Abstracts

Cyberbullying in classmates` whatsapp groups: Assessing the effectiveness of an intervention program to reduce cyberbullying and improve classroom climate, in elementary and middle schools

Dana Aizenkot, Galit Menachem & Gabriela Kashy-Rosenbaum

Social networking sites, such as WhatsApp, constitute a major part of adolescents` social lives. Alongside the positive aspects of these sites, they can be abused as a means for cyberbullying, The education system is aware of this risk and has been fighting cyberbullying through intervention programs implemented in the schools. Few interventions, however, have been studied for their effectiveness. This study addresses WhatsApp as the most popular social network in Israel and reports the results of a wide-scale school-based intervention designed to reduce cyberbullying and improve usage norms in classmates` WhatsApp groups and classroom climate. Data was collected from 106 4th to 9th classes in 25 public schools in Israel. All schools sampled for the research had participated in an intervention program that was implemented by the responsibility of a supervisor of the school counselors on behalf of the Psychological Counseling Service in the Israeli Ministry of Education. Students answered online questionnaires to assess their exposure to cyberbullying in their classmates` WhatsApp groups, the usage norms in these groups, and classroom climate pre-intervention and one-month post-intervention. Results indicated a significant decrease of WhatsApp cyberbullying, a significant improvement of WhatsApp usage norms, and a significant improvement of classroom climate. Additionally, improvement in WhatsApp cyberbullying was positively correlated with an improvement of classroom climate. Educational implications are discussed.

Keywords: whatsApp; cyberbullying; classroom climate; intervention programs; social networks; children; adolescents; students.

Radio Start: Promoting students with learning disabilities through educational radio

Ella Ben-Atar

This study describes a pioneer experiment conducted at a high school located near an educational radio station. The program's goals were to teach learning-disabled students the skills needed to operate a radio station, which require focus and split attention, and promoting their sense of competence and self-worth. The pilot program combined classroom hours for theory and practice learning with personal practice sessions, given to each student as needed by mentors who are college students in the field of communication. We hypothesized that acquiring and strengthening linguistic communications skills, while improving time management and planning abilities by receiving immediate feedback, would allow the students to expand these skills in addition to providing them with social and emotional empowerment.

The findings indicate significant improvement in the fundumental skills of participating students. Combining the technical-professional aspect of operating a radio studio with working on the teens' self-esteem promoted their confidence, their sense of competence, and their ability to handle academic tasks.

Key words: educational radio; learning disabilities; operating a radio studio;

Sexual health interventions in Israel's education system in relation to developed countries in the world: A review

Michal Hochhauser, Irena Feldman, Julia Zaizev & Stella Kalontarov

Sexuality is an essential component in the typical development of children and adolescents. The subject of sexual behavior and the health of youth concerns health and education professionals, family, community, and policymakers. This review describes sexual health interventions with different approaches in the education system in the US and Europe and the main program in Israel, and describes the positive impact of parents on the sexual behavior and health of youth and the importance of integrating them into intervention programs. In addition, the problem of most adolescents being exposed to biased sexual content on the Internet and social networks through which they acquire knowledge about sexual health. This article discusses the issues of choosing a sexual health intervention program in the education system, ways of implementing and coping with Internet content and the importance of developing methods of measurement, quality and control.

Keywords: sexuality; sexual behavior; teenagers; sex education programs.

The synergy model career intervention - A mixed methods evaluation.

Revital Dobkin & Rachel Gali Cinamon

The current study examined the effectiveness of a career intervention program aiming to prepare adolescents to blend work and family roles, the "synergy model." Participants were 78 adolescents ($n = 45$ in the experimental group, Mage = 14.83; SDage = 0.79; and 33 in the control group, Mage= 14.68; SDage = 0.46). Qualitative and quantitative methods were used for evaluation of effectiveness. Repeated-measure analyses of variance between the two groups indicated higher levels of career decision-making self-efficacy following the intervention among participants in the experimental group. Qualitative analysis of interviews conducted two weeks after the intervention demonstrated participants' satisfaction regarding the intervention. They awarded high evaluations to the skills unit of the program as well as to the relevance of the intervention to their future planning.

The interplay between social support, personal and cultural identity among young adult USSR immigrants to Israel

Alla Hemi and Yisrael Rich

This study investigated relationships between personal identity and cultural identity development and social support among 107 young adults who emigrated from the former USSR to Israel. Examining these relationships is important because personal identity, cultural identity and social support are related to individuals' psychological and physical health, and research integrating these variables is scarce. Participants voluntarily responded to three questionnaires. Results indicated that the personal identity of participants with integrative or separated cultural identity was more developed than among participants with assimilated or marginalized cultural identity. Younger age at immigration was related to a less developed personal identity. Additionally, immigration age of participants with integrative or separated cultural identity was higher than among participants with marginalized cultural identity. Findings from bootstrap analysis supported a mediation model in which the relationship between social support and personal identity is mediated by cultural identity. Implications for research and identity education are discussed.

