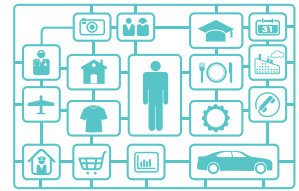


BRIDGING MENTAL HEALTH & BASIC NEEDS BY BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

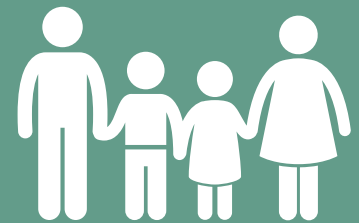


What are basic needs?

Basic needs are things that are needed in order to survive and be mentally and physically healthy. They include elements like shelter/housing, clothing, food, water, safety, a sense of belonging, and love.

How prevalent is the inability to meet basic needs in the U.S.?

The inability to meet the basic needs of youth in our country is widespread—**45% of Americans are not able to meet basic needs.**¹ In order to meet basic needs, families are believed to need an income that is twice the official poverty level. Approximately **15% of Americans and 22% of American children live in poverty.** Family income also impacts student eligibility for free or reduced school lunch; over 31 million students receive free or reduced school lunch.² In a recent survey, 84% of school principals have reported seeing students come to school hungry.³



What happens when basic needs are not met?

When families are unable to meet basic needs, youth can experience negative behavioral, social, and academic outcomes.⁴ For example, food insecurity is associated with impaired social skills and academic performance in youth.⁵ Poverty has been consistently connected with low academic achievement. Youth who face homelessness and poverty are more likely to experience mental illness.^{6,7}

Why is it important for schools to address basic needs when trying to support student mental health?

If students are struggling to meet basic needs, they may have less energy to devote to mental health and overall wellness. In addition, basic needs-related challenges, like lack of transportation, health insurance, or stable housing, may make it impossible for students to engage in mental health services and supports that they are connected with at school.

How can schools work with community partners to promote mental health and wellness in students whose basic needs are not being met?

The priority for these students should be connecting them with services that help to meet basic needs. Mental health supports alone are unlikely to achieve desired outcomes if students are struggling to meet basic needs. To help these students, schools can serve as an access point or “one stop shop” for meeting both mental health and basic needs. Partnerships with community organizations and providers that can help youth and families meet basic needs are essential.



MEET TAYLOR

Sixteen-year-old Taylor’s mother was incarcerated just before the start of the school year, leaving Taylor’s older sister with custody of her. Taylor likes school and has good friends there, and often confides in the social studies teacher. But Taylor’s sister’s home is in a rural area about 40 miles from the town, and Taylor missed a lot of school when transportation to town wasn’t available. After all these absences, Taylor has missed too many assignments and is behind in course credits. In order to be closer to school, Taylor has been staying with friends most of the time. While Taylor’s former stepfather sometimes buys Taylor new clothes or lets Taylor crash at his place, Taylor still struggles to keep clean clothes and eat regular meals. To cope with stress, Taylor smokes pot on a regular basis, and sometimes sells it to friends to make extra money.

HELL



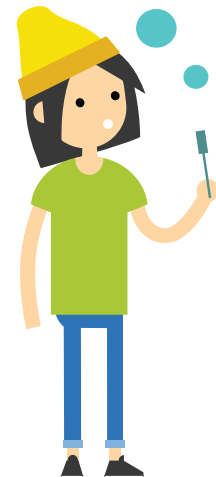
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HOW COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS CAN HELP MEET TAYLOR'S NEEDS



Taylor's Needs	Status of Taylor's Needs	Challenges with Meeting Needs	How Community Partners Can Help Meet Needs
Food	Receives free lunch at school.	Inconsistent meals on evenings and weekends.	Enroll in meal program sponsored by local business.
Housing	Stays at sister's home or couch-surfs at friends' homes.	Does not have permanent, stable housing.	Access to safe and consistent shelter via housing program.
Physical Health	Has asthma; has not seen a dentist in several years.	Has one inhaler for emergencies; not covered by health insurance.	Access to healthcare and dental services.
Behavioral Health	Uses cannabis; occasionally drinks with friends.	No clear access to behavioral health support.	Assessment and brief substance use intervention.
Mental Health	Experiencing apathy and symptoms of depression.	Has not been assessed or diagnosed with a mental illness.	Mental health screening and referral.
Education	Enrolled in high school.	Credit deficient; often absent or tardy.	Credit recovery/repair program; peer tutoring.
Work	Seeking part-time employment.	No prior job experience.	Job skills or workforce development programs.
Transportation	Gets rides from friends or walks.	Limited access to public transportation.	Obtain bus pass through school subsidized program by transportation agency.
Cultural Identity	Identifies with Asian Pacific Islander (API) culture.	Goes to school in a fairly homogenous area.	Connect to youth group at API community center.
Faith	Previous affiliation with a faith-based youth group.	Disconnected from group due to stigma from mother's incarceration.	Liaise with congregations for youth-focused engagement opportunities.
Hygiene	Showers and washes clothes intermittently at friends'/sister's homes.	Inconsistent access to showers and laundry services.	On-campus showers and laundry facilities.



SCHOOL AS A "ONE STOP SHOP" FOR MEETING ALL STUDENTS' NEEDS



BASIC NEEDS SUPPORTS	MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS	ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

Schools can build community partnerships to ensure that students have access to everything that they need—all in one place!

