

Cultural Considerations for School-Based Mental Health

Biases and Stigma in Mental Health Treatment

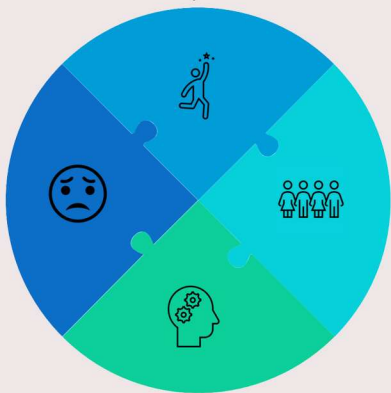
- Bias can have a negative impact on mental health care leading to issues with attrition, absence of trust, disconnection and exhaustion from explaining.⁷
- The prevalence of mental health stigma in racial minorities leads individuals from minority backgrounds to seek mental health services at a much lower rate than their white counterparts.⁴
- Culturally diverse youth are more likely to receive inferior, inappropriate, and ineffective services compared to their white counterparts.²

Cultural Adaptations to Interventions

- Cultural adaptations aim to address biases and inadequate treatment by grounding interventions with the lived experiences of clients.⁸
- Cultural adaptations provide numerous benefits to mental health treatment, the client, and the clinician.
- For example, adaptations...
 - Improve cultural compatibility of treatment.⁷
 - Include the client's subjective experiences.⁷
 - Encourage generalization of strategies beyond sessions.⁷
 - Help show cultural responsiveness.⁷
 - Build rapport with clients.⁷

Key Elements to Culturally Responsive Interventions

We must intentionally complete the puzzle



● Building Emotional Regulation Skills

Skill building in context of relationships with others.

● Psychoeducation

Partner with BIPOC youth and families in understanding symptoms in context while externalizing symptoms from their identity.

● Maximize Relationships

Culturally Responsive practices are interpersonal, collectivistic, and foster engagement with others.

● Strengths Based

Identify and apply individual strengths as the foundation for all interventions.

Need for Culturally-Responsive School-Based Mental Health

- Schools have a responsibility to provide services to culturally diverse students in a culturally responsive fashion. This involves...
 - *“The flexibility to be open to understanding a child or families experience from their frame of reference rather than through one's own.”²*
- The prevalence of biases, underutilization of mental health treatment, and the frequency of inadequate treatment has fueled the need for culturally responsive school-based mental health.
- One way to provide culturally responsive school-based mental health services is by providing culturally responsive adaptations to traditional interventions.¹⁰

How Do We Adapt Interventions?

- The first step to adapting an intervention is to choose a model of practice that will best serve the needs of your client population.
 - Some of the most popular models can be found below (see references to read more).
 - Ecological Validity Model (EVM)¹
 - Cultural Adaptation Process (CAP)³
 - Formative Method for Adapting Psychotherapy (FMAP)⁵
- It is crucial that alongside these models of practice one makes sure to...
 - Design interventions within a cultural context.⁷
 - Employ intervention procedures appropriate for the target group.⁷

What Can School-Based Mental Health Providers do?

- Conduct multicultural interviews (such as the JIMIS⁶) when gathering background information about students and families.⁹
- Engage in self-reflection to build cultural competence.⁹
- Advocate for culturally diverse students by promoting culturally adapted interventions.
- Examine student and family experiences through their cultural lens rather than through your own.
- Consult with other professionals fluent in the culture of your clients rather than by making assumptions or stereotypes of their cultural beliefs or background.

References

