Meeting the Needs of Students with Mental Health Concerns: OT Screening and Intervention

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Objectives

At the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

- Describe how mental health impacts the functioning of children and youth in the role of student
- Describe the Dual-Factor Model of Mental Health and apply it to children and youth
- Utilize screening tools to assess subjective well-being and prodromal symptoms
- Develop interventions using multi-tiered systems of support to address children's mental health concerns at school

Owen

What is Mental Health?

“There are huge differences between a teenager who is not depressed or anxious and one who bounds out of bed in the morning with twinkling eyes; between an adolescent who says no to drugs and one who says yes to meaningful involvement in family, school, and community activities; and between one who costs society little and one who actually benefits it” [Seigelman et al., 2005, pg. 498].
Dual Factor Model of Mental Health

1. Absence of mental illness symptoms
2. Presence of mental health symptoms
   - functioning well in most aspects of life
   - participating in kind and trusting relationships
   - growing into the best version of oneself
   - having a purpose or direction in life
   - adapting the environment to support one’s needs
   - having a sense of self-determination
   [Keyes, 2002]

What does Mental Health Look Like for kids like Owen?

- Early elementary school
- Late elementary school
- High school

Prodromal Symptoms

- Observable behaviors associated with the onset of a diagnosable mental illness [Kovacs & Lopez-Duran, 2010; Jackson, Cavanagh, & Scott, 2003]
- A change in an individual’s function or behavior
- Hindsight is 20/20
- Length of prodrome

Internalizing Behaviors

Externalizing Behaviors
Subjective Well-Being
- Recurrent positive affect
- Absence or infrequency of negative affect
- Increased satisfaction with life
  (Suldo & Schaffer, 2008)

PERMA and OT’s Distinct Value
- Engagement
- Accomplishment
- Meaning
- Volition

AOTA DISTINCT VALUE STATEMENT

Examples of Tier 1 Services
Examples of Tier 2 Services

- More targeted
- Small groups
- Social skills training for disliked or rejected peers, peer acceptance
- At-risk, aggressive, anti-social children
- Yoga
- Mindfulness
- Relaxation techniques (breathing)
- Play and music

Examples of Tier 3 Services

- Intensive mental health intervention
- Self-management strategies
- Social competence
- Friendship groups
- Cognitive-behavior therapy (CBT)
Creating a Responsive Learning Environment
UNDERSTANDING THE ACES TRAUMA-INFORMED CLASSROOMS INTER PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Childhood experiences have a great impact on a person’s development, as well as health.
- Early childhood experiences are a public health issue.

For more info:
https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html

Examples of ACES items
- Fairly commonplace
  - Moving residence often
  - One of your parents smoking
  - Parents being divorced
  - Living with a step parent
  - Before age 11, getting hit or spanked by parents
  - Family members making fun of you (e.g., “fat” or “stupid”)
  - Death of a grandparent or other close family member
- Not so commonplace
  - Living in foster care
  - Before age 18, getting threatened with a weapon by a parent
  - Indecent or other forms sexual abuse
  - Forced use of substances
  - Physical abuse
  - Parent committing suicide
  - Witnessing domestic or community violence
  - Being asked to or actually participating in violence

ACES Pyramid
Cultivate a sense of:
- Safety
- Stability
- Acceptance for students
A basic understanding of the instructor’s role, how stress affects learning, and how to foster social connectedness guides trauma-informed educational practices.

Stress and Learning
- Stress during the learning process can inhibit an array of abilities, including the use of logic and reasoning, attention, processing speed, language usage, coordination, and some forms of memory (Palmer, 2013).
Ways to Prevent Student Stress

- Predictable structure to each activity.
- Provide advanced instructions.
- Provide samples of products.
- Allow students to sit in their preferred seats.
- Pre-assign groups for group activities or provide adequate lead time so students can comfortably self-form groups.
- Plan for and take regularly scheduled breaks.
- Establish a positive way of eliciting class participation.
- Monitor the length and level of freedom of students in learning the next “just-right challenge.”
- Consider using models that emphasize social learning versus rule-based classroom management techniques.
- Regularly provide opportunities for reflection.

