


Evaluating a Newly Developed Nursing Assessment Tool of School-Age Students Experiencing Homelessness



Maria Anidi, DNP, MBA, RN

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Project Team Members

Michelle Beauchesne, DNSc, RN, CPNP,FAAN, FNAP, FAANP  
Anthonia Umeh, BSN, RN

Project Consultants

Pooja Bhalla, DNP, RN  
Kathy Harney, DNP, M.Ed.,RN  
Jenny Gornley, DNP, RN, NCSN

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Background

- > Observation
- > Privacy Issues
- > Support System
- > Resources
- > Template



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### Childhood Homelessness

- ▶ **Homeless definition:**  
 “lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” (National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE), 2023)
- ▶ **In Massachusetts (MA)**  
 Childhood homelessness(CH) is a significant problem  
 Approximately 19,896 MA students are experiencing homelessness (NCHE, 2023)

<https://nche.ed.gov>

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### Covid-19 pandemic heightened children at risk



**Population disproportionately impacted:**

- ▶ Homeless children
- ▶ Low-income students of color
- ▶ Approximately 11.8% of MA children <18 years living in poverty (US Census Bureau, 2023)

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### Major predisposing factor directly affecting children’s health and well-being

Homelessness interferes with learning and increased missed school days due to multiple inequities:

- ▶ Nutritional
- ▶ Physical activities
- ▶ Behavioral activities
- ▶ Vision
- ▶ Mental health
- ▶ Abject Poverty

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### The Role of School Nurses

School nurses serve as:

- ▶ **Advocates** for students experiencing homelessness
- ▶ **Catalysts** at their respective schools
- ▶ **Innovative agents** to change the trajectory by establishing better communication processes
- ▶ **Leaders** in the development of strategies to raise awareness & shape the misperceptions and associated stigma
- ▶ **Care Coordinators** of comprehensive services

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### Rationale for Tool Development

- ▶ Enhance better identification of children and youth experiencing homelessness
- ▶ Provide strategies to assess diverse complex needs
- ▶ Foster care coordination among educators, homeless liaisons, social workers, psychologists, and other team members
- ▶ Link community agencies
- ▶ Increase access and utilization of support services
- ▶ Prompt evaluation process of findings and appropriate referrals to special interest groups

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### Initial Student Screening Tool

SNAP EHB: CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

INITIAL STUDENT SCREENING TOOL (TEMPLATE)

Please Note: This will be an initial screening tool that can be used by nurses. Depending on the response, follow-up may be needed.

Area of Focus	Screening Question	Response (Yes/No/Refused)
Lack of Educational Continuity	Attendance Issues?	Yes   No
	Missing records needed to enroll?	Yes   No
Poor Health and Nutrition	Missing immunizations and medical records?	Yes   No
	Chronic hunger or food hoarding?	Yes   No
	Fatigue (may be falling asleep in class)?	Yes   No
Transportation and Attendance Issues	Early entrance and tardiness?	Yes   No
	Students absent?	Yes   No
	Lack of participation in school activities?	Yes   No
Poor Hygiene	Lack of participation in field trips?	Yes   No
	Wearing clothes for several days?	Yes   No
	Inconsistent grooming?	Yes   No
Social and Behavioral Concerns	Extreme shyness?	Yes   No
	Difficulty in being relationships with peers and teachers?	Yes   No
	Ability, exhibiting anger or embarrassment when asked about current address?	Yes   No
	Avoidance of questions related to current address?	Yes   No
	Statements made about staying with grandparents, other relatives, friends, or in motels and campgrounds?	Yes   No
	Statements such as: "I don't remember the name of the last school I was in."	Yes   No

Response such as: "No" to item being screened is the "N"  
If 3 or more responses in any 1 area with all yes responses, consider client.  
If 2 or 3 but 2 or more responses in any 2 areas with all yes responses then refer for further assessment.  
If 0 or one 2 areas with all yes responses then refer for immediate follow-up and assessment.

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### Utilization of Tool

- ▶ Assess students needs
- ▶ Advocate for students experiencing homelessness
- ▶ Educate and assist the use of a tool/template
- ▶ Refer students to the right channels
- ▶ Advocate for services and resources

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### Goal of Utilization of Initial Screening

- ▶ Adequate assessment of individual student
- ▶ Accessing specific information related to the care of vulnerable students
- ▶ Making appropriate referrals to specific agencies
- ▶ Consistent Follow up care
- ▶ Collaboration

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### Evaluating Usability of Assessment of Tool

*(Note: The content of this slide is extremely small and difficult to read. It appears to be a list of questions or survey items related to the usability of the assessment tool.)*

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**Further Tool Dissemination**

- ▶ 1) The project team plans to present assessment tool during liaison team meetings.
- ▶ 2) Offer presentations of findings to BPS nurses and to other team members
- ▶ 3) Share with community agencies.
- ▶ 4) National Presentations

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**Project Outcomes**

- ▶ **Brainstormed with other school leaders angling out how to best:**
  - Share data and advocate for services
  - Fill gaps in the referral process between Aspen and SNAP platforms
- ▶ **Developed a tool to assist school nurses in:**
  - Assessing the overall needs of students experiencing homelessness
  - Accessing information and care for vulnerable children
  - Making appropriate referrals to specific agencies
- ▶ **Collaborated with other Boston Public School (BPS) teams**
  - To unravel best ways of care coordination
- ▶ **Established a platform through the Northeastern University School Health Academy**
  - Via a webinar that will offer continuous education units

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**Discussion and Questions**

**Case Study**

Student SB who is 7 years old walks into your health office, looking so tired, unkempt, not making eye contact. He says his stomach hurts and he missed his breakfast. He's crying. When you asked if you could provide food for him. He said, "I'm just tired, I didn't sleep, my mom didn't have any place for me to lie down and sleep well". He says he sleeps "somewhere down there. . . close to school". He is new to your school. He doesn't know his previous schools' name.

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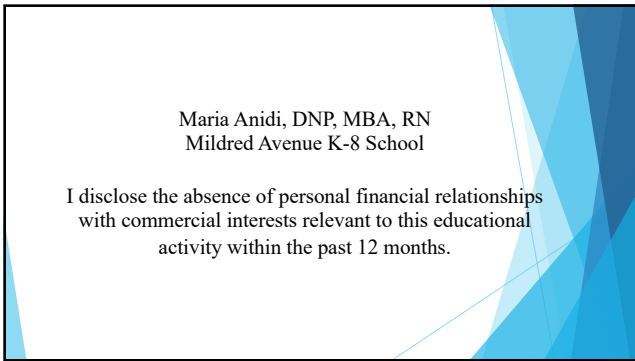
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