

Get in Rhithm: Providing Evidence-Based Interventions to Empower Student Self-Regulation Skills and Well-being

Kristen C. Eccleston, Ed. D., NBCT

Rhithm, Inc.

PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

Signs and symptoms of mental health disorders impact approximately one in six American youths aged 6-17 each year (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2021). A mental health disorder is "a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder resulting in serious functional impairment, which substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities" (National Institutes of Health, 2016, p. 1). The increase in mental health needs impacting school-aged students has created an environment where education settings have become a primary source to identify and implement student access to mental health services (Weist & Paternite, 2006). However, despite the identification of schools by Jacob & Coustasse (2008) as the "de facto mental health system" for students, uniform ways to deliver mental health services in schools and evidence supporting the effectiveness of the interventions offered continues to be minimal (Green et al., 2013; Kutash et al., 2006). Factors to consider when examining school-based mental health interventions to empower student self-regulation skills and increase overall student well-being include design efficacy and content efficacy on self-regulation skills. Additionally, consideration should be given to research findings demonstrating the impact digital technology has on youth and the interest they show in using digital platforms as a way to track their overall health (Mei et al., 2020).

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH EFFECTIVE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMMING

Digital mental health technologies intended to act as a resource and/or intervention for individual mental health needs have recently gained recognition as a format to increase access to mental health support (Jones et al., 2020). One way of ensuring the implementation of evidence-based practices within digital mental health technologies is to incorporate knowledge and feedback from licensed clinical mental health professionals (Torous et al., 2019).

Design Efficacy On Youth Well-being

- Approaches to student mental health care can develop by applying various sound methodologies already viewed as practical and established (Chorpita et al., 2011).
- One way of introducing sound methodologies is through the application of social innovation.
 - Social innovation is "the design and implementation of new solutions that imply conceptual, process, product, or organizational change, which ultimately aim to improve the welfare and wellbeing of individuals and communities" (OECD, n.d., para. 1).
 - Social innovation can occur through the process of codesign, which includes ongoing involvement of the end-users in "various stages of the production process" (Voorberg et al., 2014, p. 3).
- Chorpita et al. (2011) discuss codesign concerning mental health intervention as involving treatment researchers and end-users; both apply professional knowledge of empirical evidence to create a treatment foundation and establish "practice-based evidence" (Margison et al., 2000, p. 123).
 - This practice allows for a tailored treatment procedure that aligns with the proposed environment, provider, and end-user (Berman et al., 2020).

Content Efficacy On Self-Regulation Skills

- Many teachers face challenges in knowing how to successfully identify and support students exhibiting mental health symptoms (Frauenholtz et al., 2015).
- Soares et al. (2014) suggest that currently, a gap exists in teachers' ability to understand how mental health needs cause students to respond and act a certain way. In turn, this gap in understanding creates insecurity and complicates teachers' ability to manage everyday situations involving mental disorders.
- Kutcher et al. (2015) refer to this gap in their research when discussing findings demonstrating how a teacher's ability to intervene and navigate a scenario where a student is experiencing mental health needs can impact their attendance and overall academic performance.

SOLUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH EFFECTIVE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMMING

Programming within the Rhithm, Inc. application leverages the clinical principles of neuroplasticity and habit formation.

Design Efficacy On Youth Well-being

Licensed clinicians design Rhithm activities and lesson videos to give Rhithm users access to the same skills, interventions, and knowledge that one would discover in individual therapy or coaching. Bearman et al. (2020) discuss the issue of providing schools and students with inadequate interventions created in a research setting that does not consider the various school environmental challenges most districts face.

- **Technology integration.**
 - The Rhithm, Inc. application aligns with the essential qualities of successful self-regulation intervention discussed by Nowell et al. (2019).
 - Rhithm Inc's team of licensed clinical professionals continually develop short video segments that provide students with the types of activities identified by Nowell et al. (2019) to aid self-regulation through deep breathing, visualization, and stretching
- **Intervention length.**
 - The application's algorithm provides students and staff with the appropriate self-regulation tools that align with the information submitted by the user during the five-question check-in.
 - Videos do not exceed three minutes in length and are a form of micro-learning that allows users to gain essential knowledge in a short period of time.
- **Visual application.**
 - The Rhithm, Inc. application uses concrete language and visuals to help students identify and express their emotions via the Wellness Check-in Tool and differentiated self-regulation strategies.
 - Georgiev et al. (2004) discuss learning through digital media as an opportunity for learners to access knowledge and support whenever and wherever they are.

Content Efficacy On Self-Regulation Skills

- Rhithm, Inc. provides users with the Rhithm Toolkit that allows users to search for videos according to their evidence-based framework of choice.
- The Rhithm, Inc. application has the ability to remove limitations related to teacher understanding of student mental health needs (Frauenholtz et al., 2015; Soares et al., 2014) and counselor availability constraints (Keys et al., 1998) by utilizing the application's algorithm that selects and provides students with clinician backed videos tailored to their identified mental-health/well-being needs.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Rhithm, Inc's application is a vital mental health well-being tool that allows school systems to provide students and staff with tailored mental health resources and support. Through the application of co-design, Rhithm, Inc. has applied research findings with the experience and knowledge of licensed clinical professionals to create a mental health well-being application tailored to the unique needs of both school systems and individual users alike. Clear data outcomes allow school personnel to stay up to date with the overall school climate and the individual well-being needs of students. With school and student mental health needs on the rise, Rhithm, Inc. delivers a tailored solution that seamlessly fits into daily educational programming and utilizes a design built to minimize disruptions to the instructional schedule.

Rhithm Inc.'s approach to school and student social-emotional well-being is a revolutionary way to provide critical mental health interventions across school district settings. In addition to evidence-based interventions aimed at reducing mental health needs and symptoms, schools receive critical data that allows them to make decisive and vital decisions impacting the overall well-being of students and staff. Clinical input from licensed professionals allows Rhithm, Inc. to separate itself from other digital mental health platforms and ensures that students receive up-to-date and impactful mental health interventions specific to increasing overall student engagement and well-being.

REFERENCES

To view references for this paper please [click here](#).
To access full white paper please [click here](#).

CONTACT

Kristen C. Eccleston, Ed. D.
Professional Development Consultant | Rhithm
E: kristen@rhithm.app

