> ## Featured
>
> ***What will best meet the needs of all students and staff:***
> ### Adding Some More Mental Health Services at Schools
> *OR*
> ### Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable Student and Learning Supports System?
>
> ***Also for discussion:***
>
> ### Discipline's impact on student mental health
>
> And, as always: **Links to a few other resources relevant to continuing education**

For discussion and interchange:

>More Mental Health Services at Schools OR Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable Student and Learning Supports?

A colleague told us:

"We were asked by the state Department of Children and Families and the state Department of Education to develop a Comprehensive School Mental Health Landscape Analysis Report. The goal of this report is to identify policy, system, and practice recommendations for strengthening schools' ability to support student behavioral health and well-being. We hope this report will identify opportunities for growth and enhancement of school mental health across school districts, including recommendations to change policy, funding, and legislation. We think this report will be of interest to other states as well."

Center Comments:

With the growing concern about students' mental health, we are hearing about more and more initiatives that may be counterproductive in shaping how well schools provide supports for addressing students' learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

Before proceeding with a narrow focus on efforts that will be too limited to address the needs of students and school staff, we encourage everyone to consider how best to frame mental health in schools.

In our work, we approach mental health in schools in ways that go beyond prevailing limited thinking and approaches. We stress that mental health concerns need to be *embedded as only one facet* of school improvement efforts to develop a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of student/learning supports. For brief overviews of why we advocate for this, see

>*Schools and Mental Health: A Position Statement*
>*Time for Straight Talk about Mental Health Services and MH in Schools*

To provide in-depth details, we offer interested stakeholders our recent free book entitled:
>*Embedding Mental Health as Schools Change*

Unfortunately, despite the various efforts to address the learning, behavior, and emotional needs of students who are not doing well at school, the tendency is still to propose approaches that simply

are too limited and produce little substantive improvements. Current advocacy for comprehensive school mental health services and ongoing calls for better coordination and integration of support services are widespread examples of the limited approaches.

Such limited approaches do little to reduce the achievement and opportunity gaps and unintentionally collude with the trend to marginalize student/learning supports in school improvement policy and practice. And the marginalization continues to make student and learning supports personnel among the first laid off as budgets tighten.

The need to transform student/learning supports is obvious, but the commitment of school improvement leaders to do so remains elusive.

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.

> ***Let us know your views on this matter.***
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> And, if you are aware of efforts underway to transform how schools address barriers to learning and teaching, please share with us.
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> 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*
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> Send all info and requests to ltaylor@ucla.edu

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**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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These are sad, uncomfortable, and disruptive times for many students and school staff. We have heard significant concerns about how many youngsters are being negatively affected. With respect to addressing the impact on students, we stress that the key is to anticipate and plan to maximize proactive actions and ways to help students and staff. Student support administrators and staff can lead the way.

For students who are emotionally upset, a useful resource to draw on is the *Psychological First Aid for Schools (PFA S) Field Operations Guide*.

Other resources can be found on our **Center website**. For easy links to resources, see our *online clearinghouse Quick Finds.*

For schools that experienced problems and were unprepared to deal with them, the above discussion about developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable student and learning supports may be worth considering.

If you have already done work related to this, please share it with us so we can share with others. Send to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

> **>Discipline's impact on student mental health**

Behavior problems clearly get in the way of schools meeting their mission. Misbehavior disrupts. In some forms, such as bullying and intimidating others, it is hurtful. Observing such behavior may disinhibit others. Because of this, discipline and classroom management are daily topics at every school. Increasingly, however, concerns have been raised about inequities in applying consequences for misbehavior, and there is growing appreciation of how traditional approaches to discipline can have a negative impact on school climate and culture and the mental health of students and staff. Here's an excerpt from a recent research article emphasizing system change.

From: ***Pushed Out and Drawn In: Exclusionary Discipline, MH, and Protective Factors Among Youth in Public Schools***

"Exclusionary discipline has long been an educational equity concern, but its relationship with student health and protective factors is less understood....

