Bridging Practice & Research:

A multi-site social emotional learning and trauma-informed care program evaluation

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Wediko
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Who is Wediko?

- **Wediko Children's Services** is a non-profit organization committed to improving children's lives by providing a continuum of flexible services:
  - 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

- Though a **continuum of flexible services** and 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.

What Does Wediko New York Do?

- Wediko NY **partners with schools looking to increase capacity for meeting students' social-emotional and mental health needs** through developing proactive, school-wide interventions and supports, and by improving family and school engagement.

- **Intervention: School-based Services, depending on school and individual needs, tailored programs for each school and student**
  - Small group and individual counseling- multi-tiered interventions
  - Whole-school culture support programs (e.g. PBIS, Restorative Justice)
  - Family workshops and individualized family support (e.g. home visits)
  - School staff professional development workshops
  - Specialized student support groups- grief, social and emotional skills
  - Trauma Informed Practices- workshops for Wediko and school staff

The Research Site: 3 Middle Schools

- Wediko's programming was studied in **three New York City public schools– 100% receiving title 1 funds**. Two of the schools are community schools.

- **Grades 6th-8th, middle school students**

- 53% male, 46.7% female

- Average age 14.4 years

- Social Skills Measure, **n=424**; ACE, **n= 374**

- 68% Hispanic, 31% Black, & 2% White or Asian

Research Purpose: We are Clinician Researchers

The purpose of our research is to examine the **social and emotional learning (SEL)** outcomes and the known effects of **student trauma** in urban, low-income students participating in Wediko Children's Services school-based programming.

We are always thinking about our direct work when developing, administering, and using our research

The 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—pre and post

- CDC's **Adverse Childhood Experiences** Study (ACE) **Questionnaire** (Felitti et al., 1998), used modified version for children (National Survey of Children's Health, 2011/2012)—during the school year

- **Interviews with purposefully selected students** in May - to better understand the quantitative data and hear in their own words

SSIS-RS At A Glance
Administered in October and May

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 ⓝ.
If you think it is a **little true** for you, fill in the ⓛ.
If you think it is **a lot true** for you, fill in the ⓐ.
If you think it is **very true** for you, fill in the ⓥ.

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 ⓝ.
If you think it is **important** for you, fill in the ⓘ.
If you think it is **critical** for you, fill in the ⓒ.

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.

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

ACE Questionnaire
Administered between November - 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)

Qualitative Interviews
Administered in June

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 your 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 your school helped you work on academic goals? How?

