Get Upstream with Social-Emotional Learning

Strategies & Tools to Embrace Prevention w/Upstream Programs

Presented at the 21st Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health
OVERVIEW

SEL as Upstream Prevention

STEP UP Program Description

STEP UP Pilot Study

SEL Programs into Schools
NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

Expanding the youth suicide prevention paradigm to include “upstream approaches” began with a panel meeting in 2012...
16 NATIONAL LEADERS OF SUICIDE PREVENTION

Prevention Researchers
Philip Rogers
Peter A. Wyman

Tribal Leaders
Practitioners
Survivors
THE MISSION FOR THE PANEL...

Part 1: Are Upstream Approaches feasible?
Part 2: If so, what is the rationale?
UPSTREAM PREVENTION DEFINED

Approaches that serve to reduce the risk factors and enhance the protective processes that influence whether a young person will become suicidal.
Imagine every child has an invisible shield that surrounds her at all times. Depending on the strength of the shield, it can serve to expose her or defend her from harm.

Risk factors are those conditions that cause the shield to weaken, making a child vulnerable.

Protective Factors are conditions or interventions that make the shield stronger.
What are the risk factors that would expose a child to make her vulnerable?
TRADITIONAL APPROACH

- Wait until red flags are identified
- Rely on mental health services that are unavailable
- Kids sent back to school without tx
- Focus is on reducing risk factors
PROTECTIVE FACTORS

What if the focus were strength-based promoting positive mental health?
“Upstream Prevention, allow me to introduce you to Social & Emotional Learning.

“Social & Emotional Learning, meet Upstream Prevention. Once you two get to know each other better, you’ll be great friends!”

The formal introduction between SEL & Upstream Prevention...

Dennis Embry
PAX The Good Behavior Game
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- Emotional Intelligence “EQ”
- Emotional competence
- Character development
- Non-cognitive skills
- Soft skills
- Life skills

SEL

Emotional competence
Character development
Non-cognitive skills
Soft skills
Life skills
CASEL META-ANALYSIS

- Attitude, Interpersonal skills, Inclusion & Acceptance
  - Decrease in disciplinary action by 27%
- School bonding
  - Decrease in suspensions by 44%
- Academic Behavior, Desire to Learn & Engagement in learning
  - Up to 11% on improvement on standardized test scores
  - 17% for students at highest risk of failure
GOING UPSTREAM: PROMOTES HEALTHY POPULATIONS

- Targets the broad population of people
- Reaches the majority of children-in schools
- Universal Prevention-Intervention
- Multi-tiered System of support
A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

- Prepares for social, emotional challenges
- Developmentally appropriate instruction that spans developmental levels and ages
- Resources to families & communities
RATIONALE FOR UPSTREAM...

Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death in 10-14 year old children.

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death in 15-21 year olds.

18% of high school students have seriously considered suicide.
OUR COUNTRY SPENDS $245 BILLION PER YEAR ON YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH
STEP UP (2013) ORIGINATED FROM THE CAMP MAKEBELIEVE KIDS 8-STEP PROGRAM
Began with the Child, Group, Family Therapy Model

Children exhibited a myriad of symptoms that resulted in problems with...

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

**Self-Control, Self-Esteem, Self-Confidence, & Self-Motivation, Leading to...**

**Social Isolation, a precursor to poor student outcomes**

**Identified 8 Barriers Interfering w/Success**
- Unhealthy Friendships
- Internalizing Feelings
- Disrespecting Boundaries
- Lack of Empathy
- Emotional Dysregulation
- Negative Manipulation
- Poor Self-Regulation
- Poor Motivation

The CMB Kids-STEP UP Model addresses each of these barriers by teaching 8-Key SEL Concepts, Skill-sets, & Strategies to Promote Positive Mental Health for All Children.
STEP UP = Strategies & Tools to Embrace Prevention with Upstream Programs

Strategies & Tools
STEP UP equips middle school students with strategies and tools to safely and effectively manage their feelings, thoughts, and behavior so they may successfully interact with the world around them.

