School and Community-Based Counseling Services

Which district employees can provide school-based mental health services?

◊ School counselors, school psychologists and school social workers are all considered school-based mental health professionals.

Mental health professionals (school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers) employed by the school possess the skills needed to intervene and address mental health issues that impact a student’s ability to be successful in school.

What mental health services can school-based mental health professionals provide?

◊ School counselors, school psychologists and school social workers can provide group and individual counseling to students using evidenced-based practices to address:
  • School stress and anxiety
  • Family stress (divorce, homelessness)
  • Self-regulation and coping skills
  • Depression
  • Poor self-concept and anger/aggression
  • Grief and loss

What are other ways school counselors, school psychologists and school social workers support mental health in schools?

◊ Serve as a member of district or school teams together and analyze data to determine appropriate mental health supports and services.
◊ Work collaboratively with SEDNET to coordinate community and school-based mental health services.
How would Student Services staffing ratios impact the provision of school-based mental health counseling?

- Research shows that staffing ratios are directly correlated with the provision of mental health service.
- An increase in student services staff will lead to an increase in the capacity and the accessibility of mental health counseling services in schools.

How do school-based mental health services support academic achievement?

- Interventions that strengthen students’ social, emotional, and decision-making skills also positively impact their academic achievement, both in terms of higher standardized test scores and better grades (Greenberg et al., 2003; Fleming et al., 2005).
- School mental health programs improve educational outcomes by decreasing absences, decreasing discipline referrals, and increasing test scores (New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003).
- Expanded school mental health services in schools have been found to reduce special education referrals, improve aspects of the school climate (Bruns et al., 2004).
- School-based mental health services are associated with declines in disciplinary referrals, suspension, grade retention, and special education referrals and placement (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2005b).
- Intensive school-based mental health services for elementary school children experiencing severe emotional and behavioral difficulties have demonstrated reductions in conduct disordered behavior, attention deficit/hyperactivity, and depression (Hussey & Guo, 2003).

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