

School Mental Health During COVID-19

Sharon Hoover, Ph.D.

Nancy Lever, Ph.D.

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National Center for School Mental Health

MISSION:

Strengthen policies and programs in school mental health to improve learning and promote success for America's youth

- Focus on advancing school mental health policy, research, practice, and training
- Shared family-schools-community mental health agenda

Directors: Drs. Nancy Lever & Sharon Hoover

Faculty: Tiffany Beason, Ph.D., Jill Bohnenkamp, Ph.D., Elizabeth Connors, Ph.D, Britt Patterson, Ph.D., Kris Scardamalia, Ph.D., & Cindy Schaeffer, Ph.D.



National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH)

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Learning Objectives

- 1 – Participants will be able to identify at least 3 behavioral health challenges impacting child and adolescent schooling during COVID-19.
- 2 – Participants will be able to identify at least 3 strategies for supporting student behavioral health as they restart the 2020-21 academic year in the context of the pandemic.
- 3 – Participants will be able to identify at least 3 ways to partner with schools to support student behavioral health.



Behavioral health challenges impacting child and adolescent schooling during COVID-19

Stressors Related to COVID-19

ANXIETY/FEARS

- Increased challenges with mental health issues (*e.g. anxiety, depression*)
- Confusion and uncertainty about what will happen next
- Worry and fear for the safety of self and others (*for teachers, worry about their students*)
- Anxiety related to unknowns, new ways of operating as the 2020-21 school year begins
- Fears associated with re-opening schools and COVID-19 transmission
- Unsafe situations at home (*e.g., abuse, neglect, domestic violence*)

Stressors Related to COVID-19

LOSS

- Loss of resources (*e.g., extended family support, job loss, access to mental health services and health care*)
- Loss of family members, community members, teachers, and students
- Students and staff missing out on important rituals and transitions (*e.g., prom, graduation, end-of-year celebrations and goodbyes, losses*)
- Sudden disruption of normal routines, relationships, structures, and predictability
- Food insecurity

Stressors Related to COVID-19

EQUITY

- The disproportionate effects of COVID-19 in communities of color and increased risk for these and other stressors
- Disproportionate access to virtual education for students
(e.g., technology, learning challenges)
- Learning new technology, adapting to different ways of teaching and learning, maintaining student engagement, balancing work and home life, with multiple stressors

Citation: National Center for Safe Supportive Learning Environments, 2020



In a nationally representative survey of **young people aged 13-19**:

- Approximately **25%** felt disconnected from peers and adults.
- Over **50%** were more concerned than usual about their family's physical and emotional health (including health, finances, and basic needs).
- More than **1 in 4** reported an increase in sleep loss due to worry, feeling unhappy or depressed, feeling constantly under strain, and loss of confidence in themselves.



- Past pandemics were associated with increases in depression, anxiety, stigma, and shaming.
- Longitudinal negative impacts of other large-scale community crises (*e.g., natural disasters*) on children's behavioral health and academic functioning.

