Featured:

>*How are the kids? Is the "new normal" being mentally unwell?*

>*Learning loss: Fact or stigma?*

>**Using the holiday season for service learning? Earth could use some help**

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

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For discussion and interchange:

>**How are the kids? Is the "new normal"being mentally unwell?**

Here are some findings from recent research:

From: *Feeling mentally unwell is the "new normal": A qualitative study on adolescents' views of mental health problems and related stigma*

https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/children-and-youth-services-review/vol/143/suppl/C

"... Many of the adolescents... stated that their own generation has a greater openness, knowledge and understanding about mental health problems than previous generations. They mentioned that the recorded increase in mental health problems in young people is the result of fewer taboos about mental health problems and increased access to help, compared with the past....

While the participants recognized prejudice and discriminatory behavior linked to mental health problems across the whole spectrum (e.g. from anxiety symptoms caused by long-term stress to severe mental illness), in general they found young people to be more familiar with and less prejudiced towards more common conditions...

While the adolescents recognized mental health problems as an increasing burden for young people in society, they also had a nuanced understanding of the factors that may explain this trend. The participants attributed the rise in mental health problems to societal changes.... Their suggestion that improved openness about mental health problems is an additional factor influencing the increase in diagnoses has also been proposed ...

The adolescents recognized potential risks to mental health problems being the "new normal". One risk identified was falsely labeling those without mental health problems as having a mental health condition. Conversely, problems presented by young people with mental health problems might be disregarded because of a preconception that feeling unwell is a normal state of mind for young people these days, and that "all" young people have mental health issues...

Interestingly, the adolescents also stated that adults are less open about mental health problems and have less knowledge and more prejudice compared with younger people. They identified increased knowledge and contact with people suffering from mental health problems as drivers for reducing the stigma of mental health problems. Overall, the adolescents considered increased openness, reduced prejudice about mental health problems and reduced prevalence of stereotypic gender norms as important factors for improving young people's mental health. Their responses conveyed hope that societal change towards improved openness about mental health problems might eventually lead to a future without stereotypical gender norms and prejudice against mental health problems...."

Here is the intro from a report done by a student who worked at our Center:

From: *Normalization and Popularization of Mental Illness and Its Impact: Personal Experience and a Look at Research Findings*

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/normalize.pdf

My interest in the effects of mental illness normalization and popularization began in talks with my very close friend, Sam, who had been diagnosed with clinical depression and put on medication during high school. He told me that during the period when his depression was at its worst, he felt that what he was experiencing was not the same as the "depression" he was hearing about and

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seeing among his peers. He noticed that the word was used loosely to describe feelings that did not reflect what he was experiencing. His perception was that many of his peers casually described normal negative emotions as depression. This caused him to feel his struggles with depression were being delegitimized, and this made him want to separate himself from those he felt were misappropriating mental illness. In hindsight, he admits that his way of judging other's claims to depression was somewhat unfair, but he sees it as part of as movement to normalize mental illness in ways that is creating a new set of challenges for those experiencing severe mental illness....

For discussion and interchange:

>Learning loss: Fact or stigma?

Given the widespread calls for schools to address learning loss, it should be noted that what schools need to do involves more than doubling down on everyday instructional strategies. Remedying learning loss requires addressing a variety of barriers to learning and teaching. And it is essential to counter the myth that more and more instruction will correct the situation. Extra and excellent instruction clearly is needed (e.g., tutoring, personalized instruction). And for some students, this will be sufficient to bring them back up to grade level. However, for too long, teachers have borne the brunt of responsibility when it comes to initiatives for reducing the long-standing achievement and opportunity gaps. The reality is that instruction alone can't and shouldn't be expected to solve these chronic problems.

From: ***The COVID-19 Learning Loss: Fact or Stigma?***
https://academic.oup.com/cs/article/44/4/251/6671798

In April 2020, the discourse surrounding the COVID-19 learning loss began. Researchers predicted student learning loss due to school closures, with estimated declines in math and reading during the pandemic. To follow, hundreds of billions of dollars have been allocated to address learning loss. To be clear, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been extreme and omnipresent. However, the stigma of labeling a generation of students from a deficit-based lens does not offer the support sorely needed in school systems...

The shortsighted and blanketed portrayal of learning loss circumvents recognition of student development that consistently occurs outside of schools. Furthermore, it diminishes students' lived realities and experiences while failing to consider their perspectives. Youth do not need another deficit-based label as they endure challenges stemming from the pandemic ...

