Learning Objectives

- Identify the need for School Psychologists to be mental health providers in schools
- Explore current policies existing for mental health in schools.
- Examine opportunities for School Psychologists to advocate for mental health practices in schools
- Navigate case law regarding the legal and ethical implications for advocacy for School Psychologists
- Understand how to start at the school level as well as how to make a difference at the district, state, or federal level.

Mental Health in Schools?

- What percentage of children in the US has a diagnosable mental health disorder?
- Of those who receive treatment, what percentage of them receive interventions in school?

Mental Health Services in Schools?

- School based counseling programs improve student mental wellness, behavioral functioning, and academic achievement.
- School mental health programs improve educational outcomes by decreasing absences, discipline referrals and improving test scores.
**Nebraska Data**

**I see myself as a mental health service provider in my schools.**

- **StrONGLY AGREE:** 23.06%
- **AGREE:** 58.93%
- **DISAGREE:** 17.60%
- **STRONGLY DISAGREE:**

**Nebraska Data**

**I believe that I am a leader in providing mental health supports for all students in schools.**

- **STRONGLY AGREE:** 21.66%
- **AGREE:** 54.60%
- **DISAGREE:** 19.82%
- **STRONGLY DISAGREE:**

**Nebraska Data**

**Mental Health Services I Provide in Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Counseling/Intervention</td>
<td>23.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Counseling/Intervention</td>
<td>17.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Intervention</td>
<td>17.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Consultation</td>
<td>22.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>13.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/Class-Wide Supports</td>
<td>13.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>11.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Elbow Partner talk**

- What do you notice about the Nebraska data?
- What is reflective of your current practices?
- What is inconsistent with your current practices?

**Current Opportunities**

*When Opportunity Knocks, Don’t Let Fear Hold You Back. Open The Door And Embrace the Opportunity That Has Come Forth.*

**Major Public Policy Issues in Education**

- **International Competition**
  - College/Career Readiness
- **Addressing Disparate Discipline Practices**
- **Halting the School to Prison Pipeline**
- **Closing Achievement Gaps**
- **Teacher/principal accountability**
- **Balance Federal/State/Local role**
- **School Climate**
- **School Safety**
- **Improving behavioral, social-emotional, and mental health**
Current Policies in the Every Student Succeeds Act

- Focus on comprehensive learning supports
- School quality key indicator in accountability
- Use of Title IV funds for MTSS, PBIS, and other systems of support
- Dedicated funding to:
  - improve school safety and promote students' physical and mental health well-being;
  - prevent and reduce substance abuse, school violence, and bullying;
  - strengthen parent and community engagement to ensure safe, healthy, and school environments.
- Provide professional development to school staff
- School employed mental health professionals (e.g., school psychologists) shall be consulted in the development, implementation, and evaluation of any school-community mental health partnership

Current Policy Discussion

- **Safe School Design** — The Committee recognizes the vital role of school design in the development and achievement of evidence-based strategies and programs related to school facility security that promote a positive school climate for all students. The Committee encourages the Department to partner with outside experts and other Federal agencies as appropriate to develop best practices and design guidelines for school facilities to improve school safety and school climate. These guidelines, while focused on security and student safety, must uphold the aesthetics of the school premises as a learning and teaching environment and not diminish the uplifting, positive learning atmosphere that is essential to the best educational conditions. The guidelines should address, among other things, lessons learned from past incidents and the arrival of first responders. It should provide guidance on building elements that impact security, including but not limited to, entrances and exits, escape routes, hallway, and building layout to protect students and school personnel.

- **School Safety Clearinghouse and Mental Health Services for Students** — The Committee requires a briefing for the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate within 90 days of enactment on: (1) the progress made by the Federal government in identifying, assessing, and disseminating evidence-based approaches to maintaining safe schools and positive learning environments for all students, including establishing a clearinghouse for such approaches; and (2) improving and expanding access to mental health services for students.

- **Trauma-informed Care** — The Committee directs the Department to ensure activities within this account support the implementation of trauma-informed practices and other mental health supports in schools. Fostering trauma-informed cultures in schools helps both students and staff succeed by addressing the impacts of trauma, improves school capacity to identify, refer, and provide services to students; can improve staff retention and help keep kids in school; and support learning environments where students feel safe, supported, and ready to learn.

Policies on School Safety and Mental Health are significant priorities!

Current Policy Discussions

- **Safe Schools** — The Committee includes investments in both HHS and Education to improve mental healthcare and safety in schools. The recommendation includes $153,000,000, an increase of $35,000,000, for HHS programs such as Project Aware to expand the capacity for mental health agencies to support mental health resources in schools and connect school-aged youth and their families to needed services. The recommendation also includes $105,000,000, an increase of $10,000,000, for competitive grants to States and school districts for evidence-based activities to improve school safety and promote safe and positive learning environments for students. In addition, the Committee recommendation includes $1,220,000,000, an increase of $55,000,000, for Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants, formula funding directly to school districts that they can use for the same activities.

- **Project AWARE** — The Committee provides $103,001,000, an increase of $10,000,000, for Project AWARE. This program increases awareness of mental health issues and connects young people that have behavioral health issues and their families with needed services. SAMHSA is encouraged to continue consultation with the Department of Education in administration of these grants. The Committee requests a report on progress of grantees 180 days after enactment.
School Psychologists: Qualified Providers of Mental and Behavioral Health Services

Role of the school psychologist

School psychologists are uniquely trained to deliver high quality mental and behavioral health services in the school setting to ensure all students have the support they need to be successful in school, at home, and throughout life!

