GROWING HEALTHY MINDS

A VIRTUAL LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

Supporting Student Mental Health

Defining Roles and Taking a Team-Based Approach to Supporting Student Mental Health

October 29, 2024

Acknowledgements & Disclosures

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the New Jersey Department of Children and Families and collaboration with:

New Jersey State School Nurses Association
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NJAAP Accreditation Statement

New Jersey Chapter
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American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

Accreditation Statement:
This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Medical Society of New Jersey. New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics is accredited by the Medical Society of New Jersey to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

AMA Designation Statement:
New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics designates this live internet activity for a maximum of 1.25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

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Successful completion of this CME activity, which includes participation in the evaluation component, enables the learner to earn up to 1.25 MOC points in the American Board of Pediatrics' (ABP) Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program. It is the CME activity provider's responsibility to submit learner completion information to ACCME for the purpose of granting ABP MOC credit.

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Continuing Nursing Education Credits

No one with the ability to control content of this activity has a relevant financial relationship with an ineligible company.

Requirements:

- Participation in the full duration of each Growing Healthy Minds session for which you are seeking contact hours
- Completion of a Growing Healthy Minds session evaluation for each session for which you are seeking contact hours, which will be sent to the email you used to register following each session

This continuing education activity was approved by the Ohio Nurses Association, an Ohio Board of Nursing approver. (OBN-001-91) Expiration date: 10/1/2026

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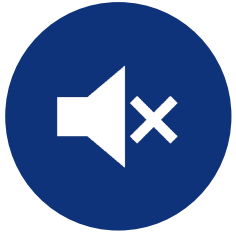
ONA aft
A Union of Nurses & Health Professionals

Housekeeping

We encourage you to turn on your camera while engaging in the session.



Kindly remain on mute to reduce background noise when you are not speaking.

By participating in these sessions, you are consenting to being recorded.

To protect student and staff privacy, please be mindful of not sharing any identifiable information.

Please unmute or use the chat function to engage in discussion with fellow participants and hub faculty.

Share your full name, role, and district in the chat!

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Meet our Hub Faculty Members

Bert Mandelbaum, MD, FAAP
School Physician for Montgomery, Hillsborough, North Brunswick, Chapin
Chair, Department of Pediatrics, Penn Medicine Princeton Health
Chair, NJAAP Task Force on Adolescent Health and School Start Times

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It Takes a Village …

The Smith family has enrolled their two children in the Welcoming School District just prior to the start of the school year. Marcus is enrolled at Welcoming High School as a sophomore and Latonya is enrolled as a 5th grader at Neighborhood Elementary School.

Mrs. Smith mentions to the secretary who accepted her enrollment information that the family is moving for the fourth time in the past five years, and that Mr. Smith is in the military and is often reassigned. She tells the secretary that "the constant moving has been stressful" and that her kids have trouble making friends. She notes that the family has been in Texas the past 2 years.

Mrs. Smith meets with each of the school principals on the first day of school. She tells each principal that her kids are extremely bright, and are expected to focus on academics first. She asks the high school principal Mr. Roberts for help to ensure that Marcus "doesn't get distracted" with lots of "silly activities" and stays focused on his grades. She asks the elementary principal Ms. Caldwell to "not put up with" Latonya's tendency to lose focus in class and let her know if Latonya has any problems playing with other students.

It Takes a Village …

One week into the school year, Latonya is sent to the main office after allegedly pushing another student down while on the playground. She meets with the principal who asks her what happened. Latonya replies that "I had to stand up for myself" and refuses to say anything else. She is then suspended from recess for a day and asked to write an apology to her classmate, which she does.

The next day, Marcus becomes upset after getting back a pop quiz from his Chemistry teacher. Specifically, he becomes upset after the class is told that the quiz results have been uploaded to the Parent Portal so that parents can review them. He received a B minus grade.

Marcus asks to be excused from class and goes to see his counselor, Ms. Caring. He tells Ms. Caring that he doesn't know what to do, and that his mom is going to freak out if she sees his grade given "everything else she has to deal with." Marcus refuses to elaborate on what he means by "everything else."

Marcus does ask the counselor if he needs parent permission to join a school club. He confides that he was interested in joining the high school's Gay Straight Alliance. He is told that he must have parent permission. He nods his head and then says he needs to get home.

It Takes a Village …

Over the next two months, Latonya has three more incidents of pushing students and being suspended from recess. Her mother says repeatedly when called in for meetings that the family is “dealing with some things” and she will make sure that Latonya stops “acting out.”

In that same time period, Marcus excels in all of his classes, never receiving another grade below A minus. He does not get involved in any school activities. One of his teachers does report to Marcus’ school counselor that he is “extremely quiet” and does not like to “engage with other students.”

