

(7/3/24) This continuing education resource is from the national
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports at UCLA

Featured

>**Can there be too much talk about mental health?**

Also for discussion:

>**Artificial Intelligence in the classroom**

And, as always: **Links to a few other resources relevant to continuing education**

For discussion and interchange:

>From: ***Do We Talk Too Much About Mental Health?***
(a New York Times' Student Perspective feature)

"Recent studies suggest that school mental health programs may not be beneficial and could even have a negative effect. What has been your experience?"

- >How often do you or the people around you — your classmates, teachers, parents, the people you follow on social media — talk about mental health?
- > Have you found talking about your mental health to be helpful? For example, has doing so made you more aware of your emotions? Or have you learned useful strategies for coping with difficult feelings?
- >On the other hand, have you ever worried that all the talk about mental health was having a negative effect on you and your peers?

In *Are We Talking Too Much About Mental Health?*, Ellen Barry writes about recent studies that have cast doubt on whether large-scale mental health interventions are making young people better. Some even suggest they can be harmful. The article begins:

'In recent years, mental health has become a central subject in childhood and adolescence. Teenagers narrate their psychiatric diagnosis and treatment on TikTok and Instagram. School systems, alarmed by rising levels of distress and self-harm, are introducing preventive coursework in emotional self-regulation and mindfulness.'

Now, some researchers warn that we are in danger of overdoing it. Mental health awareness campaigns, they argue, help some young people identify disorders that badly need treatment — but they have a negative effect on others, leading them to over-interpret their symptoms and see themselves as more troubled than they are.

The researchers point to unexpected results in trials of school-based mental health interventions in the United Kingdom and Australia: Students who underwent training in the basics of mindfulness, cognitive behavioral therapy and dialectical behavior therapy did not emerge healthier than peers who did not participate, and some were worse off, at least for a while.

And new research from the United States shows that among young people, "self-labeling" as having depression or anxiety is associated with poor coping skills, like avoidance or rumination.

In a paper published last year, two research psychologists at the University of Oxford, Lucy Foulkes and Jack Andrews, coined the term 'prevalence inflation' — driven by the reporting of mild or transient symptoms as mental health disorders — and suggested that awareness campaigns were contributing to it.

'It's creating this message that teenagers are vulnerable, they're likely to have problems, and the solution is to outsource them to a professional,' said Dr. Foulkes, a Prudence Trust Research Fellow in Oxford's department of experimental psychology, who has written two books on mental health and adolescence.

Until high-quality research has clarified these unexpected negative effects, they argue, school systems should proceed cautiously with large-scale mental health interventions.

'It's not that we need to go back to square one, but it's that we need to press pause and reroute potentially,' Dr. Foulkes said. 'It's possible that something very well-intended has overshot a bit and needs to be brought back in.'

This remains a minority view among specialists in adolescent mental health, who mostly agree that the far more urgent problem is lack of access to treatment.... Dr. Foulkes said she understood that her argument runs counter to that consensus, and when she began to present it, she braced for a backlash. To her surprise, she said, many educators reached out to express quiet agreement. "There's definitely a fear about being the one to say it,' she said.

...

> What do you think about the current focus — from parents, schools, social media influencers, even the surgeon general — on young people's mental health? Is it an important issue that you are glad is being addressed? Or have we crossed a line into talking about mental health too much?

>Is social and emotional learning a part of your school's curriculum, or have you participated in a mental health program at school, like one of those described in the article? If so, what was the program like? What kinds of things did you learn? Did you think the program or curriculum was helpful? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

>What, if any, benefits have you experienced from learning more about mental health? How has that knowledge improved your life?

>Have you ever experienced any of the negative effects that were described in the article? For example, have you ever diagnosed yourself with a condition that might not have been accurate? Or felt as if you were learning only about problems and not about solutions, leading you to feel hopeless about a situation? Do you see young people glorifying mental health disorders?

Lucy Foulkes, one of the research psychologists interviewed in the article, suggested that schools should "press pause" on mental health programs because of the potential negative effects they may have. But Lucy Kim, a Yale senior who has lobbied for better mental health support on campus, said that stigma and barriers to treatment remain the bigger problem.

>With whom do you agree more and why? When it comes to the mental health of young people in your community, what do you see as the most pressing issue?

>What suggestions do you have for how schools might approach mental health education, if you think they should address it at all? For example, is mental health education something that all students should get? Or should mental health education be targeted to those who need it most? What, if anything, would you be interested in learning about?"

What is your reaction to this New York Times' Student Perspective feature?

For Community of Practice discussion, send comments to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

What's wrong?



I heard that one out of every five people has a mental health problem. Since my friends all seem O.K., I'm worried I'm the one.

