

Research and Evaluation @ Wediko NY

New York School-Based Services November, 2015

Johanna C. Báez, LCSW, ABD
Kristen J. Renshaw, LCSW
Hans Bernier, LMSW
Liora Schwartz, LMSW
Sam Bromfield, LMSW
Meghan Gabriel, LCSW
Lynn Lim, BS



Wedi - What?

*Wediko Children's Services provides a continuum of flexible services in NH, MA, and NYC:

- * NH Summer Program founded in 1934
- * School-Based Program established in 1980 (MA) and 2011 (NYC) schools
- * NH Wediko School established in 1990
- * Home Based Solutions in MA, 2012

*Who we are



Mission of Wediko Children's Services

- * **Wediko Children's Services** is a non-profit organization committed to improving children's lives.
- * Using a **strength-based approach**, Wediko responds to the needs of children who face repeated obstacles to development due to emotional, behavioral, learning, and environmental, issues.
- * Through a **continuum of flexible services** and multi-disciplinary training programs, Wediko develops enduring partnerships with children, families, and schools.
- * Wediko strives to **capture success** and restore a sense of **competence and hope**.
- * Wediko's commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable youth is illustrated not only in its direct service programs, but also in its **continuing investment in scholarly and applied research**.

Problem Statement

Social and Emotional Learning & Trauma Informed Care

- * **SEL programs have been found to be highly effective** in teaching social and emotional skills to students, reducing problem behaviors, and promoting mental health (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011).
- * Despite the overwhelming **evidence of cumulative trauma** present in urban, low-income students (McKay, Lynn, & Bannon, 2005) and a **burgeoning movement to provide trauma informed care in schools** (TIC; National Child Traumatic Stress Network Schools Committee, 2008)...
- * **Social and emotional school programming has yet to take into consideration other environmental factors** (Durlak & Dupre, 2008), such as trauma.

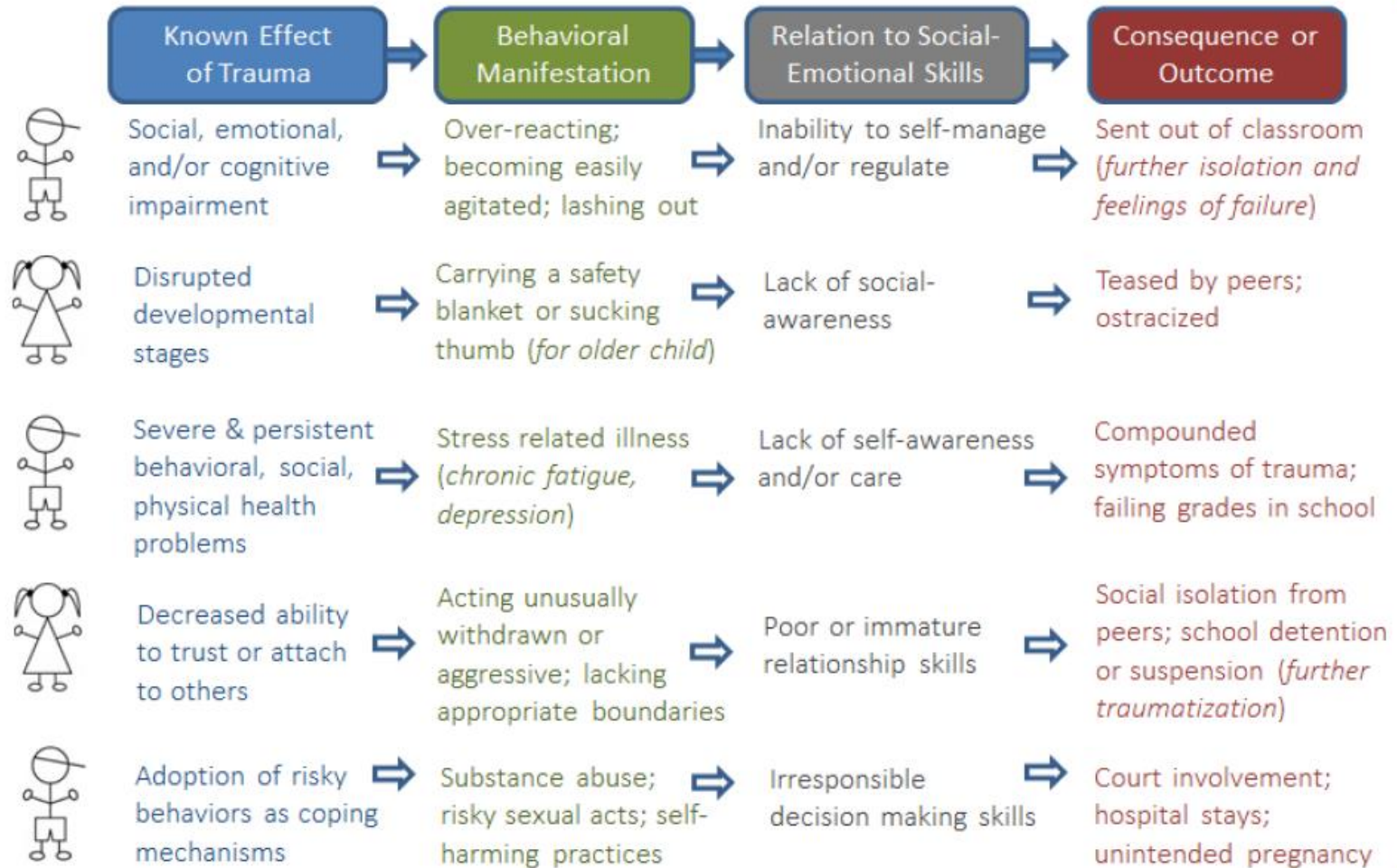
Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the intersection of social and emotional learning (SEL) and the known effects of student trauma in urban, low-income students participating in Wediko Children's Services school-based programming.