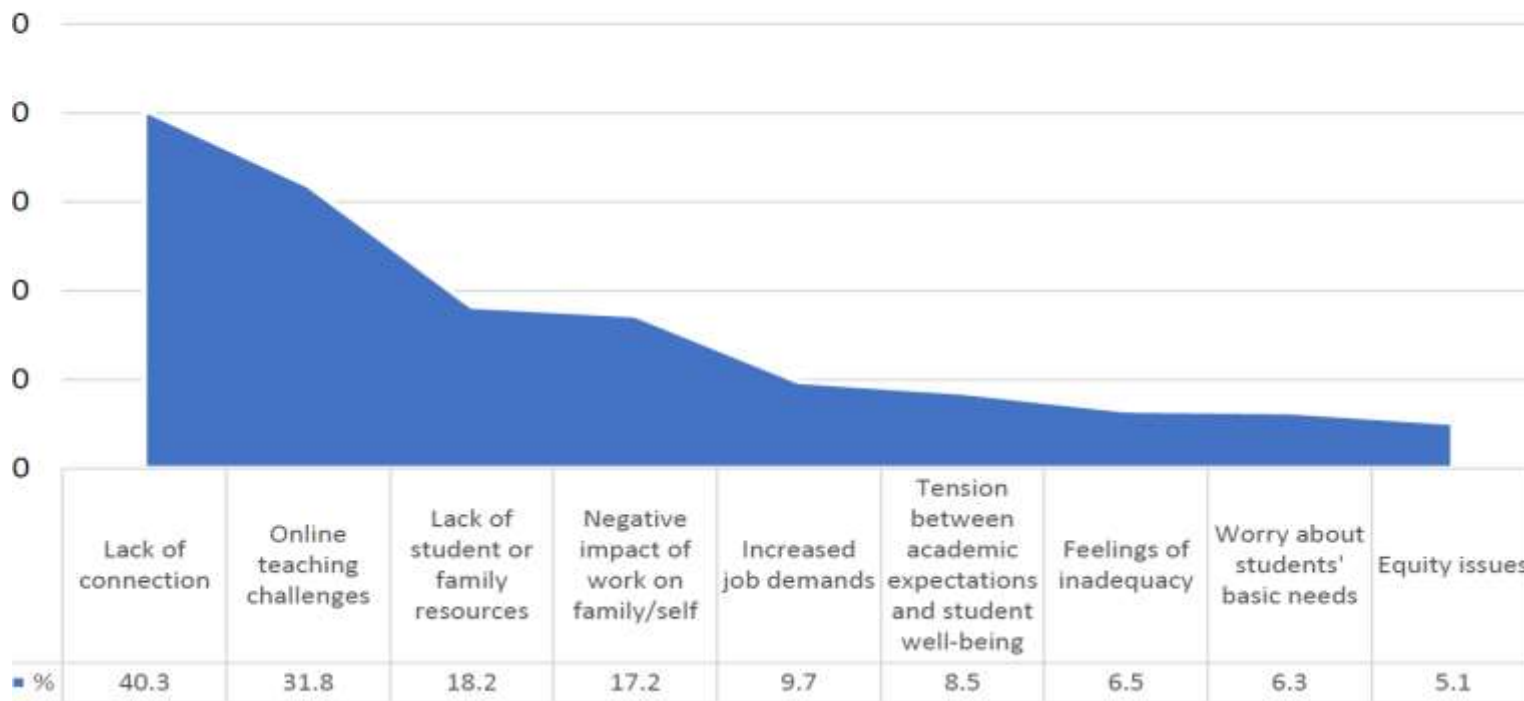
Citations:

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- Osofsky, J. Kronenberg, M. Bocknek, E., Hansel, T.C. (2015, August). Longitudinal impact of attachment-related risk and exposure to trauma among young children after hurricane Katrina. *In Child & Youth Care Forum*. 44(44), 493-510. Springer US.
- Ward, M.E. Shelley, K. & Pane, J.F. (2008). Hurricane Katrina: A longitudinal study of the achievement and behavior of displaced students. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*. 13(2-3), 297-317.



Survey of Teachers in New Orleans June 2020

Most Difficult Aspects of Teaching during the Pandemic



Responses from 453 Teachers from 45 schools in Orleans Parish



Common Educator Concerns Related to Students





Perhaps the most potent element of all, in an effective crisis service system, is relationships.

To be human. To be compassionate.

We know from experience that immediate access to help, hope and healing saves lives.

