Featured

>*Is behavior management co-opting SEL?*

>*What happens when a student stands up for a bullied peer?*

>*Peer to Peer support for teen mental health*

>*Links to a few other relevant shared resources*

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For discussion and interchange:
>*Is behavior management co-opting SEL?*

As we focus on the ways school's are addressing the growing discipline problem (see https://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/4-27-23.pdf), we are concerned that the emphasis on behavior control is undermining how schools understand SEL and the effect schools are having on social and emotional development. See, for example, the following excerpt from an EdWeek article:

When It Comes to SEL, Administrators and Teachers See Things Differently

When it comes to how well schools are addressing students' social and emotional challenges, administrators and teachers might as well be on different planets.

There is a yawning gap between administrators and teachers in how thoroughly they think behavior management programs—such as social-emotional learning (SEL) and positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS)—are being implemented in their schools....

Too often, administrators are not providing teachers with the support they need to properly implement the SEL and PBIS programs that districts invest in, the report said, describing many districts as being "program rich, but impact poor."

Barriers—from a lack of training for teachers on how to implement behavior management strategies and programs, to teachers feeling like they are under pressure to catch students up academically and don't have the time to address social and emotional issues— are foiling schools' ability to address this problem head-on....

School districts are "program rich, but impact poor" as districts often focus on the latest flashy tools or approaches rather than training teachers on existing tools or approaches and giving them strategies on how to properly implement them.

Administrators and teachers have very different views on how behavior management strategies are actually getting implemented in their schools. Administrators are much more likely than teachers to say their district has clear behavior management strategies, that teachers use PBIS and SEL, and that the district provides training on these things. ...

In one district, the report noted, more than 30 administrators said that they use PBIS and SEL. But none of the teachers said they use either strategy....

There is also a large gap between administrators and teachers on how much training districts are providing on behavior management. In districts that use SEL, 71 percent of administrators said that they or their districts' teachers have been trained on SEL while only 37 percent of teachers and staff said they had been trained...."

We shudder to think that Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is being seen mainly as a way to manage behavior. As we have stressed in our work, SEL is part of both the instructional and learning supports components at schools. The need is to embed the growing emphasis on SEL into the school's focus on both promoting positive development and addressing barriers to learning and teaching. From this perspective, SEL can be (a) part of the regular curricula, (b) part of efforts to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students, and (c) pursued as part of natural opportunities throughout the school day to facilitate development and respond to problems.

Here are some matters to think about as schools wrestle with the challenges of pursuing an agenda related to Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

(1) Keep the big picture in mind: The aim is to continuously promote positive social emotional development - not just manage behavior by teaching a limited set of social skills.

(2) Identify places in existing curricula for embedding social emotional learning.

(3) Map natural opportunities for promoting and supporting social emotional development at school.

(4) Stress ways to improve how the school staff models social and emotional functioning every day.

(5) Ensure that students have many opportunities and support to connect and build strong relationships with positive peers and adults at school.

(6) Also transform how the school staff responds to students' learning, behavior, and emotional problems to ensure that the responses enhance positive social and emotional development and school climate.

See:
>*About Promoting Social Emotional Development at School: "Kernels" and Natural Opportunities*

> *Natural Opportunities to Promote Social -Emotional Learning and MH*

For more, see the Center's Quick Find on *Social and emotional development*

What happens when a student stands up for a bullied peer?

Bullying continues to be a major concern for schools. A considerable literature has focused on perpetrators and victims; less attention has been given to the effects created by and on observers.

From: *Does defending victimized peers put youth at risk of being victimized?*

"To reduce school bullying, which is a serious problem that impacts youth's mental and physical health, many intervention efforts focus on empowering peer bystanders to defend victimized peers. Defending refers to behavior that supports a victimized peer, either directly by attempting to stop the bullying or indirectly by offering emotional support to the victim to aid their recovery.   Studies indicate that bystanders' defending of victimized peers may be associated with reduced levels of bullying in the peer group, as well as lower concurrent levels of negative adjustment for victimized youth. Research has also shown that defending can lead to increased popularity, an indicator of how well-known, socially central, and emulated youth are among peers. Yet, few adolescents consistently defend others, presumably out of fear of becoming victimized themselves.

Defending is widely described as a 'risky behavior' in research on the topic and has been found to be concurrently associated with higher rates of victimization..... The main effect of defending on concurrent levels of victimization was negative for peer-reported victimization and non-significant for self-reported victimization. Therefore, defending itself was not associated with higher levels of victimization. Instead, youth with a reputation for defending were less likely to also have a reputation among their peers as a victim. This supports the idea that defending can signal to classmates that youth are assertive and willing to stand up to bullies, which could protect them from being victimized....

