Examining the Impact of Student Socioeconomic Status and School Attributes on School Based Mental Health Partnerships

Lucy Rabinowitz
Ann DiGirolamo
Susan McLaren
Dante McKay

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/ghpc_materials

Recommended Citation
Rabinowitz, Lucy; DiGirolamo, Ann; McLaren, Susan; and McKay, Dante, "Examining the Impact of Student Socioeconomic Status and School Attributes on School Based Mental Health Partnerships" (2018). GHPC Materials. 71.
https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/ghpc_materials/71

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Georgia Health Policy Center at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in GHPC Materials by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.
INTRODUCTION

• An estimated one in five youth ages 13-18 has a diagnosable mental health problem; 75-80 percent do not receive required services.

• School-based mental health (SBMH) programs are a proven strategy for minimizing barriers to accessing services and to help address behavioral health issues that negatively influence a student's ability to thrive in school and life.

• Strong partnerships and collaboration between mental health providers and schools are essential factors in the success of implementation and sustainability of SBMH programs.

• Since its inception in 2015, 29 community-based Georgia Apex Program (GAP) providers funded by the GA Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities have partnered with more than 200 schools to provide access to SBMH services to approximately 30,000 student.

• SBMH funders and providers need to understand school contextual factors that contribute to strong partnerships, including student socio-economic and demographic indicators, to support sustainable implementation of SBMH programs.

The intent of this analysis is to inform providers about elements to consider when choosing school partners for the expansion of SBMH services. Specifically, we examine relationships between school demographic and county-level socio-economic indicators and levels of collaboration between community mental health providers and their school partners using publicly available state-wide school data and the Mental Health Planning and Evaluation Template (MHPET).

STUDY DESIGN

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Variables in Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MHPET Total Score at Baseline</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>9.94</td>
<td>4.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students identifying as any Non-White Minority (%)</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>58.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students identifying as any Non-White Minority (%)</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>22.30</td>
<td>50.20</td>
<td>37.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children whose parents lack secure employment (%)</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>26.40</td>
<td>11.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSIONS

Results indicate that in a SBMH initiative in Georgia, levels of partnership and collaboration between school and agency partners are important determinants to successful implementation of services associated with increased levels of partnership over time included sociodemographic characteristics such as higher percentage of non-white minority students and lower percentage of children living in poverty. Providers should consider school attributes like student demographics and county socio-economic indicators in determining where to place their services, as there may have a predictive effect on the increase in perceived levels of partnership throughout the year. Strong partnership has been shown to be an important factor in successful SBMH programs.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

To promote positive recovery and resiliency outcomes in children’s mental health, policy-makers, administrators, providers, and others, should factor in considerations beyond clinical and therapeutic mental health treatment. Mental health programs that operate in a vacuum and do not take into consideration social determinants, particularly as they relate to the school environment, may have a limited impact. Policies and programs must take into consideration socio-economic determinants of health if influences children's mental health including parental employment, transportation, poverty levels, and health literacy. As our findings indicate, SBMH programs foster partnerships that support schools, especially those that are under-researched. States and communities may use evidence from this analysis and similar evaluations to better identify how they may better support under-researched schools through a systems of care approach to improving children’s mental health.

REFERENCES