Keywords: social support; personal identity; cultural identity; migration.

The relationship between physical activity and gender differences in the level of anxiety in students with learning disabilities

Bishara Saied

This research examines differences by gender in the level of anxiety before and after physical activity in students with learning disabilities. The assumption is that after physical activity there will be a reduction of anxiety in students with learning disabilities.

The research questions will examine differences in the amount of anxiety (trait and state) after physical activity. Moreover, the research will examine if the expected differences in levels of anxiety (trait and state) after physical activity will vary by gender.

The 80 participants in this study are students with learning disabilities in a mixed ninth grade classroom in a regular junior high school. There are 55 boys (69%) and 25 girls (31%). The data was gathered by an STAI questionnaire. The questionnaire included 40 illustrations of emotional situations in which the students had to describe their feelings twice: once before the beginning of the physical workout and once afterwards.

The findings of the research indicate that there are changes in the amount of anxiety in these students after physical activity. The results show that physical activity is related to a reduction in trait anxiety, and an even more significant reduction in state anxiety among the boys only. Accordingly, we recommend encouraging physical activity in schools. We also recommend developing a program of intervention suitable to the population of students with learning disabilities, which will focus on skills that will reduce anxiety.

The link between sense of coherence and burnout of teachers of youth at risk

Shiri Pearlman-Avnion & Tali Gurfinkel

The research literature points to various factors that cause a sense of burnout among teachers, and a significant difference between the requirements, expectations and supervision of teachers who teach in regular education, and those who teach in special education. The present study is a quantitative pilot study that examined whether the sense of coherence of teachers who teach youth at risk is related to their sense of burnout. A limited sample of 50 high school teachers, 25 of them teachers of youth at-risk, and 25 secondary school teachers in the regular education system were surveyed, who completed a questionnaire to assess the sense of burnout of teachers in their work environment, and a questionnaire that examined their sense of coherence. Teachers who taught youth at-risk were found to have a higher sense of coherence (with large effect size), which was linked to the fact that they came to the job out of ideals, belief in their ability and willingness to invest. At the same time, the burnout of these teachers was higher than that of teachers in the regular education system. However, the size of the effect found was significant but small, indicating a greater overlap between the groups in their sense of burnout. A significant negative correlation was found between sense of coherence and burnout for the overall population of teachers in the present research (n = 50). The results of the study show that a sense of high coherence does not serve as a resilience factor against burnout, and therefore it is important to continue to understand the mechanism that underlies the burnout of teachers in special education in general, and among teachers of youth at risk in particular. The findings are of great importance in the process of inclusion and support of educational counselors in the school for teachers in regular education, special education in general, and among teachers who teach youth at-risk in particular.

Compassion fatigue and emotional distress among educational counselor

Inbar Levkovich & Tsameret Ricon

School counselors are exposed daily to the stressfull situations of students, parents and the educational staff. "Compassion fatigue" is described as indirect trauma and secondary trauma that develops in the process of the involvement of the educational counselor in stressful situations of the people they counsel. Few studies have been conducted to examine the effect of compassion fatigue among school counselors. The present study examined compassion fatigue and its three components: burnout, secondary traumatization and satisfaction from providing assistance to educational counselors in Israel in order to assess the phenomenon and to examine the effects of the demographic factors and professional factors on the phenomenon. The study included a sample of 116 educational counselors who completed a demographic information questionnaire, the Compassion Fatigue questionnaire, the Stress Perception questionnaire and the Emotional Distress questionnaire. The findings of the study indicate that the levels of compassion fatigue and burnout were moderate, the levels of satisfaction from providing assistance were higher while the levels of secondary trauma were low. The higher levels of satisfaction from providing assistance were accompanied by the lower levels of burnout and secondary trauma. There was also a significant positive correlation between feeling compassionate and feeling emotionally distressed. Primary school counselors reported higher levels of compassion fatigue compared to middle and high school counselors. The conclusion of the research is that the experience of helping a student with trauma may spill over into the personal life of a school counselor.

