



Strengthening Adolescent Mental Health Support in Schools: A Study on Strategies and Implementation

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ABSTRACT

This study explores adolescent mental health in schools with a focus on existing prevention and intervention strategies. The background of this research is driven by the increasing prevalence of mental health issues among students and the limitations of the effectiveness of current programs. The main issue is how the strategies implemented can effectively address students' mental health needs. The aim of this research is to assess the effectiveness of various school mental health programs and identify challenges and solutions to improve their implementation. The research methods include an in-depth literature review of various studies and reports on mental health strategies. The findings indicate that although many strategies have been implemented, their effectiveness is often hindered by resource limitations and stigma. The main conclusion is the need for a more integrated and data-driven approach to enhance mental health support in schools, actively involving all stakeholders.

1. Introduction

Adolescent mental health in the school environment is now a critical focus in the context of education and student well-being. Adolescence is a period of significant emotional and social changes, which can make teenagers more vulnerable to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and stress. Schools, being the primary environment for daily adolescent activities, have great potential to better detect and address these mental health issues.

One of the key phenomena supporting the case for adolescent mental health in schools is the rise in mental health disorders among students, as identified through school reporting and surveys. Over the past decade, many reports have indicated a significant increase in mental health issues like anxiety, depression, and stress among teenagers. Data from mental health surveys conducted by various organizations show that approximately one in five adolescents experiences significant symptoms of anxiety or depression during the school year (National Institute of Mental Health, 2022).

Concrete examples of this phenomenon can be found in annual mental health surveys conducted in several high schools in the United States, which reveal that over 30% of students report experiencing chronic anxiety and about 20% experience severe depression symptoms. This phenomenon highlights the urgent need for better and more integrated mental health strategies within the school environment. These reports also indicate that many students experiencing mental health issues do not receive adequate support, either in terms of appropriate interventions or the necessary social support (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

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The sharp increase in the number of students reporting mental health issues can also be linked to additional stress factors faced by today's teenagers, including academic pressure, social media pressures, and global economic uncertainty. Studies show that ongoing stress can exacerbate or trigger mental health problems, underscoring the need for better interventions and more holistic support in schools (American Psychological Association, 2023).

This phenomenon underscores the importance of researching and developing effective mental health programs in schools, as well as the need for involvement from all parties—including teachers, parents, and students—to create an environment that comprehensively supports adolescent mental health. The rising incidence of mental health issues among teenagers serves as a clear indicator that the education system needs to adjust and improve existing strategies to meet the increasingly complex mental health needs of students.

Despite various efforts to integrate mental health programs into school curricula, the implementation of these strategies often faces several challenges. Major challenges include budget constraints, a shortage of trained staff, and a lack of resources to support these programs (Hoagwood et al., 2013). These obstacles often hinder the effectiveness of the strategies applied and affect the school's capacity to provide adequate support to students in need.

Moreover, stigma around mental health remains a significant barrier to the implementation of mental health programs in schools. This stigma often causes students and parents to hesitate in seeking help or engaging in mental health programs, ultimately reducing the effectiveness of the interventions (Corrigan et al., 2014). Although many schools have implemented mental health programs, the presence of stigma highlights the need for a more inclusive and sensitive approach to addressing student needs.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive approach to evaluating various mental health strategies implemented in schools. This study not only assesses the implementation of existing strategies but also evaluates the contributions of various stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and students, in supporting the success of these programs. In doing so, this research provides new insights into how collaboration among different parties can enhance the effectiveness of mental health strategies and address existing challenges.

The urgency of this research is high, given the increasing prevalence of mental health issues among adolescents. Recent data shows that more and more teenagers are facing significant mental health challenges, with many not receiving adequate support from their school environment (Durlak et al., 2011). This research aims to provide practical, evidence-based solutions to enhance the effectiveness of mental health strategies in schools, thereby offering better and timely support to students in need.

By discussing various aspects of mental health program implementation, this research is expected to provide useful recommendations for policymakers, educators, and mental health practitioners. These recommendations will assist in designing and implementing more effective programs and supporting students' emotional well-being more comprehensively.

Additionally, this research will explore best practices and innovative strategies that have been successfully implemented in various schools and assess how they can be applied in different contexts. This is crucial to ensure that mental health programs in schools can be adapted to local needs and achieve optimal outcomes.

With a better understanding of existing challenges and solutions, it is hoped that schools will be more prepared to address mental health issues and provide more effective support to students. This research will also identify ways to engage all stakeholders in the development and implementation of mental health programs, creating a more inclusive and impactful approach.

Finally, this research will provide practical guidance for schools to assess the effectiveness of existing mental health programs and make necessary adjustments to improve outcomes. With the right support and effective strategies, schools can play a vital role in supporting adolescent mental health and helping students reach their full potential.

