

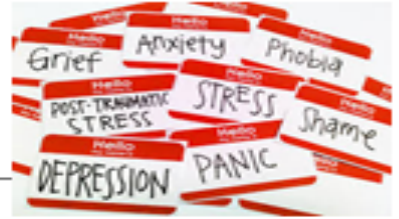


School Counselors

Role in Student Mental
Health Access

Virginia School Counselor Association - SJ47 Workgroup Presentation 9.23.19
Dr. Denise McKaig-Phillips, Mr. Matt Sheneker, Ms. Brett Welch

Mental Health



- Each year, 14-20% of youth are diagnosed with mental, emotional, or behavioral mental health disorders (National Academy of Science, 2009)
- Only 45% of youth with a mental health diagnosis receive treatment, and only 24% of those individuals receive care in the school system (Costello, He, Sampson, Kessler, & Merikangas, 2014).

School Counselors: Trained for Mental Health

- Hold a *minimum* of a Master's Degree in counseling, which exceeds the educational requirement of Virginia's Qualified Mental Health Professionals (QMHP-C) and meets Virginia's degree program requirements for Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC).
- Receive 700+ supervised hours of clinical practicum and internship experience counseling students in the school setting prior to completion of a CACREP* graduate program.
- Receive mandatory mental health training in the recognition of mental health disorder and behavioral distress, including depression, trauma, violence, youth suicide, and substance abuse (SB1117).
- Are specifically trained to provide social/emotional learning, prevention programs, mental and behavioral support, and crisis response in the school setting, in addition to academic and career development.

Widely Used Strategy for Prevention: MTSS



(Goodman-Scott et al., 2019: *School Counselor's Guide to MTSS*)

MTSS (PBIS & RTI)

- ❑ Highly implemented throughout the country
- ❑ Implemented in many schools/districts in Virginia
- ❑ Strong research base supporting the positive student/school impact of MTSS
- ❑ In Virginia: VTSS



(Goodman-Scott et al., 2019: *School Counselor's Guide to MTSS*)

How students are identified as being in need of mental health services in the school setting?

- Parent referral
- Teacher referral
- MTSS (RTI & PBIS) data

It's Not Enough

Mental Health Supports SC's Provide

- **Tier 1:** Classroom Counseling Instruction designed to target social-emotional learning, academic support and college/career awareness and exploration.
- **Tier 2:** Small Group counseling designed to build social-emotional and soft skills such as: self-regulation, social skills, relational aggression, study skills, leadership, etc. (identified by MTSS (RTI/PBIS) data)
- **Tier 3:** Individual brief counseling support sessions for developmentally appropriate issues.
- Conduct suicide assessments and provide crisis intervention
- Referrals to and collaboration with outside mental health providers (therapists) to support students in the school setting.
- School Counselors do NOT provide therapy or follow treatment plans for students with diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health disorders.

What happens when student need is more than the school counselor can provide?

- Refer out to community counselors/therapists
 - Barriers:
 - Insurance
 - Wait time/Availability
 - Parent Access
- Alternative Day Treatment Educational Programs
 - Barriers:
 - IEP required- lots of time in between to qualify
 - Cost to district

Strategy for Prevention & Intervention

- Universal Mental Health Screening
- Growing national trend
- Implemented in several school districts in Virginia, especially screening for suicide



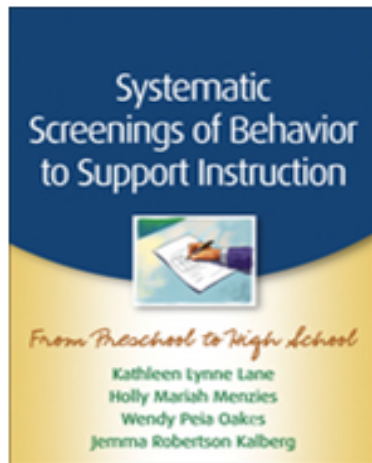
(Goodman-Scott et al., Counseling Today, Sept. 2019)

Universal Screening:

"The systematic assessment of ALL children within a given class, grade, school building, or school district on academic and/or social-emotional indicators that the school personnel and community have agreed are important."

(Ikeda, Neessen & Witt, 2008, p. 113)

The #1 recommendation, from external organization who analyzed the Sandy Hook shooting



(Goodman-Scott et al., Counseling Today, Sept. 2019)

Recommendations from VSCA

- 1) Reduce ratios: 1:250 school counselor: student refer to VSCA advocacy handout within 3 years and fully fund
 - 2) Require school counselors to be out of the master schedule rotation as a resource class (Elementary)
 - 3) Implementation of Universal Mental Health Screening statewide to ID students not otherwise identified (to be effective this requires buy-in from district leadership)
- ☆ 3 cannot be done effectively before 1 and 2 are in place.

Presenters

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