

Domain 6: Services to Promote Safe and Supportive Schools

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EDPS 513

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28 November 2022

Introduction

Domain 6 from the Professional Standards of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is Services to Promote Safe and Supportive Schools. Within this domain, it is expected that school psychologists will understand the research and principles related to resilience, social- emotional well-being, services in schools and communities to support multi-tiered prevention and health promotion, evidence-based strategies for creating safe and supportive schools, and risk factors in learning, mental and behavioral health. Additionally, it is known that school psychologists must work with others to promote responsive and preventative services that enhance mental and behavioral health, learning, and physical and psychological safety. Lastly, school psychologists are obligated to implement effective crisis prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

Discussion

As per domain 6, it is expected that school psychologists will create a positive climate for teachers, students, and other professionals. School psychologists do so by providing services that foster the positive school climate, as well as using their skills and knowledge to create and foster relationships which will transform into enhanced school connectedness for all. Next, a way in which school psychologists manifest a positive school climate is by advocating for policies- both state and local- to promote these sorts of inclusive, safe environments in the school setting. Lastly, school psychologists are expected to recognize and address protective and risk factors. These factors are crucial to pinpointing and solving systemic problems such as school dropout, substance abuse, chronic absenteeism, school failure, bullying, youth suicide and self-harm, student disengagement, and school violence.

Wellness and resilience are two psychological factors that greatly impact students, parents/guardians, and school staff alike. Without these two components, many people can feel burnt out and unhappy. It is the job of the school psychologist to promote resilience and wellness by facilitating environmental changes that are aimed at promoting the health and adjustment of children, collaborating with other professionals to provide a baseline of understanding of behaviors that lead to healthy outcomes for children, and accessing resources that address a large span of learning, physical, mental, and behavioral needs. Additionally, school psychologists take steps to encourage the development of protective factors as well as prevention strategies that establish resilience.

Implementing effective crisis prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery is one of the final tasks of the school psychologist dictated by Domain 6. School psychologists begin by implementing and evaluating prevention programs put into place that promote a psychologically and physically safe and nonviolent community and school setting. Next, one way for school psychologists to prevent crises is by monitoring for early risk indicators, providing consultation and intervention services to decrease risk, and also to encourage positive mental health and learning trajectories for students across the board. In collaboration with others, school psychologists train staff, parents, and guardians to recognize and respond to risk factors. These risk factors may need intervention, in which case the school crisis response team would step in. With the teamwork from other professionals, school psychologists conduct assessments of school safety by developing comprehensive individual and school safety plans. These plans are aimed at preventing and responding to crisis events in order to diminish the effects of crises on those in the school community. Within the crisis response teams, school psychologists use data-based decision-making methods, consultation, collaboration, problem-solving strategies,

and direct services. Additionally, school psychologists conduct comprehensive threat and suicide assessments for those students who are identified as at risk. Then, they go onto design interventions which will address both behavioral and mental health needs. Lastly, school psychologists collaborate with members of the school community to fully provide mental health support during and after all crisis situations.

Reflection

Domain 6 is a pertinent aspect of my future role as a school psychologist. Not only is it key to fully understand the background of social-emotional well-being services, it is vital to fully comprehend the evidence-based strategies for creating safe and supportive environments, as well as the risk factors found in learning, and in mental and behavioral health. By collaborating with other professionals, I will be able to provide services needed for effective crisis prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. All of these skills will be crucial in my future role as a school psychologist, even possibly a matter of life or death. By truly honing in on these skills and tasks, I will be able to best fulfill my duties as a school psychologist.