

Georgia APEX: School-based mental health services

Partnering with Highland Rivers Health to provide the Georgia APEX program in your school increases timely identification and treatment of children and teens struggling with mental health, substance use and emotional problems

Mental health issues are common among children and youth – and the first signs of mental or emotional problems often appear at school. Children and adolescents with unmet mental health needs struggle academically, missing more school, receiving lower grades and often dropping out altogether.

The Georgia APEX Project offers schools an efficient and timely means of helping students who are struggling with mental, emotional, behavioral and substance use issues. The program provides in-school mental health counselors that serve as a resource for students and staff, and most important, help link students and their families with needed mental health services in their community.



School-based mental health services make it more convenient for youth to get the critical services and support they need

Through the Georgia APEX Project, Highland Rivers Health provides mental health professionals onsite at your elementary, middle or high school. In partnership with school staff, Highland Rivers' therapists will assess and identify a student's mental health needs and determine how best to meet his or her individual needs. Appointments can be scheduled during the school day, before or after school, or at home if desired. Services include:

- On-site mental health professionals
- Individual and group counseling
- Community Support Services
- Psychiatric and nursing services
- Linkage and referral to other services
- Training and support for school personnel

For more information about the Georgia APEX program, email:

apexinfo@highlandrivers.org

Or visit:

<http://highlandrivershealth.com/apex>

Mental health services are critical for youth

- One in five children (20 percent) ages birth to 18 has a diagnosable mental health problem.
- One in 10 children has a serious mental health problem that is severe enough to impair their functioning at home, in school or the community.
- The onset of major mental illness problems may occur as early as 7 to 11 years of age.
- Roughly half of all long-term mental health problems start by the mid-teens.
- Mental health problems can often affect academic performance. Fourteen percent of children with mental health problems receive mostly Ds and Fs.
- Forty-four percent of children with mental health problems drop out of high school.
- Over the course of the school year, children with mental health problems may miss as many as 22 days of school.
- Thirteen percent of youth ages 8 to 15, and 21 percent ages 13 to 18, live with mental illness that causes significant impairment in their daily lives.
- Up to 80 percent of children in need of mental health services do not receive them.

Benefits of school-based mental health services

- Increased access to mental health services
- Improvements in attendance, academic performance, engagement and school climate
- Reduction in mental health stigma
- Fewer classroom disruptions, discipline referrals, course failures and inpatient hospitalizations