In that same time period, Marcus and Latonya each go to see the school nurse at their schools multiple times, with each complaining about vague symptoms of stomach pain and headaches each time. When contacted Ms. Smith says that her kids are sometimes “a little dramatic” and that she is always telling them to stop looking for excuses to get out of class.

It Takes a Village …

Two months into the school year, the district is contacted by local law enforcement. It has received a Handle with Care Notice regarding Marcus and Latonya.

That same evening, the Neighborhood School elementary principal Ms. Caldwell is attending a PTA meeting. The PTA President asks her after the meeting if she "heard about the Smith family." Ms. Caldwell indicates that she has not heard anything. The PTA President then says that Mr. Smith was deployed into a war zone just after the school year started, and has been missing in action for the past two weeks.

It Takes a Village …

- What should happen now? What should have happened along the way?
- What if the district decides to proactively reach out to the prior school district in Texas and learns that Marcus had previously expressed suicidal ideation and been bullied for being gay?
- What if the district learns that the prior district had wanted to evaluate Latonya for a potential learning disability but the mother had refused to give consent?

Share in the chat:

What is one thing that you would do in your respective role as a school principal, counselor, nurse, etc. to support this family?

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The Role of the Principal

- In both cases the school principal would want to meet with the family and the students
- School records including discipline should be requested when a new family is enrolling
- Ask the family if there is anything that the school should know to help support in the transition
- If you don’t receive the records, the principal can reach out to the principal at the previous school for more information
- Once reviewed, a transition plan for the students should be established in consultation with the school counseling department
- Handle with Care notification - immediately send to counseling department to call down student and check in with them

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The Role of the Principal

Misses in this case:

- Not requesting records
- Needed parental permission to join SAGA / GSA
- Referral to the school counselor after incident
- Requesting information from the classroom teacher to discuss behaviors in class and if they notice anything (possible Principal made I&RS referral)
- Having a transition plan for new students - buddy system
- When noted that Marcus was not involved - check in and find out interests and ask a club leader to personally invite

In the school setting, which staff member is likely the first point of contact to address the concerns?

A. Bus Driver
B. School Counselor
C. School Psychologist
D. Classroom Teacher

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The Smith Family's School Counseling Services

Both students can benefit from school counseling services but services may *look* very different.

	LaTonya	Marcus	Mom
Tier 1 Interventions (Everyone gets it)	Classroom Lessons Individual Check Ins including academic advising	Individual Check Ins New Student Peer Mentor/Ambassador	• Consistent communication • Consent for counseling groups. • Referral to counseling/therapy • Offer psycho-ed on how military-related stress can impact children's behavior and mental health • Help mom learn how to recognize signs of stress and support her children's resilience. • Connect Mom to local and national military family resources, such as support groups, counseling services, etc.
If the interventions above are not successful, move to Tier 2			
Tier 2 Interventions (Some students get it)	Small Group Counseling Peer Tutor	Small Group Counseling (after information gathering-consent needed?)	
If the interventions above are not successful, move to Tier 3			
Tier 3 Interventions (Only a small percentage of students get it) GROWING HEALTHY MINDS	Behavior Plan with Data Tracking Track academic grades Track progress in 6 week increments Possible referral to CST if interventions are not successful. Referral/recommendation for outside counseling	Referral to SAC counselor Referral/recommendation for outside counseling	

LaTonya and the School Counselor

Role of the Elementary School Counselor for Latonya

- **One on one conversation with LaTonya's Teacher.**
- **Phone call to Mom**
  - **Get parent input**
  - **Offer recommendations**
    - **Tier 1-Support through SEL Classroom Lessons and Individual Check Ins**
    - **Tier 2-Small Group Counseling**
      - Friendship group?
      - Students of deployed parents?
      - New student welcome group?
      - Peer Tutor?
    - **Tier 3**
      - **Behavior Plans**
      - **Data Tracking**
- **Is Therapy or Long-Term Counseling Appropriate? Can the School Counselor Do That?**

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Marcus and the School Counselor

Role of the High School Counselor for Marcus

- **Call Mom**
  - **Offer recommendations**
  - **Tier 1-Individual Check Ins**
  - **Tier 2-Small Group Counseling**
    - **Double check district policy on parental consent for joining GSA**
      - Does consent policy apply equitably to all student organizations? Or just GSA?
      - **If no parent consent given, consider other counseling groups.** .
- *Referral to SAC counselor*
  - *In New Jersey, the Student Assistance Counselor (SAC) is primarily focused on providing prevention, intervention, and support services related to substance use, mental health, and overall student well-being.*

