



Interconnecting School and Community Mental Health Systems to Foster Trauma-Sensitive School Communities: Expanding the Conversation to Include School Nurses

CHALLENGES

- Low intensity, low fidelity interventions for behavior/emotional needs
- Habitual use of restrictive settings (and poor outcomes) for youth with disabilities
- High rate of undiagnosed mental health problems (stigma, lack of knowledge, etc.)
- Changing the routines of ineffective practices (systems) that are “familiar” to systems
- “Referrals to a mental health person” viewed as an intervention
- Ad hoc and weak connections of community mental health providers to schools
- Need for systematic MOUs that clarify roles
- Integration into school-based teams
- Funding support to function within each Tier of support
- Constraints on School-Employed Mental Health Staff
 - Too few of them, with ratios for school psychology, counseling and social work far below recommendations of national organizations
 - Status quo, narrowed functioning of positions (e.g., school psychology – evaluation, counseling – academic advising)
 - Pressures related to “gatekeeping”

DISCUSSION

- Do school nurses apply trauma-informed care in schools? What does (or what could) this look like? (Within Tiers 1-3)
- Can we expand the effectiveness of the continuum of MTSS if we include school nurses and community medical professionals?
- How can we install effective systems to address trauma for all youth through schools?
 - Changes in routines and procedures? (Who needs to be available to participate in team meetings?)
 - Changes in how interventions are selected and monitored? (Team review of data/research vs. individual clinician choice?)
 - Changes in language we use? (Identifying specific interventions vs. generic terms such as “counseling” or “supports”?)
 - Changes in roles/functions of staff? (Clinicians coordinating/overseeing some interventions that non-clinicians deliver?)
 - Share local examples of community and school leaders and practitioners exploring, adopting, installing, implementing, refining, and improving an integrated system.