

Mental Health and Schools Supporting Collaborative Practice

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There is considerable evidence that children's schooling plays a critical role in their adjustment.

Success in school is clearly associated with positive mental health & well-being for students.

Schools and Mental Health: The Reality is that

Schools either promote mental health and act as
a protective factor for children

OR

Schools contribute to poor adjustment and act as
a risk factor for children

School as a Risk Factor

Osher, Dwyer, and Jackson (2004)

- Alienation
- Academic Frustration
- Chaotic Transitions
- Negative Relationships with Adults and Peers
- Teasing, Bullying, Gangs
- Segregation with Antisocial Peers
- School-driven Mobility
- Harsh Discipline; Suspension, Expulsion, Push Out/Drop Out

School as a Protective Factor

Osher, Dwyer, and Jackson (2004)

- Connection
- Academic Success
- Supported Transitions
- Positive Relationships with Adults and Peers
- Caring Interactions
- Interaction with Pro-social peers
- Stability
- Positive approaches to disciplinary infractions

Risk and Protective Factors

Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Antisocial and Criminal Behavior

School Context

Risk Factors

school failure

normative beliefs about aggression

deviant peer group

bullying

peer rejection

poor attachment to school

inadequate behavior management

Protective Factors

positive school climate

prosocial peer group

responsibility and required helpfulness

sense of belonging/
bonding

opportunities for some success at school and recognition of achievement

school norms concerning violence

Schools and Children's Mental Health: You Are Already Providing It!

- Classroom teachers can play a key role in supporting mental health and identifying students who MAY be in need of assistance
- Schools are commonly regarded as the de facto providers of mental health services for children and youth (Burns, et al., 1995; Farmer, et al., 2003).
- Schools provide an estimated 70–80% of psychosocial services to those children who receive them (Rones & Hoagwood, 2000).
- 21% of US children ages 9 to 17 have a diagnosable mental or addictive disorder that causes at least minimal impairment and behavioral challenges (US Surgeon General)

Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Antisocial and Criminal Behavior

Child Factors

Risk Factors

prematurity
low birth weight disability
prenatal brain damage
birth injury
low intelligence
difficult temperament
chronic illness
insecure attachment
poor problem solving
beliefs about aggression
attributions
poor social skills
low self-esteem
lack of empathy
alienation
hyperactivity/ disruptive
behavior
impulsivity

Protective Factors

social competence
social skills
above average intelligence
attachment to family
empathy
problem solving
optimism
school achievement
easy temperament
internal locus of control
moral beliefs
values
self-related cognitions
good coping style

Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Antisocial and Criminal Behavior

Family Factors

Risk Factors

Parental characteristics:

teenage mothers
single parents
psychiatric disorder, especially depression
substance abuse
criminality
antisocial models

Family environment:

family violence and disharmony
marital discord
disorganized
negative interaction/ social isolation
large family size
father absence
long-term parental unemployment

Parenting style:

poor supervision and monitoring of child
discipline style (harsh or inconsistent)
rejection of child
abuse
lack of warmth and affection
low involvement in child's activities
neglect

Protective Factors

supportive, caring parents
family harmony
more than two years between siblings
responsibility for chores or required helpfulness
secure and stable family
supportive relationship with other adult
small family size
strong family norms and morality

Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Antisocial and Criminal Behavior

Community and Cultural

Risk Factors

socioeconomic disadvantage
population density and housing conditions
urban area
neighborhood violence and crime
cultural norms concerning violence as acceptable
response to frustration
media portrayal of violence
lack of support services
social or cultural discrimination

Protective Factors

access to support services
community networking
attachment to the community
participation in church or other community group
community/cultural norms against violence
a strong cultural identity and ethnic pride

Data: schools and mental health

- Students with mental illness have the highest dropout rate of any disability group
- Nationally, 50% of children with serious emotional & behavioral disorders and 30% of students with other disabilities drop out of high school
- Over half of the adolescents in the United States who fail to complete their secondary education have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder

Barriers to Involvement in Child Mental Health Interventions

- Triple threat: poverty, single parent status and stress
- Concrete obstacles: time, transportation, child care, competing priorities
- Attitudes about mental health, stigma
- Previous negative experiences with mental health or institutions

Barriers to Involvement in Child Mental Health Interventions

- Scarce mental health resources
- Transportation
- Stigma associated with mental illness and seeking care
- Concerns about confidentiality
- Isolation

Schools Need to be Supported Too

Educators need to be highly supported through a systems approach that:

