DATA-INFORMED, TARGETED INTERVENTIONS FOR IMPROVING EMOTION REGULATION: CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERNALIZING PROBLEMS

Objectives:

- Describe the process model of emotion regulation and how it relates to families and schools
- List measures for monitoring emotion regulation (e.g., intensity of emotions, use of adaptive strategies)
- Identify targeted interventions, based on a functional assessment, for effectively supporting students with emotion regulation difficulties.

What is the problem?

Access and provision of mental health services to children and adolescents is a global challenge (Kieling et al., 2011; Millar, Lean, Moraes, & Sweet, 2013; Rones & Hoagwood, 2000)

School-based mental health interventions (Murphy, Abel, Hoover, Jellinek, & Fazel, 2017)

Of children in need, 80% do not receive mental health services (Kataoka et al., 2002)

Why is it important?

Types of referrals

- Internalizers vs. Externalizers
- Types of Referrals
- Slipping through the cracks

Internalizing Problems

School avoidance, social anxiety, test anxiety, withdrawal, somatic complaints, depressed or irritable mood, or appears overly tired.

Externalizing Problems

Aggression, hyperactive, rule-breaking, opposition, non-compliance, acting out, or substance abuse.
Myths about Emotion Regulation

- Emotions are internal events that we, as helping professionals, have no control over.
- The only way to regulate emotions is to talk about them to change your negative thoughts.
- Internalizing problems are internal events that cannot be measured.

Process Model of Emotion Regulation

- 4 Component Model of ER in relation to Broad Deficits in Psychopathology:
  - Awareness, understanding, acceptance of emotions
  - Engagement in goal-directed behavior
  - Ability to flexibly apply strategies to moderate emotional experiences
  - Willingness to experience negative emotions when pursuing meaningful activities

Key messages from research

- Meta-analysis of Effectiveness of ER processes:
  - Cognitive Change: more effective than Attentional Deployment and Response Modulation

- Overlooked Antecedent Interventions:
  - Research on substance use, eating, and exercise, academic achievement, and retirement savings suggest that adapting or modifying environmental factors or situational cues is more effective.

Who are the key players? Caregivers and Teachers

- Learning ER at home:
  - Reactions to their child's emotions
  - Expressions of emotions
  - Discussions of emotions with their child.

- Emotional support in Schools:
  - High emotional support over time when their teacher provided high emotional support:
    - Responsiveness to student's needs
    - Respect for student perspectives
    - Absence of negativity
    - Presence of safety and enjoyment

It is striking that none of these empirically-validated interventions have been combined into a comprehensive intervention package and tested for their blended effectiveness. From a clinical standpoint, given the multiply-determined problems of children, evidence for the effectiveness of a combined school-based intervention that targeted the reduction of problem behaviors through the use of cognitive-behavioral techniques, improvement in social skills, and teacher management of behaviors through consultation is lacking. - Hoagwood et al. (1997)
Consultation in Schools

- Role of school mental health clinicians in consultation (Fagan & Wise, 2007)
- Conjoint behavioural consultation (CBC) (Sheridan et al., 1996a; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2007)
- CBC and internalizing problems (Auster, Feeney-Kettler, & Kratochwill, 2006)

Getting Practical

How to measure ER for internalizing problems? How to implement targeted interventions?

Research to Practice

- Based on the dissertation research data collected in Spring 2019
- Challenges to supporting ER
- Measures and interventions based on a contemporary research on emotion regulation
- Aim is to help mental health professionals develop meaningful, personalized interventions with youth, families, and schools.

