Webinar Q&A

Using Multi-tiered Systems of Support to Address Students' Mental Health: An Evidence-Based Approach

This document includes responses from presenter Dr. Shai Fuxman to questions that were not answered during the webinar on July 28, 2022.

Q: What is the rate of false positives and false negatives on screeners that might be used for this purpose?

A: The answer to this question depends significantly on the mental health screening tool. There are many tools out there. When selecting a mental health screening tool, it is important to look at how the tool was developed and tested for psychometric properties (that is, validity and reliability). Here is a resource from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) focused on the selection and use of mental health screening tools:

https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/ready_set_go_review_mh_screening_in_schools_508.pdf

Here is another resource from the UCLA Center for School Mental Health:
https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/screening-assessing-students-indicators-tools

Q: Given the focus on equity as a driver to the MTSS (Multi-tiered Systems of Support) framework, do you have suggestions for how "red flags" or symptoms might differ for different racial, ethnic, LGBTQ+ students?

A: This is a good question. I have not seen any research about differences in trauma-related symptoms, or other forms of mental health "red flags" by racial or ethnic groups or for LGBTQIA+ students. However, there is research demonstrating educator bias (including implicit bias) that impacts how educators and education systems handle mental and behavioral "red flags" differently based on students' identity. For example, studies have shown that educators are more likely to choose harsh disciplinary actions for students of color vs. their White peers as a response to "red flag" behaviors or symptoms. Here are some studies on the subject:

Villodas, M. T., Pfiffner, L. J., Moses, J. O., Hartung, C., & McBurnett, K. (2019). The roles of student gender, race, and psychopathology in teachers' identification of students for services. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *107*, 104468.
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0190740919302336

Fadus, M. C., Valadez, E. A., Bryant, B. E., Garcia, A. M., Neelon, B., Tomko, R. L., & Squeglia, L. M. (2021). Racial disparities in elementary school disciplinary actions: findings from the ABCD study. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *60*(8), 998-1009.
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0890856720322139

Walker, L. (2021). Why Don't You See Me?: Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Black Male Students. *The New Educator*, *17*(3), 264-280. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1547688X.2021.1909788

Gregory, A., Osher, D., Bear, G. G., Jagers, R. J., & Sprague, J. R. (2021). Good intentions are not enough: Centering equity in school discipline reform. *School psychology review*, *50*(2-3), 206-220.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/2372966X.2020.1861911

Q: What about documentation? Mental health has to follow HIPPA requirements, and so typically only the provider is aware and information is not shared with the classroom teacher, MTSS team, etc.
A: In 2019, the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services issued a joint guidance document on the application of FERPA and HIPPA to student health records, including mental health-related information. This guidance document answers these and related questions:

https://rems.ed.gov/docs/2019%20HIPAA%20FERPA%20Joint%20Guidance.pdf

Q: How is this PBIS adjusted/contextualized to accommodate refugee children entering our schools?
A: Though not specific to positive behavioral intervention and supports (PBIS), this resource from the National Association of School Psychologists provides helpful information about supporting the mental health needs of refugee students: https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/mental-health-resources/war-and-terrorism/supporting-refugee-students

Q: Curious how schools implementing this model work within the confines of laws that protect student information? I know counseling departments within colleges will not share information about a student's mental health with faculty because they fear violating HIPPA.
A: See answer above with joint statement from U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services.

Q: I am very interested in Native American specific interventions as well. Do you know if there are any and where I may be able to find these?
A: Here are a few resources:

SAMHSA's National American Indianan and Alaska Native Mental Health Technology Transfer Center: https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/national-american-indian-and-alaska-native-mhttc/home

Mental Health Evidence-Based Practices for American Indian and Alaska Native Schools and Communities: https://mhttcnetwork.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/NAIAN_MHTTC_EnvScan.1.28.2020.pdf

Resources for Native and Indigenous Communities and Mental Health from Mental Health America: https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/national-american-indian-and-alaska-native-mhttc/home