

## **School Practitioner Community of Practice**

(A network for sharing & exchange)

**August 8, 2018**

**Topic: Improving school climate by making the new school year a welcoming experience and a fresh new start**

**For discussion:**

**>Welcoming families and building working relationships**

**Some Center resources on the topic:**

**This practitioner provides links to the following related resources:**

**>Home Involvement, Engagement, and Re-engagement in Schooling**

**>Self-study Survey for Home Involvement, Engagement, & Re-engagement in Schooling**

**>What Schools Can Do to Welcome & Meet the Needs of All Students & Families**

**>Engaging and Re-engaging Families When a Student is Not Doing Well**

**>Connecting Schools, Families, and Communities**

**>Fostering School, Family, and Community Involvement**

**Invitation to listserv participants to share perspectives**

**Learning from others:**

**>Addressing the social context of bullying**

**>A few resources on other topics of concern**

**Note:** Go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla> for links to other resources including

>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops

>Calls for grant proposals, presentations, and papers

>Training and job opportunities

>Upcoming webcasts & other professional development opportunities

**This resource is from the**

**Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA**

**Given shrinking education budgets, we have been asked to increase our outreach to make our free resources more available (e.g., for planning, professional development, etc.).**

**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).**

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**For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to [Ltaylor@ucla.edu](mailto:Ltaylor@ucla.edu)**

**For previous postings of community of practice discussions, see <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm>**

## **T**opic for exchange:

After the last school year ended with a crisis, a school is asking: *How might we work with families to bounce back?*

We view this as a matter of renewal and believe the problem arises in all schools where things have not been going well.

A new school year provides special opportunities for schools, students, and families to make a new start and begin the long-range work required to enhance a supportive and nurturing school climate.

A beginning step is to expand welcoming activities to include a potent outreach to families with positive messages and an invitation to build a strong, supportive working relationship over the first few months. Back to school events for the whole family are “golden times” for highlighting improvements, clarifying student and family supports, and laying out opportunities for moving forward. As much as feasible, the events should include parents, students, and community members playing active roles in planning and hosting. All this provides opportunities to address lingering concerns from the previous year and re-engage those whose problems have pushed them away from school involvement.

Enhancing and maintaining inclusive positive working relationships requires a well designed and implemented home and community engagement focus (see the resources listed below for a guide). And special efforts usually are required to reach out and assist families of students who manifest attendance, behavior, emotional, or academic problems.

### **Some Center resources on the topic:**

- >**Home Involvement, Engagement, and Re-engagement in Schooling**  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/book/ch6home.pdf>
- >**Self-study Survey for Home Involvement, Engagement, & Re-engagement in Schooling**  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/homeinvolvementsurvey.pdf>
- >**What Schools Can Do to Welcome & Meet the Needs of All Students & Families**  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/welcomeguide.htm>
- >**Engaging and Re-engaging Families When a Student is Not Doing Well**  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/winter12.pdf>
- >**Connecting Schools, Families, and Communities**  
[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/publications/28 connecting schools families and communities.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/publications/28%20connecting%20schools%20families%20and%20communities.pdf)
- >**Fostering School, Family, and Community Involvement**  
[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/publications/44 guide 7 fostering school family and community involvement.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/publications/44%20guide%207%20fostering%20school%20family%20and%20community%20involvement.pdf)

For more resources from our Center and from others on this topic, see our online clearinghouse Quick Find on *Parent/Home Involvement in School* –  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/homework.htm>

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### **Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives**

**What do you recommend for building working relationships with families?  
Ideas for connecting with those whp don't engage easily?**

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

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## **A Note About Robocalls as a Tool in Relating to Parents**

Robocalls from schools and the district are becoming commonplace. So much so that Texas recently circulated a caution about legal considerations. (See *Schools and Robocalls* at [https://www.tasb.org/Services/Legal-Services/TASB-School-Law-eSource/Business/documents/ch\\_districts\\_and\\_robotcalls.aspx](https://www.tasb.org/Services/Legal-Services/TASB-School-Law-eSource/Business/documents/ch_districts_and_robotcalls.aspx) .)

Robocalls are a useful aid, especially when emergencies arise (e.g., alerting families, plans for picking up children). But besides legalities, the calls can be annoying and may counter efforts to build good working relationships. (Think about all the robocalls you get, your feelings about them, and how much people want to block them.)

Here's an amusing cautionary tale:

"...Awakened at 4:33 a.m. on a Wednesday by a ringing phone, Aaron Titus jumped out of bed in a panic. Maybe something terrible had happened, he thought. Even if nothing was wrong, his heart raced with other considerations: His five children, ages 5 and under, including his week-old daughter, were mercifully still asleep, and he wanted to keep it that way.

In a blurry rush, Titus answered the phone halfway into the second ring, listening in disbelief to an automated caller tell him what he already knew: It was a snow day. School would open two hours late. In other words, he and his family could sleep. But now he couldn't....

Later in the day, the 31-year-old father, a lawyer who knows a thing or two about technology, made a decision that might well bring amused satisfaction to like-minded parents everywhere. Titus arranged for an automated message of his own. He found a robocall company online, taped a message and listed every phone number he could find for nine school board members, the Superintendent and the General Counsel.

At 4:30 a.m. Thursday, phones began ringing with 29 seconds of automated, mocking objection: "This is a parent, calling to thank you for the robocall yesterday at 4:30 in the morning. I decided to return the favor. While I know the school district wanted to ensure I drop my child off two hours late on a snow day, I already knew that before I went to bed. I hope this call demonstrates why a 4:30 a.m. call does more to annoy than to inform."