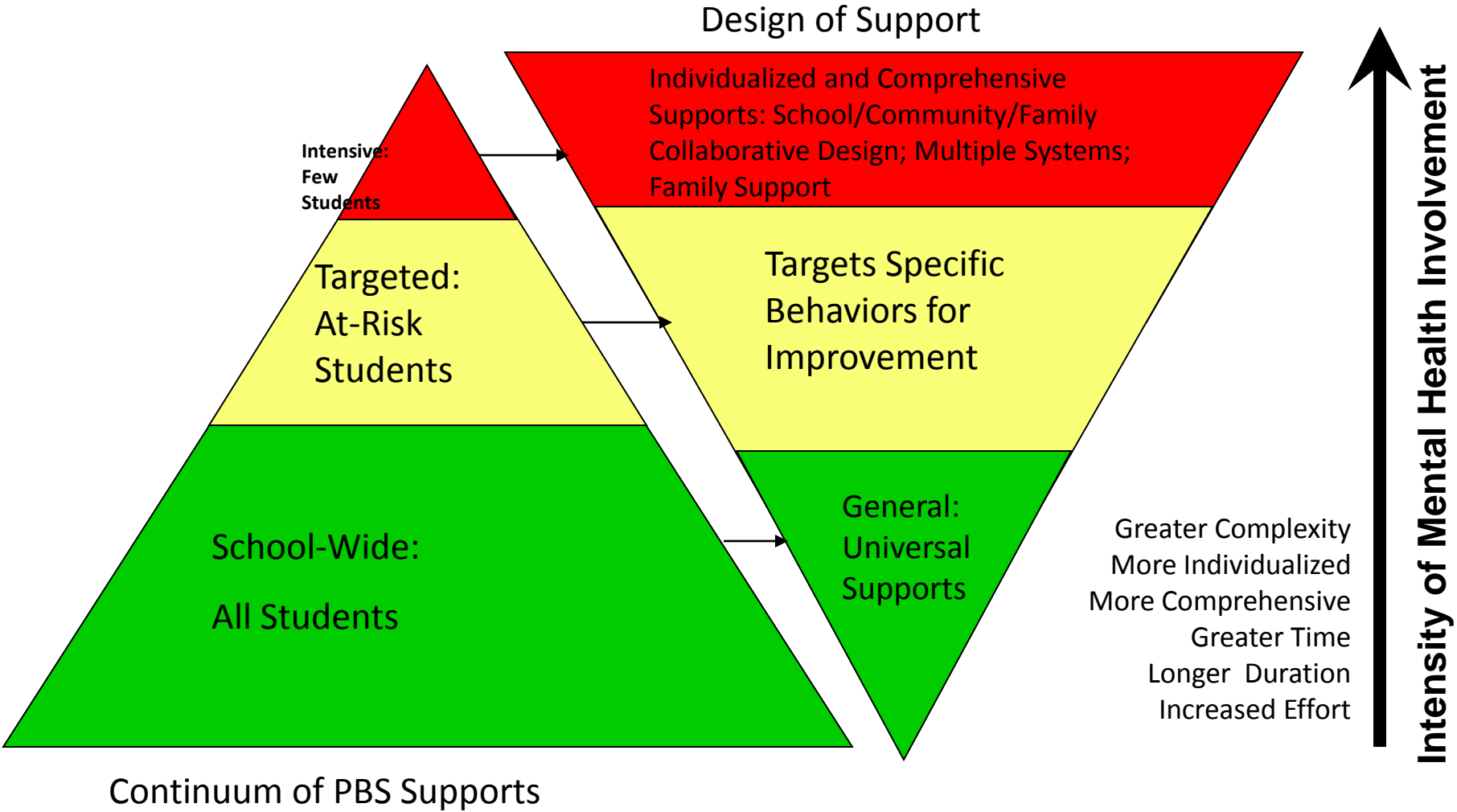
- Provides them with essential information
- Includes established procedures for efficient referral to in-school (targeted and intensive) and community-based supports
- Fosters on-going communications that link community, school and families in partnership toward common outcomes and aligned supports

Create a Caring Community

Osher (2006)

- Students perform better on tests when they believe that their teachers care about them
 - This relationship is stronger for students who are judged to be at risk for dropping out of high school
- Supportive relationships promote student engagement, positive attitudes, and a sense of belonging toward school, motivation, and academic achievement
- Connections with adults in the school protect against a range of anti-social outcomes which impact on academic performance (e.g., substance abuse)

Relationships between PBS and Mental Health (Schools) and Mental Illness (Community Resources)



School-Home-Mental Health Collaboration Works

- School-based programs focused on consultation with teachers and parents can be effective approaches to enhancing children's mental health (Lowie, Lever, Ambrose, Tager, & Hill, 2003; McKay, et al., 2003; Weiss, et al., 2003).
- Consultation with teachers can maximize opportunities to effect children's academic learning and classroom behavior (Fantuzzo & Atkins, 1992; Ringeisen et al., 2003)