NASP White Paper: School Psychologists Mental and Behavioral Health Role

- School psychologists are qualified MBH providers
- NASP training and practice standards encompass MBH services
- School psychologists are recognized in the ACA and NCLB as qualified providers


School Psychologists as Mental Health Providers??

NASP Model for Services by School Psychologists

PRACTICES THAT FOSTER ALL ASPECTS OF SERVICE DELIVERY
- Data-Based Decision Making and Accountability
- Consultation and Collaboration

DIRECT AND INDIRECT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND SCHOOLS
- Systemic Practice to Promote Learning
- Parental Involvement in School
- Professional Development

FOUNDATIONS OF SERVICE DELIVERY
- Diversity in Development and Learning
- Research and Program Evaluation
- Legal, Ethical, and Professional Practice

Position Statement

Mental and Behavioral Health Services for Children and Adolescents

Resolution: School Psychologists as Qualified Mental and Behavioral Health Service Providers

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Association of School Psychologists affirms that school psychologists are qualified providers of child and adolescent mental and behavioral health services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Association of School Psychologists remains committed to improving the capacity of school psychologists to provide compassionate, comprehensive, and culturally responsive school mental and behavioral health services.
Model of School Based Mental Health Services

Prevention and Universal Interventions
- Prevention and wellness promotion
- Universal screening for academic, behavioral, and emotional barriers to learning
  - Examples
    - Consultation with teachers/administrators/families
    - MTSS design/implementation
    - Social Emotional Learning
    - Positive behavior interventions and supports
    - Effective discipline policies and practices
    - Bullying/Violence Prevention
    - Crisis prevention and intervention teams
    - Fostering positive relationships among students and staff

Early Identification
- Data analysis
- Staff development/Mental Health First Aid
- Suicide Risk/Threat Assessment
- Protocols for Responding to Bullying
- Systems to report concerns
- Parent/Family Education

Nebraska Data

Targeted Interventions
- Check-In Check Out
- Group Counseling
- Teacher/Family Consultation
- Behavior Plans
- Mentoring
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
- Solution focused therapy
Role of the School Psychologist

- School Psychologists **should be the leading mental health experts in schools** who are knowledgeable about development in social, affective, and adaptive domains.
Competing Priorities

Stigma/Lack of Understanding

(Lack of) Funding

Shortages

Consequences of Ignoring the Issue

Systemic/Societal
- School to Prison Pipeline
- Homelessness
- Decreased rates of high school graduation/college completion
- Increased Incarceration
- Stagnant progress in reducing school and community violence
- Economic Impact

Individuals
- Decreased achievement
- Poor social skills
- Substance abuse
- Low Self Esteem
- Suicidal Ideation
- Increased engagement in risky behaviors
- Suspension/Expulsion
- Decreased earnings

** Edited.
Your Voice Matters

School Mental Health: Who is Influencing the Conversation

- School administrators
- School psychologists/counselors/social workers
- Community agencies
- Private practitioners (Marriage and Family Therapists, Clinical Psychologists etc.)
- Juvenile Justice
- The Media
- Celebrities

How do Others Perceive School Psychologists?

Do decision makers know how you help:

- Meet the needs of students at-risk for school failure?
- Ensure safe school environments?
- Improve school-family-community collaboration?
- Contribute to improved school climate?
- Lower or prevent barriers to learning?
- Facilitate data-based decision making at the individual/classroom/building/district levels?
- Provide guidance on realigning services to enhance academic progress?

Nebraska Data

I regularly advocate for my role as a mental health practitioner in my schools.

Nebraska Data

Approximate % of Time I Spend Providing Mental Health Services and Behavior Support at My...
Advocacy: What is my role as a school psychologist?

Ethical Obligation: “to speak up on behalf of students that cannot speak for themselves”

Legal Obligation: Somewhat unclear

Ethical requirements are not legal requirements of school-based employees (Zirkel, 2009)

So…..what CAN I do?

Key Legal Cases:
- Pickering vs. Board of Education of Township High School District 205 (1968) – private citizens can speak on matters of public concern without being dismissed from their position
- Garcetti vs. Ceballos (2006) – A public employee’s speech is only protected if it is expressed as a private citizen and in no way reflected as the employee’s public and professional duties
- Settlegoode vs. Portland Public Schools (2004) – teachers need to speak out on school matters because of the level of informed opinions they have about the best interests of the children that are in their building

What did our work used to look like?

Participate in Social Media!

Why Social Media Matters….

- Every senator and most representatives currently utilize Twitter
- Can reach a wider audience with your message
- Social media is an increasingly used tool to get desired public policy results
- Helps to tell YOUR STORY to DECISION-MAKERS
- Done well, social media messages can help you engage supporters, capturing and retaining their attention
Tier 1 Social Media
- Connect with state association/NASP
- Follow stakeholder groups
- Share out helpful resources
- Convey key ideas about what’s good for kids and how school psychologists can help

Tier 2 Social media
- Follow key school board members and state legislators
- Thank those via tweet that do something positive
- Share key messages on issues under consideration of importance
- Convey/ask how school psychologists can help
  - (Be sure that you don’t violate any district social media policies for staff)

Tier 3: Social media
- Share out key resources
- Retweet supporting messages and valid third-party resources
- Pay attention to stakeholder posts and tweets

Elbow Partner Talk
- What are ways that you can engage with universal communication strategies?
- What is one resource that you might share from the NASP website?
- What is one stakeholder that you can engage with within 2 weeks?
- What are barriers that get in the way of universal communication?

Key Takeaways
- School psychologists are uniquely qualified to develop comprehensive support systems, provide direct and indirect services, and expand access
- Barriers exist, but we can overcome them!
- Current public policy presents significant opportunities for school psychologists to do what we do best———improve outcomes for students

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