Analytic Framework: Universal School-based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Programs to Reduce Depression and Anxiety Symptoms

Universal school-based CBT programs for the primary prevention of depression and anxiety

All elementary, middle and high school students

Improved coping strategies
• Emotional self-awareness
• Response normalization

Improved student mental health and behavior

• Increased referral for diagnosis and treatment
• Identification and reporting of child maltreatment

Potential harms
• Secondary and vicarious traumatization
• Negative impact on sharing traumatic experiences

Potential additional benefits
• Improved social interaction
• Improved learning abilities
• Improved classroom function
• Improved family management of youth anxiety

Key potential effect modifiers
• Program type, content, and provider type
• Student and family characteristics: SES; race/ethnicity; parent mental health

Improved quality of life

Reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression

Response to child maltreatment

Improved student mental health and behavior

Potential harms
• Secondary and vicarious traumatization
• Negative impact on sharing traumatic experiences

Potential additional benefits
• Improved social interaction
• Improved learning abilities
• Improved classroom function
• Improved family management of youth anxiety

Key potential effect modifiers
• Program type, content, and provider type
• Student and family characteristics: SES; race/ethnicity; parent mental health
Universal School-based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Programs to Reduce Depression and Anxiety Symptoms

This analytic framework represents the hypothesized pathways and relationships between universal school-based cognitive behavioral therapy programs and improved quality of life. School-based cognitive behavioral therapy targets all students and is postulated to improve students’ coping strategies which may, in turn, improve their mental health and behavior and increase the likelihood they will seek mental health treatment. It is expected this will lead to reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression. Students’ improved coping strategies may also increase referral for diagnosis and treatment and the identification and reporting of child maltreatment. This is expected to reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression and increase the response to child maltreatment. Improved coping strategies are also postulated to reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression. These effects are expected to improve students’ quality of life. Key effect modifiers are program type, content and provider type, and student characteristics. Potential harms would include students experiencing secondary and vicarious trauma and negative impact of sharing traumatic experiences. Additional benefits could include improved social interaction, learning abilities, classroom function, and family management of youth anxiety.