In classrooms with high levels of bullying, defending others likely signals to peers that an individual is assertive and capable of standing up for themselves, and therefore defenders are unlikely to also have a reputation as a victim...."

For more on bullying, see

>*Conceptualizing Help for Students Victimized by Bullies*
>*How Important are Bystanders' Interventions in Bullying?*

Peer mentors have been described as knowledgeable guides for new students, facilitators providing access to people and resources, role models and advocates. They support transitions and help mentees navigate daily challenges. Peer mentors often are matched with students seen as "at-risk" (e.g., those from low socioeconomic status, new to the country immigrants, students for whom English is a second language, students manifesting learning and behavior problems).

Peer mentorships also have the potential benefit of generating a double impact (i.e., both mentors and mentees can benefit). While research is limited, positive results are reported for cross-age mentoring. Examples for mentees are feelings of connectedness to school, competency, grades, prosocial behaviors and attitudes, and self-efficacy. Positive results reported for mentors include enhanced personal and interpersonal skills and connectedness to school, increased confidence, self-esteem, empathy and moral reasoning, intrapersonal communication and conflict resolution skills, and relationships with parents.

About *Youth Supporting Youth* – by Nghia Do, California Childrens Trust Youth Advisory Board Member, after participating at the National Governors Assoc. conference

"... presenting to all of the country's governors was truly something I'll never forget. My panel was titled *Increasing Awareness around Youth Mental Health*. I was joined by experts... The difference between me and them? While they're all talented experts, I'm the only one who could uncontroversially be called "youth". So my job was to bring data and personal context to the youth mental health crisis, and discuss the "must-do" actions to center youth in the solution.

I wanted to share a few key points from my presentation with the wider community to give a better understanding of where I'm coming from.

Youth are not the problem. We see lots of bad news every day about problems facing youth, but the reality is that, as I've seen in my own non-profit, youth are actually the solution to the mental health crisis. Through peer-to-peer support, we're able to grab hold of our own destinies.

Peer-to-peer is a life-long calling. Every day we hear more and more that healthcare, especially mental health, is understaffed. What better way to create a path for tomorrow's workforce than by having them start when they're young.

Prevention is key. So much of our mental health system is about chasing after problems after they've become too big to ignore. But by building a community of peers, supported by teachers and counselors, we can prevent so much suffering before it even happens.
Peer-to-Peer in Action

I think the best way to address the mental health crisis facing young people is to LISTEN to young people. We are not only talking about the problems we are facing, we are creating the tools we need to solve the problems for ourselves. We know what will move this work forward, we just need the space to do it.

I've been working on this for nearly two years, and we've made remarkable progress. Read our issue brief that outlines what is needed to bring a successful P2P program into a school, how to actually make it happen, and how to fund it."

Youth Supporting Youth: Expanding Peer-to-Peer Programs in Schools to Address the Growing Youth Mental Health Crisis

For more on this, see *Peer Relationships, Peer Support, and Peer Counseling*

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

The Role of Social and Emotional Learning in Future Workforce Readiness

Peer Programs Helping Schools Tackle Student Depression, Anxiety

Adolescent Peer Support League

Kids' Declining Mental Health Is the 'Crisis of Our Time,' Surgeon General Says

Antiracist and Trauma-Informed: Enhancing Social and Emotional Learning to Build Resilience

Coping Style Moderates the Relationship Between Community Violence and Depressive Symptoms in Urban Adolescents

The Role of Affective Teacher–Student Relationships in Bullying and Peer Victimization: A Multilevel Meta-Analysis

How Self-Concept, Competence, and Their Fit or Misfit Predict Educational Achievement, Well-Being, and Social Relationships in the School Context

The relationship between sleep duration and mood in adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis

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

5/3 Fostering Resilience
5/9 Developing culturally responsive educators
5/9 Collaboration between school and community
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
5/23 Understanding doubled up

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**

- **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**

"I know I didn't do my homework, so I understand keeping me in from recess. Then again, recess offers badly needed exercise, social interaction, and the opportunity to refocus. It's a quandary."

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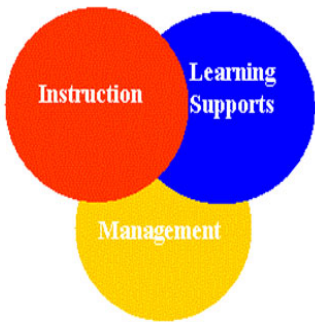
For information about the
National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
go to http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

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

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/)