A Multi-Tiered Decision-Making Framework for Emotional and Behavioral Health

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Objectives

• Identify three challenges encountered by an urban school integrating universal screening with an existing SWPBIS framework
• Describe important components of teacher training for behavioral and mental health screening, and effective classroom management strategies
• Identify specific activities necessary to sustain and scale a Tier I and Tier II mental and behavioral health assessment to intervention program

Current State of Child & Adolescent Mental Health: A “Public Health Crisis”

• Approximately 20% of children are experiencing significant mental, emotional, or behavioral symptoms that would qualify them for a psychiatric diagnosis.
  - (Burns et al., 1995; Costello, Mustillo, Erkanli, Keeler, & Angold, 2003)
• "Most people with mental disorders in the U.S. remain either untreated or poorly treated"
  - (Kessler et al., 2005)

Social-Emotional & Behavioral (SEB) Functioning

• Academic success ≠ School success
  - (Taylor & Kilgus, 2014)
• SEB Competence
  - (Denham, 2006; Kwon et al., 2012)
  - Display of appropriate behaviors and skills (e.g., interpersonal skills, study skills, self-regulation, self-awareness)
  - Limited display of inappropriate behaviors and skills (e.g., internalizing, externalizing)
• SEB Competence = protective factor
  - Among ethnic minority students living in low-income, urban communities
  - (Bair & Haynes, 2008)

Addressing SEB Difficulties

• Most common approach is Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)
• Consistency found in recommendations for Tier 3 assessment
  - Targeted screening & Rating scales
  - Problem identification ≠ RIA
  - Progress monitoring ≠ Direct observation
• Recommendations for assessment are less clear at Tiers 1 & 2
  - Problem
Universal Screening

Teacher Referral and School Identification

- Refer-Test-Place models
  - Teachers differ in their ability to work with students
  - Perceptions of “teachability”
  - Teachers not trained to know how problematic behavior must be prior to referral
- Children’s behavioral/emotional problems may be under-referred and/or referral (and services) is delayed

(Lloyd, Kauffman, Landrum, & Roe, 1991; Severson et al., 2007; Sp, 2006; Walker et al., 2000)

Screening for “At-risk” Students

Universal Screening: Outcomes

1. Short term goal: provide early intervention

2. Long term goals: Decrease academic failure, improve student well-being, improve educators ability to effectively respond to concerns

Screening for “At-risk” Students

Social, Academic, & Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRS)

- Brief behavior rating scale
  - 19-20 items
  - Teacher, Parent, and Student Self-Report
- Criterion-referenced
  - Research-based cut scores
  - Not At Risk and At Risk
- One broad scale and three subscales
  - Total Behavior
  - Social Behavior
  - Academic Behavior
  - Emotional Behavior
- Available via FastBridge Learning: fastbridge.org
Social, Academic, & Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRS)

**Pros**
- Brief and efficient
- Assesses multiple domains, based on SEB theory
- Extent of diagnostic accuracy research
- Multinormative, Spanish versions
- Only screener that met psychometric criteria established by NCII

**Cons**
- Need for more research at high school levels
- Also need for more research regarding parent version
- Cost: $1-2 per student

SAEBRS Conceptual Model

Universal Screening: Interpretation & Use

- Reactive vs. Prevention-oriented screening
- Already collecting data on
  - Attendance
  - Days absent, tardies, # of moves
  - Academic outcomes
  - Growth on CBM’s
  - Benchmark assessment data
  - Standardized test scores (AIMS)
  - Grades
  - Office Discipline Referrals

Universal Screening: Interpretation & Use

System Support (Tier 1)

- Start with universal strategies
- Determine type of risk most prevalent
- SSS or SSSD Example:
  - Externalizing Behavior
    - Revise school-wide expectations or reinforcement plan
    - Or rather, ensure integrity of existing plan
  - Internalizing Behavior
    - Implement social emotional learning curriculum
    - Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)
    - Second Step
    - Why Try?
    - Incredible Years

Classroom Support (Tier 1)

- Determine the type of risk most prevalent within the classroom
- Example: SAEBRS
  - Social Behavior
    - Classroom Checkup (Bendix, Herman, & Splitt, 2011)
    - Good Behavior Game
  - Academic Behavior
    - Classroom instruction of various academic enablers (e.g., organization, preparation for instruction)
    - Promote instructional practices (e.g., opportunities to learn, pace of instruction)
Individual or Group Level Support (Tier 2)

- Individual or small-group interventions
- Example: SAEBRS
  - Teaching Strategies
    - Instruction of key skills
    - Social skills, academic enablers, emotional competencies
  - Antecedent/Consequence Strategies
    - Check In/Check Out (CICO) to prompt and reinforce appropriate behaviors
    - Research supporting use with social, academic, or emotional behavior

School District of Philadelphia Model

Urban Schools are hard...