8. Have you improved in any area of your life since being at your?

9. What more can your 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
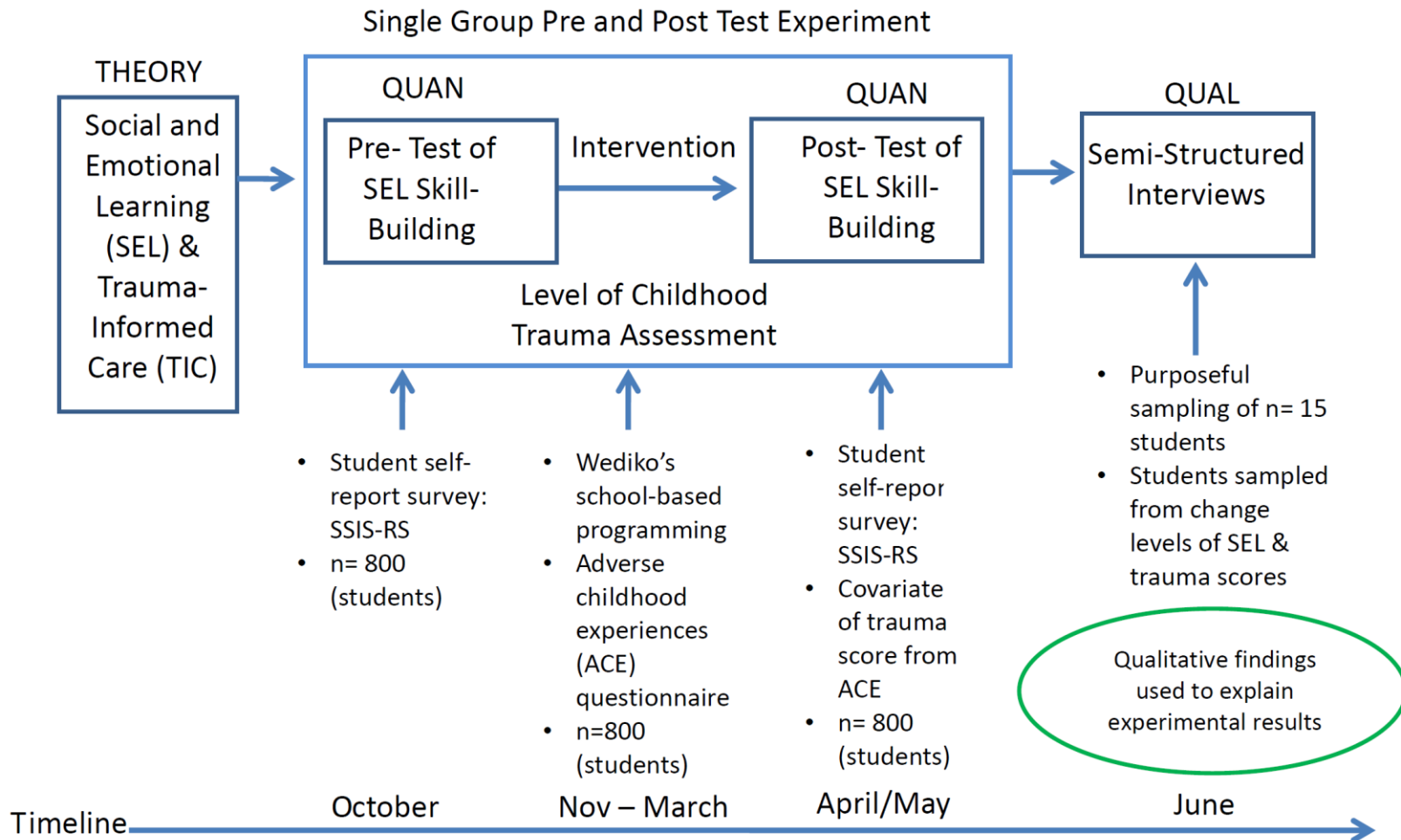
Timeline- Getting Data Back to Use

Timeline of Research during the 2016-2017 school year:

- **September 1-15th: Discussion of research evaluation timeline.** Provide Principal with timeline, consents, and example SSIS-RS rating scale/ACE Questionnaire. Create letter to go home providing a brief overview on the research.
- **September 15- October 15: Providing and collecting consent from caregivers.**
- **Last week in October: Time 1 SSIS-RS administration to all students**, measuring social skills and problem behaviors.
- **November: Go over SSIS-RS data with key school staff and Wediko staff** to identify students that need more support/services. Provide the follow-up services decided upon to research staff.
- **November- March: Administering the ACE Questionnaire to assess students reported level of trauma.** Completed in one-on-one counseling sessions and supported with further services/referrals. Provide the follow-up services provided to research staff.
- **April: Provided ACE results to key school staff and Wediko staff** to identify students that need more support/services. Provide the follow-up services decided upon to research staff.
- **April/May 1-15th: Time 2 SSIS-RS administration to all students,** measure post social skills and problem behaviors.
- **June 1-9th: Interview selected students for qualitative data on outcomes and trauma.**
- **June: Presenting data to school staff and discussing areas for future development.**
- **June- August: Analyzing SSIS-RS, ACE, and interview data.** Presenting to school at beginning of school year and to Wediko staff to inform programming.

Research Results

New York School-Based Programs: 2015-2016 School Year

Social Skills and Problem Behaviors: What We Found

- Our overall results from a paired samples t-test (3 middle schools, 424 students) showed that student levels of social skills slightly got worse (significant) and that **problem behaviors significantly decreased (got better) over the course of the school year.** This data shows that students report improving in their problem behaviors, but slightly getting worse in their social skills.

