



Middle School Teachers' Mental Health Training, Knowledge, & Perceived Roles: School Psychologists' Potential Contribution

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Learning Objectives

- ▶ Understand the mental health issues that affect children and adolescents in the United States;
- ▶ Understand mental health issues of children and adolescents in Texas;
- ▶ Types of mental health issues that teachers identified are prevalent in the classroom;



Learning Objectives

- ▶ Teachers' knowledge, training, and experience in supporting mental health;
- ▶ Teacher's role in addressing students' mental health needs;
- ▶ Identifying ways in which teachers can be better equipped to deal with students' mental health needs;
- ▶ School Psychologists potential contribution



Mental Health in Children and Adolescents in the U.S.

- ▶ One in five children and adolescents in the United States has a mental disorder that interferes with daily functioning. Yet, fewer than one in five of these children receive the mental health services they need (U.S. Surgeon General's Report).
- ▶ Children with mental disorders, particularly depression, are at a higher risk for suicide. An estimated 90 percent of children who commit suicide have a mental disorder (U.S. Surgeon General's Report).



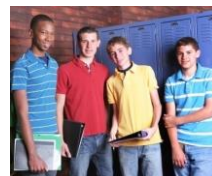
Mental Health in Children and Adolescents in the U.S.

- ▶ One in five children and adolescents in the Anxiety disorders, mood disorders (such as depression), and disruptive disorders (such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) are the most common mental disorders among children. Of these, anxiety disorders are the most common, affecting about 13 percent of children age 9 to 17 (U.S. Surgeon General's Report).



Mental Health in Children and Adolescents in the U.S.

- ▶ When left untreated, childhood mental disorders can lead to school failure, family conflicts, substance abuse, violence, and even suicide (SAMHSA/CMHS).
- ▶ Substance abuse is also linked to untreated mental disorders; 43 percent of children who use mental health services also have a substance abuse disorder (SAMHSA).



Mental Health in Children and Adolescents in the U.S.

- ▶ When left untreated, childhood mental disorders
Untreated mental disorders also may increase a child's risk of coming into contact with the juvenile justice system; studies show that 66 percent of boys and almost 75 percent of girls in juvenile detention have at least one mental disorder (President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health Final Report).



Mental Health in Children and Adolescents in the U.S.

- ▶ Students facing mental health problems struggle to finish tasks, have poor school attendance records, and experience new struggles with peer and adult relationships (Hill, Ohmstede, & Mims, 2012).
- ▶ Doctors' offices and schools are important settings for recognizing and addressing children's mental health problems. (U.S. Surgeon General's Report).



Mental Health in Children and Adolescents in the Texas

- ▶ Spending for Mental health in Texas ranks 49th in the United States compared to other States (Texas Medical Association, 2016).
- ▶ 519,368 estimated children ages 17 and younger afflicted with a severe emotional disturbance (Texas Health and Human Service, 2016).
- ▶ Yet, there is a shortage of mental health professionals to support the need to address students' behavioral health (State of Texas Health Services. 2014).



Mental Health in Children and Adolescents in the Texas

- ▶ State legislation now requires education of all school personnel in order to help in the screening, identification, and intervention of mental illness in children and adolescents; and guaranteeing adequate means to support (Dietrich, Snyder, & Villani, 2016).



Our Study



- ▶ Surveyed middle school teachers to examine the following:
 - ▶ What are the levels of teachers' perception of current mental health needs in their school?
 - ▶ What are the levels of knowledge, skills, training experience in the area of mental health?
 - ▶ What do teachers perceive is their role in supporting children's mental health?
 - ▶ What do teachers perceive are the barriers to supporting mental health needs in their school setting?

Participants

- ▶ 241 Public Middle School Teachers from grades 6th-8th from 8 different middle schools
 - ▶ 83.8% had a Bachelor's Degree
 - ▶ 15.8% had a Master's Degree
 - ▶ 0.4% had a Doctoral Degree



Participants

- ▶ Years of experience ranged from 1 to more than 20 years of teaching.
 - ▶ 17 % had 1 to 3 years
 - ▶ 18.3% had 4 to 7 years
 - ▶ 21.2% had 8 to 11 years
 - ▶ 11.2% had 2 to 15 years
 - ▶ 5.8 % had 16 to 19 years
 - ▶ 26.5% had more than 20 years



Participants

- ▶ Courses Taken at a Higher Education Institution concerning any type of mental illness:
 - ▶ 27.3 % had no courses
 - ▶ 43.7% had 1 to 2 courses
 - ▶ 13.4% had 3 to 4 courses
 - ▶ 8% had 5 to 6 courses
 - ▶ 1.7 % had 7 to 8 courses
 - ▶ 5.9% had 9 or more courses



Participants

- ▶ 64% had not attended a training or workshop related to teaching students with mental illness
- ▶ 53.6 % identified having received School Administration support in working with students diagnosed with mental illness



Student Characteristics

- ▶ Average Student Enrollment Per School: 844 Students
 - ▶ 99 % Hispanic
 - ▶ 89% classified as Economically Disadvantaged
 - ▶ 39% classified as English Language Learners
 - ▶ 7% receiving Special Education services



