

Title: Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices in Urban Schools: Project ACCESS

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Background:

Unmet need for behavioral health services is extraordinarily high among urban children of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. As overall unmet need for services continues to grow, schools are fast becoming the main source of behavioral health services for children. There is a need for implementation research to better understand methods to disseminate evidence-based practices (EBPs) to school mental health providers in order to meet the unmet needs of students in urban schools.

Aims:

The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of Project ACCESS (Advancing Collaboration for Children's Emotional and School Success; Eiraldi et al., 2014), a clinical trial focused on enhancing urban schools' internal capacity for implementation of school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS) with integrated small group EBPs at the Tier 2 level. The main aim of the project is to determine whether school staff can implement EBPs with fidelity and clinical effectiveness whether they receive consultation and coaching with performance feedback (C + C) or just receive consultation (C) alone.

Method:

Six, large urban schools in the Northeast were randomized to C + C or C only. Consultation and coaching was provided by trained research staff supervised by licensed psychologists. Fidelity of implementation was evaluated based on direct observation in the school (for school-wide interventions) and by coding videos of small group intervention sessions.

Results:

Preliminary results suggest that schools can successfully implement EBPs and that fidelity is higher for schools receiving C + C.

Conclusions:

SWPBIS with integrated evidence-based mental health interventions can be employed as a vehicle for addressing mental health problems in under-resourced urban schools, and school personnel can be trained to maintain high levels of implementation fidelity.