Creating Hope and Community: The Critical Role of the Social Worker in a Multi-Tiered System of Support

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Agenda

• Introductions-
• Children and Youth at Risk: Urgency of the Problem and Why PBIS/MTSS is the Answer
• The role of the school social worker in a PBIS/Multi-Tiered System of Support:
• BREAK
• Evidence-Based Practices, Behavior Support, and Cultural Competence
• PANEL Discussion
Learning Objectives

• Articulate the many roles of the school social worker within a multi-tiered system of supports.
• Identify the advantages of using a multi-tiered system in prevention, early intervention, and evidence-based practices
• Articulate specific challenges to working in a multi-tiered system

Our Norms

➢ Ensure a way for everyone to participate
➢ Bring an open mind
➢ Listen to understand
➢ Silence your cell phones and use them during breaks
Acknowledgements

- George Sugai & Rob Horner, OSEP Center on PBIS
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- Hank Bohanon, Loyola University of Chicago
- Joanne Cashman, IDEA Partnership

History- Introductions
Tariq

• Table Discussion # 1

• 1 in 5 children will experience a mental health problem of mild impairment; 1/10 will experience a mental health problem of severe impairment.
• Of those children and youth who need mental health services, over 75% receive those services in schools

(Duchnowski, Kutash, & Friedman, 2002; Power, Eiraldi, Clarke, Mazzuca & Krain, 2005; Rones & Hoagwood, 2000; Wade, Mansour, & Guo, 2008)
Disproportionality

- African American students (especially males) are 3.5 times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their white peers
- Students with disabilities are 2X more likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions than students without disabilities
- The dropout rate is 50% or more among African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic youth, and students with emotional handicaps

Some “Big Picture” Challenges

- Low intensity, low fidelity interventions for behavior/emotional needs
- Habitual use of restrictive settings (and poor outcomes) for youth with disabilities
- High rate of undiagnosed MH problems (stigma, lack of knowledge, etc)
- Changing the routines of ineffective practices (systems) that are “familiar” to systems

Why Invest In a Framework?

- Increasingly diverse student population
  - Language, SES,
  - Academic ability (range)
  - Social behaviors
  - Stressors at home / community
- To meet the range of needs, teachers need to:
  - Employ a range of instructional strategies
  - Teach classroom routines to support higher level thinking skills
  - Encourage student behaviors
  - Pointed toward self-management
We Should be Adopting A Systemic Approach That is….

- Effective: Desired Outcomes?
- Efficient: Doable?
- Relevant: Contextual & Cultural?
- Durable: Lasting?
- Scalable: Transportable?

School Can Add to Risk Factors

Osher, Dwyer, and Jackson (2004)

- Alienation
- Academic Frustration
- Chaotic Transitions
- Negative Relationships with Adults and Peers
- Teasing, Bullying, Gangs
- Segregation with Antisocial Peers
- School-driven Mobility
- Harsh Discipline; Suspension, Expulsion, Push Out/Drop Out
Impact of Trauma on Development

Impairment of:
- Attachment
- Biological Impacts
- Affect Regulation
- Dissociation
- Behavioral Regulation
- Cognition
- Self-Concept
- Family Context

Developmental Trauma Disorder
(van der Kolk, 2005)

“many problems of traumatized children can be understood as efforts to minimize objective threat and to regulate their emotional distress” (p.403)
- These are survival responses to disordered or dangerous environments

“{the child’s} maladaptive behaviors tend to inspire revulsion and rejection...and is likely to lead to labeling and stigmatizing children for behaviors that are meant to ensure survival.” (p. 404)
Punishment

- Punishment stops a behavior
- But alone, it has some major side effects
  - Increases escape/avoidance
  - Encourages “sneaky” behaviors
  - Generates desire for revenge
  - Makes behavior harder to change
  - Does not teach
  - You can’t find a big enough hammer
  - It works both ways
  - It makes us filter (e.g., He’s always mean to me!)

How about the adults?

Reactive responses....

When we experience aversive situation, we want select interventions that produce immediate relief
- Remove student
- Remove ourselves
- Modify physical environment
- Assign responsibility for change to student &/or others
Think of Tariq....