Ways to Capture Emotion Regulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target of measure</th>
<th>Type of measure</th>
<th>Source of data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Observation of emotion regulation (structured and unstructured)</td>
<td>Field notes and consultation meeting reflections, Office referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Self-report: Emotion Tracking Form</td>
<td>Student/Parent/Teacher interviews, Questionnaires (BASC-3, BRIEF, Self-theories of intelligence and failure)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Classroom observation instrument</td>
<td>Classroom climate and demographics, Questionnaires (BASC-3, BRIEF, Self-theories of intelligence and failure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Demographic information, Home observation instrument</td>
<td>Questionnaires (BASC-3, BRIEF, Self-theories of intelligence and failure)</td>
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Case Example

Silly, sensitive Sam

- Age, Grade: 10, Gr. 5
- Reason for referral: Being sent to office, multiple times a week for crawling under desk, crying, waiting
- Interests: Pokémon, video games (Zelda)
- Personal Goals: Focus better

Attention-seeking Adrian

- Age, Grade: 12, Gr. 7
- Reason for referral: Disruptive classroom behavior, disruptive, self-doubts, behavior (ADHD, Anxiety)
- Interests: YouTube (Mr. Beast), video gaming (Call of Duty)
- Personal Goals: Impulse control, talk about emotions, thinking ahead

Disconnected Danielle

- Age, Grade: 11, Gr. 6
- Reason for referral: Missing school, conflict with parents, withdrawal in class (ODD, ADHD, Anxiety)
- Interests: Climate change and dance
- Personal Goals: Expressing emotions, resolving problems with parents
Caregiver/Teacher Report: Daily Rating Form

Example of Data

Typical Compelling Behavior Pathway

Target behavior: Reduce emotional outbursts (e.g., wailing, refusing to do something, complaining, acting silly or being overly upset etc.)

Adapted Behavior Pathway

Target behavior: Reducing emotional outbursts (e.g., wailing, refusing to do something, complaining, acting silly or being overly upset etc.) while improving on using adaptive coping skills (example: calming strategies, problem-solving, asking for help, changing task)

Link to Process Model of Emotion Regulation

Intervention Targets from a Functional Behavior Pathway
Prevention: Interventions Targeting Setting Events & Antecedents

- Sleep hygiene and nutrition
- Psychoeducation
- Visual schedules to promote predictable routines and environments
- Provide adaptations for school work
- Plan ahead for breaks and changes of environment

Response to Dysregulation: Targeting Consequences Based on Behavior Function

Reinforce Positive Behavior
- Give verbal or nonverbal praise for use of coping strategies
- Subtly remind student of use of break card or other options

Response to Problem Behavior (Corrective Feedback)
- Minor: Redirect/prompt
- Moderate: Connect then provide support and suggestions
- Major: Give time/space or take to safe space

KEY MESSAGES
- ER is more than just coping strategies
- ER is most effective when targeting antecedents
- Use multiple source of data to inform target of intervention
- A repertoire of targeted skills/strategies MORE USEFUL than searching for the “Right One”
Thanks!

ANY QUESTIONS?
You can reach us at
simon.lisaingo@alumni.ubc.ca
jaime.semchuk@alumni.ubc.ca

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- Blue: #6d9eeb

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Conference Handouts

Presented by
Simon Lisaingo
& Jaime Semchuk

@ the Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health Conference 2019
**Behavior Pathway**

**Routine:** Structured classroom (specific routine/setting)

**Setting Event**
- Biological Factors (physical health, hunger, sleep, sensory)
- Psychological Factors (motivation, developmental level, temperament)
- Social Factors (relational stress/conflict)
- Environment (transition, location, time of day)

**Antecedent**
- At home, change in routine, request or demand
- At school, presenting in front of peers

**Thoughts/Feelings**

**Challenging Behavior**
- **Major:** Wailing, rocking, negative self-talk ("I'm stupid")
- **Moderate:** Refusal to do task
- **Minor:** Act silly, not follow directions, "I don't know", imaginary play, complaining, etc.

**Alternative Behavior**
- Take a break (e.g., safe space at home/school)
- Ask for alternative assignment
- Ask for help from peer or adult
- Read at back for classroom

**Desired Behavior**
- Independently complete task/situation
- Use adaptive/helpful coping strategies (e.g., breathing, asking for help, etc.)