Regardless of whether learning loss is validated scientifically, students still need holistic support... Young people often navigated insecurities before the pandemic (e.g., those related to housing, financial, food, mental health, and physical health)....

The learning loss discourse contributes negatively to the stigma children already experience and may further shape educator biases. The ecological lens ... offers a framework to counteract the deficit-based constructions of youth through schoolwide support with a structural emphasis...

All students have innate capacities to be resilient.... Framing youth positively rather than as "at risk" can help to nurture innate student capacities....
An emphasis on strength- and asset-based youth perspectives reimagines schooling for young people by unearthing experiences with learning and bolstering school engagement....

Building relationships, establishing communication, and helping to empower and support teachers may strengthen schoolwide support....

The road ahead may be challenging, but we can harness support by reevaluating student strengths, valuing their learning, and recognizing their skill development and resilience. Although compassion, care, and love for students are not a tall order, they can mean the world to so many students as they navigate through their childhood, the school system, and a turbulent society.

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Effectively dealing with learning loss for a great many students will require

(a) rethinking student/learning supports,

(b) moving beyond a deficit and problem-focused bias to incorporate approaches that build on intrinsic motivation and students' strengths/assets/resilience,

(c) braiding resources.

The following resources are examples of our Center's focus on these matters.

>*Rethinking Student and Learning Supports*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fall22.pdf

>*Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/briefguide.pdf

>*Protective Factors/Resilience*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/sampler/resiliency/resilien.pdf

>*About Funding Stream Integration*
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/fundinginteg.pdf

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>Using the holiday season for service learning? Earth could use some help

While food banks and toy drives generally are the most popular ways to think about involving youth in holiday giving, so can helping them address climate change (and it can be a year round effort).

From: *How can teenagers help protect the environment?*
https://www.indystar.com/story/news/2022/10/03/how-to-help-the-environment-hoosiers-climate-change-action-planning-committe-iupui/69519002007/

... Younger age groups are becoming more active and vocal on environmental concerns and climate change advocacy...

The consensus among those currently involved in environmental protection issues is that collective action is far more effective than individual actions, especially collective actions focused around issues currently within your high school or community....

Once a group is organized, Gabe Filippelli, executive director at the Environmental Resilience Institute of Indiana University, said one good option is working within a school to change the culture around some environmental issues. He gave recycling as one example: "This could involve setting up recycling programs," Filippelli said. "This could look like not only a bin for aluminum cans only, but also involve the recycling of gently used clothing and items, and both could then wrap around a larger environmental message about reducing the use of things we have and refusing fast fashion, which has a tremendous negative impact on the environment."...

Working within the framework of our school is important. Find a topic or issue where conversation is already happening and pushing for something that already has some momentum.

Putting up flyers up and having conversations with other students, staff and teachers can be a good way to start building such momentum...

Preparing a future path for environmental advocacy is yet another way to help in the long term. There are many ways to focus a passion to help: pursuing environmental studies in college, volunteering with local organizations, staying involved in climate action into graduate work, and taking jobs in areas that offer opportunities to make an impact. Taking advantage of science courses offered in high school and undertaking special projects within he school also can also be successful ways to help....

From: *Empowering Schools to Take Climate Action*
https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/22/11/harvard-edcast-empowering-schools-take-climate-action

...there are nearly 100,000 public schools across the country. Those schools are among the largest consumers of energy in the public sector. Energy is the second highest cost for many school districts, behind salaries. So it's also a substantial cost for school districts. Our schools operate the largest mass transit fleet in the country, with 480,000 school buses. Our schools serve seven billion meals annually. And all of those things add up to a sizable carbon footprint.

   ... the education sector actually contributes a lot to climate change. But one of the things that then is also most powerful about the education sector, with nearly one and every six Americans in it, is that if you advance climate solutions within the sector, you're providing opportunities for children and youth who are enrolled to learn about climate solutions firsthand. ....

The K12 Climate Action Commission was co-chaired by former education secretary John King, and former governor and EPA administrator Christine Todd Whitman.... what that plan outlines is a vision that, 10 years from now, our 100,000 schools across the country are beacons for climate action. That they run on clean, renewable electricity. That students are coming to school on electric school buses. That they are using locally sourced food and composting, or repurposing, or donating any related food waste. That school yards don't have heat trapping asphalt. That they're green, sustainable school yards that help reduce community heat and flooding. That students are empowered within those school buildings to learn about climate change, climate solutions, and sustainability firsthand. So that they're prepared to lead a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable society ahead....

