The Role of School Mental Health in Mental Health Promotion and Violence Prevention

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Forum on Global Violence Prevention’s Workshop: Violence and Mental Health: Opportunities of Prevention and Early Intervention

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Center for School Mental Health

MISSION
To strengthen the policies and programs in school mental health to improve learning and promote success for America’s youth

• Established in 1995. Federal funding from the Health Resources and services Administration.

• Focus on advancing school mental health policy, research, practice, and training.

• Shared family-schools-community agenda.

• Co-Directors: Sharon Stephan, Ph.D. & Nancy Lever, Ph.D. http://csmh.umaryland.edu, (410) 706-0980
CSMH Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health

- 1996 Baltimore
- 1997 New Orleans
- 1998 Virginia Beach
- 1999 Denver
- 2000 Atlanta
- 2002 Philadelphia
- 2003 Portland, OR
- 2004 Dallas*  
  * Launch of National Community of Practice on School Behavioral Health
- 2005 Cleveland
- 2006 Baltimore
- 2007 Orlando
- 2008 Phoenix
- 2009 Minneapolis
- 2010 Albuquerque
- 2011 Charleston, SC
- 2012 Salt Lake City
- 2013 Crystal City-Arlington
- Sep 18-20, 2014 – PITTSBURGH!
SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH – A DEFINITION
A partnership between schools and community health and behavioral health organizations...

Guided by youth and families.
Who provides mental health services in schools?

Of the 98,000+ public schools in the United States, mental health services are provided by...

**Contracts:**
- County MH (29%)
- Community Health (19%)
- Individual Providers (18%)
- Juvenile Services (17%)
- Hospitals (6%)
- Faith-based (4%)

Foster et al. (2005)
A Shared Agenda –

Role of community mental health professionals:

• **Provide a broad continuum of services** to supplement school-employed staff services.

• **Reduce unnecessary, expensive services** (ER visits, crises, etc.) by:
  – facilitating connections/referral pathways to community providers
  – providing preventive care (screening, identification, brief intervention)
  – assisting with transition back to school from more restrictive psychiatric placements
Partners build on existing school programs, services, and strategies.
Focuses on all students...

...in both general and special education
Includes a full array of programs, services, and strategies
Making the Case for School Mental Health

• What we know intuitively

• Demonstrated need

• Benefits of a school setting

• Connection to academic outcomes

• Social and economic costs
What we know intuitively

Healthy students make better learners

It is challenging to teach a child who is not able to focus on schoolwork

A child who succeeds in school is more likely to be healthy
Median Age of Onset: Mental Illness

- Birth
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Phobias & Separation Anxiety
- ADHD
- Opposition Defiant Disorder
- Conduct Disorder
- Intermittent Explosive Disorder
- Psychosis
- Major Depression
- Substance Abuse

Source: WHO World Mental Health surveys as reported in Kessler et al. (2007)
In a given classroom of 25 students….

1 in 5 will experience a mental health problem of mild impairment.

1 in 10 will experience a mental health problem of severe impairment.

Less than half of those who need it will get services.
Of those who DO receive services, over 75% receive those services in schools

(Duchnowski, Kutash, & Friedman, 2002; Power, Eiraldi, Clarke, Mazzuca & Krain, 2005; Rones & Hoagwood, 2000; Wade, Mansour, & Guo, 2008)
Barriers to Traditional Mental Health Care

- Financial/Insurance
- Childcare
- Transportation
- Mistrust/Stigma
- Past Experiences
- Waiting List/Intake Process
- Stress
Treatment as Usual Show Rates in Traditional Outpatient Settings

(McKay et al., 2005)
Why Schools?

• **Advantages** of the school setting
  – Less time lost from school and work
  – Greater generalizability of treatment to child’s context
  – Less threatening environment
  – Students are in their own social context
  – Clinical efficiency and productivity
  – Outreach to youth with internalizing disturbances
  – Greater access to all youth → mental health promotion/prevention
  – Cost effective
  – Greater potential to impact the learning environment and educational outcomes
What does the research tell us about school mental health outcomes?

• Improvements in social competency, behavioral and emotional functioning

• Improvements in academics (GPA, test scores, attendance, teacher retention)

• Cost savings!

• Increased access to care → Decreased health disparities

Greenberg et al., 2005; Greenberg et al., 2003; Welsh et al., 2001; Zins et al., 2004; Bruns et al., 2004; Lebr et al., 2004; Jennings, Pearson, & Harris, 2000; see Hoagwood, Olin, Kerkar, Kratochwill, Crowe, & Saka, 2007 and Wilson & Lipsey, 2007)
Violence Exposure in School-Aged Youth

• Youth 2.5 times more likely than adults to be victims of violence.
• Urban youth are particularly at risk with 98.5% reporting exposure to nonfatal violent crimes. (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006)
• Violence exposure occurs across multiple contexts:
  – Home
  – Community
  – Schools
Violence Exposure in School-Aged Youth

Lifetime Exposure to Victimization in a Nationally Representative Sample of Adolescents (%)
(N=6483) - * 61% encountered some type of traumatic event over lifetime

