Creating a School Community

Presented By: Laurel Bear, Ph.D.
Every child deserves a champion - an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be. - Rita Pierson
THE STUDENTS THAT ENTER OUR SCHOOL CAMPUSES ARE NOT THE SAME AS THEY WERE 5, 10, 15 YEARS AGO...
Remember, the kids who need the most love will ask for it in the most unloving ways.

The Gottman Institute
MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

• 20% of school-aged children have a mental health diagnosis

• Over 70% don’t get treatment (even if they have insurance)

• For youth in poverty or with non-English speaking parents, more than 80% do not get treatment

• Almost 57% of children in California have had adverse experience (trauma)
MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

- Of children and youth that get care, 70% do so in school
- When universal school climate strategies are well implemented, mental health referrals go down significantly
Building a positive and engaging learning environment while understanding social emotional learning

Every child should have a caring adult in their lives. And that's not always a biological parent or family member. It may be a friend or neighbor. Often times it is a teacher.

Joe Manchin
American Politician
HOW TRAUMA AFFECTS BEHAVIOR

TRAUMA IN THE CLASSROOM

Trauma can damage neural connections in the learning areas of the brain responsible for memory, organization, and emotional regulation, making it hard for students to process, learn, and integrate new information.

Students experiencing an overactive stress response may show up as defiant, hostile, and angry or jumpy, anxious, and worrisome. Their behavior may be loud and disruptive. Their nervous system is full of undischarged stress and tension.

Students may also appear needy or idealizing, particularly if they've experienced developmental trauma. Due to a lack of adequate mirroring in childhood, these students seek mirroring and attention from their teachers but never seem fulfilled by it.

Some students may experience complete dissociation or shut down. These students may be depressed, chronically tired, or may seem generally listless. They can show up bored, dissociated, and annoyed in class.
WE NEED TO CREATE A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR STUDENTS, MORE THAN EVER BEFORE!!!
Students come to school with a number of problems, concerns, and needs:

- Mental health needs
- Broken homes—Divorce, deportation
- Incarceration, passing of parent/s
- Unaccompanied youth
- Medicated: Anti-depressants: Prozac
- Self-medicated: Pot, prescription drugs, alcohol
- Homelessness: Car, motel, multi-family

Have you experienced any of these circumstances in your school sites with your own students?
SPARKING INNOVATION
BUILDING A SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Think outside the box!

- Attendance
- School Climate Safety
- Creating Board Policy
- Messaging Change
- Trainings
- School & Community Partners
- Parent Engagement
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

• The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions.

• It is the ability to set and achieve positive goals, feel, and show empathy for others and also establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.
WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT ALL STAKEHOLDERS WITH...

Communication

Maintaining a Good Environment for Learning
- Behavior/Discipline
- Attendance

Creating a Learning Community via partnerships

Need for Self-Care
- Teacher Wellness Series
- Parent University
- YMCA

Creating Positive Social Emotional Learning

School Community
WHY DOES YOUR DISTRICT NEED TO CREATE A SCHOOL COMMUNITY SYSTEM OF CARE?

• Do you have students at-risk?
• How prepared are you for addressing school safety?
• How are you currently addressing students who demonstrate need?
• What are you doing for students/families in crisis?
• Do your students need access to mental health services in schools?
• What additional services do your students need?
• How do you support your staff?
WHAT ARE SCHOOL BASE SERVICES?

• School-Based Mental Health services - University & agency partners

• Interventions – attendance & discipline

• Universal treatments utilizing evidence-based curriculums

• Parent Engagement, Education, and Support Programs

• Address School Climate and Student Engagement and Safety of all Students

• School Community Partners
TRAININGS

- Suicide Prevention
- Threat Assessment
- Child Abuse
- Crisis Response
- Pyramid of Success
- Attendance
- Student Health
- Parent Engagement
- Special Populations

- Mental Health
- Simulated Critical Incident
- School Safety
- Didactic Trainings
- Teacher/Staff Wellness Series
SCHOOL CLIMATE
WHY IS SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPORTANT?

• Perceptions about school climate impact teacher morale and student achievement.

• Positive school climate benefits students, teachers, and staff. Teachers are motivated to teach and students are motivated to learn (Bulach, 1994).
CRISIS RESPONSE
Preparing For The Unthinkable
How will you foster relationship building on your campus, in creating a school community?

Student to Student
Teacher to Student
Student to Teacher
Student to Adult Staff
Adult Staff to Student
BE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE

- Acknowledge the Positives
- Communication
- Implement school-wide expectations that are consistent
- Keep schools safe
- Model your expectations
- Pay attention to your non-verbal messages

Be around the people you want to be like because you will be like the people you are around.
A Decade of Service
WHO IS ALHAMBRA UNIFIED?

- Total student enrollment 17,404
- Asian 53% (9202)
- Hispanic/Latino 41% (7194)
- White 2% (359)
- African American/Black <1% (122)

4 cities Alhambra, Monterey Park, San Gabriel and Rosemead
2008
1 University
3 Mental Health Agencies
4 Community Agencies
1 Parent Programs

2013
7 Universities
10 Mental Health Agencies
7 Community Agencies
5 Parent Programs

Present
11 Universities
11 Mental Health Agencies
14 Community Agencies
6 Parent Programs
GATEWAY REFERRALS 2017-2018

• Total referrals 2375
• 1910 accepted services
• 95 were already receiving services from an outside agency
• 61 waitlisted
• 220 declined services
• 99 passive decline for services
OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
Gateway To Success

School Based Mental Health...

“We all have a hand in every child’s success”

- School Based Mental Health
  - Individual therapy to students
  - Crisis intervention
  - Small groups
  - Universal EBP’s in classrooms (i.e.: PATHS, Second Step, etc.)
  - Classroom presentations (i.e.; anti-bullying, A-G req., etc.)
  - Linking families with resources in the community
- Ongoing Parent Education and Workshops
- School safety and more…
PARENT EDUCATION

- Parent University - 4 workshops
- Parent Project
  - 10 week course at APD
- Strengthening Families (EBP)
  - 10 weeks, parents of children ages 6-14 yrs
- Incredible Years (3 – 5yrs)
- 40 Developmental Assets
  - 5 week, all parents welcome
  - Saturday School
SCHOOL INTEGRATION AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
KEY PEOPLE ON CAMPUS

Principal
  - Office Manager
    - Assistant Principal
  - School Resource Officer
    - Attendance Clerk
      - Office Assistant
      - School Community Coordinators
  - School Resource Officer
    - Teachers
      - Intervention Advisors
      - Counselors
      - School Psychologists
      - Nurse and Health Assistant
      - Custodian
      - Yard Supervisors or Campus Supervisors (HS Only)
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

• Build relationships one at a time
• Be friendly and make a connection
• Ask people questions
• Tell people about yourself
• Go places and do things

• Accept people the way they are
• Assume other people want to form relationships
• Overcome your fear of rejection
• Be persistent
The kids who need the most love will ask for it in the most unloving ways.
QUESTIONS?