Educational exclusion fosters risk for a cascade of adverse and mutually reinforcing consequences, such as increased anger and apathy toward education leading to school disengagement or disruption of social cohesion with subsequent isolation....

Given inverse associations between protective factors with depression and anxiety symptoms, efforts to bolster protective factors may promote emotional well-being irrespective of individual youth's personal exclusionary discipline exposure.

These actions can range from informal efforts to connect youth to resources to structured programs targeting these buffering protections. For instance, caregivers and educators can facilitate involvement in extracurricular activities or mentor relationships for youth with, or at-risk for, exclusionary discipline experience. They might also connect youth to evidence-based interventions addressing social competency ... or parent-child connectedness....

Such individual-level efforts can help support emotional health in the near-term, particularly as structural changes to exclusionary discipline policies and practices may require significant investment of time and resources....

Although these strategies are important actions for educators and service providers, the greatest impact will likely be realized through systemic change. Our study corroborates other recommendations for institutions to reduce reliance on exclusionary discipline as an educational and health equity imperative. Institutions can also explore and fund alternative disciplinary frameworks such as multi-tiered systems of supports and restorative practices, which may positively influence student and school-level outcomes inclusive of exclusionary discipline.   These models reimagine student misbehaviors as inappropriate individual choices toward understanding them as developmentally appropriate coping behaviors to adverse circumstances.
Structures governing school staff, such as school resource officer policies or teacher training, can also be modified to align with principles of child development and trauma-informed care...."

For more on this concern, here are a few Center resources:
> ***Rethinking Discipline to Improve School Climate***
> ***Common Behavior Problems at School: A Natural Opportunity for Social and Emotional Learning***
> ***Rethinking How Schools Address Student Misbehavior & Disengagement***

Also see the Center's *online clearinghouse Quick Finds* on ***Disciplinary Practices*** and ***Discipline Codes and Policies***

>Links to a few other relevant shared resources

>>**Children's Prosocial Resilience in the Face of Adversity**

>>**Adolescents' social interaction skills on social media versus in person and the correlations to well-being**

>>**"When we go to ask for help, they don't understand how to help us": Understanding how youth with childhood histories of conduct problems link sexuality and gender to school-based service use**

>>**Inner strength amidst pandemic: Teachers' self-efficacy patterns and perceived personal accomplishments**

>>**The beauty and the beast of social media: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the impact of adolescents' social media experiences on their mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic**

>>**Avoiding Us versus Them: How Schools' Dependence on Privileged "Helicopter" Parents Influences Enforcement of Rules**

>>**The decisive decade: Understanding the trajectories of 14- to 24-year-olds**

>>**Roundup of Youth Mental Health Webinars**

>>**Supporting Kids During a Divorce**

>>**Supporting Families Impacted by Domestic Violence: Opportunities to Partner with Families to Promote Family Violence Prevention Programs and Services**

A Few Upcoming Webinars

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

5/16 Empowering grassroots mentoring
5/23 Strengthen Students? Connections to School
6/5 Use of humor in treatment and recovery
6/6 Challenges and insights around AI
6/26 Accelerating English Learner Success
7/11 Enhancing School Safety Using Behavioral Threat Assessment (part three)
*7/23 Stress management and resiliency training*
8/13 Administrator Basics for Supporting English Learners with Disabilities

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

I've got the answer to your problems!
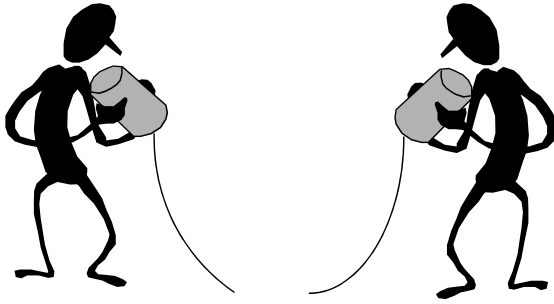
O.K. But you know H.L. Mencken cautioned that "For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong."

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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

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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.

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.