- With a smaller **2-year data set from one school (n= 66), we are seeing improvements in social skills and problem behaviors, just not significant.** We will continue to study these students over time.

Trauma Results:
# What do you think we found?
374 Students Surveyed

Percentage of Students Who Experienced Different Advserse Childhood Experiences (ACE)
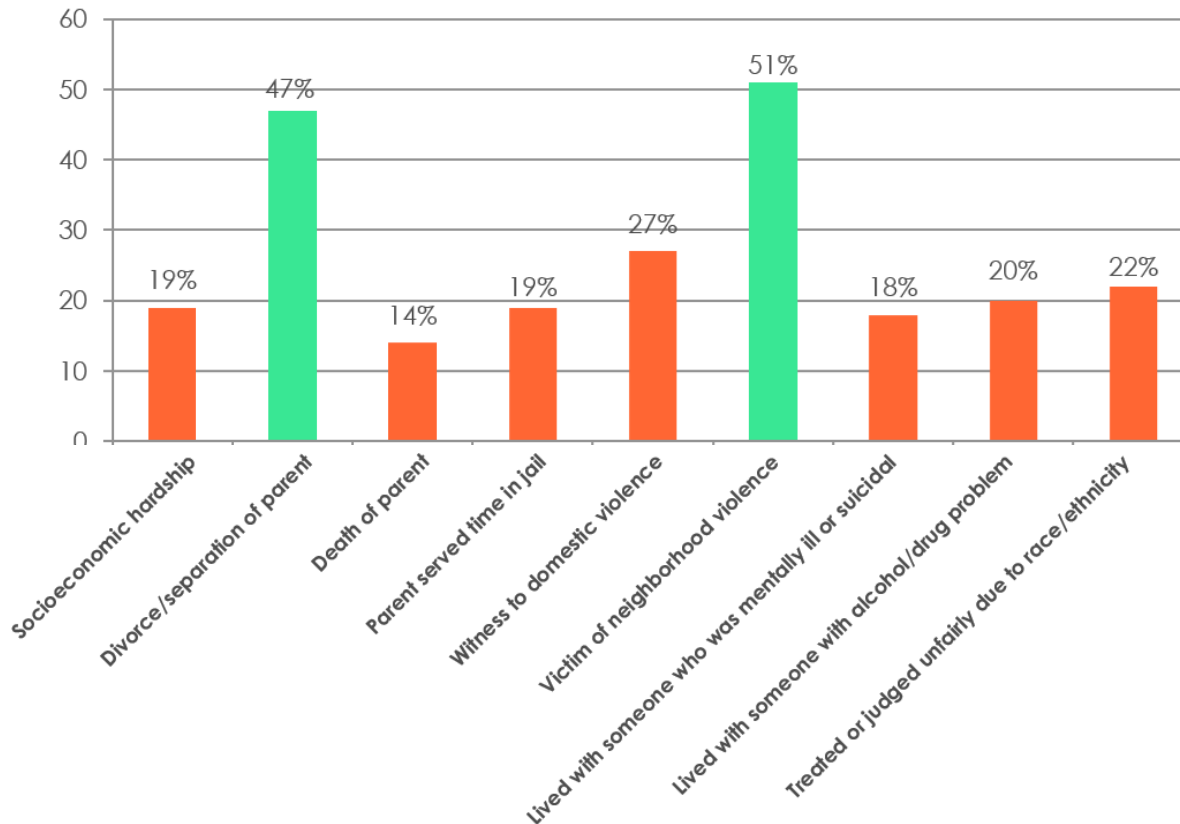
- Socioeconomic hardship
- Divorce/separation of parent
- Death of parent
- Parent served time in jail
- Witness to domestic violence
- Victim of neighborhood violence
- Lived with someone who was mentally ill or suicidal
- Lived with someone with alcohol/drug problem
- Treated or judged unfairly due to race/ethnicity

Percentage of Overall ACE Scores
374 Students at NDSS, 363, 291- 86% have 1 or more