Excerpted from a Washington Post article –  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/md-father-uses-robocall-to-get-revenge-on-school-officials/2011/01/13/ABOh1WR\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.6ef3764219f8](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/md-father-uses-robocall-to-get-revenge-on-school-officials/2011/01/13/ABOh1WR_story.html?utm_term=.6ef3764219f8)

About legalities, here is an excerpt from the Texas document cited above:

"Many...school districts use automated calling and text messaging services to communicate with students, parents, and staff about various issues. Some recent developments in the law affect how districts and their vendors may conduct such calls. ... The Telephone Consumer Protection Act and the rules adopted by the Federal Communications Commission ...prohibit any non-emergency calls using an automatic telephone dialing system or an artificial or pre-recorded voice to a wireless number without express consent of the recipient...Therefore, non-emergency robocalls from a district to wireless phones, without consent, could violate the TCPA....

The FCC confirmed that, in the context of schools, robocalls that relate to a situation affecting the health and safety of students and faculty fall under the emergency purpose exceptions and do not require prior consent. ...

In limited cases, the FCC has acknowledged that when a parent or student gives only their wireless number as a point of contact to a school, that constitutes consent to receive communications 'closely related to the school's mission.' (Messages about teacher conferences and survey to provide input on school related issues....)"

## Learning from others

### >Addressing the social context of bullying

Excerpt from: Understanding Adolescent Narratives About “Bullying” Through an Intersectional Lens: Implications for Youth Mental Health Interventions. (2018) R. Haines-Saah, C. Hilario, E. Jenkins, et al. *Youth & Society*, 50, 636–658. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0044118X15621465>

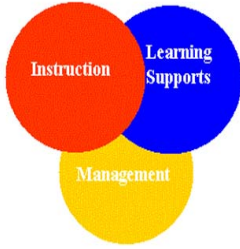
“... research has suggested that approaches to addressing bullying have been inadequate for addressing the complexities of systemic discriminations such as racism, sexism, and homophobia as they have informed harassment, social aggression, and violence among young people. In a recent study exploring students’ perspectives on who was more likely to have been a victim of bullying and the reasons why they might be bullied, findings suggested that youth were usually not targeted “at random” as victimization was frequently linked to differences that were socially and historically significant: gender, religion, mental ability, sexual identity, and race. Yet rarely have bullying interventions accounted for this complexity or addressed the unequal social contexts that inform adolescents’ experiences of peer-based aggression when, ‘bullying mirrors social and political contexts that tend to privilege certain people . . . and marginalize/oppress others’ ...

By introducing an intersectionality framework for understanding bullying, our intent was to highlight the need for approaches that extend beyond relationship-based conflicts and to contextualize the discourse around bullying vis-à-vis the presence of local and structurally embedded inequities. In doing so, there are implications for how we think about and respond to peer-based aggression in the policy, programming, and research arenas. Positioning these aggressions as linked to intersecting oppressions and as collective/cultural insists that we think critically about the broader and local contexts of health and social inequities when designing intervention to prevent youth bullying....

What we believe is required, is an extension of a whole school approach—which targets multiple levels of the school setting—to address bullying within the context of the “whole community” with the aim of fostering a culture of social cooperation and inclusion among all local youth. For example, this includes an ‘endorsement of a community rejection of bullying’ that extends beyond schools to the creation of physically and emotionally ‘safe spaces’ in all workplaces and community-based activities. ... Perhaps most importantly, our research suggests that it is important for intervention research and programming to understand the social context of bullying as youth experience and perceive it, so that the interventions or solutions proposed are defined by, and resonate with youth across the community....”

### >A few resources on other topics of concern

- >>Long-Term Effects from a School-Based Trial Comparing Interpersonal Psychotherapy-Adolescent Skills Training to Group Counseling  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/15374416.2018.1479965?needAccess=true>
- >>Primary prevention programs reduce perpetration of intimate partner/sexual violence among youth.  
<https://www.thecommunityguide.org/content/primary-prevention-reduces-intimate-partner-violence-and-sexual-violence-among-youth>
- >>Declines in efficacy of anti-bullying programs among older adolescents: Theory and a three-level meta-analysis  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0193397314001385>
- >>About Homeless Youth <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/homeless.pdf>
- >>Embedding the arts into the school’s agenda: Music as an example  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/music.pdf>
- >>A personal perspective on depression among latino students  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/latdep.pdf>
- >>A personal look at self-reliance and help seeking  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/helpseek.pdf>



Take a couple of minutes to view the new free book:

***Improving School Improvement***  
[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

*If you missed the following, you can access them and more from the Center's homepage –*  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

**>The quarterly ejournal for Summer 2018.**

Excerpts from a new, free book.

Online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/news.htm>

Contents:

Part I: Good Schools and Classrooms

Part II: Moving toward Personalized Instruction and Special Assistance

Part III: New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching

Part IV. Moving Forward

**>The August *ENEWS*' discussion of:**

*Ways to proactively address regular concerns that arise over the school year*

**Also the 2017 free book on:**

***Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom & Schoolwide***

[http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving\\_school\\_improvement.html](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html)

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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>

**Recent publication related to the initiative:**

*>Transforming Student and Learning Supports:*

*Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System –*

<https://titles.cognella.com/transforming-student-and-learning-supports-9781516512782.html>

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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/>)**