*~ SAMHSA 2020,
National Guidelines for Behavioral
Health Crisis Care
Best Practice Toolkit*



Now



Always

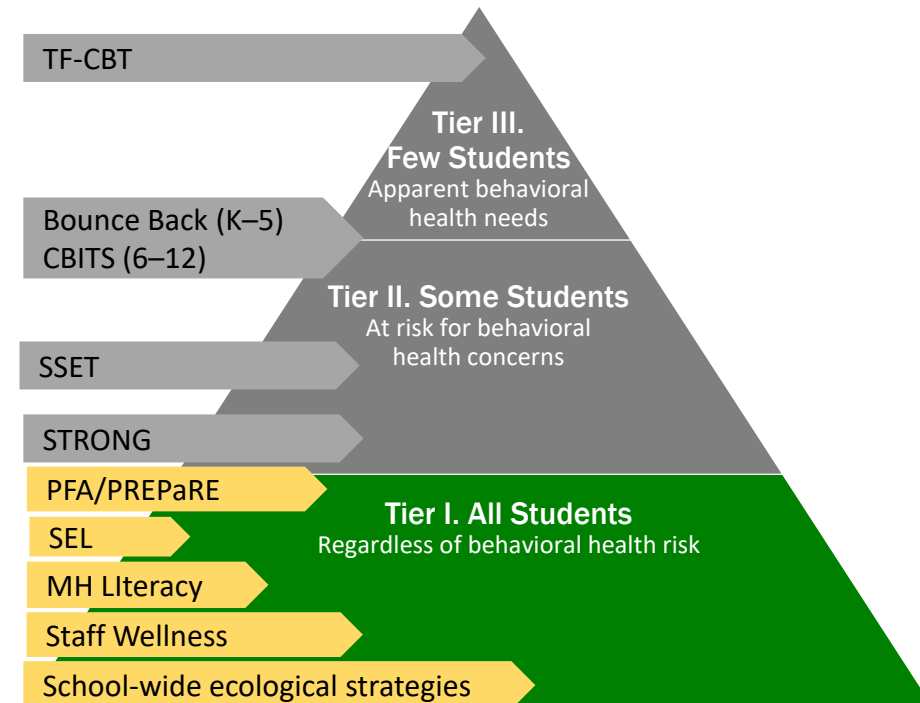


Strategies for supporting children as schools restart



UNIVERSAL Strategies

- Supportive, inclusive, **positive school climate**
- **Culturally responsive** policies and practices
- **Trauma responsive** policies and practices
- **Staff wellness**
- **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**
- **Crisis preparedness**
- **Mental health literacy** for school staff and students





What Kids Need (age doesn't matter)

- To feel loved and protected
- To understand
- To know their feelings
- To feel capable



Social and Emotional Strategies





Universal Strategies



- “Encourage reassurance, routines, regulation”
- Translation of existing Tier 1 strategies
 - SEL in virtual classes/home
- Daily-weekly check-ins



Closegap: Daily Check-ins (Closegap.org)

Students do a daily emotional check-in



Teachers and Parents get Info in Real Time



Students connect with an adult or participate in self-guided activities





PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID: Listen Protect Connect/Model and Teach



https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/PFA_SchoolCrisis.pdf



Is this a normal reaction to COVID or is it more?

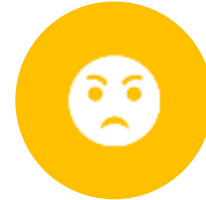




Warning Signs for Depression



Social withdrawal;
isolation



High emotional
reactivity /anger to
limits /expectations



Increase self criticism
and overaction to
criticism



Drop-in activities, loss
of interest



Talking about death,
interest in death,
wanting to be dead



Increased tendency
to shut down



How to Ask About Mood



Chose the right time	Do not engage immediately after an argument/disagreement or when in the middle of fun task
Stick to the facts	Tell them specific behaviors you find concerning, ask if they have noticed behaviors
Validate	Let them know how hard things have been lately, express concern for their well-being
Self-disclose	Sharing can be a powerful tool
Ready for push-back	Conversation may go poorly or not

Screening in Schools

- Impact of COVID-19
 - COVID-19 Adolescent Symptom & Psychological Experience Questionnaire (CASPE)
 - Epidemic Pandemic Impacts Inventory (EPII)
 - DERS for Coronavirus Pandemic
 - Coronavirus Impact Scale
- Life Satisfaction/Subjective Well-being
- Psychological distress/Symptomatology
- Positive Functioning
- School Factors
- Social Determinants of Health

School Mental Health System Certificate Report Update

System Performance My Schools Trauma Responsiveness **Screening and Assessment** Team Members

Welcome to the School Mental Health Screening and Assessment Library. Use the filters below to locate a measure that is appropriate for your needs. Each measure includes a one page information sheet, scoring details, and access to the measure.