Conceptual Model

Trauma's Impact on Students.



Research Questions

1. **Quantitative Research Questions:** Are there pre and post changes in the students' level of social and emotional skills and problem behaviors? Did childhood trauma moderate pre-post intervention changes on overall social skills and problem behaviors?
2. **Qualitative Research Question:** What were the primary themes identified by students in terms of social and emotional skills learned in Wediko's school-based programming? From students who have different change levels of SEL and trauma (low, medium, high), what themes emerged in terms of social and emotional skills learned?
3. **Mixed Methods Research Questions:** How do the qualitative interview questions explain the experimental outcomes on level of SEL and trauma? For students who have differing levels of SEL change scores and different levels of trauma, do they differ in their experiences of SEL?

The Research Site

- * Wediko's programming was studied in one case study school in the South Bronx, New Directions Secondary School (NDSS), for over-age and under-credited middle school students from ages 12-18.
- * N= 75 students, grades 6th-8th
- * 53% male, 46.7% female
- * Average age 14.4 years
- * Overall, 8909 point of Wediko service were provided to the sample during the 2014-2015 school year (including outreach calls, counseling, home visits, and advisory groups.)



The Intervention: Wediko's school-based programming

Wediko's New Directions Secondary School programming includes the following multi-tiered services (Intervention):

- * Whole-school culture change programs, i.e. Staff workshops, PBIS, behavior monitoring
- * Professional development for staff and direct clinical support on SEL, TIC, and mental health.
- * Parent outreach (daily outreach calls, workshops, home visits, and community referrals)
- * Daily individual and small group counseling, crisis counseling
- * Weekly Advisory class sessions and Side by Side™ groups (social and emotional skill-building groups)
- * The number of Wediko services provided per student was on average 83 points of service.

Research and Evaluation Tools

- * **Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) rating scales (SSIS–RS; Gresham & Elliott, 2008):** Gives us a quantitative measure of social skills and problem behaviors—we will be using this as an evaluation tool at all of our larger school sites, pre and post
- * **CDC’s Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE) Questionnaire (Felitti et al., 1998)**
- * **Interviews of students** in May- to better understand the quantitative data
- * At some of our sites, we will pilot a new measure this year that looks at risks and strengths, **BIMAS**

SSIS-RS At A Glance

Instructions

This booklet contains a list of things students your age may do and has two parts: Social Skills and Problem Behaviors. Please read each sentence and think about yourself.