Percentage of Overall Student ACE Scores
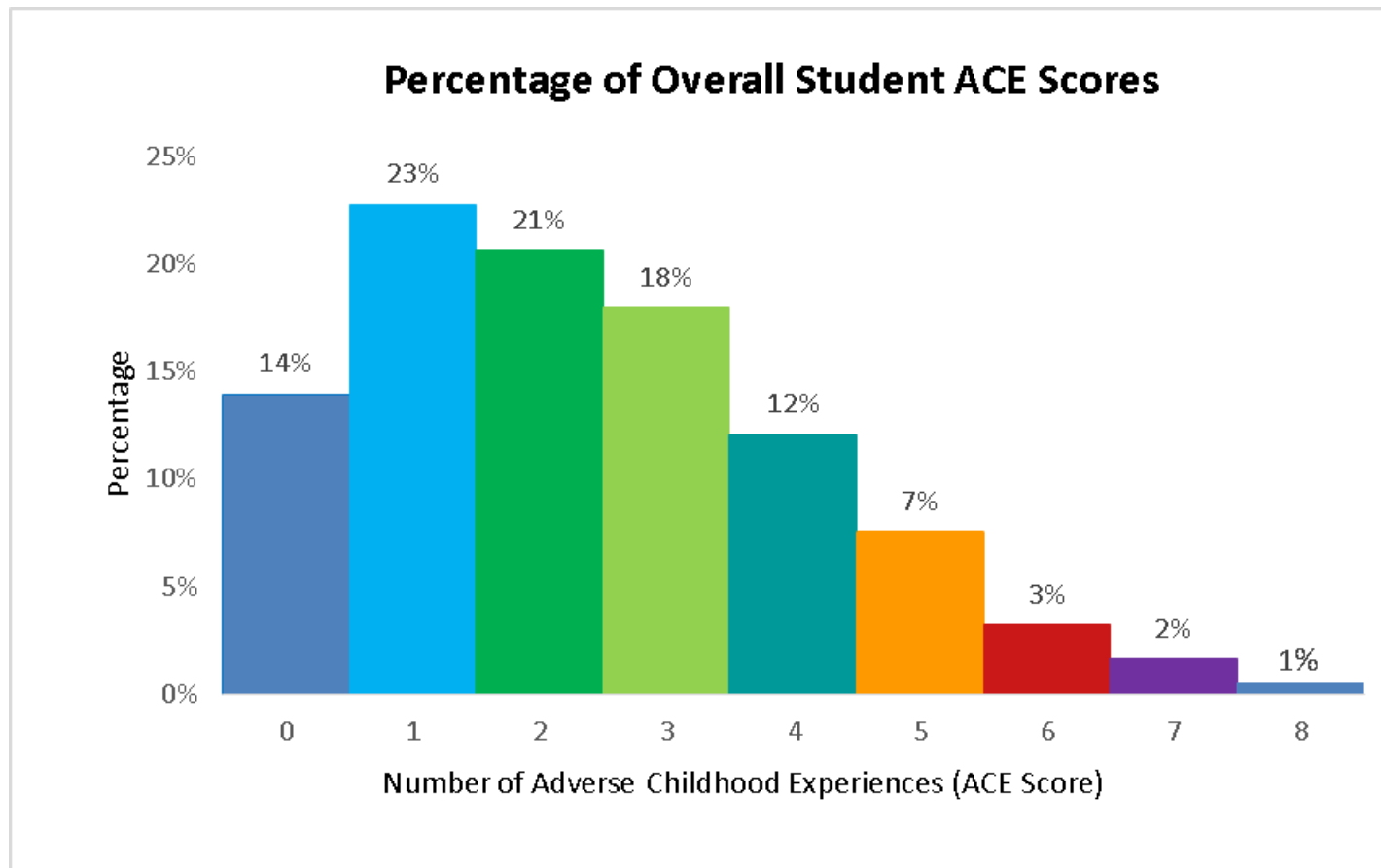
Qualitative Themes