- Kidnapped
- Physical abuse
- Physical abuse by intimate
- Physical abuse by other
- Mugged
- Rape
- Sexual assault
- Stalked
- Witnessed domestic violence

McLaughlin, Koenen, Hill, Petukhova, Sampson., Zaslavsky, & Kessler, (2013)
Violence Exposure by peers in School-Aged Youth

Peer Victimization in the Past Year – ages 6-17 (%)
N=2999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Assault</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Intim.</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Victim.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Victim.</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Crime</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Harass</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Turner, Finkelhor, Hamby, Shattuck, & Ormrod (2011)
% occurring in school

- Physical Assault: School=58.5%
- Physical Intimidation: School=52%
- Emotional Victimization: School=82%
- Sexual Victimization: Mostly outside of school (except for sexual harassment)
- Property Crime: School=57%
- Internet Harassment: School=Exclusively outside of school

Turner, Finkelhor, Hamby, Shattuck, & Ormrod (2011)
School Violence

• During the 2009-2010 school year:
  – 40% of public schools reported to police at least one incident of violence
  – 10% reported at least one serious violent incident

• A study of public schools in the U.S., 16.6% of students carried a weapon on school property in the prior month
  – 5.9% of students missed school because safety concerns

Why Schools?

• In Baltimore, neighborhood factors and student self-report of school and neighborhood safety linked with academic performance
  – Increasing violence associated with decreasing math and reading achievement from 4.2 to 8.7 %
  – Increasing perception of safety associated with increases in achievement from 16 to 22%
    (Milam, Furr-Holden, & Leaf, 2010)

• A public health approach to violence prevention can be implemented in schools
A Public Health Approach

• Focuses on multiple points of intervention
  – Student, Classroom, School, Community

• Evidence-based practices

• Developed across multiple stakeholder groups including community partners

• Safety conceptualized more broadly than security measures, part of school climate
School Climate: PBIS

• Important to change climate of the school

• Positive Behavioral Intervention Support (PBIS): School-wide framework targeting school climate

• Extensive research shows that PBIS:
  – Improves the perception of school safety
  – Reduces aggressive behavior and violent acts in school

(Bradshaw et al., 2012; Greenberg et al., 2003; Surgeon General’s Report on Youth Violence, 2001; White House Conference on School Violence, 2006)
Environmental Design

Natural surveillance - the placement of physical features that maximize visibility

Access management - guiding people by using signs, well-marked entrances and exits, and landscaping

Territoriality - a clear delineation of space, expressions of pride or ownership, and the creation of a welcoming environment

Physical maintenance - repair and general upkeep of space

Order maintenance - attending to minor unacceptable acts and providing measures that clearly state acceptable behavior.

Benefits for Schools:

– Warm, welcoming environment; Sense of order; Ownership by students; Maximizes presence of authority figures; Minimizes opportunities for out-of-sight activities
Evidence Based Prevention Programs

• **PeaceBuilders: School-wide program**
  – Fosters positive school climate by integrating activities and rewards for positive, non-violent behaviors into the daily school routine
  – Targets positive relationships between students and school staff
  – Encouraging nonviolent attitudes, values, and beliefs

• **Teaching Students To Be Peacemakers: Classroom-based program**
  – Students learn conflict resolution strategies, including negotiation, and practice skills by serving as peer mediators in the classroom.

• **Families & Schools Together: Multifamily group intervention**
  – Builds partnerships between families, schools, and communities.
  – Enhances family functioning, prevents school failure and violence, and reduces daily stressors for children and parents.
  – Enhances protective factors for children: parent-child bonding, parent involvement in schools, parent networks, family communication, parental authority, and social capital to reduce the children's anxiety and aggression.
“Inclinations to intensify security in schools should be reconsidered. We cannot and should not turn our schools into fortresses. Effective prevention cannot wait until there is a gunman in a school parking lot. We need resources such as mental health supports in every school and community so that people can seek assistance when they recognize that someone is troubled and requires help… If we can recognize and ameliorate these kinds of situations, then we will be more able to prevent violence.”

- December 2012 Connecticut School Shooting Position Statement
Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence
December 19, 2012
Impact of security measures

• There is no clear research evidence that the use of metal detectors, security cameras, or guards in schools is effective in preventing school violence (Addington, 2009; Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson, 2010; Casella, 2006; Garcia, 2003).

• In fact, research indicates that their presence negatively impacts students’ perceptions of safety and even increases fear among some students (Bachman, Randolph, & Brown, 2011; Schreck & Miller, 2003).

• In addition, studies suggest that restrictive school security measures have the potential to harm school learning environments (Beger, 2003; Phaneuf, 2009).
“Protect our children and our communities”

- Develop universal systems for assessing school climate, student mental health and outcomes of comprehensive school mental health efforts

- Youth Mental Health First Aid for teachers (Project AWARE)

- School and school district training in school-based trauma, anxiety, conflict resolution and violence prevention strategies

- Provide interdisciplinary training to school-employed and school-based community mental health professionals in the delivery of evidence-based comprehensive school mental health services
National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments
http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov

Engagement, Safety, Environment, School Climate Measurement, Implementation

National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention - Safe Schools/Healthy Students

- Partnerships among schools, mental health, juvenile justice, law enforcement