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Pediatric mental health: Responding to a national emergency with school-based interventions

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Abstract

In a recent report by the Centers for Disease Control, it was estimated that 20 percent of children in the United States have a diagnosable mental health condition, and that approximately 80 percent of them are not treated for these disorders. In some states, including Washington State, this is an underestimate. More than 30 percent of 10th graders and 30 percent of 12th graders in Washington State reported feelings of depression. From 2010 to 2012, there were significant increases in the numbers of students who made plans to commit suicide, as well as those who made suicide attempts. Because about one-third of students report lack of adult presence to assist with these feelings, it is important, effective, and convenient for school nurses and other school-based health providers to assist in the assessment, diagnosis, treatment, support, and case management for children with mental health disorders. This session will provide an overview of epidemiologic data of mental health conditions in children, will review tools used by school nurses and school-based health centers (SBHCs) to assess students, and will present options used by a number of school districts to provide services and follow-up treatment for students with mental health disorders. Structural, monetary, and social barriers and facilitators will be discussed.

Biography

Robin Fleming is responsible for forecasting and responding to trends in nursing practice in Washington State, and to advocating for legislation, policy, and regulations that preserve, promote, and protect nursing practice and patient safety. She manages WSNA's Continuing Education program for nurses in Washington State. She holds expertise in the areas of school health and school nursing. She has worked as a school nurse for more than a decade in urban schools, has developed programs to help youth with mental health challenges, and to assist in diversifying the health care workforce. Her research on these and other topics has been published in multiple peer reviewed journals.

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