



ROLE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS IN BUILDING MENTAL HEALTH IN STUDENTS

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Abstract: Mental health is defined by the World Health Organization as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Therefore, if you don't have a healthy mental state it will be hard for you to live your life to the fullest extent. Everyone knows that regular exercise is good for the body. But exercise is also one of the most effective ways to improve your mental health. Mental health promotion in early childhood settings and schools is about creating positive, safe and supportive environments, and providing opportunities to build and practice relationship skills. All staff can be involved in mental health promotion as it relates to every area of the early childhood setting or school – the culture, policies, curriculum and activities. Early childhood and school professionals are often the first to recognise instances where a child or young person's behaviour or interactions have changed. A usually social child or young person who withdraws from friends or activities or a usually calm child or young person who begins to display erratic behaviour are often noticed first in the classroom or early childhood setting. By building mental health promotion capacity, early childhood and school professionals will be helped to recognise where changes in behaviour or interactions may be an early indicator of a mental health concern and respond. An effective response may be to consult with someone else in the school who has appropriate knowledge and skills or make a referral for the child or young person to receive professional support. Early childhood and school staff already have a range of generalised skills and practices, such as listening and relationship skills, that that can be used and built upon to help staff understand their role in mental health promotion.

Keywords: School teachers, Mental health

Introduction:

Mental health is defined by the World Health Organization as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Therefore, if you don't have a healthy mental state it will be hard for you to live your life to the fullest extent. Everyone knows that regular exercise is good for the body. But exercise is also one of the most effective ways to improve your mental health. Regular exercise can have a profoundly positive impact on depression, anxiety, ADHD, and more. It also relieves stress, improves memory, helps you sleep better, and boosts

overall mood. And you don't have to be a fitness fanatic to reap the benefits.

Mental health promotion in early childhood settings and schools is about creating positive, safe and supportive environments, and providing opportunities to build and practice relationship skills. All staff can be involved in mental health promotion as it relates to every area of the early childhood setting or school – the culture, policies, curriculum and activities.

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Early childhood and school staff already have a range of generalised skills and practices, such as listening and relationship skills, that that can be used and built upon to help staff understand their role in mental health promotion.

Early childhood and school staff can promote positive mental health by:

- practicing listening skills with children and young people, such as through allowing child-led discussions and providing an overall summary of the discussion
- assigning the role of establishing and maintaining referral pathways to a staff member or team so there are processes for referral in cases where a child or young person requires additional support. The staff member, or team, who has this responsibility will also be responsible for clearly documenting and communicating this process to staff in the early childhood setting or school
- exploring relationships with local mental health community organisations and services and how the early childhood setting or school can tap into this knowledge

- establishing a community of knowledge around mental health promotion. This may include establishing a small library about mental health promotion in the staff room
- appointing a mental health promotion champion who is able to provide support to other staff on how to integrate mental health promotion into wider health promotion and wellbeing activities
- having a paediatrician or mental health practitioner come to the early childhood setting or school and discuss the importance of positive mental health and its impacts on teaching and learning
- understanding the backgrounds of the children, young people and their families that attend the early childhood setting or school and how this may impact on their relationships and interactions
- understanding how the development of children and young people affects interactions with peers and adults.

Conclusion:

Mental health promotion in early childhood settings and schools is about creating positive, safe and supportive environments, and providing opportunities to build and practice relationship skills. All staff can be involved in mental health promotion as it relates to every area of the early childhood setting or school – the culture, policies, curriculum and activities. Early childhood and school professionals are often the first to recognise instances where a child or young person's behaviour or interactions have changed. A usually social child or young person who withdraws from friends or activities or a usually calm child or young person who begins to display erratic

behaviour are often noticed first in the classroom or early childhood setting. By building mental health promotion capacity, early childhood and school professionals will be helped to recognise where changes in behaviour or interactions may be an early indicator of a mental health concern and respond. An effective response may be to consult with someone else in the school who has appropriate knowledge and skills or make a referral for the child or young person to receive professional support. Early childhood and school staff already have a range of generalised skills and practices, such as listening and relationship skills, that that can be used and built upon to help staff understand their role in mental health promotion.

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