Social Skills & Problem Behaviors

Decide **how true** each sentence is for you.

- If you think it is **not true** for you, fill in the **(N)**.
- If you think it is a **little true** for you, fill in the **(L)**.
- If you think it is a **lot true** for you, fill in the **(A)**.
- If you think it is **very true** for you, fill in the **(V)**.

Then, decide **how important** you think the sentence is when you are with others.

- If you think it is **not important** for you, fill in the **(N)**.
- If you think it is **important** for you, fill in the **(I)**.
- If you think it is **critical** for you, fill in the **(C)**.

Please answer all questions with the best response for you for each sentence, even if it is hard for you to make up your mind. There are no right or wrong answers. Please ask questions if you do not know what to do. Begin working when told to do so.

Before starting, be sure to complete the information in the boxes on page 1 of this form.

***Administered in October and March

Social Skills

	How True?	How Important?
1. I ask for information when I need it.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
2. I pay attention when others present their ideas.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
3. I try to forgive others when they say "sorry."	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
4. I'm careful when I use things that aren't mine.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
5. I stand up for others when they are not treated well.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
6. I say "please" when I ask for things.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
7. I feel bad when others are sad.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
8. I get along with other children/adolescents.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
9. I ignore others who act up in class.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
10. I take turns when I talk with others.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
11. I show others how I feel.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
12. I do what the teacher asks me to do.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
13. I try to make others feel better.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
14. I do my part in a group.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)
15. I let people know when there is a problem.	(N) (L) (A) (V)	(N) (I) (C)

ACE QUESTIONNAIRE- just for NDSS

*** Administered
between October-
March

From the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH, 2011/2012)

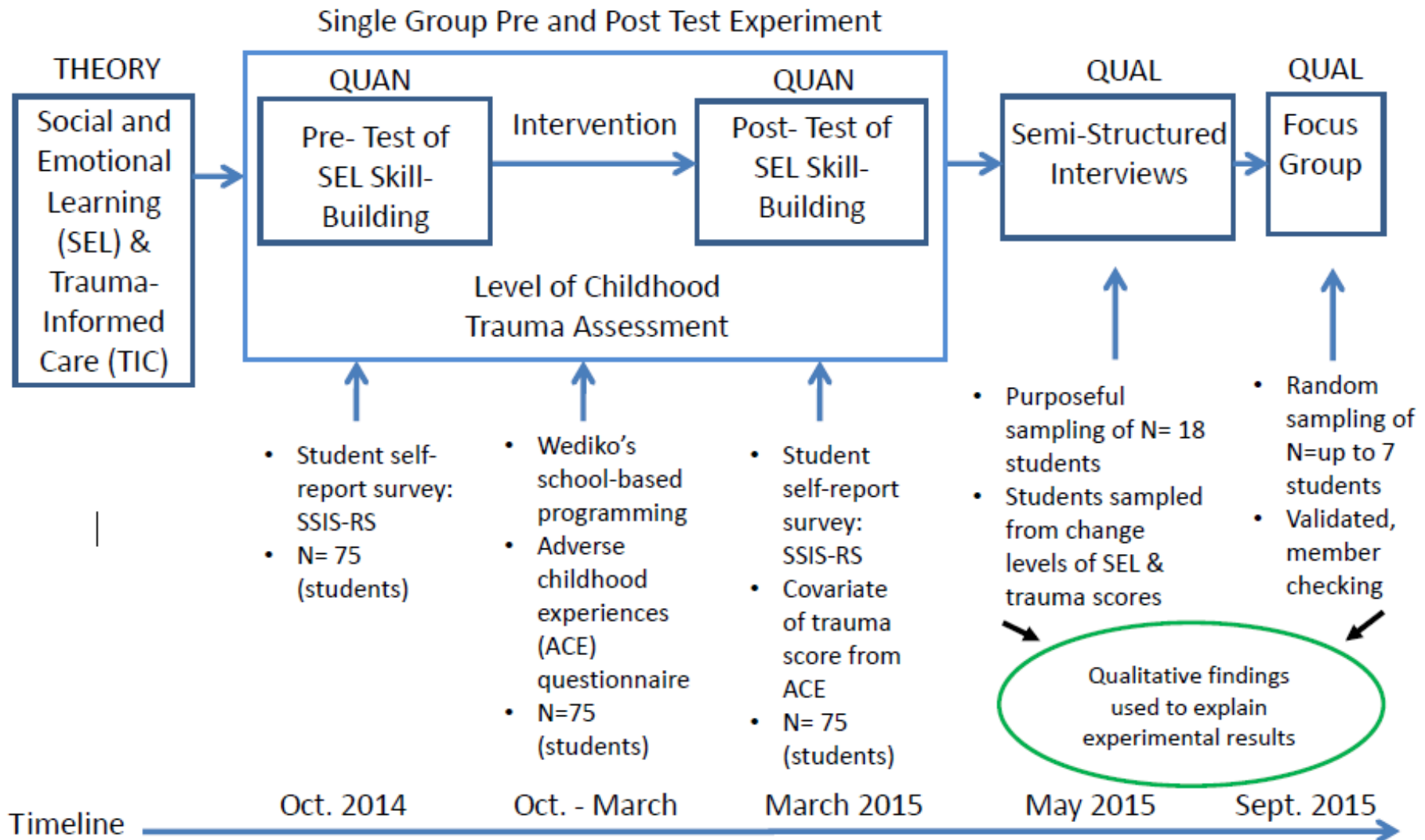
1. Did you ever live with a parent or guardian who got divorced or separated after you were born? (Yes/No)
2. Did you ever live with a parent or guardian who died? (Yes/No)
3. Did you ever live with a parent or guardian who served time in jail or prison after you were born? (Yes/No)
4. Did you ever see or hear any parents, guardians, or any other adults in your home slap, hit, kick, punch, or beat each other up? (Yes/No)
5. Were you ever the victim of violence or witnessed any violence in your neighborhood? (Yes/No)
6. Did you ever live with anyone who was mentally ill or suicidal, or severely depressed for more than a couple of weeks? (Yes/No)
7. Did you ever live with anyone who had a problem with alcohol or drugs? (Yes/No)
8. Have you been treated or judged unfairly due to race/ethnicity? (Yes/No)
9. Since you were born, how often has it been very hard to get by on your family's income, for example, was it hard to cover the basics like food or housing? (1: Very Often, 2: Somewhat Often, 3: Not Very Often, 4: Never)

