

# Students' Mental Health and Wellness: Mental Health Service Provision

## THE NOTRE DAME MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY

### ALLIANCE FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

James M. Frabutt, Will Clark, & Melissa Regan  
University of Notre Dame

In the fall of 2009, principals representing over 400 schools—across 12 dioceses—participated in the Alliance for Catholic Education's Mental Health and Wellness Survey.

The purpose of the study was to examine data from a national sample of Catholic elementary and secondary schools in order to shed light on patterns of mental health service provision, staffing, needs, and barriers (Frabutt et al., 2010). While Foster et al.'s (2005) groundbreaking work provided descriptive

insight regarding the landscape of mental health services in public schools, an environmental scan of such efforts in the private education sector—and Catholic schools in particular—has been lacking.

To complement an understanding of who is providing mental health services and what the presenting conditions and needs of students are, this fact sheet focuses on mental health service provision in Catholic elementary and high schools.

## Mental Health Service Provision...

Principals reported whether or not certain services were available to their students via school, diocesan, or community based resources. Delineated in the table on the following page, the service continuum contained 11 services such as crisis intervention, case management, substance abuse counseling, and assessment for emotional or behavioral problems. This list was originally used in the Foster et. Al (2005) survey.



Survey results indicated that the most common mental health service, provided within 64% of elementary schools, was *assessment for emotional and behavioral problems or disorders*, which may include behavior observation, psychosocial assessment, and psychological testing (see Table 1). Three other services were provided by more than half of the elementary schools: *Crisis intervention* (60%), *behavior management consultation* (57%), and *referral to specialized programs or services for emotional/behavioral problems* (51%).

## Mental Health Service Provision (cont'd)...

Principals' responses also helped to identify the least frequently provided mental health services. A minority of sampled elementary schools provide *substance abuse counseling* (16%), *referral for medication management* (14%), and *medication for emotional and behavioral problems* (11%).

The most common mental health service provided within Catholic high schools was *crisis intervention* (85%). Nearly three-fourths of surveyed high schools offered *behavior management consultation* and *outside referral to specialized programs for emotional or behavioral problems*. *Individual counseling/therapy* and *assessment for emotional/behavioral problems* was offered by 67% and 63% of high schools, respectively. The mental health service least frequently provided in high schools was *medication for emotional and behavioral problems*.

On average, 9.3% of Catholic school students in surveyed schools receive some form of mental health or wellness service. In elementary schools, 7.2% of students received one or more mental health services during the last school year. In secondary schools, 18.8% of students did.



Table 1. Percentage of Schools Providing Various Mental Health Services by School Level

Services	Elementary %	High %
Assessment for emotional or behavioral problems or disorders (including behavior observation, psychosocial assessment, and psychological testing)	64	63
Crisis intervention	60	85
Behavior management consultation	57	74
Referral to specialized programs/services for emotional/behavioral problems/disorders	51	74
Individual counseling/therapy	49	67
Case management (monitoring and coordination of services)	38	37
Group counseling/therapy	34	46
Family support services (child advocacy, counseling)	33	42
Substance abuse counseling	16	48
Referral for medication management	14	23
Medication for emotional and behavioral problems	11	9

### References and Acknowledgment

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**Contact Information:**  
**James M. Frabutt, Ph.D.**  
 271 Institute for  
 Educational Initiatives  
 University of Notre Dame  
 Notre Dame, IN 46556