The relationship between differentiation of self and separation anxiety: Comparison of Jewish and Arab college students

Matan Ruach & Ora Peleg

The study examines cultural and gender differences in levels of separation anxiety and differentiation of self among college students in Israel. It also explores relationships between family dimensions (differentiation of self and birth order) and separation anxiety. The sample included 408 Jewish and Arab students aged 18-51, of whom 275 (68%) were Jews (79 men, 196 women) and 133 (32%) were Arabs (27 men, 106 women). Participants answered the DSI-R Differentiation of Self Questionnaire (Peleg, 2008; Skowron & Schmitt, 2003) and the Separation Anxiety Questionnaire (Wertheim-Mizrachi, 1995). Results yielded negative relationships between all three dimensions of separation anxiety (interpersonal, intrapersonal, extrapersonal), on the one hand, and emotional reactivity and fusion with others, on the other, as well as a positive relationship between the three dimensions of separation anxiety and I-position. An interaction effect was also found: the level of the firstborn's I-position was higher than that of all others in the birth order for Jewish participants, while there was no relationship between birth order and any study variables for Arab respondents. Both cultural and gender differences were revealed. Jewish students reported lower levels of separation anxiety (intrapersonal dimension) and emotional cutoff and a higher level of fusion with others than Arab students. Moreover, women reported higher levels of emotional reactivity and fusion with others and a lower level of emotional cutoff than men. The main study conclusion is the central contribution of differentiation of self to separation anxiety: people who are well-differentiated, i.e., create relationships that enable a balance between intimacy and autonomy, can cope calmly with separation situations. This is the first study in Israel to explore in depth the family dimensions that affect separation anxiety, showing cultural and gender differences.

School counselor and school adaptation to the 21st century: The role of the counselor in making the school more relevant for children

Peleg Dor-Haim

Schools face frequent and difficult crises that are manifested in violence and discipline problems of children on the one hand and teachers' burnout on the other. Extensive literature provide various explanations for the distress of students and teachers in schools. This article presents a unique perspective on the distress that characterizes many schools from critical observation of the founding assumptions of the school system in the historical context of their establishment. The article tries to explain these basic assumptions and identify the practical steps that the educational counselor can take in order to influence the presuppositions of the school, improve the educational climate, and promote systemic change.

Kaywords: school; school adaptation; Schools in the 21st century; the work of the educational counselor; Relevance of the school to students.

Counseling proudly: The work of school counselors with LGBT youth

Inbar Levkovich & Ofir Lekach

This study examines the experience of school counselors with issues related to the LGBT population (gay, lesbian, transgender, and bisexual). The study is based on a phenomenological qualitative method and semi-structured interviews with 18 high school counselors. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and underwent content analysis. The study findings show that school counselors perceive LGBT adolescents as a population with unique characteristics, including the need for concealment, feelings of loneliness and confusion, lack of acceptance in the peer group and family, and feelings of emotional distress. The counselors described a strong desire to help adolescents, along with a sense of great frustration and helplessness, resulting from lack of knowledge, sources of support and the feeling of being alone in the campaign. In addition, they mentioned the difficulty of working with parents who often find it hard to accept their children's sexual identity. Additional findings also point to a difficulty to deal with the issue from a systemic standpoint – schools are often afraid to deal openly with the issue and take a firm stand, as a result of fear of the parents' reactions and those of the educational system.

Organizational resilience in schools: Antecedents and practical implications – for the principal and the school counselor

Orit Shani & Anit Somech

In the current era schools are required to adjust to a complex and rapidly changing environment. As a result, the recognition of resilience has expanded. This research suggests that organizational resilience will mediate the connections between the antecedents of team characteristics (social capital and team empowerment), management characteristic (psychological capital of the principal), work environment characteristics (organizational flexibility and goal interdependence) and between the consequences: school functioning in crises and school's innovation.

Method: In order to examine the proposed model, quantitative study has been conducted with 98 schools including 1132 educators. Data were collected from multiple sources: teachers, school counselors, principals and school inspectors.

Findings: The statistical analysis was based on Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Positive significant relationships were found between the antecedents of social capital, team empowerment, goal interdependence and between organizational resilience. In addition, positive significant relationship was found between organizational resilience and school functioning in crises. Organizational resilience was found to be a mediator between three of the antecedents of social capital, team empowerment, goal interdependence and between school functioning in crises. School functioning in crises mediates the connections between organizational resilience and school's innovation.

Practical implications: The current study calls the attention of policy makers in the educational system, principals and school counselors to the importance of developing organizational resilience in schools. It is also important to strengthen school's social capital, increase team empowerment and goal interdependence among teachers. Such efforts that would increase organizational resilience, could achieve a better school functioning during crisis situations, and indirectly, increase school's innovation.

Keywords: organizational resilience; school resilience; social capital; team empowerment; goal interdependence; school functioning in crises; school's innovation.