

Did You Know? Social and Emotional Issues

Courtesy of NAGC Research and Evaluation Network

Protective Factors

Protective factors serve as barriers to depression among gifted adolescents.

Mueller's (2009) comparison study of gifted and non-gifted adolescents asked if giftedness acts as a protective barrier in helping gifted adolescents improve their resiliency to mental health vulnerabilities, such as the onset of depression. They found that, generally, gifted adolescents indeed are significantly less depressed than their non-gifted peers. Protective factors such as self-concept, perceived connection to family/parents, and feelings of belonging in school contributed to the measured resiliency for both gifted and non-gifted adolescents within their study; however, researchers found that this did not necessarily apply to gifted students of color. Specifically, the Hispanic students in their sample reported that they were more likely to experience depression, even with all three protective factors in place.

Perfectionism

There are different types of perfectionism; therefore, teachers, parents, and researchers should view perfectionism in gifted students as a multidimensional concept that includes both functional and dysfunctional aspects.

Chan (2009) used the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism scale with Chinese gifted students in Hong Kong and found that there were three clusters of perfectionism: healthy, unhealthy, and nonperfectionists. Researchers suggest that key adults in students' lives should encourage gifted students to pursue excellence with the goal of "mastery of learning" instead of "drive towards avoidance of failure," as well as help set and achieve high standards and goals while recognizing students' limitations.

Stress

Academically achieving gifted students may experience more stress than they communicate to parents/guardians/teachers.

Peterson, Duncan, & Canady's (2009) longitudinal study of the effect of various negative life events, stress, and school experiences on the academic achievement of gifted youth found that their sample of gifted students experienced many different negative life events. These students may be less likely to communicate their experienced distress related to their academic challenges, peer relationships, school transitions, and overcommitment to activities to their parents, guardians, or teachers.



Myths

The October 2009 special issue of the Gifted Child Quarterly explores 19 common myths of gifted research.

The different myths discussed range from sample population representation, use of assessments, the characteristics of the gifted population, classroom practices, and gifted students' social and emotional needs.

References

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- Mueller, C. E. (2009). Protective factors as barriers to depression in gifted and nongifted adolescents. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 53*, 3-14. doi:10.1177/0016986208326552
- Peterson, J., Duncan, N., & Canady, K. (2009). A longitudinal study of negative life events, stress, and school experiences of gifted youth. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 53*, 34-49. doi:10.1177/0016986208326553

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