Prevalent Mental Health Issues

- ▶ The five most cited mental health problems included:
 - ▶ Disruptive behavior/acting out (95%)
 - ▶ Defiant behavior (94%)
 - ▶ Hyperactivity (93%)
 - ▶ Problems with attention (92%)
 - ▶ Peer problems (88%)



Role in Addressing Students' Mental Health Needs

- ▶ Need knowledge in screening for mental health disorders:
 - ▶ 31% of teachers showed they agreed or strongly agreed
 - ▶ 30% were neutral
 - ▶ 39% disagreed or strongly disagreed



Role in Addressing Students' Mental Health Needs

- ▶ Need knowledge in referring children and families to school-based service providers:
 - ▶ 49% of teachers showed they agreed or strongly agreed
 - ▶ 25% were neutral
 - ▶ 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed



Role in Addressing Students' Mental Health Needs

- ▶ Do you Implement classroom behavioral interventions:
 - ▶ 46% of teachers showed they agreed or strongly agreed
 - ▶ 34% were neutral
 - ▶ 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed



Role in Addressing Students' Mental Health Needs

- ▶ Need knowledge in conducting behavioral assessments:
 - ▶ 38% of teachers showed they agreed or strongly agreed
 - ▶ 28% were neutral
 - ▶ 33% disagreed or strongly disagreed.



Knowledge, Training, and Experience in Supporting Mental Health

- ▶ Teachers rated their education and training in using behavioral interventions:
 - ▶ 56% rated their education or training as none or minimal,
 - ▶ 34% as moderate,
 - ▶ 6% as substantial.
- ▶ Most participants did not feel confident about their knowledge and ability to use interventions.



Knowledge, Training, and Experience in Supporting Mental Health

- ▶ Besides education and training, teachers rated the amount of experience in using behavioral interventions:
 - ▶ 51% rating as none or minimal,
 - ▶ 43% as moderate, and
 - ▶ 7% as substantial.
- ▶ Most teachers reported that they did not regularly use behavioral interventions in the classroom.



Knowledge, Training, and Experience in Supporting Mental Health

- ▶ If teachers received training in behavioral interventions, they highlighted the particular format in which training occurred.
- ▶ The top three forms included:
 - ▶ In- service workshops,
 - ▶ Independent reading or self-study
 - ▶ Undergraduate coursework



Equipping teachers to deal with students' mental health needs;



- ▶ The majority of the participants cited that they need additional knowledge and/or skills training in the following areas:
 - ▶ Behavior Intervention/Classroom Management (28%);
 - ▶ Identifying students that may potentially have mental health issues (16%);
 - ▶ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (14%);
 - ▶ Disruptive behavior (11%)
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Equipping teachers to deal with students' mental health needs;



- ▶ Some comments by teachers:
 - ▶ "I have no training, or idea on how to deal with mental illness."
 - ▶ "I need help in identifying students with mental disorders; I'm stressed out!"
 - ▶ "What do I do when these kids do not take their meds?"
 - ▶ Training in mental health issues and classroom management is crucial and needed!!
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Equipping teachers to deal with students' mental health needs;



- ▶ Teachers cited 27 different challenges they face in the classroom environment:
 - ▶ Lack of knowledge/not enough training (26%)
 - ▶ Identifying students in their classroom that may show signs/symptoms of mental health issues (25%);
 - ▶ Working with children with disruptive behavior (15%),
 - ▶ Working with students who are hyperactive or diagnosed with ADHD (7%).

Equipping teachers to deal with students' mental health needs;



- ▶ Some comments by teachers:
 - ▶ "Kids with mental health problems have lots of behavioral problems and are tough to control."
 - ▶ "I have no knowledge of who they are, what problems they have, and what intervention will help them."
 - ▶ "I Have no knowledge of mental illnesses, or how to select those suffering from a mental health issue."
 - ▶ Training in mental health issues and classroom management is crucial and needed!!
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Equipping teachers to deal with students' mental health needs;



- ▶ Teachers responded to having concerns related to mental health illness:
 - ▶ Lack of teacher training concerning mental health (23%)
 - ▶ Lack of ability to identify students exhibiting signs/symptoms of mental health issues (11%)
 - ▶ Not knowing about mental health (10%)
 - ▶ Lack of classroom techniques (9%).

Study Limitations

- ▶ Small sample size
 - ▶ Only included middle school teachers from one geographical area
 - ▶ Homogeneous group of teachers
 - ▶ Specific student mental health issues were unknown
 - ▶ Mental Health issues were generalized
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School Psychologists' Potential Contribution

- ▶ Some ideas:
 - ▶ Become involved in training on mental health issues and provide support for teachers seeking guidance
 - ▶ Become involved in training on classroom behavior management strategies and their implementation
 - ▶ Provide training on Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans
 - ▶ Establish a collegial relationship on campuses to demonstrate and help teachers on addressing behavior issues
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Any Questions



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Resources

- ▶ "Facts about Children and Mental Health" at www.mentalhealth.samsha.gov
 - ▶ National Association of School Psychologists at www.naspcenter.org
 - ▶ Texas Education Agency: www.tea.state.tx.us
 - ▶ Kids Health at www.kidshealth.org
 - ▶ Mental Health First Aid: www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org
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