(Cahill, 2017)

Promote Social Connectedness

- Meaningful relationships with adults at school can help promote persistence and facilitate the acquisition of essential positive outcomes (Karp, 2011).

Ways to Promote Social Connectedness

- Use active listening techniques during all interactions.
- Use and model good interpersonal communication skills.
- Model and teach students how to offer constructive feedback to peers.
- Attend to students’ interests and, when possible, allow students to explore them in the classroom.
- Use group activities that involve student collaboration.
- Refrain from using fear to motivate, correct, or instruct.
- Promote diversity and acceptance.
- Agree to disagree in constructive, objective ways during intellectual discussions.
- Model how to recover from mistakes.
- Establish goals collaboratively.
- Share progress updates with students; provide accurate feedback and praise.
- Celebrate progress.

(Cahill, 2017)

Inter-professional Collaboration to Address Mental Health

- Social worker
- School psychologist
- Special educators
- General educators
- School counselor
- Outside mental health counselors
- Time outs and suspensions
- Behavior intervention plans
- Wrap around services

Screening and Assessment Tools

- Many measures aren’t appropriate to use with adolescents.
- Observations are ok, but they don’t “test” or get at the “subjective” view.
- Students’ Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS)
  - 7 item self-report; 6 point scale (strongly agree—strongly disagree)
  - Used with special populations
- Multidimensional Students’ Life Satisfaction Scale
  - 30–40 items
  - School, family, friends, self, living environment

(Huebner, 1994; Seligman, Huebner, & Valois, 2003)
Before Starting Intervention: Volition


Volitional Behaviors

- Shows curiosity
- Initiates actions
- Task directed
- Shows preferences
- Tries new things
- Stays engaged
- Expresses mastery pleasure
- Tries to solve problems
- Tries to produce effects
- Practices skill
- Seeks challenges
- Modifies environment
- Pursues activities to completion
- Uses imagination

EveryMomentCounts.org
Dr. Susan Bazyk

- Comfortable Cafeteria
- Refreshing Recess
- Calm Moment Cards
- Making Connections and Learning Together (using the Zones of Regulation)

Using Occupation-based Interventions to Increase Volition

- Volition is shaped by personal circumstances and history
- Confluence of Personal Causation, Values, and Interests

Personal Causation

- Personal Causation
- Sense of Capacity
- Self-efficacy
- Appraising Self
Values
- Personal convictions
- Sense of obligation

(Lee & Kielhofner, 2017)

Interests
- Enjoyment
- Pattern
- Problematic activity choices vs. interests as inspiration

(Lee & Kielhofner, 2017)

Volitional Processes
- Anticipation
- Making Choices
- Experience
- Interpretation

(Lee & Kielhofner, 2017)

Volitional Continuum

HABITS AND ROUTINES

(Lee & Kielhofner, 2017)

How We Can Support Owen
- Worksheet and sharing

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- Worksheet and sharing

Resources for OT Practitioners
- AOTA School Mental Health Toolkit
  - Resolving conflict and restraint
  - Inclusion
  - Creating a positive mealtime experience
  - Anxiety disorders
  - Childhood obesity
  - Childhood trauma

- Depression
- Grief counselor
- Promoting strengths
- Recess promotion
- Social and emotional learning

http://www.aota.org/Practice/Children-Youth/Mental%20Health.aspx

(Lee & Kielhofner, 2017)
Other Resources

- Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS)
  - https://www.pbis.org/
- Collaboration for Academic Social and Emotional Learning
  - http://www.casel.org/
- EveryMomentCounts
  - http://www.everymomentcounts.org
- Mental Health First Aid
  - http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org
- Illinois Social Emotional Learning Standards resources
  - http://www.ilclassroomsinaction.org/sel.html

How are you already addressing children's mental health?

References

- Leventhal, R. H. (1994)._playful development and validation of a multidimensional life satisfaction scale for young children, Psychological Assessment, 6(2), 149-158.