Clear All 0 filters selected Search:

Filter	Instrument Name	Purpose	Focus Area	Reporter for (Student Age)
Focus Area	Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist (ATEC)	Screening/Initial Evaluation Progress Monitoring	Autism	Caregiver (2+) Educator (2+)
Assessment Purpose	Brief Problem Checklist (BPC)	Screening/Initial Evaluation Progress Monitoring	Anxiety Depression Disruptive Behavior	Student (7-18) Caregiver (7-18)
Student Age	CAGE	Screening/Initial Evaluation	Substance Use	Student (16+) Clinician (16+)
Language	Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC)	Screening/Initial Evaluation Progress Monitoring	Depression/Mood	Student (6-23)
Reporter	Child Mania Rating Scale, Parent (CMRS-P)	Screening/Initial Evaluation Progress Monitoring	Depression/Mood	Caregiver (5-17) Educator (5-17)
Cost	Conditions for Learning (CFL)	Screening/Initial Evaluation Progress Monitoring	Academic School Climate	Student (grade 2-12)

Social Emotional Health Survey (SEHS) – Secondary

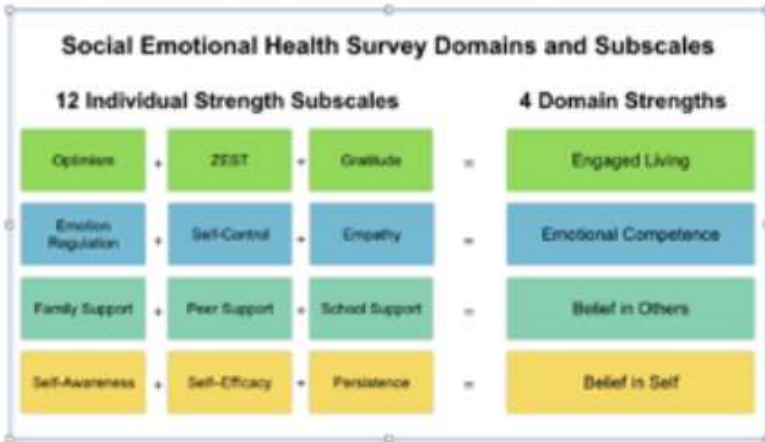
Project CoVitality* www.covitalityucsb.info (Twitter: UCSBCovitality)

The SEHS-Secondary is an assessment of key psychological mindsets associated with students' positive, thriving development.

Students With High Strengths Are...



What does the SEHS-Secondary Measure?



Self-Efficacy, Persistence, Self-Awareness, Peer Support, School Support, Family Support, Empathy, Emotional Regulation, Self-Control, Gratitude, Zest, Optimism

Focus on Student Strengths

Students with high versus low SEHS-Secondary strengths are more likely to:

- feel that their life has meaning and sense of direction (92% v. 27%)
- say they are happy to be at school (82% v. 34%)
- express gratitude for many people (99% v. 42%)

Efficient, yet Comprehensive

- Completed in less than 15 minutes
- Includes brief emotional distress scale
- Access to relevant student support resources
- UCSB, WestEd, CDE Partnership