- **Wediko really helps**
  - "They (Wediko) help whenever they can. If there's a problem going in class, they take you out of the class and talk to you and calm you down. In the beginning of the year, before I had Wediko, I used to try to fight, be disrespectful to all the teachers. Ever since Ms. ** was my counselor, I started to calm down more…She just talked to me. She let me talk to her, too, and me tell her how I felt and then it just would all go away."
- **The Students are Working to Overcome Obstacles (ACE)**
  - "I didn't grow up with my mom or my dad, I grew up with my grandmother. When I came here I didn't have no one to talk to. I didn't even feel like talking to my mom or my dad. When I come home, I just go home and I close the door. But when I started talking to Ms. **, I felt like I could tell her everything that's been going on."
- **The Students feel like they made Positive Changes and Improved**
  - "Now that I've opened up to Ms. **, she talked to me, it's like now I realize who's there for me and what comes first is my academics."
  - "They help me with anger issues, and they help me to gain control of myself. Like in the beginning of the year, for example, I was so wild and I think I could do whatever because I was in fifth grade and stuff, but then they showed me like, I'm not going to try to be like one of those dropouts. They showed me the way to success, like they showed me how to accomplish goals and stuff."

Bridging Research and Practice

How We Used the Research Data to Inform Our Direct Work and Clinical Practice

School-Based Mental Health: Bridging Practice and Research

- **Overcoming the gap between research and practice in children's mental health is a national priority** (Ringeisen, Henderson, & Hoagwood, 2003) and developing strategies to promote adoption of evidence-based practices is a critical area of study (Short, Weist, Manion, & Evans, 2012).

- **Educators have been utilizing assessments to inform their practice for over two decades** (Ringeisen et al. 2003). Those in school based mental health are also working on bridging this gap between evaluation and intervention.

- **Barriers to bridging this gap in school environments have been identified:**
    - **Research relevancy and the buy in of school staff and clinicians**; competing focus on academic priorities (Short et al. 2012; Connors et al. 2015)
    - **Dissemination of information**; communication between school, clinicians and families to discuss the importance of the research and interventions (Weisz et al. 2005; Short et al. 2012)
    - **Slow turn around time** of research to useable data (Weisz et al. 2005)
    - **Limited resources/qualified staff** in schools (Ringeisen et al. 2003)

5 Key Steps Wediko Took to Bridge Practice and Research

1. **Built partnerships with school personnel** and engaged in **discussions about the relevance of the research** to the goals of the schools

    1. Continuously participated in ongoing conversations about connections between social and emotional learning, trauma-informed practices, and personal/academic success

2. **Analyzed the data immediately following the administration** of the SSIS Time 1 & 2 and ACE to identify and target students and classes needing additional support

    1. Provided individual/group counseling, social emotional programming, etc. in real time

3. **Reported back** to key school staff and Wediko staff about findings and co-created plans **to address student needs based on the research data.**

4. **Responded with flexibility based on context of the school**: provided a range of interventions and services in school, after school and to families, as needed

5. **All Wediko staff were involved in administering and interpreting the data as both a practitioner and researcher**, we were able to **limit disconnect between data collection and interventions**

How We Used the Data in Real Time
## SSIS Results- Social Skills and Problem Behaviors

- **The SSIS data was used to identify classes that could benefit from Wediko's social and emotional classroom push-in program**, Side by Side, to target specific social skills and behavioral problems with weekly in-class workshops on the following topics:
  - Bullying
  - Cooperation
  - Empathy
  - Self-Control

- **After Time 1 SSIS, students at each of the 3 schools were identified as being top concerns based on their scores in social skills (n= 26) and problem behaviors (n=51) as compared to normative data**. These students were assigned Wediko counselors to meet with and follow up on necessary services. Services provided were different based on each students needs.