**School Can Build Protective Factors**

Osher, Dwyer, and Jackson (2004)

- Connection
- Academic Success
- Supported Transitions
- Positive Relationships with Adults and Peers
- Caring Interactions
- Interaction with Pro-social peers
- Stability
- Positive approaches to disciplinary infractions
VIOLENCE PREVENTION

- Positive, predictable school-wide climate
- High rates of academic & social success
- Formal social skills instruction
- Positive active supervision & reinforcement
- Positive adult role models
- Multi-component, multi-year school-family-community effort

The Origins of PBS*

PBS originates from:
1) The science of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and the theory that all behavior has a purpose and/or communicates something.
2) The Public Health Multi-tiered Model of Prevention
3) The movement for normalization and inclusion of individuals with disabilities, and,
4) Person-centered values

*(Carr, 2002)
SW-PBS Logic!

Successful individual student behavior support is linked to host environments or school climates that are effective, efficient, relevant, & durable for all students

(Zins & Ponti, 1990)
Features of PBIS

• Multi-tiered Framework
• Teach and reinforce socially valued social skills
• Work in representative teams
• DATA! DATA! DATA! - To assess the needs of students, to assess implementation, and to assess outcomes
• Evidence-based practices (values-based)
What does it mean to be systematic about behavior support for students in classrooms? In schools?
The mission of the Rundlett Middle School PRIDE Team is to guide, support, and sustain the development of structures and systems that foster a positive school climate and promote student learning.
Table Discussion:

The Skills of the Social Worker
The Changing Role of the School Social Worker

1) School social workers as School First-Responders
2) School Social Workers as Referral Experts and Resource Coordinators
3) School social workers as Three-Tier Intervention Experts
4) School social workers as Organizational Consultants
5) School social workers as Evidence-Informed Practitioners
(Kelly, 2012)

National Study of SSW
(Kelly, et al., 2010)

SSW population demographics remain largely unchanged since earlier studies (Allen-Meares, 1994; Costin, 1969)

- "Students face complex issues, but few are served by outside mental health services: SSW are often the only provider"
- "Paradigm shift for attention to prevention has not yet been echoed in practice: high caseloads, student complexities, and administrative paperwork demands largely explain the ideal/actual discrepancy noted by respondents”
- "Majority of time in individual and group counseling”
• Emphasis on family engagement as a Tier 1 or Tier 2 intervention, but further study is needed to understand how family engagement is operationalized across school social work practice contexts
• SSW play a limited role in school leadership through participation in school committees, developing prevention activities, or improving school culture
• Limited reliance on use of research, journals, and books to improve practice
• Workshops and peers rate much higher, but unclear how evidence-based those resources are being used

Old Approach → New Approach

• A MH counselor is housed in a school building 1 day a week to “see” students;
• MH person participates in teams at all 3 tiers;
“Instead of enforcing its demands for compliance, a teacher may help students understand what is being done to them. She can talk about mutual respect instead of obedience. She can help them to understand the positive rewards for acceptable forms of behavior. In particular, in a liberal democratic society, a caring teacher will help students to acquire the skills and understanding necessary for full participation.”

Marcel

• Discussion # 3

Why Do We Need To Be Culturally Competent and Responsive?
Louisiana Disproportionality Example: Students Without Disabilities, Discipline by Race and Ethnicity*

*Source: Office of Civil Rights, US Department of Education; 2009-10 Estimates

SCHOOL-WIDE
1. Leadership team
2. Behavior purpose statement
3. Set of positive expectations & behaviors
4. Procedures for teaching SW & classroom-wide expected behavior
5. Continuum of procedures for encouraging expected behavior
6. Continuum of procedures for discouraging rule violations
7. Procedures for on-going data-based monitoring & evaluation

CLASSROOM
1. All school-wide
2. Maximum structure & predictability in routines & environment
3. Positively stated expectations posted, taught, reviewed, prompted, & supervised.
4. Maximum engagement through high rates of opportunities to respond, delivery of evidence-based instructional curriculum & practices
5. Continuum of strategies to acknowledge displays of appropriate behavior.
6. Continuum of strategies for responding to inappropriate behavior.

EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTION PRACTICES

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT
1. Behavioral competence at school & district levels
2. Function-based behavior support planning
3. Team- & data-based decision making
4. Comprehensive person-centered planning & wraparound processes
5. Targeted social skills & self-management instruction
6. Individualized instructional & curricular accommodations

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
1. Continuum of positive behavior support for all families
2. Frequent, regular positive contacts, communications, & acknowledgements
3. Formal & active participation & involvement as equal partner
4. Access to system of integrated school & community resources

NONCLASSROOM
1. Positive expectations & routines taught & encouraged
2. Active supervision by all staff (Scan, move, interact)
3. Precorrections & reminders
4. Positive reinforcement
PBIS Features- Tier 2

► Systems:
  – Tier 2 Team
  – Early Identification, Decision Rules.
  – Communication with teacher, parents and students.

► Practices:
  – Check In/Check Out
  – Social Contracting
  – Other Targeted Group Interventions
  – Simple Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Support Plans

► Data:
  – Weekly (Bi-weekly) ODRs, Attendance, Progress Reports.
  – Functional Behavioral Assessment, Competing Behavior Pathway

Applied Behavior Analysis

• The notion that behavior is influenced by a 3-part sequence:
  1. there is a stimulus
  2. there is then a response
  3. There is a reinforcing consequence

• Many of the methods we now use for teaching is based upon ABA, and there is much research to support this framework
Functions (Purposes) of Behavior

Behavior meets a need the individual has:

- **Attention** - the individual is using the behavior to gain attention from peers or adults.
- **Escape** - the individual is engaging in the behavior to avoid a task, such as doing chores or homework.
- **Tangible** - the individual is engaging in the behavior in order to gain something (for example, trying to get you to buy him or her something).
- **Sensory** - the individual is engaging in the behavior to respond to some stimulus or sensory need (some children, for example, have the need to block out noise or avoid contact with people).

The ABCs of Behavior

- **Antecedents** – what happens right before a behavior occurs
- **Behavior**: What does the behavior look like?
- **Consequences** – what happens right after a behavior occurs
- **Reinforcers** – consequences which increase a behavior
Social Learning Theory....

- Cognition, behavior development
- One's behavior
- People & environment & cognition
- Context

PBIS Features - Tier 3

► Data
  - Individualized Progress Monitoring

► Systems
  - Systematic screening for intensive level support needs
  - Teacher training and support through Targeted Team
  - Staff time and resources to provide individualized supports to youth

► Practices
  - Individualized person-centered planning and supports
  - Individualized education planning and supports
  - Intensive FBA and Behavior Support Plans
  - Referral to Community Resources
“Tariq” (again)

• How can he be College and Career Ready?

Youth with EBD Need...

• An intervention that assists with high school completion and real world employment
• To learn self-determination skills for transition to adulthood
• Assistance to build a positive social support network
• Assistance to develop a personalized career and post-high school plan
RENEW: Conceptual Framework

System of Care and Wraparound

YOUTH, FAMILY RENEW

Self-Determination

School-to-Career

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

EDUCATION

DISABLED

Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological System’s Model
BUILDING HOPE: RENEW PRINCIPLES

• Self-Determination
• Unconditional Care
• Strengths-Based Supports
• Flexible Resources
• Natural Supports

My Strengths

3/18/2014
(n=11)

NH PBIS High School Project: Fidelity (n=15)
Dropout Rates: Louisiana

HOPE!
Latoya Fletcher

RENEW Facilitator's Training © Institute on Disability, University of New Hampshire
Panel

• Laura Richard: What unique competencies and characteristics does the social worker bring to the school setting?
• Annahita Ball: How do these qualities fit within a PBIS/Multi-Tiered System of Support?
• Carolyn Hill: How does a PBIS/MTSS framework fit within school reform?
• Joanne Cashman: What’s at risk and what can be gained?

Relationship-Building: Part of the Social Worker’s Vocation

“Today many young people not only fail to develop the capacity to care, but also seem not to know what it means to be cared for....Kids seem to be able to survive material poverty, and many can ignore much of the violence in the media...if they have continuing relationships with adults who obviously care for them”

(Noddings, 2002, p. 25 & 26)
Thank you!

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