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Health & Wellness Report:

Pandemic Causes Widespread Emotional Trauma

Mental-and behavioral-health problems for students and adults are at all time high with the closing of schools. At first, with schools closing, psychologists were more about protocol procedures or how to stick to the mandated time line of assessments; however, it was soon learned that a plan is needed for the now and for school reopening. The overwhelming need to protect students who experience domestic violence, abuse, emerging mental health, suicide-risk threat, self-harm to themselves or others cannot wait.

Everyone has been affected by this pandemic, and we all remain at risk from the virus and resulting economic strains, however these effects are not equally distributed. Schools that have faced stresses by limited resources, high poverty rates, or other recent crises likely will experience the greatest difficulty of the pandemic. Many schools psychologists are now working on services so that they can help the schools provide ethically and effectively using technology, much like teachers with digital teaching.

They have started to provide virtual telehealth counseling to “help teachers adapt behavior-management strategies to a Zoom classroom, and created social-emotional-learning lessons for the home context”. Pretending everything is “normal” will likely exacerbate mental health issues and underlying traumas, also the potential of stifling and set back any growth students and family were making prior to the pandemic. Unless students and families emotional needs are met first in a consistent manner learning will not occur. Students will have a very difficult time- resulting in low grades, lower graduation rates, poor self-image, even death.

While schools are closed and prior to their opening, developing a long term-term recovery plan to help your child and family will be key. Do not rely on school officials to do it for your child or your family. Don’t assume the schools will be completely equipped to help you immediately, as each school will be facing their own set of setbacks and challenges returning back to school. Creating a resource map of who will be your qualified mental-behavioral health services, school psychologists, school counselors, and social workers both in your schools, community and your local politicians.

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