2. Methodology

The research method employed in this study involves a comprehensive literature review of secondary sources relevant to adolescent mental health in schools. This process begins with the identification and selection of scholarly articles, books, research reports, and policy documents related to mental health prevention and intervention strategies in the school environment. Data will be collected from various academic databases such as PubMed, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar. Inclusion criteria will cover publications from the past 10 years, relevance to the research topic, and the quality of methodology reported in the studies.

Subsequently, analysis will be conducted using thematic synthesis methods to identify patterns, trends, and gaps in the existing literature. Data from various studies will be categorized based on main themes, such as the effectiveness of mental health programs, implementation challenges, and the contributions of stakeholders like teachers and parents. The results of this analysis will provide a comprehensive overview of how mental health strategies are implemented in schools and what has been learned from previous research. The aim of this method is to develop evidence-based recommendations for enhancing mental health strategies in the school environment.

3. Result

3.1 Strategies for Preventing and Handling Adolescent Mental Health in Schools

3.1.1 Education and Awareness Program

One of the primary methods used in schools for mental health prevention is through educational and awareness programs. These programs aim to enhance the understanding of mental health among students, teachers, and staff, as well as to reduce the stigma associated with mental disorders. Such programs typically include training on recognizing signs of mental health issues, stress management skills, and ways to seek help. For instance, some schools have implemented curricula that include information on mental health and life skills that support students' emotional well-being (Jorm et al., 2017).

3.1.2 Individual Counseling and Support

Many schools now offer counseling and personal support services for students facing mental health issues. School counselors or psychologists assist students with various personal, emotional, and academic problems through individual counseling sessions. These services are crucial for providing tailored assistance and addressing issues before they escalate further. Additionally, counselors may collaborate with teachers and parents to develop appropriate support plans for students (Reinke et al., 2011).

3.1.3 Crisis Intervention Program

To address potential crisis situations that may occur in schools, some schools have developed crisis intervention programs. These programs involve specialized teams trained to handle urgent mental health incidents, such as suicidal threats or aggressive behaviour. The teams typically consist of counselors, psychologists, and sometimes external mental health professionals. The aim of these programs is to provide immediate intervention and crisis support, as well as to plan appropriate follow-up steps (Elliott et al., 2012).

3.1.4 Family Involvement

Involving families in mental health strategies in schools is another important strategy. Programs that involve parents and families help support students' mental health outside of school. Training and workshops for parents on how to support their children emotionally, as well as how to recognize early signs of mental illness, can strengthen support networks at home. Family involvement can also improve communication between school and home, which greatly benefits students' well-being (Hoagwood et al., 2013).

3.1.5 Social and Emotional Skills Development Program

Social and emotional skills development (SEL) programs have been shown to be effective in preventing mental health problems among adolescents. SEL programs teach students skills such as stress management, conflict resolution, empathy, and interpersonal skills. By providing students with these skills, they become better able to cope with the pressures and challenges they face, as well as develop healthy relationships with peers and adults (Durlak et al., 2011).

3.1.6 Supportive School Policies and Environment

School policies that support mental health, such as anti-bullying policies and inclusive school environments, also play an important role in prevention strategies. A positive and supportive environment can reduce stress and improve student well-being. Additionally, clear policies on addressing mental health issues, as well as training for staff on how to support students, help create safer and more supportive school environments (Weist et al., 2012).

3.2 Effectiveness of Strategies in Overcoming Mental Health Problems Among Adolescents

3.2.1 Education and Awareness Program

Programs that focus on education and awareness have proven effective in increasing understanding of mental health and reducing stigma. Research shows that by providing training to students, teachers, and staff regarding mental health, there is a reduction in the stigma that often surrounds mental disorders and an increase in knowledge about how to provide support to individuals with mental health problems (Jorm et al., 2017). These programs usually include information regarding symptoms of mental disorders, skills for managing stress, as well as methods for seeking help. However, the long-term effectiveness of these programs often depends on the frequency of training and active participation of all members of the school community.

3.2.1 Individual Counseling and Support

Personal counseling and support services in schools show positive results in dealing with adolescent mental health problems. Students who receive individual counseling often experience improvements in their emotional well-being and academic performance. School counselors who interact directly with students can help them overcome personal and emotional problems, as well as develop strategies for further support (Reinke et al., 2011). Research shows that students who engage in counseling are less likely to experience serious mental health disorders and cope better with academic and social demands.

3.2.3 Crisis Intervention Program

Crisis intervention programs have also proven effective in dealing with urgent mental health situations in schools. Teams trained in crisis intervention can provide a rapid response to emergency events such as suicide threats or aggressive behaviour. With prompt intervention, mental health problems can be managed before they become more severe, which reduces the likelihood of more serious mental health problems later in life (Elliott et al., 2012). The effectiveness of this program is highly dependent on adequate training and good coordination between the intervention team and other relevant parties.

3.2.4 Family Involvement

Involving families in mental health strategies has been shown to increase the effectiveness of the support students receive. Programs involving parents and families help strengthen support at home. Training and workshops for parents on how to support their children emotionally and how to recognize early signs of mental illness can strengthen support networks at home. Family involvement also improves communication between school and home, which contributes to student well-being (Hoagwood et al., 2013).

3.2.4 Social and Emotional Skills Development Program

Social and emotional skills development (SEL) programs show strong evidence of their effectiveness in preventing mental health problems in adolescents. SEL programs teach students important skills such as stress management, conflict resolution, and empathy, which supports their emotional and social well-being. Research shows that students who participate in SEL programs show decreased aggressive behavior, improved social relationships, and better abilities to deal with stress and life challenges (Durlak et al., 2011).

3.2.5 Supportive School Policies and Environment

Policies that support mental health in schools and inclusive school environments play an important role in creating conditions conducive to student well-being. Anti-bullying policies and a positive school environment can reduce the stress experienced by students and create a supportive atmosphere. Research shows that schools with supportive policies and environments tend to have better levels of student mental health and show reduced incidents of negative behaviour (Weist et al., 2012). The effectiveness of these policies often depends on consistent implementation and support from the entire school community.

3.3 Challenges in Implementing Adolescent Mental Health Strategies in Schools

3.3.1 Resource Limitations

One of the main obstacles schools face in implementing mental health strategies is limited resources. Many schools face limited budgets, which hinders their ability to provide adequate mental health services. These obstacles include a lack of funding for mental health programs, a lack of trained staff, and inadequate facilities to support these programs. As a result, schools may experience difficulty providing sufficient counseling, training for staff, and necessary educational materials (Perry et al., 2015).

3.3.1 Lack of Staff Training and Skills

Limited training of school staff regarding mental health is another major challenge. Many teachers and staff do not have special training or background in dealing with mental health issues. Without adequate training, they may feel unprepared to deal with complex mental health issues and unable to provide the necessary support. This can hinder the implementation of effective mental health strategies in schools (Collins et al., 2013).

3.3.2 Stigma and Discomfort

The stigma surrounding mental health is a major challenge that influences the implementation of mental health strategies in schools. This stigma often makes students, parents and staff feel reluctant or embarrassed to talk about mental health problems. As a result, mental health problems may not be properly identified or treated, and necessary support may not be provided. Overcoming stigma requires consistent efforts and integration within the school culture (Corrigan et al., 2014).

3.3.4 Lack of Family Involvement

Family involvement in mental health programs is often not optimal. Parents may not always realize the importance of their support in their child's mental health or may not know how to best support their child. Without active involvement from families, efforts made at

school can be less effective. Programs involving families require additional efforts to ensure that parents receive relevant information and feel involved in the support process (Hoagwood et al., 2013).

3.3.5 *Balance between Mental Health and Academic Needs*

Schools often have difficulty balancing students' mental health needs and academic demands. An excessive focus on academic achievement sometimes ignores the importance of students' emotional well-being. Sometimes, prioritization of academic outcomes can reduce the time and resources allocated to mental health programs. Finding an effective balance between these two aspects is a significant challenge in the implementation of mental health strategies (Reinke et al., 2011).

3.3.6 *Evaluation and Measurement of Effectiveness*

Another significant challenge is in the evaluation and measurement of the effectiveness of mental health strategies. Schools often have difficulty assessing the impact of the mental health programs they run. Without adequate measurement tools, it is difficult to determine whether the strategies implemented are truly effective or require adjustments. Proper evaluation requires accurate data and reliable assessment methods to measure the outcomes and impact of mental health programs (Wells et al., 2014).

3.4 *Role and Contribution of Various Parties in Supporting the Success of Mental Health Prevention and Treatment Strategies in Schools*

3.4.1 *Teacher's Role*

Teachers have an important role in supporting students' mental health at school. They are often the first to observe changes in a student's behavior or mood. With appropriate training, teachers can learn to identify early symptoms of mental health disorders and provide necessary support. They can also create a positive and inclusive classroom environment, as well as serve as a liaison between students and available mental health services, referring students to counselors or mental health professionals when necessary (Roeser et al., 2013). In this way, teachers not only support students' emotional well-being but also help build a school culture that is responsive to students' emotional needs.