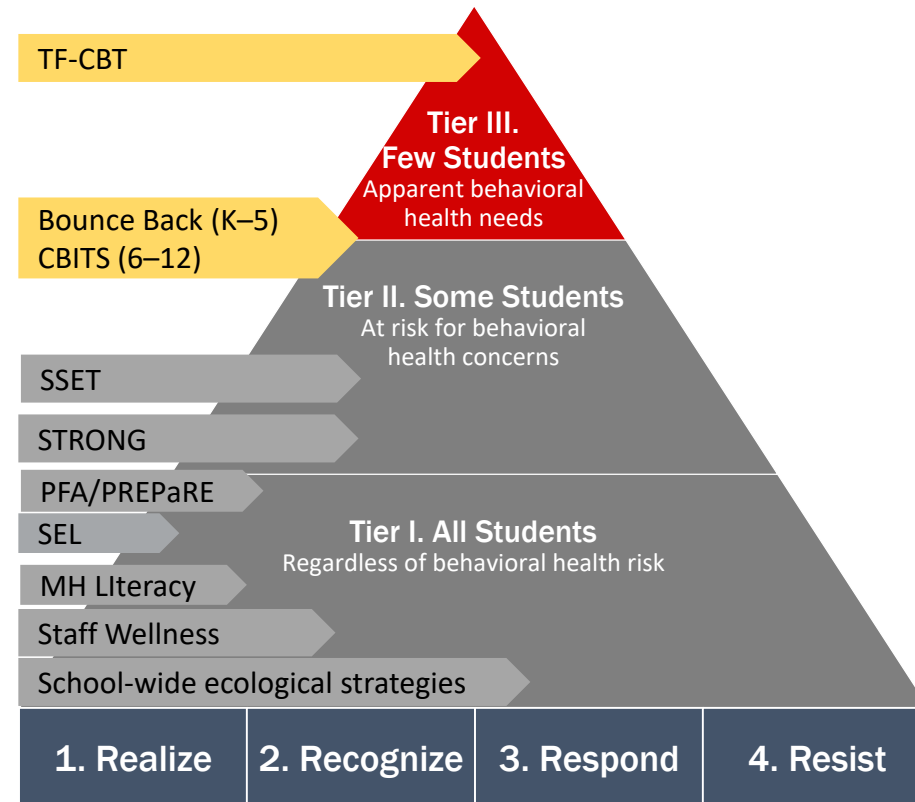
Screen for strengths
<https://www.covitalityucsb.info/>

and consider trauma-informed assessment:

<https://csch.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2206/2020/06/CSCH-Report-Responding-to-COVID-19-Planning-for-Trauma-Informed-Assessment-in-Schools-Final-June-2020.pdf>