Data Results from 26 Students: Tailored Interventions Helped!
SSIS Results on Social Skills

- **Students who were identified as having low social skills at time 1 were provided with follow-up counseling services (n=26).** These students **showed significant improvement on all social skill scales and total social skills.**

 *The change was significantly different than those who were not identified, using a repeated measures ANOVA

Estimated Marginal Means of MEASURE_1
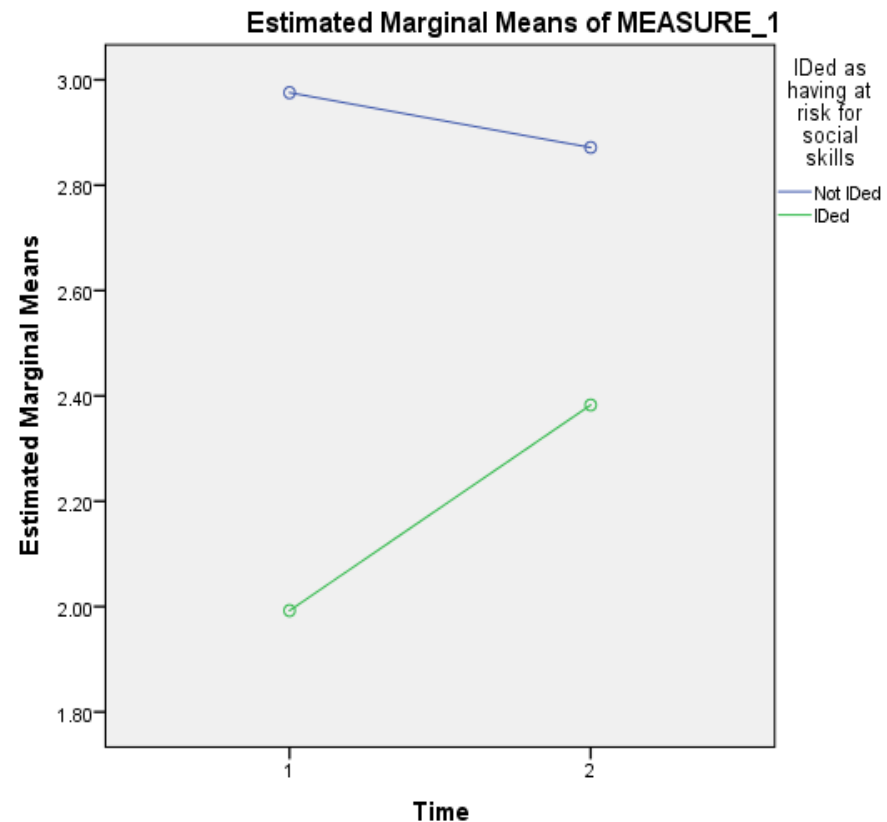
Data Results from 51 Students: Tailored Interventions Helped!

SSIS Results on <u>Problem Behaviors</u>

- **Students with high reported problem behaviors at the beginning of the school year had significant drops in problem behavior over the school year (n=51).**

  *The change was significantly different than those who were not identified, using a repeated measures ANOVA

