Teachers are at risk of misattributing early signs of mental illness in migrant youth to language deficits.

Ensuring Early Intervention and Sustained Recovery in Migrant Youth Through a Systems of Care Approach

Introduction

- A 14-year-old K’iche Guatemalan-American child experienced a delay to care of over a year, ultimately requiring prolonged hospitalization.
- Changing demographics in North Carolina have resulted in a majority of public school students representing minoritized populations. Teacher, school staff demographics are not yet reflective of this shift.
- For school-aged children, teachers perform a critical role in early intervention as they are often the first professionals to notice behavioral change.
- Through interviews of Systems of Care representatives, we identified opportunities for growth.

Targets for Systems Improvement

- Teachers and the school nurse shared that 6th grade social withdrawal, academic poor performance, and mutism were attributed to language deficits and cultural factors.
  -- A training opportunity to better identify early signs of mental illness in migrant youth is being developed.
- Acculturation stress was identified as a significant precipitant of decline by the therapist and psychiatrists.
  -- A training opportunity to better identify this factor and meaningfully intervene is being developed.

Interventions you would consider?

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