1. Staff Turnover
   - FREQUENT changes in administration and staff year to year
2. Lack of Resources
   - High numbers in classrooms; few teachers/open vacancies
   - Basic supplies missing or diminished
3. Difficulty Communicating
   - HUGE districts with many schools
4. Community Challenges

Predicting Abandonment of SWPBIS

- Investigation of 1861 schools across three states
- Of these, 70 schools stopped implementation
- Most schools abandoned within first three years
- The only predictor of abandonment was urban settings
- 44 schools provided reason for abandonment
  - 82% School Administrator Support
  - 11% Insufficient Data Submission
  - 5% Competing Initiatives

State of Affairs

- Due to budget cuts in recent years in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP), mental health services have been severely cut or eliminated, significantly reducing the number of school-based mental health professionals necessary to provide comprehensive services.
- An estimated 100,000 youth in Philadelphia schools may not be able to access mental health services.
- Moreover, 1 in 3 children in Philadelphia live below the poverty line and do not have access to outside mental health services.

Pilot School Model

- Middle school (grades 5-8) in a K-8 building
- Eight teachers of ~200 students
- Implementing PBS with fidelity across all three tiers (as of May 2018)
- High suspension/OIR rates
Multi-tiered Decision Making Framework

- Decision-making framework was developed via an iterative process that includes:
  - Feedback from school-based partners,
  - Periodic and planned review of program effectiveness that will allow for necessary changes, and
  - Data to inform key decisional cut points.
- The framework is based upon and augment a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) implementation that is currently being initiated in several schools within the SDP and more broadly across the state, as well as best practices specified within a trauma-informed approach.

Teacher Training on the SAEBRS

- 90 minute in-service training for teachers
- Benefits and purpose of universal screening
- School and teacher’s role in student mental health screening
- Defining and recognizing behaviors on the screener
  - Videos of the behaviors
  - Practice identifying and distinguishing between behaviors

Fall and Winter Screening Data

- Students At Risk from Fall 2016 to Spring 2018
- Comparison of School-Wide Risk by Subscale and Grade in Spring 2018
Teacher Training in Classroom Management

Many teachers enter the field with limited, if any, classroom management training from pre-service programs (Begeny & Martens, 2006; Freeman, Simonsen, Briere, & Mackago-Sage, in press).

Most teachers report receiving little professional development in classroom management (Wei, Darling-Hammon, & Adamson, 2010).

Student behavioral concerns are one of the leading causes for teachers leaving the field (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Increasing rates of effective instruction provided to students with behavior problems has been associated with a decrease in problem behavior (Sutherland, Alder, & Gunter, 2003; Simonsen & Myers, 2015).

Joyce & Showers (1980, 2002)

Plan: Classroom Management Training and Coaching

- Train teachers in skills to improve classroom environments and student behavior
- Completed the Devereux Classroom Observation Tool (DCOT) for baseline data
- Review individual data with staff and select skills to address
- Teachers receive performance feedback in target skills
- Observations in classroom followed by feedback
- Once a skill is mastered, new skills will be addressed

Devereux Classroom Observation Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Observed (1-4)</th>
<th>Target Level</th>
<th>Baseline Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Setting Lesson Agenda</td>
<td>125 or 110</td>
<td>.45% or better</td>
<td>100 or 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Using Effective Procedure</td>
<td>125 or 110</td>
<td>100% or better</td>
<td>100 or 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Using Grouping Strategies</td>
<td>125 or 110</td>
<td>100% or better</td>
<td>100 or 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Using Classroom Management Strategies</td>
<td>0 or 10%</td>
<td>60% or 70%</td>
<td>100 or 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Managing Rebellion</td>
<td>0 or 10%</td>
<td>60% or 70%</td>
<td>100 or 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Providing Compliments</td>
<td>0 or 10%</td>
<td>40% or 50%</td>
<td>100 or 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Providing Constructive Feedback</td>
<td>0 or 10%</td>
<td>40% or 50%</td>
<td>100 or 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Dealing with Rebellion</td>
<td>0 or 10%</td>
<td>40% or 50%</td>
<td>100 or 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dealing with Aggression</td>
<td>0 or 10%</td>
<td>40% or 50%</td>
<td>100 or 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Controlling Offense</td>
<td>0 or 10%</td>
<td>40% or 50%</td>
<td>100 or 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Preventing Student Task Obstacles</td>
<td>0 or 10%</td>
<td>100% of students</td>
<td>100 or 90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coach Role

Assignments
- Each coach assigned two classrooms
- Logistical considerations

Observation and Feedback
- Observe one skill per week
- Complete feedback form with score and graph
- Leave hard copy with teacher immediately after observation

