Strategies for Early Mental Health Identification in Schools

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Universal Screening

**Pros**
- All children included
- No child who is at-risk for problems will be missed
- Identified children can be offered help before problems become serious

**Cons**
- Large number of children to screen at once
- May need additional staff to do screening
- Expensive
- Must be ongoing (every 6 months - 1 year)
- May be difficult to guarantee services for all children identified
- Risk of public outcry

Selected Screening

**Pros**
- Children are selected based on having a specific risk
- More reasonable number of children to screen at once
- May fit into programs designed to help at-risk kids
- May be done outside the classroom
- Identified children can be offered help before problems become more serious

**Cons**
- Some at-risk children from general population may be missed
- Identified children may have been experiencing problems for some time before screening
- Places new demands on existing staff
- May need to establish service linkages

Indicated Assessment

**Pros**
- Identified/referral children are screened & assessed – ensures comprehensiveness
- Including screening can:
  - Increase assessment quality
  - Increase efficiency over time
  - Increase quality of clinician-child relationship
  - Availability of treatment services

**Cons**
- No case finding in general population – many at-risk children may be missed
- Identified/referral children have been experiencing problems for some time and have impairments before referral and screening
- Places new demands on existing staff

Early Identification Strategies

**Match Strategy with Screening Tools**
- Broad Screening Tools
  - For Universal or Selected Screening
    - Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC-35, PSC-17)
    - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)
  - Specialized Screening Tools
    - For Selected Screening or Indicated Assessment
      - DISC Predictive Scales (DPS) & Voice DISC
      - Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), Youth Self-Report (YSR), Teacher Report Form (TRF)
  - Targeted Instruments
    - For Universal or Selected Screening or Indicated Assessment
      - CRAFFT
      - Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test/Instrument Name</th>
<th>Website/Link</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.who.int">Publications@who.int</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aseba.org/index.html">http://www.aseba.org/index.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDI (Child Depression Inventory)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.c-d-i.org">www.c-d-i.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children (DISC) and DISC-Prediction Scales (DPS)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uic.edu">www.uic.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pediatric Symptom Checklist</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dbhnhs.gov/services/PediatricSymptomChecklist.html">http://www.dbhnhs.gov/services/PediatricSymptomChecklist.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mhsc.org.uk">www.mhsc.org.uk</a></td>
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The Teaching Teachers to Identify Program (TTIP)
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Program Description
- Adaptation of Systematic Screening of Behavior Disorders (SSBD) developed by Walker & Severson (1990).
- Teaches teachers to recognize student behaviors that are indicative of potential internalizing or externalizing disorders.
- Gives teachers the opportunity to complete brief questionnaires about students they feel may have an internalizing or externalizing disorder.
- Encourages the referral of at-risk students to the appropriate school personnel (social worker, guidance counselor, etc.).

TTIP Implementation and Results
- Implemented in 5 schools with school based mental health clinics
- 536 students screened
- 61% (n = 327) identified as exhibiting externalizing symptoms
  - 63.9% of these students (n = 209) met criteria for a potential externalizing disorder
- 39% (n = 209) identified as exhibiting internalizing symptoms
  - 52.2% of these students (n = 109) met criteria for a potential internalizing disorder

Teacher Satisfaction with TTIP

TTIP Ethical Considerations
- Parental consent
- Confidentiality
- Stigma
- Access to services for identified students
- Referral to services
Discussion Questions

- What are other pros and cons to any of the strategies presented?
- What concerns have been raised in your community about applying screening strategies in your schools?
- What has your community tried that worked? that didn't work?