Interview Questions

1. In your own words, what are social and emotional skills?
2. What are some of your own social and emotional goals? (e.g. getting along better with parents, making friends)
3. What social and emotional skills are taught during your school day?
4. What programs in your school support social and emotional skill building?
5. What are the roles of the Wediko staff at New Directions Secondary School? (what do they do/provide)
6. What are some of your academic goals? (e.g. get better grades, get along with teachers)
7. Has New Directions helped you work on academic goals? How?
8. Have you improved in any area of your life since being at New Directions Secondary School?
9. What more can New Directions Secondary school provide to support your learning and development?
10. Is there anything more you would like to say?

****Additional questions may be asked based upon the quantitative results**

A Mixed Methods Intervention Explanatory-Sequential Design

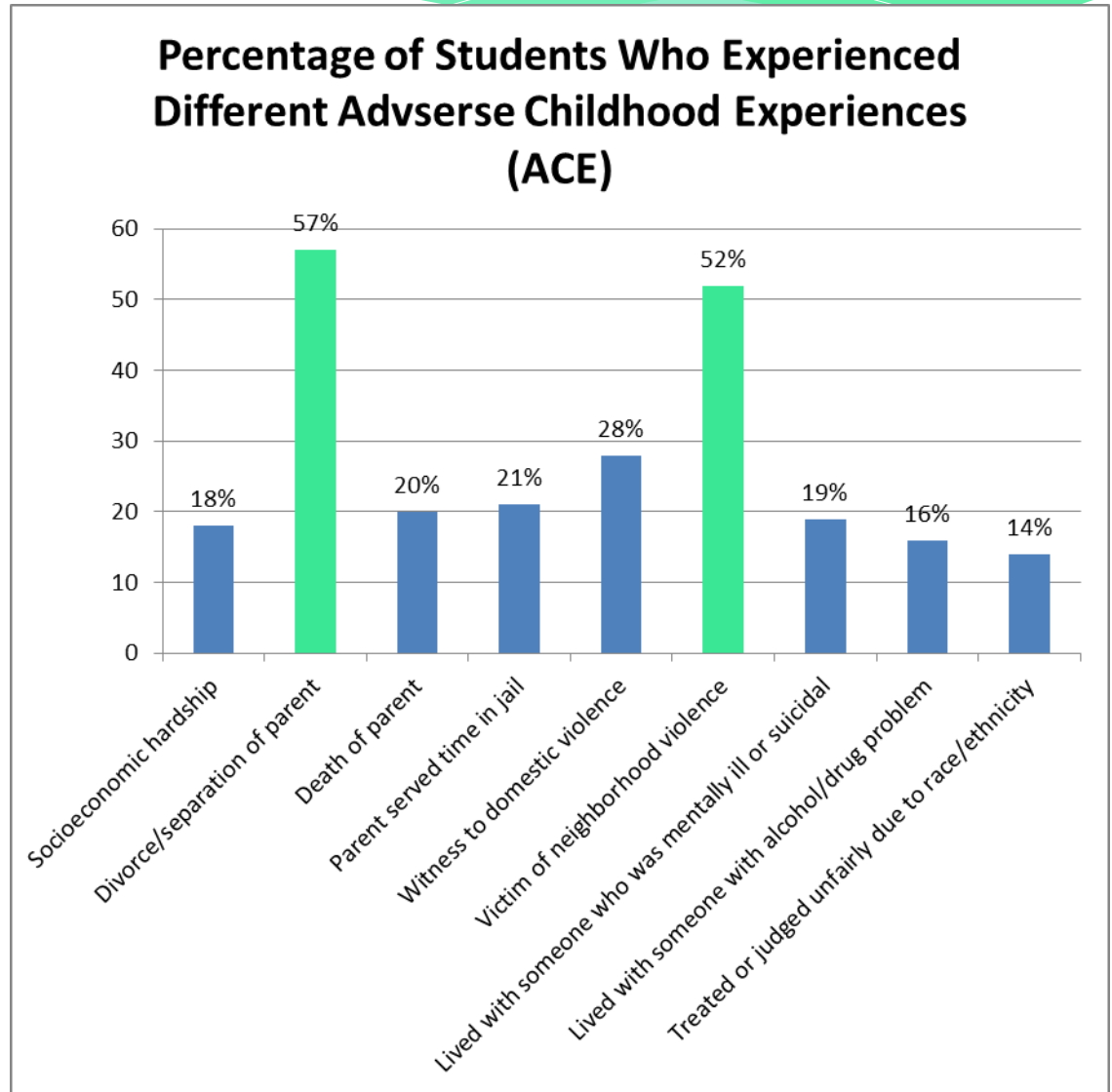


Quantitative Results

- 1. It is hypothesized that there will be significant increases in the social skills subscales and decreases in the problem behavior subscales of the SSIS-RS measure.**
 - * These results indicate that student levels of social skills and problem behaviors did not change over the intervention. They stayed about the same over the course of the year! One possible explanation, is that without Wediko services they would have gotten worse.
- 2. Did childhood trauma moderate pre-post intervention changes on overall social skills and problem behaviors?**
 - * The results showed that the pre-existing levels of childhood trauma did not moderate the intervention effect over time for social skills or problem behaviors. The students looked similar no matter if they had high or low trauma. One interpretation of these results is that low-trauma students might more closely resemble high-trauma students because of the high rates of stressors in these students lives.

ACE Past Trauma Results

- * The students had a mean Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) score of 2.44 (a little over 2 previous traumas, SD= 1.83) with 86% of students reporting having one or more ACE.
- * 23% reported 4 or more ACEs (high), 44% reported 2-3 ACEs (medium) and 33% reported 0-1 ACEs
- * Divorce/separation of a parent and Victim of neighborhood violence had the highest percentage of prevalence.



Qualitative Results- 7 Themes

1. Differing Meanings of Social and Emotional Skills

- Most students knew social and emotional skills were “something good” and more easily identified emotional skills as relating to feelings and “being able to tell people what you’re feeling.”