DCOT Skills
- Definitions and Mastery Criteria
- DCOT Skill Graphs
- DCOT Skill Tips and Examples

2017-2018 Outcome Data

May 2018 Group Results

- Baseline Average
- Current Average
Classroom Outcomes: Successes and Challenges

Successes
- Very concrete skills and targets
- Feedback provides details about what the skill looks like
- Lesson agenda was good place to start – not dependent on student behaviors/outcomes
- Students don’t seem to notice additional staff – used to others coming in and out of classrooms
- Individualized use of specific skills

Challenges
- Logistics
- More feedback at a time wanted (e.g., more than one skill at a time)
- Repetitive for second-year participants
- Specific suggestions for improvement wanted by participants

Secondary Prevention: Targeted Supports for At-Risk Students
Tier 2 Supports: Individual and Small Groups

138 students at risk on SAEBRS-ES
Principal and school counselor identify students
Consent from parent or guardian of students
7 students participated in trauma-focused group
26 students participate in relaxation groups and CATS program

Relaxation Group Format
- 1) ROAR Expectations
- 2) Review Previous Week’s Homework
- 3) Learn New Relaxation Strategy
- 4) Discussion
- 5) Homework
Relaxation Strategies

1) Breathing
   • General, 4-7-8, changing postures

2) Identifying and Changing Automatic Thoughts
   • CBT triangle, changing unhelpful thoughts to helpful thoughts

3) Progressive Muscle Relaxation
   • Tense and relax all major muscle groups

4) Review
   • Discussion and practice

Progress Monitoring

Student Direct Behavior Ratings (DBR):
- A research supported assessment that consists of the quantification of a behavior at a given point in time
- Commonly used to capture small increments of behavioral change in response to an intervention

Student Comments about Relaxation Groups

"My mom says I have become nicer since I learned how to use these strategies instead of fighting"
"I practiced my breathing when my sister was yelling at me so that I didn’t yell back"
"I taught my mom how to change her automatic thoughts and we practiced together"
"I did 4-7-8 breathing when I failed a test and it helped me stay calm and in the classroom"

Tier 2: Trauma Screening

- Trauma Exposure Checklist
  - Any of the following events had happened to you? (Circle true or false)
  - Child PTSD screener
  - Student assent and parent consent

Trauma Screening Data

Screening Guidelines
- Big kids must have at least one exposure to trauma AND Related PTSD symptoms in the clinical range
- Indicated by scores >14 on PTSD screener

Students at our school
- Students experienced range of 4-14 traumatic events
  - Average number = 9.3
  - 10/13 students exhibit moderate to severe symptoms of PTSD
  - Average score = 19.1
CBITS: Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools

- Developed by a team of researchers in collaboration with the Los Angeles Unified School District
- Designed specifically for children of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Intended to be implemented by people with some training in cognitive-behavioral therapy
- For students in grades 5-12

Goals of CBITS

1) Reduce symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
2) Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety
3) Improve grades, attendance, behavior, and coping skills

Tier 2 Outcomes: Successes and Challenges

Successes
- Students reported positive changes in behavior after the groups
- Data sheets similar to currently existing CICO forms and simple to complete

Challenges
- Progress monitoring
- Timing of intervention
- Consents
- Implementers and Sustainability

Implementation Processes and Challenges

Challenge 1: Quick Fix WANTED!

- The Problem:
  - District/Staff want to buy a program that will be the “fix”
  - They don’t understand that MTSS is a framework where THEY do the work
  - The “fix” happens over time
- Addressing It:
  - Clearly state expectations for implementation in the overview
  - Show data frequently to teams and staff
  - Celebrate small successes to keep buy in
Challenge 2: Upside Down Triangle

- The Problem:
  - Too many students “at risk”
  - Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports are stretched too thin and become reactive rather than preventative.

- Addressing It:
  - Classroom management
  - Fidelity at Tier 1

Challenge 3: Data Based Decision Making

- The Problem:
  - Difficult for staff to:
    - Understand data
    - Value collecting data
    - Use it to make decisions

- Addressing It:
  - Using data to make “feelings” real and show the team success
  - Sharing data with staff so they understand the importance of documentation

Challenge 4: Staffing/Workload Issues

- The Problem:
  - Understaffed
  - Hard to implement interventions
  - Limited availability for trainings
  - Difficulty scheduling regular meetings
  - Staff turnover
    - Difficulty maintaining fidelity and buy-in
    - “Identity crisis”

- Addressing It:
  - Continuous retraining
  - Coaching to support the maintenance of fidelity

Making the Sale

- District/Building administration needs to buy in first
- Have to provide the “Why” behind “Why Screen”
- Need to have the next steps thought out
- System Change in hard – Go Slow to Go Fast!!
- Sustainability

Questions?

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