McLean School Nurse Liaison Project

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MCPAP: Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project

- Started in 2004 in response to clear need
- Increasing mental health care access
  - Improve PCP’s knowledge, skills and confidence to manage/prescribe
  - Assist with referrals to specialist care
- Offers PCPs access to a child Psychiatrist for consult, education, and referrals
- Southeastern region managed by McLean Hospital, SE campus
School Outreach

- 2012: Pilot program to extend MCPAP-style services to schools in Southeastern MA, starting with six towns.
  - Focus on School Nurses as the access point to the school
- 2015: 5-year grant funded expansion, with a goal to serve all of SE Massachusetts
- Hired an Advanced Practice Nurse with experience in psych, school nursing, & nursing education to develop & implement the program.
Why School Nurses?

- Licensed professionals whose training includes psych
- Connected to all staff, kids, families, and providers
- Well-placed to identify issues
  - Psychiatric distress often presents with physical symptoms
  - May pick up on changes, patterns
- Involved in behavioral issues
  - Children in crisis are often sent to the nurse
  - Required to assess after restraint
- Frequently not well-utilized
  - Out of the loop, until abruptly expected to solve it
Program Enrollment

- Agreement Letter details services & limits, signed by Nurse Leader and Superintendent (or principal).
  - ’16-’17: Enrolled 24 public districts & 9 independents
  - ’17-’18: Enrolled 8 public districts & 12 independents

- Currently: 60 districts & 43 independent schools
  - Totaling over 400 schools and 231,000 students
  - Roughly 21% of the state.
Services Offered

- Consultation
  - School nurse & other staff can call / email the NP any time, with any questions

- Education
  - Educational presentations offered to schools on a growing variety of topics

- Resources
  - Developing Library of printable resources.

I think this program is a great resource when needed - and a great resource for school teams for PD around behavioral/mental health issues.
Consultation

- Questions from School Nurses, other school staff (principal, guidance, etc.), or teams.
- Confidential – no identifying information given
- Voicemail returned w/in 30min, emails within 3 hr.
- Offering guidance, information, assistance with general or specific issues
- NP consults with Child Psychiatrist if needed
- Does not replace existing Crisis Management Plan
- NP sends relevant resources, follow-up email

Nice to know Julie is available even if to brainstorm an idea or concern before going to principal or calling a parent.

A member of our team called to get another opinion on a student. I did not call personally, but the information provided was extremely helpful to the school team.
Call volume gradually increasing

- As staff hear more about the program, remember it’s available.
- As they become more comfortable with the consultant.
- As non-nurses realize they can call (19% of consults in 17-18)

Helpful to know we have a resource we can rely on with appropriate and reasonable response.

After meeting Julie, I feel much more comfortable calling.
Most common topics

- Communication
  - With Students
  - With Family
  - With Providers
  - With other Staff
- Behavior Strategies
  - Aggression
  - Anxiety
  - Class Refusal
- Access to Care
I am extremely grateful, as is my staff. We refer to the training repeatedly in our discussion of students. Because we do not have a budget for in services, we would otherwise not have access to this information.
Schools eager for education

- 12 in-services completed Spring ’16
- 62 completed in ’16-’17
- 77 in ’17-’18
- Monthly After School Seminars hosted by independent schools
- Nearly 2100 School staff attended last year
  - 34% school nurses
  - 46% teachers
  - 20% counselors, psychologists, etc.
- Most popular topics:
  - Somatic (18), Anxiety (16), Trauma (10)
Reinforcing the material

- Resources requested by Attendees are sent 2-5 days later.
- Opportunity at every presentation to discuss current situations they are dealing with.
  - Follow up contact around these consultation discussions
  - Demonstration increases comfort for contacting consultant in the future

I have used the resources from my school psychologist who has attended trainings.
Resources

- Developing a tool kit of forms, guidelines, and best practices for school nurses
- Growing database of resources (websites, pamphlets, posters, tools) which school staff can access and distribute when needed
- Collect and organize information regarding current best practices
- Distribute a monthly newsletter

The materials have been extremely helpful in counseling children.

I love the newsletters and print them out to use as reference.
Measuring impact

- Staff in enrolled schools are invited to complete an annual survey.
  - Measuring comfort and confidence levels managing a variety of issues and diagnoses
  - Measuring participation in the program
  - Soliciting suggestions for future services
Describing impact

- Improved their communication with students, parents and/or staff: 51%.
- Increased their confidence managing mental health issues: 49%.
- Used information from MSNLP to educate students, parents and/or staff: 51%.
- Increased empathy for those struggling with mental health issues: 41%.
- Increased intradepartmental collaboration: 16%.
- Increased ability to take an active role around these issues: 27%.

Survey question: “What is most useful about the consultation process?”

- #1 Answer: “Just knowing a consultant is available boosts my confidence” (52%)
Future of the Program

- Continuing to broaden available materials & topics
- Expanding beyond the Southeast region
  - Accepting towns outside the region now, though with limited services
- Offering presentations remotely, or online
- Fostering increased collaboration between school nurses, school staff, and providers
- Securing funding for a permanent program
- Assisting with replication elsewhere in the state
How to develop a Liaison Project in your area

- Find Funding
- Provide infrastructure
  - Travel, phone, office, computer
- Hire a nurse
  - Psych experience
  - Pediatric experience
  - School/Education experience

Someone has the knowledge I need and I can access it in a timely manner.

The program has been an excellent support and resource. We could not do all that we do for the students, families and staff without the program!

I think we are so fortunate to be included in this program. I have seen a difference in our staff- they are clearly more empathetic and beginning to think of classroom strategies that are appropriate to the situation.