenting with Empathy and Respect"), and some parents have shared that they have to compromise their relationships with their kids to accommodate the school's demands (which are not always developmentally appropriate and mostly based on behaviorism). This brings about more conflicts between parents and children, diminishes the intrinsic motivation of children, and leads to school rejection. Then, the school imposes more intense behavior controls, and you know how this goes. This is happening in elementary school, where students' positive school experiences matter more than lit/math scores

I'm not trying to divide teachers and parents. However, I think a lot of parents – especially the ones in underserved/marginalized groups – lack resources. In that sense, I would like to help them feel better and prevent them from impairing their relationships with their children to follow the schools' behavior control strategies (behavior chart, punishment, consequences, and etc.)."

**Comments from the Field:**

Here are some thoughts about this from colleagues:

1. "I directed a member of our staff to take the next 6 months to appropriate behavior strategies into the our local culture and create a teacher manual that will help consider culture when using behavior strategies. This is all early research and frustrating for both families and teachers.

At the end of the day, we need families and teachers to work together. Parents cannot abdicate to the schools, they need to be involved with other parents and use their influence to teach what works. That is the key "what works" for the child. If behavior techniques do not work, the teacher should be reviewing the data and adjusting the interventions to be sure they work. All with a foundation of a good relationship with the child. If the parents do things at home that work that the teacher can learn from, it needs to be communicated to the school team. Much of this is contingent on the foundation of good relationship with families, teachers, students and school teams.

Overall we need to be realistic about what our public schools offer students. It would be nice to reimagine education (that may take a miracle) or put our students in private schools (not all can afford) or home school (hard for many) if we have differing opinions about educating our children. If we cannot do that, then we need to collaborate with the school staff who work with our students each day and work on a solution that may take a few months to see success. It's being in the long game, not a quick fix."

2. "There are a lot of unknowns in this but it sounds like these parents need an advocate. At a minimum, I would encourage this case manager to contact and meet with the principal to explain what s/he is generally hearing from parents. The manager should ask about the school's behavioristic approach to get details about what is intended and not get information third hand (through teachers or students to parents to the manager). School administration may need to ensure that practices are being used as intended and not overused or misused by some staff to the detriment of these families.

I'm guessing that if you dig deep enough, you can get to the values at heart of this behaviorist approach. It is possible that some of those values will likely match values of the parents as

well. (Ex. Well run classrooms so students aren't distracted by misbehavior.) From there, I would hope that a 'happy medium' could be negotiated that meets the needs of both classroom teachers and parents of these students with a different cultural background.

Ideally, this manager may consult with or possibly include someone in this discussion who has mediation experience. I don't know whether this is a national practice, but there may be professionals in the area who mediate special education issues between families and the school. Perhaps a mediator could counsel or even assist the manager with this discussion. If there are behavioral problems with students, perhaps they may be considered for special education support services at some point. One of these mediation experts would be familiar with the process and be able to offer helpful advice.

As a starting point, the manager may wish to scan through this document:

<https://www.advocacyinstitute.org/resources/Preparing.for.SpEd.Mediation.Resolution.Sessions.pdf>

There is also a video for parents about special education mediation at:

<https://www.cadeworks.org/resources/cadre-materials/idea-dispute-resolution-parent-guides/mediation>”

3. “In my personal experience, I've reached the conclusion that many parents are hesitate to negotiate with public schools. The school agency and its buildings are often large, imposing, difficult to navigate. The educational terms and initialisms don't communicate well. Schools are overworked and under-staffed to the point that almost all flexibility has dissolved away. In dealing with other cultures, school staff may have difficulty adjusting to the needs of students that don't match their assumptions about schooling....

This school is lucky to have a case manager to assist the Korean immigrants. But that person is probably only one voice in a discussion containing a half dozen to a dozen other school employees? It seems to me that a well-trained, experienced Korean advocate needs to be at school problem-solving meetings to explain how procedures that make sense to Western educators might not be so effective with students raised in the Korean culture. If there are any ill-feelings, then any ire hopefully can be directed to and absorbed by the advocate.

