

MAY 2022

SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHT

Community Collaboration



Marshall Public Schools

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

We have developed a specific program with one of our previous partners, Catholic Charities, to provide a variety of mental health services K-12. Because we are a smaller district, we have had trouble accessing some of the larger behavioral health in-school programs that are offered in Dane County due to the cost of those programs. We worked out a program where we are provided two Master's level clinicians: one for K-6 and one for 7-12. They each are in our schools 7 hours per week, which we are looking to expand to at least 14 hours next year. They are able to work with our students individually or in small groups.

We pay Catholic Charities an hourly rate, which eliminates the need to do any type of billing. Additionally, we partnered with Journey Mental Health to facilitate the REST program which uses a universal screener to determine which students we will place in an evidence-based trauma counseling group (CBITS curriculum). We do this with our 7th graders. In addition to our community partnerships, we updated our universal SEL curriculum in both the elementary and middle school to the new version of Second Step.



OUTCOMES & "TRIAL RUNS"

The outside clinicians have been really nice to have in our buildings because, especially as kids get older, they sometimes want more privacy and they would prefer working with someone not directly connected to the school. I've had students who have been really hesitant about therapy or that don't really understand what it is, and it's been nice to have the option of introducing them to our clinician and providing a "trial run." This way, there is less of a commitment, and they can try it out and decide if they want to continue. Having the option for this has been really nice for the kids who are harder to reach, and it helps them feel in control of their services. When kids have a positive experience in school with a therapist, they are more likely to continue to reach out for help outside of school.

FOCUS ON EQUITY

Many of our kids, especially the ones most marginalized, have trouble accessing mental health services due to cost, waitlists, stigma, or lack of transportation, insurance, and time off. Having programs at school greatly decreases many of the barriers for our kids to receive services. Even if there is some stigma in receiving mental health services, it seems that families are more willing to allow their child to see someone at school. For a lot of our kids, the travel time alone is too difficult for our families to take on. Having the option for kids to see someone at school has allowed many kids the chance to meet regularly with a clinician. Having groups and the chance for kids to work through trauma or stress together is also really powerful. We have students who just don't want to do individual counseling who are willing to do it if it's with their peers. Lastly, our REST program incorporates a racial trauma module in with their curriculum, which has been important for all students.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Working with both of our community partners has been really helpful in our referral pathway, in part because it expands our group knowledge base. There are more mental health professionals with a variety of experiences or connections that help give ideas and suggestions when we need help finding the best fit for a student and their family. This is especially the case with the REST program through Journey Mental Health. After our screener and interviews, we work with Journey to talk through and make a plan for every child who might need additional support. Having someone working with us outside of school also helps keep us accountable and they can see things from an outside perspective that sometimes we miss.

KEY CONTRIBUTORS
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