Embrace Prevention
STEP UP is a Universal Prevention program, inclusive for all students, whether considered 'typical' or needing extra social, emotional, or behavioral supports.

Upstream Programs
STEP UP is an Upstream Program, geared toward the promotion of positive mental health for all students.
STEP UP: FEATURES OF PROGRAM

- Comprehensive SEL curriculum
- Designed for middle school students aged 11-14 at the Tier 1 level
- Each Step (module) has part A and part B
- 14 (now 16) lesson plans, 25 minutes/lesson
- Separate Student Journal Workbook
STEP UP: THE 8-STEPS

1. Social Connections
2. Expressing Feelings Safely
3. Respecting Boundaries
4. Building Empathy
5. Mood Control
6. Stopping Manipulation
7. Self-Regulation
8. EQ & Motivation
FREE-STANDING LESSONS (2 PARTS)

Part A
- Introduce SEL Concept to Promote
- General knowledge
- Practice skill-sets
- Learn strategies

Part B
- Deepens the Lesson
- Rationale
- Potential consequences
- Warning signs
- Handling the situation
STEP UP PILOT STUDY
2013 – 2015
LAS VEGAS, NV
BACKGROUND

STEP UP Strategies

- Integrate program into existing curriculum or during a stand alone SEL class
- Reinforce strategies and skillsets through interactive learning
- Strength-based approach
METHODS

- Quasi-experimental study

- Subjects
  - Urban, private school
  - 7th – 8th grade
  - 59 students
  - 32 male (54%), 27 female (46%)
  - Average age at start: 12.16 years

- Implementation
  - 2 year period
  - 2 control groups, 2 experimental groups

- Assessments
  - Social Emotional Assets and Resilience Scales – Kenneth Merrell, PhD
    - Teacher version – administered pre and post both years
    - Child version – administered pre and post in year 1
    - Adolescent version – administered pre and post in year 2

46% Males (n=32)
54% Females (n=27)
# RESULTS

Table 1. Baseline Differences in Gender and Outcome Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>p*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 (Female)</td>
<td>14 (Male)</td>
<td>11 (Female)</td>
<td>16 (Male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest 2013 SEARS-T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Regulation (SR)</td>
<td>50.80 (8.74)</td>
<td>52.33 (7.37)</td>
<td>0.358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Competence (SC)</td>
<td>46.90 (11.14)</td>
<td>51.92 (9.24)</td>
<td>0.047</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathy (E)</td>
<td>52.66 (9.79)</td>
<td>51.96 (9.08)</td>
<td>0.972</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility (R)</td>
<td>49.13 (10.72)</td>
<td>50.48 (7.93)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49.46 (9.80)</td>
<td>51.81 (8.57)</td>
<td>0.226</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretest 2013 SEARS-C</td>
<td>47.63 (6.64)</td>
<td>49.40 (7.46)</td>
<td>0.346</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*p values using t-tests for outcome variables and Chi square for gender.
## RESULTS

Table 2. Comparing 2013 Pre-Test and 2014 Post-Test T-scores on SEARS Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Control Pre-Scores</th>
<th>Control Post-Scores</th>
<th>Treatment Pre-Scores</th>
<th>Treatment Post-Scores</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEARS-Teacher</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Regulation</td>
<td>50.37</td>
<td>8.63</td>
<td>50.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Competence</td>
<td>46.46</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>49.34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>51.87</td>
<td>9.97</td>
<td>47.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>48.40</td>
<td>10.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48.84</td>
<td>9.83</td>
<td>48.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEARS-Child/Adolescent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47.44</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>49.55</td>
<td>9.30</td>
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# RESULTS

