

Universal, School-Based Mental Health Program Implemented Among Racially and Ethnically Diverse Youth Yields Equitable Outcomes: Building Resilience for Healthy Kids

Abstract

Although suicide is a leading cause of mortality among racial and ethnic minority youth, limited data exists regarding the impact of school-based mental health interventions on these populations, specifically. A single-arm pragmatic trial design was utilized to evaluate the equity of outcomes of the universal, school-based mental health coaching intervention, Building Resilience for Healthy Kids. All sixth-grade students at an urban public middle school in Colorado Springs, Colorado were invited to participate. Students attended six weekly 1:1 sessions with a trained health coach discussing goal setting and other resilience strategies. 285 students (86%) participated with 252 (88%) completing both pre- and post-intervention surveys. Students were a mean age of 11.4 years with 55% identifying as girls, 69% as White, 13% as a racial minority, and 18% as Hispanic. While Hispanic participants demonstrated significantly lower scores for baseline measures of self-efficacy, no significant differences by race and ethnicity for self-efficacy remained at the post-intervention survey. In addition, racial minority students exhibited significantly greater improvements in personal and total resilience compared to White and Hispanic students, controlling for baseline scores. Overall, our data together suggests that Building Resilience for Healthy Kids may represent an equitable and accessible option for improving youth mental health.