The advocate may have access to additional services and service providers. There may be funds available from sources unknown to the school system. I'm hoping the agency providing the case manager might have a list of advocates who understand both Korean cultural need and United States educational law. If not, we might need two advocates.

I've known schools that were so attached to their behavior management plan that they could not see how it systematically escalated students to major blow-ups. People who tried to explain this to them were dismissed as not understanding. In such a case, we need to search for Plan B.

I've had more luck with small, private schools being able to accommodate individual differences smoothly. But, those can be pricey. Oddly enough, sometimes the key difference between the public and the private school was the importance of kindness over obedience in the values structure of the agencies. Nowadays, we all could use a little more kindness.”

From: *Parents' Perceptions of Culturally Responsive Teacher Practices and Elementary Children's Mental Health and Well-being*

“...culturally responsive teachers create inclusive and safe educational spaces, build strong parent-school alliances, provide accommodations for and acknowledgments of religious and cultural holidays, integrate accurate and comprehensive cultural information into the curriculum, and ensure equitable access to educational opportunities and resources....

Providing an avenue for caregivers to voice their needs and perceptions is a critical asset in our understanding and implementation of effective culturally responsive practices in elementary schools....

Culturally responsive practices are positively related to middle and high school students' school belonging, school connectedness and interest, student-teacher relationships, perceptions of equity, and attitudes towards teachers....

The quality and climate of the school environment are significant contributors to children's mental health and well-being. Positive and culturally responsive school environments can help enhance children's mental health and well-being....”

For more on concerns related to teacher and families working together, see

- >[\*Parent/Home Involvement and Engagement in Schools\*](#)
- >[\*Engaging the Strengths of Families, Youth, and Communities in Rebuilding Learning Supports\*](#)
- >[\*Home Involvement in Schooling: A Self-Study Survey\*](#)
- >[\*Cultural Competence and Related Issues\*](#)

### Center Comment

*We often have to remind folks that one major reason for compulsory education is that society wants schools to play a role in socializing the young. Every school has a socialization agenda, and the agenda and the practices for achieving it often raise concerns and conflicts.*

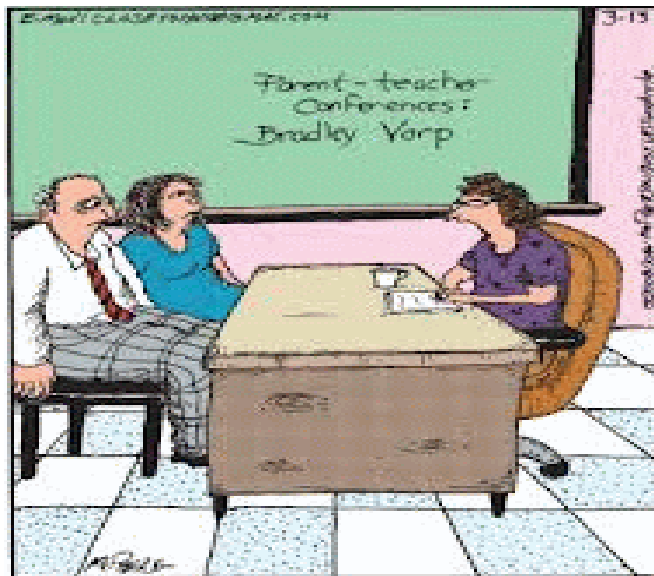
Conflicts frequently arise over which practices best serve individual students while also meeting society's expectations. In particular, conflicts arise over how to ensure students and families conform to school demands and rules and how best to address interfering factors. In this context, it is not uncommon for efforts to control specific behaviors to take precedence over understanding why a student may be having problems and providing students and their families with essential help (e.g., implementing special accommodations and assistance for addressing learning, behavior, and emotional problems). For more on this, see [\*Helping and Socialization\*](#).

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**What are your experiences and thoughts about how schools can best balance helping and socialization and reduce conflicts?**

Send to [ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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"Before we discuss some of Bradley's issues, the superintendent is willing to offer you \$25,000 to move out of the district."