**Consequence/Outcome**
- Completes activity; Improved grades/performance; Making new friends; Better able to take on challenges

**Consequence**
- Taken away from situation

**Function**
- Sensory
- Escape/Avoidance (e.g., escape from unpleasant internal state)
- Attention
- Tangibles

**Target behavior:** Reducing emotional outbursts (e.g., wailing, refusing to do something, complaining, acting silly or being overly upset etc.), while improving on using adaptive coping skills (example: calming strategies, problem-solving, asking for help, changing task).
### Sample Suggested ER Intervention Strategies for Home and School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Event</th>
<th>Manipulate Antecedent</th>
<th>Shift Thought Patterns</th>
<th>Teach Behaviour</th>
<th>Alter Consequences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk about possible problems that arise before difficult situation or new routines.</td>
<td><strong>Prevent problem behaviour</strong>&lt;br&gt;Breakdown assignment/activity&lt;br&gt;Provide a peer tutor/helper&lt;br&gt;Provide choice where possible (e.g., “What part of the activity would you like to start first?” “what will you do when you are done?”)</td>
<td><strong>Notice signs</strong>&lt;br&gt;Observe signs of frustration (cringing face, muttering, or deep exhales)&lt;br&gt;Prompt use of a break or direct attention to another task or different aspect of the task.</td>
<td><strong>Teach Alternative Behaviour</strong>&lt;br&gt;Teach break card or asking for help (e.g., “if you need to break, you can find the break cards here” or “raise your hand if you need help”); require returning to activity; Encourage to work independently</td>
<td><strong>Reinforce Behaviour</strong>&lt;br&gt;Give verbal or nonverbal praise for use of coping strategies&lt;br&gt;Subtly remind student of use of break card or other options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual schedule for predictability.</td>
<td><strong>Prompt Alternate/Desired Behaviour</strong>&lt;br&gt;Remind availability of break cards and safe space (e.g., “do you need to take a break before getting started?”)&lt;br&gt;Provide support ahead or request (e.g., check-in “do you know your job?”)&lt;br&gt;Connect before redirected (e.g., “I can tell this is hard for you, let’s try to figure this one out together.”)</td>
<td><strong>Shift thought patterns</strong>&lt;br&gt;Teach to self-identify negative thought patterns and use adaptive coping strategies to change thought patterns (e.g., focus on something else, focus on positive self-statements “I can do this”, “Nobody’s perfect”).</td>
<td><strong>Teach Desired Behaviour/Social Skills</strong>&lt;br&gt;Teach and Pre-correct (e.g., “your job is to…”)&lt;br&gt;Teach and practice using emotion regulation coping skills</td>
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<td>Counselling focused on negative self-thoughts.</td>
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### Next Steps

**Plan for School Consultation & Supports:**
- Brainstorm how to make work meaningful and interesting
- Notice and praise positive behaviour (focusing, using strategies like taking a break, moving seats, etc.), ignore minor behaviour
- Model and encourage use of emotion language and strategies (e.g., praise use of strategies to control impulses)

**Plan for Home Supports:**
- Engage in small challenges (impulse control challenges) that help him practice his impulse control, problem solving, and coping skills
- Model and encourage use of emotion language and strategies

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Emotion Regulation Support Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Date of Assessment:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grade:</td>
<td>Consultant name:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Behavior Pathway

Routine: ________________

- Setting Event
- Antecedent
- Thoughts/Feelings
- Challenging Behavior
  - Major:
  - Moderate:
  - Minor:
- Alternative Behavior
- Desired Behavior
- Consequence/Outcome
- Consequence
- Function

Target behavior: ____________________________________________________________________________

Simon Lisaingo & Jaime Semchuk - Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health Conference 2019
# Suggested Intervention Strategies for Home and School

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## Next Steps

### Plan for School Consultation & Supports:
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- 

### Plan for Home Supports:
- 
-
Classroom Intervention Strategies for Internalizing Problems

The following is a list of common intervention strategies used for supporting students with internalizing problems in schools.

Before the day begins and before the problem occurs, teachers can...