And what do you think about this?

Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom

From: *Teachers Are Using AI To Grade Papers. Who's Grading The AI?*

"...English teachers say AI tools can help them grade papers faster, get students more feedback, and improve their learning experience.... Teachers use AI to do things like personalize reading material, create lesson plans, and other tasks in order to save time and reduce burnout...

Last summer, Jen Roberts, an English teacher at Point Loma High School in San Diego, went to a training session to learn how to use Writable, an AI tool that automates grading writing assignments and gives students feedback powered by OpenAI. For the past school year, Roberts used Writable and other AI tools in the classroom, and she said it's been the best year yet of nearly three decades of teaching. Roberts said it has made her students better writers, not because AI did the writing for them, but because automated feedback can tell her students faster than she can how to improve, which in turn allows her to hand out more writing assignments....

Roberts says the average high school English teacher in her district has roughly 180 students. Grading and feedback can take between five to 10 minutes per assignment she says, so between teaching, meetings, and other duties, it can take two to three weeks to get feedback back into the hands of students unless a teacher decides to give up large chunks of their weekends. With AI, it takes Roberts a day or two...."

For more on this, see our Center's online clearinghouse quick find on

>[*Technology as an Intervention Tool*](#)

Center comment: Advanced technology offers tools for improving almost every facet of efforts to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development. It also is raising a host of concerns. Clearly, a brave new world has emerged. There is much for all of us to learn about advanced technological applications. We all need to grasp the big picture and develop a plan and an agenda for integrating such applications into our daily work in ways that effectively deal with the concerns.

What are your views about using social media and AI?

Let us know. Ltaylor@ucla.edu

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

>>[**An Exploratory Study Examining Student Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Across School Transitions**](#)

>>[**High School Students as Researchers about Their School: Exploring Its Potential for Choices and Skills**](#)

>>[**Leading Innovation in Education**](#)

>>[**Exploring the "Social" in Social Media: Adolescent Relatedness—Thwarted and Supported**](#)

>>[**Disparities in High School Graduation by Identity and Disability Using Intermediate and Long-Term Educational Outcomes**](#)

>>[**5 Things Schools Can Do This Summer to Improve Student Attendance Next Year**](#)

>>[**When Are Kids Ready for Social Media?**](#)

A Few Upcoming Webinars
For links to the following and for more webinars, go to the Center's Links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts

- 7/11 Managing conflict on interdisciplinary teams
- 7/11 Enhancing School Safety Using Behavioral Threat Assessment (part three)
- 7/16 Leadership in Education: Building Collaborative Teams and Driving Innovation
- 7/17 Principals, Lead Stronger in the New School Year
- 7/18 Culturally informed crisis support
- 7/23 Stress management and resiliency training
- 7/25 Organizational commitment to a culture of care
- 8/13 Administrator Basics for Supporting English Learners with Disabilities
- 8/15 Conversations with youth
- 8/20 Welcoming students through transitions
- 8/22 Compassionate leadership
- 9/19 Empowering grassroots mentoring
- 9/26 Organizational culture

How Learning Happens (Edutopia's updated series of videos explores how educators can guide all students, regardless of their developmental starting points, to become productive and engaged learners.)

Webinar recording: [Unpacking the Impacts of Structural Racism on Youth](#)

For more webinars, go to the our Center's links to Upcoming/Archived Webcasts/Podcasts – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/webcast.htm>

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

Schools committed to the success of all children must be redesigned so that teachers, student support staff, and others at the school can help students as early as is feasible when they become aware of a behavior, emotional, learning, and/or physical problem. Such a redesign can minimize the impact of such problems and appropriately stem the tide of referrals for out of class specialized assistance (e.g., mental health services) and special education.

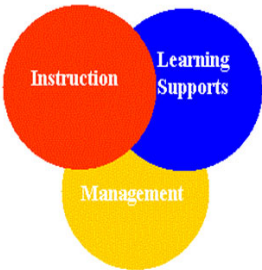
Through the **National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports**, our Center emphasizes the opportunity to start now to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage disconnected students.

If you are aware of efforts underway to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching, please share with us.

And if anyone is thinking about increasing the capacity of a district or school with respect to developing a *unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports*, we have many resources to help in moving forward. For example, see our recent guide:

>***Student/Learning Supports: A Brief Guide for Moving in New Directions***

Send all info and requests to ltaylor@ucla.edu



**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.**

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.

THIS IS THE END OF THIS ISSUE OF THE PRACTITIONER

Who Are We? Recently renamed the Center for MH in Schools and Student/Learning Supports, our national Center was established in 1995 under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project (which was established in 1986). We are part of the Department of Psychology at UCLA. The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor.