

#### **Purpose**

- To suggest a re-prioritized research agenda with a focus on mental health programs and practices that are integrated into schools' ecological framework

#### **Problems and Prospects in School-Based Mental Health Services**

- A lack of consensus on the optimal ways to deliver and integrate supports within schools in the integration of mental health and education
- Some screening and counselling services are time-consuming and compete with instructional time, and resource intensive
- "clinic within schools" model does not provide many opportunities for collaboration between mental health providers and educators
- Negative environments in school in impoverished communities may overwhelm educational and mental health programs

#### **An Ecological Approach for School-Based Mental Health Services**

- Ecological models are individualized to the differing contexts within and across schools
- A key aspect of integrating mental health efforts into ongoing routines of schools is the identification and support of original persons and resources within schools as agents of change
- Use of naturalistic resources within schools to implement and sustain effect supports for students' learning and well-being (e.g. embedding mental health staff in classrooms can improve consultation efforts)
- Include integrated models to enhance learning and promote health (e.g. class-wide programming or class-wide routines prevent stigmatization when individualized programs are implemented in isolation)
- Attention to outcome improvement in all students
- Strengthening parents' active involvement (e.g. specialized outreach programs delivered by parents to parents of students with mental health needs, using strategic family supports)

#### **Research Agenda**

- To promote a new model of children's mental health services; specific recommendations are:
- To examine classroom- and school-based processes and identification of where opportunities exist to promote children's school success and social-emotional development
- To examine how best to organize and support original resources in school settings in meeting students' mental health needs
- Need effective and efficient service models that integrate promotion, prevention, and interventions
- Should address the impact of school district policies on educational and mental health promotion

#### **Conclusions**

- The present models of school-based mental health are overly focused on conventional definitions of mental health practice and does not provide enough attention to issues that may affect both schooling and mental health
- The proposed agenda considers the school context in children's mental health promotion
- Mental health services research can propose targets for change in collaborative with educators