- Talk about possible problems that may arise before difficult situations or new routines.
- Use a visual schedule for predictability (e.g., on their classroom white/chalkboard have a list of activities for the day and the times they will occur, review it with the classroom before each day; especially, review changes to their normal routine).
- Manage noise level or provide headphones (e.g., students sometimes have noise-cancelling headphones available to use if they find it too noisy in the classroom, or allow the student to listen to their personal music)
- Work on negative self-thoughts (e.g., teachers may refer the student to counselling so that the student can learn cognitive strategies for reframing negative self-thoughts and building greater self-awareness)
- Create a calming corner in the classroom (e.g., a known place in the classroom where students can go if they are feeling overwhelmed or upset, where they can go to work quietly or take a break).
- Set up and remind the student about receiving a tangible reward (e.g., playing cards from parents) for achieving their emotion regulation goals (e.g., remind that that you are working with their parents to support them towards their goal to use more emotion regulation strategies).
- Model the use of identifying strong emotions (e.g., teacher makes a spelling mistake on the board or forgets something at home)
- Model the use of emotion regulation strategies (e.g., teacher openly acknowledges a mistake and fixes it, and uses a positive self-statement: “nobody’s perfect, I guess that I am human too©” (positive self-statement); teacher communicates how they are feeling and what they are doing about it “I am having a rough day and feeling a bit tired, but I am feeling excited about what we are going to work on today”(positive reframe).

To prevent the problem behaviour, teachers can...

- Breakdown assignments/activities (e.g., instead of giving the student an open-end goal or task, break down the assignment into manageable/achievable chunks)
- Provide a peer tutor/helper (e.g., have a designated student in the classroom that the student gets along with and is capable of supporting the student)
- Provide choice where possible (e.g., “What part of the activity would you like to start with first?”; “What will you do when you are done?”)
- For writing tasks, allow to use computer (e.g., if handwriting is a concern or is slow, a computer might make it easier for the student)
- Remind availability of break cards and safe space (e.g., “do you need to take a break before getting started?”)
- Provide support ahead or request (e.g., check-in “do you know your job?”)
During or before known challenging tasks (e.g., math test or essay writing), teachers can...

- Observe for signs of frustration (e.g., cringing face, muttering, or deep exhales)
- Prompt use of a break or direct attention to another task or different aspect of the task.
- Teach or model to the student to self-identify negative thought patterns and use adaptive coping strategies to change thought patterns (e.g., focus on something else, focus on positive self-statements “I can do this”, “Nobody’s perfect”)
- Teach break card or asking for help (e.g., “if you need to break, you can find the break cards here” or “raise your hand if you need help”); require returning to activity
- Teach and pre-correct (e.g., “Remember, your job is to...”)
- Teach and practice using emotion regulation coping skills (e.g., “I know this task may be a little harder than usual for you all, but I believe you can do it. What I have done is helped break it down into steps for you...”)

After the problem behaviour occurs, teachers can...

- **Minor problem behaviour:** Connect then redirect and prompt the student to a different activity (e.g., stand in close proximity and gently remind student of expectations).
- **Moderate problem behaviour:** Connect then provide support and suggestions (e.g., when the student has calmed down, get down to their level, and take the time to talk to the student about the event, their behaviour, how they felt, what they tried, and what they could do differently; or, help the student collaboratively solve their specific problem).
- **Major problem behaviour:** Ask to take go to safe space (e.g., if safe to do so, stand in close proximity, and remind student of their option to use the calming corner or to the office; if behaviour is unsafe, remove other students from the classroom and seek support).

When student does things well (e.g., uses adaptive emotion regulation strategies), teachers can...

- Make an extra effort to provide immediate verbal praise for using an emotion regulation strategy (e.g., “Great work, getting your headphones, I know it is noisy in here” or “I noticed you went to the calming corner, good job!”)
# Emotion Tracking Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>When...</th>
<th>I am/was feeling...</th>
<th>I tried to...</th>
<th>Next time I will...</th>
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<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Completed by:</th>
<th>Size of the Problem?</th>
<th>How intense?</th>
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<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>Small &lt;----- Big</td>
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Parent/Teacher Daily Rating Sheet for home

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/ Initials</th>
<th>Describe any emotional outbursts or challenging behaviour:</th>
<th>Rating of Behaviour</th>
<th>Describe any strategies that you used or observed (e.g. calming or coping strategies):</th>
<th>Rating of Strategies</th>
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