From: *Coping with climate change: Advice for kids — from kids*
https://www.npr.org/2022/11/17/1137156134/kids-youth-coping-climate-change

...Kids across the world are increasingly facing the impacts of climate change, from losing homes in disasters to having recess canceled due to extreme heat waves. Climate anxiety is on the rise, as a younger generation confronts inheriting a much hotter world.... In coping with those feelings, many young people are figuring out ways to find meaning and purpose. Here's some of their advice.
1. Talk to a friend about what's up...
2. Get out in nature ...
3. Join people doing something in your community.... When climate change seems daunting, find someone who cares about it and ask how to help in your community. .. Helping out in your community doesn't need to be a big project.... The key thing is to find meaning in the action and build social connections in the process....
4. Don't be too intimidated to speak out....”

From: ***Climate change is here. These 6 tips can help you talk to kids about it***
https://www.npr.org/2019/10/22/772266241/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-climate-change

“Clinical anxiety affects a small (and growing) percentage of children. But worries about the environment are widespread. In a recent poll in The Washington Post, 7 in 10 teenagers said climate change will harm their generation — that was a bit more than older folks.”

In addition to *emotion-focused coping* and *problem-focused coping*, this article discusses *meaning-focused coping* -- “how to frame the problem so that we can continue to hope and not collapse into cynicism, apathy or despair.”

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

Climate change: youth in action https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/youth-in-action

Climate change resources: youth https://climatechangeresources.org/youth/

Emotional Responses to Social Media Experiences Among Adolescents
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15374416.2021.1955370

Reverse mentoring in education
https://www.moves.cc/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Reverse-Mentoring-in-Education_preprint.pdf

What Schools Can Do to Ease Students' Anxiety
https://www.edweek.org/leadership/what-schools-can-do-to-ease-student-anxiety/2022/11

State Legislative Guide For School Mental Health
https://hopefulfutures.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/State-Legislative-Guide-for-School-Mental-Health-1.pdf

The State of Mental Health In America
https://mhanational.org/sites/default/files/2023-State-of-Mental-Health-in-America-Report.pdf?eType=EmailC
onfirmation&eId=ba69fd5f-0e00-404e-bec5-abbab0f91eef

The Holiday Checklist for LGBTQ+ People
https://lgbtqequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/The-Holiday-Checklist-for-LGBTQ-People-Printer-Version.pdf

NYC schools Chancellor David Banks lays out $205 million plan to improve special education
https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2022/12/1/23488843/nyc-banks-special-education-asd-nest-horizon-path

The Future of Education https://edu.google.com/future-of-education/

FROM CRISIS TO CARE: Building from 988 and Beyond for Better Mental Health Outcomes
https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/SAMHSA_Digital_Download/PEP22-01-03-001.pdf

Navigating Academia as Neurodivergent Researchers: Promoting Neurodiversity Within Open
Scholarship
https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/gs-navigating-academia-as-neurodivergent-researchers

A Beautiful Struggle: Reimagining Neighborhood Schools in Urban Communities
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epdf/10.1177/016146812012200204

Plurality in the Measurement of Social Media Use and Mental Health: An Exploratory Study
Among Adolescents and Young Adults
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/20563051211035353

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

12/14 Promoting Community Based Violence Intervention Success: Meaningful Measures and
      Effective Communication
12/20 Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Students Experiencing Homelessness
12/15 Supporting students and staff
12/15 Community resilience model for schools
1/9 Moving toward resilience
1/11 Sustaining the Community Based Violence Intervention Ecosystem: Sources of funding for
      CVI strategies
1/19 Improving vocational outcomes among adolescents
1/22 McKinney-Vento 101: Basic requirements of the act
1/25 Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility

"Before you go inside, give me
a chance to explain the mess..."

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.)

- **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

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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
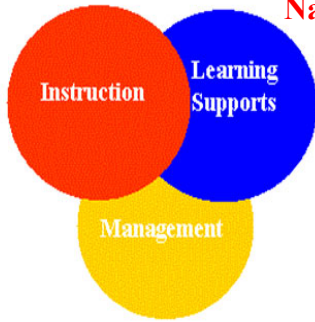
Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to promoting whole child development, advancing social justice, and enhancing learning and a positive school climate.

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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/)