Early Intervention and Treatment in Schools

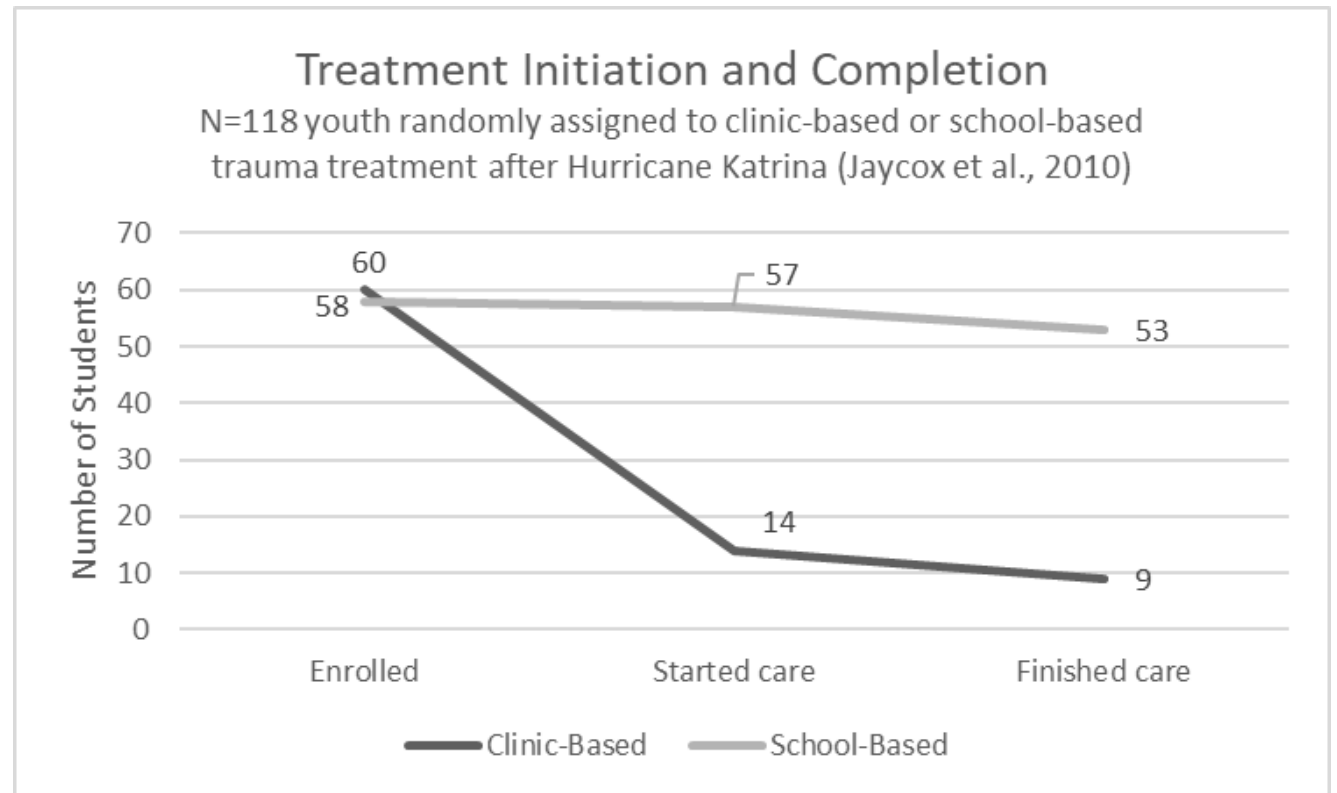
- Evidence-based psychosocial interventions – e.g., CBITS/Bounce Back, TF-CBT
- Psychiatric care