3.4.1 *Role of Parents*

Parents play an important role in supporting the success of mental health strategies in schools. Their involvement in school activities such as workshops and mental health training can strengthen the support children receive. Actively involved parents can help detect early signs of mental health problems and provide emotional support at home. Effective communication between parents and schools is also critical to designing appropriate interventions and tailoring supports to students' specific needs (Epstein, 2011). Parental involvement in making mental health policies in schools can also increase the effectiveness of the strategies implemented.

3.4.1 *Students Role*

Students also play an important role in supporting mental health in schools. With sufficient education about mental health, students can more easily recognize problems in themselves and their friends. Students can play a role in providing social support to friends who are experiencing difficulties and encouraging them to seek help if needed. Peer support programs or peer groups often help build supportive communities in schools (Durlak et al., 2011). Additionally, students' involvement in extracurricular activities can help them develop social and emotional skills that are important for managing stress and improving their well-being.

3.4.2 Role of Counselors and Mental Health Professionals

School counselors and mental health professionals have a key role in supporting and treating mental health issues in schools. They are responsible for providing counseling services, developing prevention programs, and collaborating with teachers and parents in identifying and treating mental health problems in an effective manner. These professionals can also train teachers and staff on how to recognize and treat mental health problems, as well as provide interventions when students face a crisis (Reinke et al., 2011). With their expertise and experience, they help ensure that the mental health strategies implemented are effective.

3.4.3 Role of School Administration

School administration has an important role in supporting the implementation of mental health strategies by establishing supportive policies and providing necessary resources. They are responsible for ensuring adequate budgets for mental health programs, as well as creating a supportive and inclusive environment. Administration also needs to ensure coordination between various parties in the school, including teachers, counselors, and parents, to implement mental health policies effectively (Weist et al., 2012). Strong administrative support is essential for mental health strategies to be implemented and managed well.

3.4.3 Community Role

Communities also play a role in supporting mental health in schools. Partnerships with community organizations, such as non-profits or public health services, can expand access to additional resources and support. Communities can help provide training for school staff, support mental health activities, and strengthen support networks for students and families (Hoagwood et al., 2013). Good collaboration between schools and communities can increase the effectiveness of mental health strategies and provide more comprehensive support.

The research findings indicate that the effectiveness of mental health strategies in schools varies depending on their implementation and stakeholder involvement. Programs such as social-emotional skills training and individual counseling have been shown to be effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression in adolescents, particularly when integrated comprehensively with the school curriculum. However, many schools face challenges in consistently implementing these strategies due to budget constraints and a lack of trained staff. The research also identifies that school-based interventions involving families and communities tend to have a more significant positive impact compared to programs that focus solely on the school environment (Durlak et al., 2011; Weist et al., 2012).

Key challenges in implementing mental health strategies in schools include funding issues, a shortage of trained human resources, and the persistent stigma associated with mental health. Many schools face budget limitations that restrict their capacity to provide comprehensive and sustainable programs. Additionally, the lack of trained mental health staff hampers program effectiveness. Stigma surrounding mental health issues also remains a significant barrier, often causing students and parents to hesitate in engaging with support programs or seeking help (Hoagwood et al., 2013; Corrigan et al., 2014).

The role and contributions of stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and students are crucial in supporting the success of mental health strategies in schools. Trained teachers can assist in the early detection of mental health issues and provide direct support to students. Parents involved in mental health programs can reinforce the strategies implemented at school and ensure consistent support at home. Student involvement is also important, as they can provide valuable feedback for program improvements and promote understanding and acceptance of mental health issues among their peers (Roeser et al., 2013; Epstein, 2011).

4. Conclusions

This study indicates that mental health strategies implemented in schools have significant potential to support students' emotional well-being, but their effectiveness is often hindered by various challenges such as budget constraints, insufficient staff training, and stigma surrounding mental health issues. The literature review reveals that although many prevention and intervention programs have been implemented, their success largely depends on adequate support from all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and students. The main conclusion of this research is that to enhance the effectiveness of mental health strategies in schools, a more integrated approach that is sensitive to students' needs and based on strong data and evidence is required.

Moreover, it is crucial to involve all parties in the development and implementation process of mental health programs to ensure that these programs are not only well-designed but also effectively accepted and implemented. This research identifies an urgent need for a deeper evaluation of how these programs can be adapted to local contexts and existing challenges. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of various strategies, schools can design better interventions and provide more effective support for students' mental health.

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that schools adopt a more holistic approach to implementing mental health programs by actively involving all stakeholders. Schools need to provide more intensive training for staff on mental health issues and effective intervention strategies. Additionally, it is important to develop policies that support comprehensive mental health support, including adequate budget allocation and reduction of stigma related to mental health issues. Further research is also needed to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of these programs and tailor them to the specific needs of students and the challenges present in various school contexts.

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