


Chapter 17

Interdisciplinary Preparation to Meet the Emotional and Behavioral Health Needs of Diverse Students

Sara Kupzyk

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6721-8659>

University of Nebraska, Omaha, USA

Philip D. Nordness

University of Nebraska, Omaha, USA

ABSTRACT

Although interdisciplinary teaming within a multi-tiered system of support is valuable, barriers to collaboration exist among professionals because of competing standards, lack of understanding roles, and lack of common language. These challenges may relate to how pre-service training is arranged. Training is usually provided in separate programs with little overlap in courses and field experiences. Interprofessional education (IPE) is a potential means of addressing the siloed approach. The goal of this chapter is to describe an IPE preparation program designed to develop scholars to meet the emotional and behavioral health needs of diverse students. Participating scholars complete a plan of study that includes shared coursework and courses that are unique to their field, participate in a weekly professional seminar, and take part in an interdisciplinary practicum experience. The authors also offer recommendations for university programs seeking to create interdisciplinary opportunities for pre-service professionals.

School district administrators indicate that the mental health and behavioral needs of students are among their top concerns (Deliberti & Schwartz, 2022). The focus on behavioral health needs is warranted since two out of five youth will meet criteria for a mental health disorder by age 18 (Bitsko et al., 2022). Furthermore, in the School Pulse Panel, a national survey of 846 school public school leaders, over 80

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-6438-0.ch017

Interdisciplinary Preparation to Meet the Emotional and Behavioral Health Needs of Diverse Students

percent of the leaders reported that the behavioral and socioemotional development of students had been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (U.S. Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences, 2022). In addition, over 50 percent of school leaders reported an increase in classroom disruptions and tardiness, and over 30 percent reported an increase in fights between students and student verbal abuse on teachers and staff. To address these issues, 70 percent of school leaders said they need more training to support students' socioemotional development and 51 percent reported the need for more training on behavior management strategies.

Even before the pandemic, the mental health and behavioral needs of children and youth were not being met as schools struggled to keep up with demand and barriers to access across diverse populations prevented many students from receiving the services they need (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2021). In fact, only half of youth with a mental health disorder receive treatment, with schools being the most common site services are delivered (Whitney & Peterson, 2019). Untreated mental health concerns can lead to behavior challenges in classrooms that are linked to high student dropout rates, later unemployment, incarceration, and homelessness (Kataoka et al., 2002). Overall, there is a pressing need to increase the number of school professionals that receive training to effectively and collaboratively address behavioral challenges presented by students.

The current approach to addressing the behavioral challenges of students is often fragmented. Within schools, there are a number of professionals, including teachers, counselors, school psychologists, special educators, and behavior analysts that are trying to address the behavioral needs of students, however they often work independently of each other without collaborating across disciplines (Adelman & Taylor, 2021). This results in a siloed approach to meeting the needs of students and is less effective in supporting the generalization of academic and behavioral skills (Adelman & Taylor, 2021). In the absence of collaborative services and supports for these students, challenging behaviors are often dealt with through punitive discipline procedures or referral to special education. This is problematic when we consider the racial disparities in student discipline rates, particularly exclusionary discipline practices (Barrett et al., 2018; Skiba et al., 2011).

As an alternative to this siloed approach, schools need to consider a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) to address educational and behavioral health needs of students (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2021). MTSS is an integrated framework for organizing a continuum of evidence-based practices for addressing the academic, behavioral, and socioemotional needs of children and youth. Within this framework interdisciplinary expertise can be leveraged to guide implementation of integrated practices and promote effective decision making across each tier. The MTSS framework includes universal screening, differentiation of goals and objectives, tiered social and academic interventions, and ongoing progress monitoring. Successful MTSS implementation addresses the academic and behavioral needs of every student, regardless of their ability, eligibility, or cultural background, and can be addressed by integrating assessment and intervention within a multi-tiered approach (March & Mathur, 2020). When implementing an MTSS framework the goal is to identify and address the differing needs of the students and to match them with the supports across the tiers.

An effective MTSS framework prioritizes primary prevention at tier 1 by establishing a routine to provide an environment that is predictable, safe, and emphasizes pro-social behaviors that we want students to display (I-MTSS Research Network, 2022). Tier 1 includes a universal, evidenced based core curriculum that can typically address the diverse behavioral and academic needs of most children. This can include universal expectations for behavior, evidenced based instruction, and screening to measure student progress. The middle tier (tier 2) is intended to provide secondary prevention which may in-

15 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/interdisciplinary-preparation-to-meet-the-emotional-and-behavioral-health-needs-of-diverse-students/316420

Related Content

Increasing Knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorders Among Urban Special Educators in Tanzania: Results From Three Teacher Training Workshops

Nilofer C. Naqvi, Sarah J. E. Wong-Goodrich, Amanda Martinage, Sarah L. Gordon, Jacqueline A. DeCuffaand Martha Collins (2022). *Research Anthology on Inclusive Practices for Educators and Administrators in Special Education* (pp. 880-898).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/increasing-knowledge-of-autism-spectrum-disorders-among-urban-special-educators-in-tanzania/292921

Informing School Rehabilitation Professionals: Evidence-Based Practices of Accommodations in the Inclusive Classroom

Pei-Ying Lin (2020). *Special Education Design and Development Tools for School Rehabilitation Professionals* (pp. 86-102).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/informing-school-rehabilitation-professionals/246664

Perspectives, Strategies, and Propositions for Cultivating Inclusive Educational Environments: Teaching for Neurodiversity and Creative Learning

Ananí M. Vasquez (2022). *Handbook of Research on Challenging Deficit Thinking for Exceptional Education Improvement* (pp. 144-178).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/perspectives-strategies-and-propositions-for-cultivating-inclusive-educational-environments/294261

Using Diverse Picturebooks for Inclusive Practices and Transformative Pedagogies

Rhoda Myra Garces-Bacsal, Najwa Mohammed Alhosani, Hala Elhoweris, Hind Tuaib Al Ghufli, Najla Mohamed AlOwais, Emmanuel S. Bajaand Ruanni Tupas (2022). *Rethinking Inclusion and Transformation in Special Education* (pp. 72-92).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/using-diverse-picturebooks-for-inclusive-practices-and-transformative-pedagogies/307843

Family and Teacher Roles in Family Engagements in Special Education in Kenya

Clifford Otieno Owino, Beatrice Bunyasi Aworiand Joyce Achieng Ogogo (2023). *Meaningful and Active Family Engagement: IEP, Transition and Technology Integration in Special Education* (pp. 89-111).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/family-and-teacher-roles-in-family-engagements-in-special-education-in-kenya/330950