



Just the Facts . . .

School Psychologists as Health Care Providers*

Good emotional and behavioral health is an integral part of healthy development and enhances a child's sense of well-being, supports rewarding social relationships with family and peers, and facilitates achievement of full academic potential. Children with emotional or behavioral difficulties may have problems managing their emotions, focusing on tasks, and/or controlling their behavior. These difficulties, which may persist throughout a child's development, can lead to lifelong problems. There is growing recognition of the interrelationships among physical, psychological, social, and educational functioning. In the past couple of decades, professionals from various disciplines have recognized the need for integrated service delivery to address the health, mental health, educational, and social service needs of youth. Comprehensive programs have been shown to be effective in facilitating early identification of high-risk students, reducing the need for more restrictive placements, decreasing involvement in risky behaviors and reducing morbidity and mortality, enhancing health promoting behaviors, and improving academic and school functioning.

Comprehensive health care is an integrated system of culture-specific services ranging from prevention to treatment directed toward health, mental health, and related needs of students and their families. School psychologists are uniquely positioned to facilitate the development, delivery, and monitoring of prompt, effective, and culturally responsive mental and behavioral health services of prevention and intervention. School psychologists' broadly focused preparation as academic, mental, and behavioral health service providers, coupled with their engagement in and familiarity with schools' organizational and cultural contexts, equips them to play a primary role in multi-tiered and responsive behavioral health programs.

School psychological and related services are designed to address health problems and related difficulties in social, emotional, behavioral, cognitive, academic, and family functioning. Care is not restricted to services provided in traditional healthcare settings by medical personnel, but includes the broad range of services provided by mental health, educational, and social service personnel across multiple school and community settings. Furthermore, school psychologists do not work in isolation, but are partners with other professionals to ensure comprehensive and integrated services. Most importantly, school psychologists assume a central position in orchestrating necessary systems changes and sustaining the health-care process.

For more information, please contact NYASP at president@nyasp.org.

*Based on Nastasi, B. (2000). School Psychologists as Health-Care Providers in the 21st Century: Conceptual Framework, Professional Identity, and Professional Practice