

THE IMPACT OF COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH ON ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Wellness Fund projects show decreased levels of anxiety and depression amongst students

The overall sample for this study consisted of 245 unique schools which received funding support for comprehensive school health (CSH) at school or jurisdiction level during 2010–2014.

The data on anxiety and depression were obtained from the Tell Them From Me (TTFM) survey.

These schools represent 45 different projects and 27 of the 61 (44%) of Alberta's public, separate and francophone school jurisdictions. Since some schools have received Wellness Fund support for multiple years, the total sample used in the analysis consisted of 427 observations representing about 75,000 students.



245 schools



75 000 students



45 projects



Anxiety



Depression

decrease

5%

The schools that are in the actively-funded stage, relative to the ones in the pre-funded stage, have lower percentages of students with anxiety and depression.

Specifically, the percentage of students that suffer from anxiety and depression are about five-percent and three-percent less in the actively-funded schools relative to pre-funded schools.

decrease

3%



For schools to reduce the levels of depression and anxiety among students, understanding that mental health initiatives are not short term interventions is critical.

Commitment to CSH models through the incorporation of education, supportive community involvement and fostering positive environments have the potential to improve the school climate and mental health of students.

Dassanayake, W., Springett, J., & Shewring, T. The impact on anxiety and depression of a whole school approach to health promotion: evidence from a Canadian comprehensive school health (CSH) initiative. *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion*. Volume 10 (4). Pages 221–234.

STAY CONNECTED

wellnessfund.ualberta.ca



WellnessFundAB

Interested in more?

Read the full paper:

bit.ly/WFAnxietypaper



ALBERTA HEALTH TRENDS

Anxiety Disorders among Teens in Alberta

Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health concerns for Albertans, including teens (ages 15-19).

The more common forms of anxiety disorders are generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and phobias, particularly social phobias. Symptoms can vary, but typically include restlessness and irritability for generalized anxiety disorder, and difficulty breathing and chest tightness for panic disorders. Anxiety disorders can lead to poor performance in school, behavioral problems, and substance misuse.



¹ Alberta Health, Health Standards, Quality and Performance Division, Analytics and Performance Reporting Branch. Health Trends Alberta. Anxiety Disorders among Teens in Alberta. June 27, 2017.

BEST PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM

- Teach children to name their emotions and identify where they come from. This helps develop coping skills and control over these emotions.
- Build a word wall with emotional vocabulary. This gives students direct access to those words and feelings.
- Make a mindful effort to learn each student's name and at least one fact about them. When students feel connected to their school community they have higher levels of emotional well-being, engagement, and empowerment.
<http://bit.ly/SchoolConnectedness>
- Have each student tape a sheet of paper to their back and walk around, writing positive qualities about their peers on their backs.
- Have the class brainstorm positive statements they can say to themselves when are challenged. These could be printed and displayed in the classroom.
- Discuss what sections of a book will be read aloud with students before calling on them to read. If reading aloud in the class causes stress and anxiety, plan ahead of time and let a student practice a small selection the night before.

Because relationships and emotional processes affect how and what we learn, schools and families must effectively address these aspects of the educational process for the benefit of all students. Students with social emotional skills demonstrate significant improvements in attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement.²

² Durlak, J., Weissberg, R., Dymnicki, A., & Schellinger, K. The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. Child Development. January/February 2011. Volume 82 (1). Pages 405-432.

STAY CONNECTED

wellnessfund.ualberta.ca

 WellnessFundAB

Interested in more?

[wellnessfund.ualberta.ca
/resources/infographics](http://wellnessfund.ualberta.ca/resources/infographics)