Table 3. MANCOVA on 2013 Pretest and 2014 Posttest T-scores on SEARS Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>η²</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEARS TEACHER</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Regulation</td>
<td>1155.47</td>
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<td>1155.47</td>
<td>15.44</td>
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<td>0.247</td>
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<td>Social Competence</td>
<td>344.06</td>
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<td>Empathy</td>
<td>1028.97</td>
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<td>11.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>1164.63</td>
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<td>1164.63</td>
<td>20.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1033.73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1033.73</td>
<td>15.23</td>
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<td>0.245</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SEARS YOUTH</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.927</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Pre-test 2013 SEARS-Teacher Social Competence subscale as a covariate.
LIMITATIONS

Subjects
- Small sample size
- Homogeneity of sample

Implementation
- Cannot control for possibility of material spillover into non-experimental group outside of classroom

Assessments
- Conducted immediately after program
- No medium-range or long-term effects tested
CONCLUSIONS

Effective means to:
- Enhance social-emotional skills
- Promote learning pro-social attitudes
- Establish lifelong positive coping skills
- Build skills and strategies to safely and effectively deal with social and emotional challenges.
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conduct additional studies with a rigorous experimental design
2. Diversify sample population
3. Larger sample groups
4. Investigate long-term impact with additional post-program testing
5. Incorporate into standard academic curriculum
6. Minimum 2-year implementation
7. Dedicate resources to sustain program fidelity
FOLLOW SEL STANDARDS

Ensure SEL programming follows SEL standards to provide effective, evidence-based curricula to students.
# Step Up Aligned with School Social Work National Standards

## Goal 1: Self Awareness

Learn how to recognize and assess one’s feelings, interests, strengths and challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Middle School/Jr High Standards</th>
<th>Step Up Lesson Plans Grade 6</th>
<th>Step Up Lesson Plans Grade 7</th>
<th>Step Up Lesson Plans Grade 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Similarities and Differences</strong></td>
<td>Explain how individual, social and cultural differences may increase resiliency to bullying and identify ways to address it.</td>
<td>Step 3-A Basics, Interactive Activity, Supplemental Materials&lt;br&gt;Step 3-B Basics, Interactive Activity, Supplemental Materials</td>
<td>Step 4-A Interactive Activity, Supplemental Materials, &amp; Trainer Tips&lt;br&gt;Step 4-B Interactive Activity, Supplemental Materials &amp; SJ&lt;br&gt;Step 6-B Basics, Interactive Activity, Supplemental Materials &amp; SJ</td>
<td>Step 8-A Basics, Interactive Activity, Supplemental Materials &amp; SJ&lt;br&gt;Step 8-B Basics, Discussion, Interactive Activity &amp; SJ</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
MTSS: MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

- School District
  - Elementary Schools
    - Classroom
    - Targeted Groups
    - After-school program
    - Integrate w/ Core Curriculum
  - Middle Schools
    - Stand-Alone
    - Targeted groups
## College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Communication (1-A)</th>
<th>Non-Verbal Communication (1-B)</th>
<th>Understanding Feelings (2-A)</th>
<th>Expressing Feelings Safely (2-B)</th>
<th>The 3 Types of Boundaries (3-A)</th>
<th>Boundary Invasions (3-B)</th>
<th>The Concept of Empathy (4-A)</th>
<th>Expressions of Empathy (4-B)</th>
<th>Healthy Response (5-A)</th>
<th>Mood Thermometer (5-B)</th>
<th>Methods of Manipulation (6-A)</th>
<th>Stopping Manipulation (6-B)</th>
<th>Chain Reaction (7-A)</th>
<th>Sixth Sense (7-B)</th>
<th>Personal Power (8-A)</th>
<th>Emotional EQ (8-B)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
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<td>A.SL.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</td>
<td>![Checkmark]</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.SL.6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.</td>
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STEP UP AN EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM

SAMHSA: NREPP

Included in National Registry of Evidence Based Programs and Practices as an “effective SEL program that improves

- Self-Regulation
- Social Competence

Essential protective factors related to positive mental health

CASEL

Listed by the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning as a “Complementary SEL Program” that is comprehensive in scope and taught as a stand-alone course or integrated into core curriculum
CONTACT INFORMATION

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