2. Wediko Works “Really Hard at Helping Kids”

- “These Wediko people are really trying to, they’re working really hard at helping kids in this school.”

3. Students Working on Goals

- Many talked about their goals as a work in progress saying “I’m working on...,” “I’m trying...,” “I’m learning,” or “I want to improve.”

4. “I Improved” this School Year

- “The school helped me change... This year the teachers have told me that I improved a lot” or they talked about growing out of it, “My behavior, my attitude, acting more mature (improved)... I grew out of it.”

5. New Directions Understands Me

- “I think it’s good. I see people helping other people. I see sometimes friends helping friends. Here I met really cool people. They’re like... This is home,” and “Out here, people understand me. My classmates, my teachers.”

6. Making Behavior Changes is “Complicated”

- “I think it's going to be complicated, because I don't think some students is going to want to change, or ...They probably used to the way they are.”

7. “Trauma has Affected Me, Too”

- “We’re all going through something” and “It’s life; you go through stuff.”

Integration in a Joint Display in an Intervention Trial With a Qualitative Follow Up

Intervention Results	Qualitative Interview Follow Up Results	Possible Explanations Intervention Results with Qualitative Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change in social skills or behavior scores from pre to post- stayed the same • Trauma did not moderate the intervention effect- it did not matter your level of trauma (low, med, or high) • More services was predictive of lower social skills and increased problem behaviors - we were providing more services to those who probably needed it the most 	<p>Themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Differing Meanings of Social and Emotional Skills 2. Wediko Works “Really Hard at Helping Kids” 3. Students Working on Goals 4. “I Improved” this School Year 5. New Directions Understands me 6. Making Behavior Changes is “Complicated” 7. “Trauma has Affected Me, Too” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The qualitative results provided an in-depth picture of how students at different levels of previous trauma felt in terms of social skills, problem behaviors, and trauma. • In terms of the No change, students felt that they needed more time for change to happen or that students were not taking it seriously. • All students felt that Wediko counselors helped and that they improved. • Trauma was understood as affecting school.

How can this be applied to our direct work in schools?

- * **Know that change takes time-** we will continue to survey these same students at NDSS this year to see if more time helps them to make changes. We are also going to **take this data back to the students** and ask them what they need to make changes.
- * **We need to focus on teaching and modeling social and emotional skills-** many students struggled to define or give examples of social skills. We can do this through providing consistent weekly *Side by Side*[™] classes and teaching these skills in our counseling sessions.
- * The majority of our students have one or more traumas- we need to **know which students have had major traumas** and providing extra support (individual counseling, small group counseling, check-ins, parent meetings, etc.). We need to have clear plans for those students who need more support.
- * **Notice students who are using more services and know that they are more likely to be struggling with social skills and problem behaviors.** We need to have clear plans for these students, too.
- * Actually, **use the data during the school year to identify students who need more support.** Look at data after October administration and have a clinical meeting on those students who need to the most social skills and problem behaviors support.

References

**IRB Approval by NYC DOE, Smith College and Wediko

- * Creswell, J.W. (in-press). 30 Essential Skills for the Qualitative Researcher. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc
- * Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2011). Designing and conducting mixed methods research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc
- * Durlak, J.A., & Dupre, E.P. (2008). Implementation matters: A review of research on the influence of implementation on program outcomes and the factors affecting implementation. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41, 327-350.
- * Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405-432.
- * Felitti, M. D., Vincent, J., Anda, M. D., Robert, F., Nordenberg, M. D., Williamson, M. S., et al. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The adverse childhood experiences (ACE) study. *American journal of preventive medicine*, 14(4), 245-258.
- * Gresham, F., & Elliott, S. N. (2008). Social skills improvement system (SSIS) rating scales. Bloomington, MN: Pearson Assessments.
- * McKay, M. M., Lynn, C. J., & Bannon, W. M. (2005). Understanding inner city child mental health need and trauma exposure: Implications for preparing urban service providers. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 75(2), 201.
- * National Child Traumatic Stress Network Schools Committee. (2008). Child trauma toolkit for educators. Los Angeles, CA & Durham, NC: National Child Traumatic Stress Network.