



## Editorial: The March 2024 Issue: Insights for School-Associated COVID-19 Recovery

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For this March 2024 issue of *Contemporary School Psychology*, my inaugural issue as its editor-in-chief, I have curated a collection of articles pertaining to COVID-19 crisis recovery. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted education systems, causing great distress to educators, families, and children. By resisting the impulse to carry on with status quo pre-pandemic operations, school psychologists and their educator communities can build new, more resilient, compassionate, equitable, and effective school-based support systems. The articles in this issue highlight how COVID-19 disruptions sparked innovative thinking, resulting in technological advancements, new service delivery models, and novel intervention approaches.

The first set of contributions explores the risks associated with school closures due to COVID-19 and the protective supports that mitigate adverse outcomes for students. Balkundi and Fredrick (2023) report that, among a sample of school-aged student survey respondents, COVID-19 stress was positively related to symptoms of depression and anxiety. Social support from teachers buffered the relation between COVID-19 stress and internalizing symptoms, suggesting that students' access to supportive teachers is an essential developmental asset during a public health crisis. In an example of deep qualitative research, Kiperman et al. (2024) found that, during the COVID-19 school closures, LGBTQ+ youth reported exacerbated mental health concerns when they lived with disaffirming families and had less access to in-person affirming supports at school. This set of studies underscores the importance of maintaining existing school-based social supports and growing new ones before, during, and after crisis events.

Also described in this issue are studies exploring COVID-19 impacts on school psychologists and their communities of adult educators. Addressing risks for practicing school

psychologists, Rozmiarek and Crepeau-Hobson (2022) found that, among school psychologist respondents, engaging in crisis intervention work was associated with symptoms of secondary traumatic stress and burnout. Similarly, among a sample of teachers, Metrailler and Clark (2022) reported elevated levels of occupational stress and stress associated with COVID-19-related social distancing behaviors were associated with decreases in perceptions of school climate. Finally, Bocanegra et al. (2023) reported that, like their k-12 counterparts, school psychology training programs underwent significant changes as they moved from in-person to remote, online instruction. Among their sample of trainers of school psychologists, the accompanying stressors associated with such swift and profound organizational changes were associated with reports of decreased job satisfaction. This collection of research findings points to the need for education leaders to prioritize support for front-line educators whose service is critical for maintaining student well-being through all phases of crisis events.

Additionally, the issue includes studies describing innovative approaches to identifying and delivering services during the pandemic, such as strengthening prereferral systems, providing therapy remotely, and delivering academic and behavioral interventions online. Sims et al. (2023) provide recommendations for ensuring the utility of prereferral systems during school closures and for ongoing attention to legal considerations related to modifying remotely delivered standardized tests. Moore and Zabolski (2023) describe opportunities and procedures for providing narrative and in vivo exposure therapy in a remote delivery model. Lastly, in their study exploring the feasibility and utility of academic and behavioral interventions delivered remotely, Kupzyk et al. (2023) report that special education teachers increase skills use and report high acceptability rates for remote training designs. This collection of papers illustrates several use cases for remote technology in applied school psychology, for which continued ethical, legal, and practical problem-solving is necessary.

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Lastly, examples of COVID-19 recovery projects are discussed. O'Malley et al. (2023) describe a twelve-week intervention designed to help high school-aged youth make sense of their COVID-19 experiences. Using student voice methods, including photovoice, youth participants received cathartic opportunities for self-expression, examined the role of schools as youth-serving social institutions, and shared their COVID-19 stories with school adults.

This issue features scholarly and creative contributions from across the United States, offering insights and inspiration for COVID-19 recovery efforts and future crisis preparedness. I hope readers find this issue informative and inspiring as they work to recover from COVID-19 and plan for future global crisis events.

Meagan O'Malley

Editor-in-Chief

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