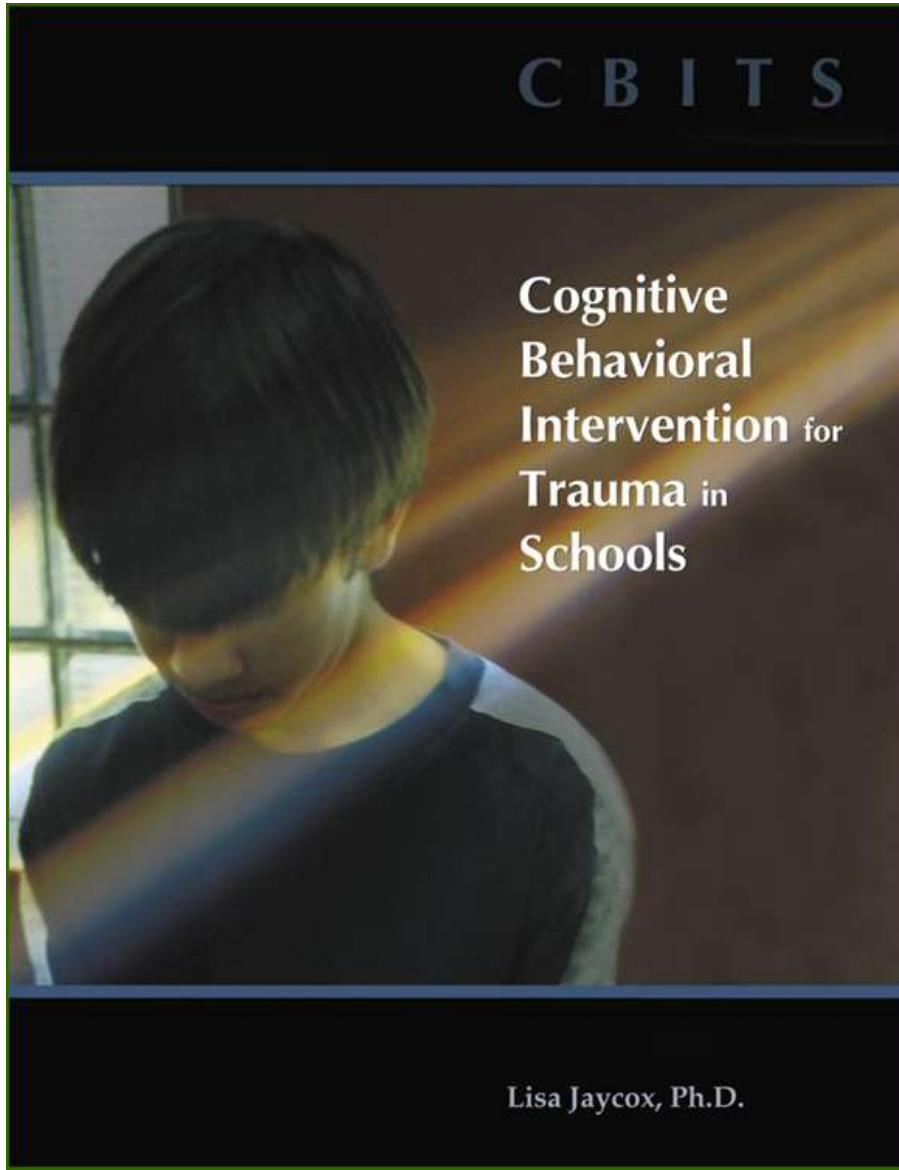




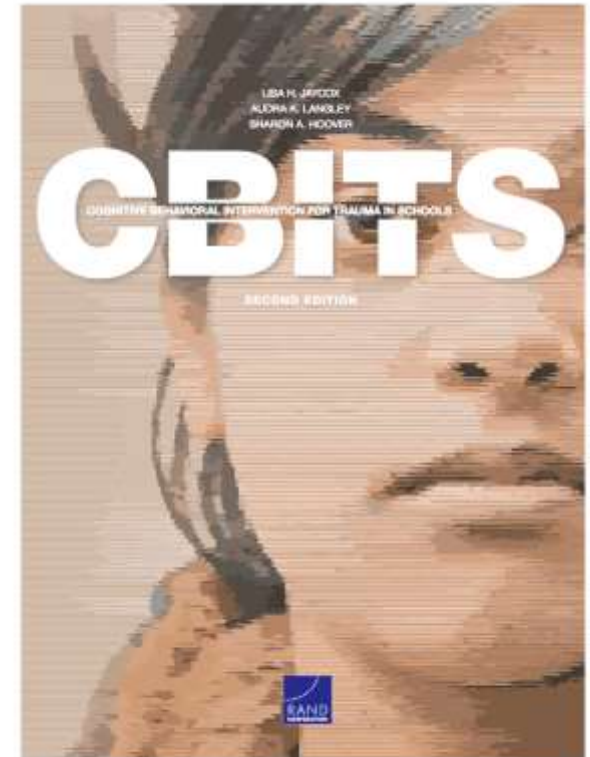
Why Mental Health Treatment in Schools?

Youth are 6x more likely to complete mental health treatment in schools than in community settings (Jaycox et al., 2010)





CBITS developed to help children in schools cope with trauma



NOW – Tier 2/3 Strategies

- Online interventions
 - Individual
 - Family
 - Group



CBITS Online Live

Session 1: Introduction, Orientation, and Rationale

Session 2: Psychoeducation and Relaxation

Session 3: Thoughts and Feelings

Session 4: H.O.T. Seat

Session 5: Social Problem-Solving

Session 6: Moving-Up Ceremony



Alliance for
Inclusion &
Prevention

https://cbitsprogram.org/_static/cbits/uploads/files//revised_virtual_delivery_guidance_2.0.pdf