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LaTonya and the School Nurse

- Review student's medical history and physical.
  - Request medical records from previous school nurse.
  - If there is no physical, use these complaints to encourage mother to have physical done and give a list of local providers.
- Perform state required screenings as early as possible in the school year.
- Evaluate each medical complaint thoroughly and also note the time of day and perhaps class she is coming from.
- Inform mother if visits continue and previous interventions. Inform mother that these complaints could be symptoms of many different conditions and encourage the medical evaluation
- Encourage meditation and if no programs in your school, teach simple methods such as breathing techniques.
- Provide a safe space for her in the nurse office if she shows up. Understand there is a handle with care situation. Is the situation with his father causing more symptoms?
- Refer to CORE team (or multidisciplinary team to assist students). Could she have an adult mentor? Could he have a school buddy or student mentor assigned to help him learn the school routine and help facilitate friendships?

Marcus and the School Nurse

- Review student's medical history including physical.
  - Request previous health office records from previous school nurse.
  - If there is no physical, use these complaints to encourage mother to have physical done and give a list of local providers.
- Note previous suicidal ideology.
- Perform state required screenings as early as possible in the school year.
- Evaluate each medical complaint thoroughly and also note the time of day and perhaps class he is coming from.
- Inform mother if visits continue and previous interventions. Inform her these complaints could be symptoms of many different conditions, and it would be good to have the medical provider exam the provider.

Marcus and the School Nurse

- Encourage meditation and if no programs in your school, teach simple methods such as breathing techniques.

- Provide a safe space for him in the nurse office if he shows up. Understand there is a handle with care situation. Is the situation with his father causing more symptoms? Is he safe related to what we know about him identifying as LGTBQ?

- Refer to CORE team (or multidisciplinary team to assist students) Could he have an adult mentor? Could he have a school buddy or student mentor assigned to help him learn the school routine and help facilitate friendships?

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Role of the School Physician

- Consulting role in most school districts
- Guide medical policies
- Provide education to school nurses, but also administration or parents
- Communicate with student's medical team or other outside agencies

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School Physician Role with Marcus and Latonya

- Can provide education as needed to administration/nurses on LGBTQ issues or ADHD
- Can potentially interface with the students' PMD to discuss school based issues/concerns
- Can be a resource for the school nurses

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Key Legal Considerations

- **Need to address Foreseeable Dangers for Latonya and Marcus**
  - Suicidal ideation/Mental Health Needs, Social and Emotional Well-Being, Underlying Medical Issues, Student Behavioral Issues. See Frugis v. Bracigliano
- **Appropriate information sharing under FERPA**
  - Transfer of discipline records permitted under federal law
  - Key question "Who has a legitimate educational interest" in information?
  - Key pieces of information known by secretary, two school principals, school counselor, two school nurses, law enforcement, parent, student
  - Proactive steps to share information within district, across districts
- **Ensuring a safe, affirming environment**
  - Provide education on strong protections under NJ Law Against Discrimination for LGBTQIA+ status. Ensure protocols in place to provide support, protect confidentiality.
- **Role of I & RS/ Child Find obligations**
  - After gathering additional information/exploring potential interventions, may need to consider possible evaluation for eligibility under IDEA
- **Student Behavior/Discipline**
  - Code of Student Conduct
    - Avoid over-reliance on suspension, increased focus on restorative practices
  - Conducting Effective Investigations
    - Get to root causes for Latonya's behaviors
    - Mistake to just determine what happened and not why

Resources

N.J.A.C. 6A:16, Programs to Support Student Development

School Counselor Roles & Ratios: https://www.schoolcounselor.org/about-school-counseling/school-counselor-roles-ratios

The NJDOE website on mental health: https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/wellness/mh/

Joint Guidance on Application of FERPA and HIPAA

LEGAL ONE Podcast Episode - Responding to Escalating Mental Health Needs in Schools - https://the-legal-one-podcast.captivate.fm/episode/responding-to-escalating-mental-health-needs-in-schools/

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Evaluation

Reminder:

If you are seeking educational credit for your participation in this webinar,

Please be sure to complete the session evaluation at:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3HYYB5H

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Join us again next month!

Topic: Chronic absenteeism and school refusal: Examining patterns and developing action plans
Cost: FREE! There is no cost to participate in this series.
When: Thursday, November 21st from 5:00-6:15pm
Where: All sessions are hosted virtually via Zoom.

Presented by:

Bert Mandelbaum, MD, FAAP

Kathy McCutcheon MSN, RN, NCSN

David Nash, Esq

Laura Williams, MA

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Say hello at the NJEA Convention!

New Jersey Youth Mental Health Pavilion

Booth #2601

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