Addressing the Mental Health and Social Emotional Needs of All Students

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stress
MH and Stress stats

- Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness start by age 14 and 75% start by age 24
- Levels of stress, especially toxic stress, are rising among youth; in 2015, teens reported higher levels of stress than adults
- 30% of young adults reported having a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder in the past 12 months; the most common are anxiety, disruptive behavioral disorders, ADHD, and depression
- Suicide is 2nd leading cause of death Suicidal ideation is estimated to occur in 15-20% of youth
- 8-10% of high school youth attempted suicide in the last year

- Vulnerable populations (LGBTQ youth, living in poverty, system-involved) and youth of color are even more at risk due to systemic inequities and lack of early interventions
- Excessive levels of toxic stress have significant impacts on brain development which impacts learning
- 80% of youth with mental health issues do not access care
- Untreated mental health issues are among the most disabling and costly conditions in public health

Adelsheim, 2016; Bethune, 2014; Gallo et al., 2014; Kessler et al., 2005; Murphy et al., 2014
Helpless and/or hopeless

Never-ending work

Less creativity

Minimizing

Chronic exhaustion

Avoiding conversations

Guilt or fear

Anger and cynicism

Less empathy

Unhealthy self-care

Overwhelm

Less optimism

Educator/School Staff Stress Response
“Schools are first and foremost social-emotional institutions”

Stuart Shankar, York University
Resilience and Posttraumatic Growth

• While toxic stress can lead to poor mental health, not every child or adolescent will suffer these consequences.
• While large percentages of child and adolescent mental health issues persist into adulthood, many do not.
• Many children and adolescents do well in the face of adversity and trauma and build resilience in the process.
• Indeed, having experience with a moderate level of adversity supports better mental health and wellbeing.
• Having experiences with a high level of adversity does not necessarily equip one to be more resilient: they often need more supports in order to connect to their keys to wellbeing.

Having and increasing protective factors is very important, including:
• A shift in focus to wellness as a baseline
• Early comprehensive intervention
• Positive student-to-teacher relationships
• Positive student-to-student relationships
• Positive teacher-to-teacher relationships
• Universal SEL applications
• PBIS model
• Promotion of positive MH practices
• Preventative MH services

Murphy et al., 2014; National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, 2008; Seery, Holman, & Silver, 2010
System of Supports for School-Based Mental Health Services

- **Intensive, Individualized Interventions**
  - Brief individual counseling
  - Individual Educational Plan w/ Counseling as a Related Service
  - Behavior Intervention/Support Plan
  - Crisis Intervention
  - Wraparound services

- **Targeted, Supplemental Interventions & Supports**
  - Small group interventions
  - Anger management/self-management training
  - Targeted social skills training
  - Student Engagement/Attendance
  - Peer counseling/peer mediation
  - Adult mentor

- **Schoolwide, Preventive Systems of Support**
  - Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support
  - Safe & Healthy Schools (School Climate)
  - Schoolwide Social Skills Training
  - Social/Emotional Learning
  - Bullying Prevention

**Define**
- What is the mental health need?

**Analyze**
- Why is the need occurring?

**Implement**
- What are we going to do about it?

**Evaluate**
- Is it working?
SEL Outcomes

- Conduct problems
- Negative risk-taking behavior
- Emotional distress
- Disconnection
- Problematic social behaviors
- Mental health issues

- Attitudes toward oneself
- Self-efficacy
- Confidence
- Persistence
- Empathy
- Commitment to school
- Sense of purpose
- Social behaviors
- Relationships with peers and adults
- Test scores, grades, and attendance

Durlak et al., 2011; Farrington et al., 2012; Sklad et al., 2012; Hawkins, Kosterman, Catalano, Hill, & Abbott, 2008; Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015
Power of Adult-Student Relationship

Schore, 2001
American Institutes of Research’s Center on Great Teachers and Leader [http://www.gtlcenter.org/sel-school](http://www.gtlcenter.org/sel-school)
Adult SEL Competence & Learning

• Adults who have the ability to recognize, understand, label, express, and regulate emotions are more likely to demonstrate patience and empathy, encourage healthy communication, and create safe learning environments.

• Teachers skilled at regulating their emotions report less burnout and more positive affect while teaching.

• School leaders with strong SEL competencies build and maintain positive and trusting relationships among members of the school community.

Brackett, Katella, Kremenitzer, Alster, & Caruso, 2008; Brackett, Mojsa, Palomera, Reyes, & Salovey, 2008; Patti & Tobin, 2006
Attention
mind full or mindful?
Strengths-based Approach
What is Strong vs. What is Wrong
Generosity
Gratitude practices
How do we focus these concepts in a school setting?
Originally founded as Cleo Eulau Center in 1994
Mental health agency focused on education and learning environments

**Support** teachers, students, entire school community by
- *fostering healthy relationships*
- *promoting development of resilience*

**Educate** on direct connection between emotions and learning, as well as mental health promotion

**Create** more vital, healthy, and positive learning environments
Continuum of services for lifelong resilience and social, emotional, and academic success for students, educators, and administrators
MH in High Schools

These students are facing extreme adversities as victims of pervasive domestic and community violence, coerced gang involvement, poverty, racism, and loss of family members to death, incarceration, and deportation. They are skilled at survival in their communities but struggle managing the classroom and school community. Many end up dropping out of high school. Studies on high school attrition indicate that preventive counseling, occurring before students are in crisis, reduces the risk of these students dropping out later.
MH and SEL in K-8 schools

SEL programming may reduce the number of students who require early intervention, because participation in SEL programs fosters in children the skills they will need to cope with life’s challenges and helps teachers manage their classrooms in ways that promote interest and engagement, all within a caring school environment.
Focus on Educators

The educator-student relationship is the most powerful variable for learning and success. When teachers cultivate their own social emotional skills and practice self-care, they are able to respond to challenging moments with compassion and understanding, rather than shame and punishment. It takes only one teacher or caring adult to change a student’s life for the better.
Changing Students, Teachers, Principals, & School Communities

- Increase of 11% in observed student social emotional skills
- 95% of educators/staff increased awareness of student social emotional issues
- 94% of educators/staff increased resilience
- 93% of educators/staff put resilience into practice
- 87% of principals changed outlook towards leading and teaching

Acknowledge Alliance RCP Annual Report, 2017-2018
Questions & Conversations
Resources

Toolkit for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention

SEL Discussion Series for Parents and Caregivers

Connecting Social and Emotional Learning with Mental Health
Thank you!

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