Partnering with Schools to Support Student Behavioral Health

Universal supports

Patient-specific supports



Universal Supports

- Provide recommendations on policies and procedures to schools and districts that will promote a safe return to school
 - See the American Academy of Pediatrics' list of planning considerations: <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>
- Support teachers
- Consultation on how to identify concerns, conduct screening, triage students
- Host a virtual "Ask a doctor" session for parents
- Virtual classroom visits to teach kids about hand hygiene, wearing masks, distancing, etc
- Provide resources to the schools about where testing and PPE could be accessed
- Provide a list of mental health providers and child/adolescent psychiatrists in the community
 - Search for clinicians who specialize in child/adolescent and family therapy
 - Indicate which insurance plans providers accept
 - Determine the length of wait lists
- Create "quick guides" with indicators of mental health difficulties (e.g., anxiety and depressive symptoms), discuss potential screening options, and how to access services within the school or local community



Questions to ask local districts/schools of patients:

- What are schools'/districts' plans for the upcoming school year? (e.g., virtual, hybrid, or in-person learning)
- What resources and supports will they offer for students' social, emotional, and behavioral wellbeing?
 - Does the school have a social-emotional curriculum? Will this program continue in the fall?
 - Are there mental health providers within the school? Will they have the capacity to continue work with students? How will students and families access these services?
- What are ways that I can partner with schools to expand upon existing resources and offer additional support to schools, students, and families?



Patient-specific supports

- Support re-establishing routines
- Provide education to families about distance learning strategies, including special education rights/accommodations in distance learning
 - https://www.nasdse.org/docs/NASDSE_LRE.pdf
- Encourage families to connect with school mental health supports
- Communicate with school personnel about student progress/concerns
- Screen students and families for COVID impact and general well-being



Back to Basics:

- **Routines** can help everyone stay in touch and reduce stress. If the ones you have in place are working, stick to them, if not create new ones for this special time.
- **Basic hygiene routines:** brush teeth, change out of pajamas, hair
- **Sleep routines.** Sleep schedules may have shifted during the summer (especially for teens!). Review sleep hygiene principles, troubleshoot common causes for late bedtimes, and establish a bedtime routine.





Behavioral Activation

Staying "SAFE"



Social

call friends, play
games with family



Active

dance,
walk/run/ride bikes,
do YouTube
exercises



Fun

choose an
activity you
enjoy- read,
puzzles, board
games



Effortful

chores,
schoolwork,
make dinner,
clean



Remind parents: Ask for help when needed



You can't do it all!
Ask for help if
struggling to explain
a new concept



Virtual
learning
resources
(Kahn
academy)



Small
groups via
Zoom



Coaches /
tutor
available
virtually



Reward effort!!!

-Parents should NOT gage their own daily “success” based on child’s outcomes (work completion, grades, etc.)

-Instead, measure your success by looking out how you interacted with your child (provide positive praise, ignore negative behaviors, validate feelings)



Screening questions to ask patients/families

- Since COVID and school closures:
 - What has been the most difficult for your family?
 - What positive opportunities, if any, have arisen for your family?
 - Have any of your family or community members become ill or died from COVID?
 - Have you had any job loss or financial loss?
 - Have you had any trouble with food or housing?
- How will your child be returning to school (in-person, hybrid, distance)?
 - How did distance learning go for you/your child in the Spring? Did you learn anything that could be helpful now?
 - How do you/your child feel about this year's school plan? Do you have any specific concerns? Anything you are looking forward to?



Screeners to incorporate in visits



- Pediatric Symptoms Checklist (PSC-17)-General Emotional and Behavioral Concerns
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)-General Emotional and Behavioral Concerns, includes assessment of strengths
- Behavioral Health Checklist (BHCL)
- Patient Health Questionnaire-Modified for Teen (PHQ-9-M)- Brief Depression Screener for Adolescents



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