## **Youth Share Recommendations about Supporting Their Mental Health Needs**

From **PACERS' MH Youth Advisory Board**

We encourage schools and community organizations to add regular activities throughout their events, school day, and year dedicated to fostering inclusion, kindness, and support and promoting mental health and wellness.

Here are a few ideas:

- Start a wellness club: Create a club where peers can connect, build relationships, and learn new strategies for taking care of themselves and each other.
- Get creative: Share and practice a calming strategy over morning announcements, during lunch, or other assemblies.
- Suggestion box: Ask students to share what works for them or what supports they would like to have in school.
- Post it walls: Have sticky notes available with different mental health related themes and ask students to participate in completing sentences like: "It's okay...", "I feel...", "What gives me hope...."
- School Public Service Announcement (PSA) competitions: Host a fun and positive competition around creating unifying messages each year, such as "Stand Together," "You are not alone," etc.
- Host a wellness fair: The fair should offer opportunities for mental health focused community-based organizations to participate and include student-led activities, games, skits, etc.
- Host educational events: These events can educate students, staff, and parents about mental health and wellness.
- Presentations: Invite theater groups, authors, artists, and other professionals to present to and engage students, staff, and families using stories, art, and coping strategies (such as guided mindfulness) to address mental health needs and support wellness.
- Add more wellness education to your school's curriculum: This can include reading books with themes that address mental health and wellness...."

### **>Links to a few other relevant shared resources**

**Beyond Psychotherapy and Medication: Wellness, Well-being and Fun Interventions Should be Part of Robust Systems of Care for Youth and Young Adults**

**Enhancing School and Community Collaboration Chapter 14 in *Improving School Improvement***

**Evolving Community Schools and Transforming Student/Learning Supports**

**School mental health toolkit**

**Bullying and ostracism in youth with and without ADHD: implications for risk and resilience**

**Stress among Korean Immigrant Parents of Children with Diagnosed Needs Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Immigrant Parents' Involvement in American Schools: Perspectives from Korean Mothers**

**How School Discipline Impacts Students' Social, Emotional and, Academic Development**  
**Special Education Is Getting More Expensive, Forcing Schools to Make Cuts Elsewhere**  
**CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) Results**  
**State-level Data for Understanding Child Welfare in the United States**  
**Using Intersectionality to Promote Youth Development**  
**Belonging in Schools: A Social Psychological Perspective**

### **A Few Upcoming Webinars**

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

- 5/10 Relationships All Year Round
- 5/10 Leverage Social Capital to Create Equitable, Inclusive Learning Environments
- 5/10 Paving the way to college
- 5/17 Working Towards Positive Educational Outcomes: Mental Health and Special Education
- 5/18 Lived experience: why it is important
- 5/24 Culturally responsive practice
- 5/23 Understanding doubled up
- 6/6 Afterschool learning: academics or fun?
- 6/6 Wellness strategies
- 6/8 Effective psychotherapy
- 6/23 Youth mental health
- 6/28 Peer support

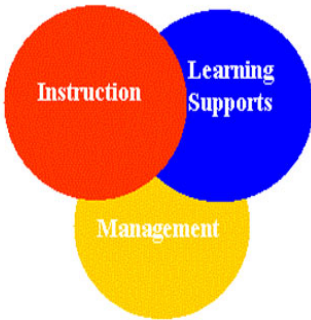
### **To Listserv Participants**

- **Please share this resource with others.** (Everyone has a stake in the future of public education and this is a critical time for action.)
- **Let us know what's going on** to improve how schools address barriers to learning & teaching and reengage disconnected students and families. (We can share the info with the over 130,000 on our listserv.)
- **For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**
- **Looking for information?** (We usually can help.)
- **Have a suggestion for improving our efforts?** (We welcome your feedback.)

***We look forward to hearing from you!***

Send to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)

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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.

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**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND  
INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!**

**For new sign-ups – email [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto: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/> )**