
Mental Health in Schools: More than Providing School-Based Services

When you hear the term Mental Health in Schools or School Mental Health, what comes to mind?

Probably you think about students who have psychological problems, about what services they need, and how schools don't provide enough of such services. This is not surprising given the widespread tendency for the term mental health to be thought of as referring to mental disorders (illness) and for relevant interventions to be discussed in the context of school-based services.

As a result, many well-intentioned initiatives and policy reports limit discussion to integrating and expanding school-based health services. This is especially the case as a result of the increased concern about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest push is seen in the federal launch of a joint-department effort to expand school-based health services.

While the focus on school-based services is a necessary piece of addressing barriers to learning and teaching, it is just one facet of what schools need. And focusing on it in isolation of what else is needed has unfortunate consequences for students and schools.

See: *Time for Straight Talk about Mental Health Services and MH in Schools*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/mhinschools.pdf>