Estimated Marginal Means of MEASURE_1

IDed as being at risk for problem behavior
— Not IDed
— IDed
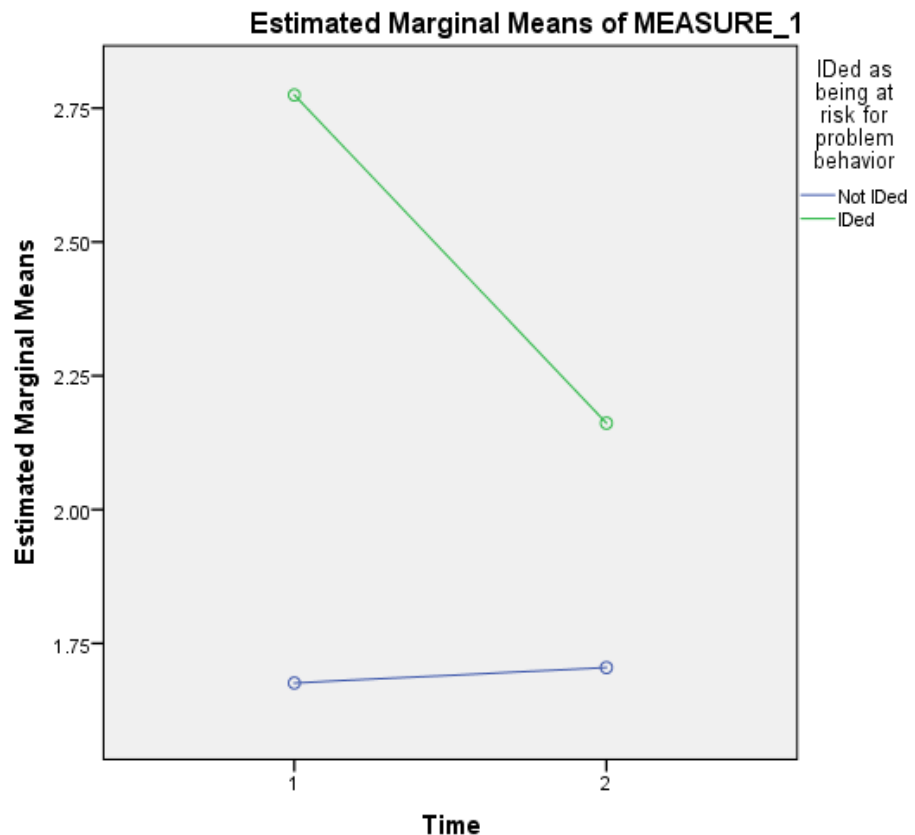
How We Used the Data in Real Time
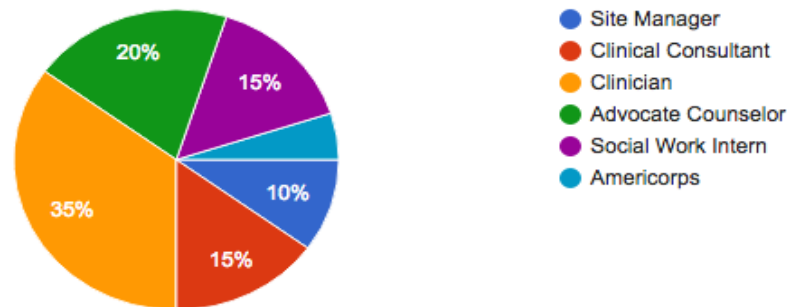## ACE Results

- As a **result of the ACE questionnaire assessing previous levels of trauma, numerous students were identified as wanting or needing additional support**. The following interventions were provided based on ACE results:
    - Individual counseling
    - Group counseling
    - Follow up from their teacher or another school staff
    - Attendance monitoring
    - Home visits
    - Referrals to in-school services as well as out of school services
    - Frequent individual follow up from Wediko counselor
    - An increase in family outreach
    - An overall greater understanding of student's personal histories

Feedback from Wediko Staff
Using the Data Feedback

- **Wediko staff who administered the SSIS and ACE questionnaires found it to be helpful in their immediate clinical practice. They reported:**
    - Interactions with students were refocused and goals were reevaluated
    - Helped identify students needing support who otherwise would not have stood out or sought support
    - Improved our ability to discuss trauma with students and their families

Title/Role at the school (20 responses)

- Site Manager
- Clinical Consultant
- Clinician
- Advocate Counselor
- Social Work Intern
- Americorps

Informing Our Work in 2016-2017

- **Larger focus on modeling and teaching social and emotional skills** through PBIS, Side by Side, and teacher coaching

- **Using a trauma informed care approach** to student and staff work
  - Training staff in evidence based practices: TF-CBT, TST, and ARC
  - Providing teacher support groups at 2 sites

- Attempting to **reach more students through group counseling on topics identified by the SSIS and ACE data**

- Providing **support groups for families**

How Can You Bridge Practice and Research in Your Work?

- Support **professional development of school personnel**
  - **Turn data around and offer workshops** on trauma informed care to school staff as a way to communicate findings and connect it back

- Partner with **community-based organizations that integrate research into daily practice- it is just part of our culture**
  - Utilize staff of different educational backgrounds as clinicians AND researchers; this culture will communicate unity to the school

- **Target multiple levels of the organization** (Ringeisen et al. 2003)
  - Individual (bring information back to students); Organizational (discuss with teachers and administrators, provide workshops); State/National Level (be consistent with mandates and financed with existing sources)

- **Collaborate with school personnel. Develop a relationship with key school staff and a research plan with the context of the school in mind**

Thank You!
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**IRB Approval by NYC DOE and Wediko