



OPTIMIZING ACADEMIC OUTCOMES OF HIGH-ACHIEVING HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMEN VIA A MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

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PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES

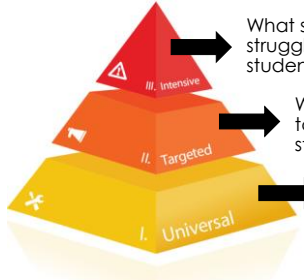
1. Provide a **rationale for a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)** to foster the mental health of AP/IB students, based on research identifying factors related to AP/IB students' academic and emotional success.
2. Describe **preventative universal interventions (Tier 1 services)** for students, teachers, and parents to increase AP/IB student use of effective coping strategies and school engagement.
3. Describe **screening procedure** using data from students, teachers, and records students to identify AP/IB students at-risk emotionally or academically
4. Describe a **selective intervention (Tier 2 services)** using motivational interviewing for at-risk AP/IB students to increase effective coping strategies and school engagement.
5. Describe the **collaboration, leadership qualities, and implementation procedures** necessary to provide a MTSS for AP/IB students that involves youth, parents, and teachers.

WHY PROVIDE SUPPORTS TO HIGH-ACHIEVING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, LIKE THOSE TAKING AP/IB COURSES?

- MTSS can provide additional support and tiered systems for students at-risk for academic or emotional decline.
- High-achieving students, such as students taking AP/IB classes, may go overlooked due to positive characteristics such as economic wealth, family resources, or high academic achievement.
- Recent research suggests AP/IB students:
 - Higher levels of stress compared to general edu. students (Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2013), primarily due to their academic demands (Suldo et al., 2009).
 - Students in AP/IB report juggling multiple academic demands (a heavy academic workload, high teacher expectations, and difficulty managing time (Milburn, 2011; Taylor & Porath, 2006).
 - As students' stress increases, their risk for internalizing and externalizing symptoms and reduced life satisfaction increases (Suldo et al., 2009).
- Currently, there are no evidence-based interventions developed to address stressors AP/IB students experience.




WHAT DOES MTSS LOOK LIKE FOR HIGH-ACHIEVING STUDENTS?



- What supports should struggling 9th grade AP/IB students receive?
- What factors should we target to identify at-risk AP/IB students?
- What skills should ALL 9th grade AP/IB students be taught?


STEP 1. DEFINING "STUDENT SUCCESS"



Academic Success

- Grades in Courses (semester GPA)
- Average Score on AP and/or IB End-of-Course Exams

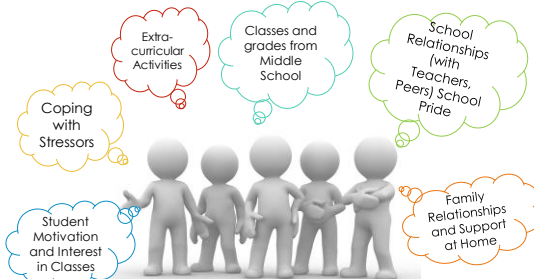
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Mental Health

- Happiness (high life satisfaction)
- Emotional Distress (minimal)
- School Burnout (minimal)


STEP 2. IDENTIFYING FACTORS LINKED TO STUDENT SUCCESS



Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2010

OUR RESEARCH ON AP/IB STUDENTS: STUDY DESIGN

- Surveyed over 2300 high school students in AP and IB classes
- Diverse sample
 - Grades 9 – 12
 - > 50% from a racial or ethnic minority group
- 19 large public high schools across Florida
- 10 IB + 10 AP Programs



Suldo, Shaunessy-Dedrick, Ferron, & Dedrick, 2017


KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS: PREDICTORS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

Promotive Factors

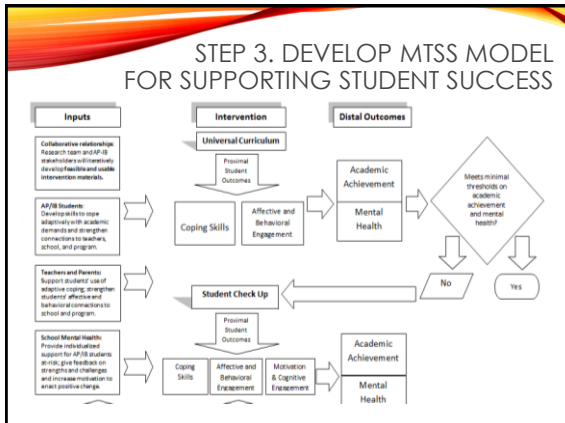
- ★ Coping with Stress through Problem-Focused Strategies
- ★ Connections to Teachers, Schools, and Program
- Parenting (Supportive, Encourage Independence)

Risk Factors


- Coping with Stress via Avoidance and Withdraw/Relying on Self
- Minimal Connections to School, Program, Teachers
- Low Involvement in Extracurricular Activities
- Parenting (Overinvolved or Not Understanding)



Suldo, Shaunessy-Dedrick, Ferron, & Dedrick, 2017



TIER 1 SUPPORTS FOR ALL 9TH GRADE AP/IB STUDENTS



Universal Stage: Module Content	Students	Teachers	Family
Adjusting to AP/IB: Role of Stress	X	X	X
Factors Related to AP/IB Success	X	X	
Forming Strong Connections to School, AP/IB Program, and AP/IB Teachers	XX	XX	HANDOUTS
Engaging through Extracurricular Activities at School and Community	X	X	
Coping	X	X	
• Time and task management	XX	XX	
• Relaxation and positive thinking	X	X	
• Seeking support from school and beyond	X	X	
• Minimizing use of ineffective strategies	X	X	
Booster Sessions (Eustress + Strengths/Values)	XX	XX	X
Supportive Parenting Practices			
Home Environment Conducive to Learning			
Promote Connections to School at Home			

STRATEGIES EMBEDDED IN THE ACE CURRICULUM

Didactic Presentation of Data

Guessing Games

Self-Assessments

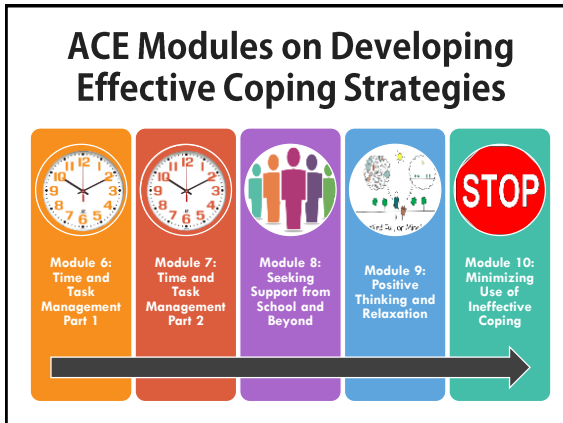
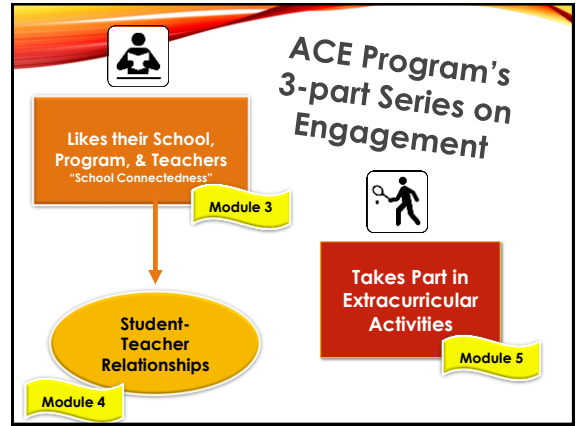
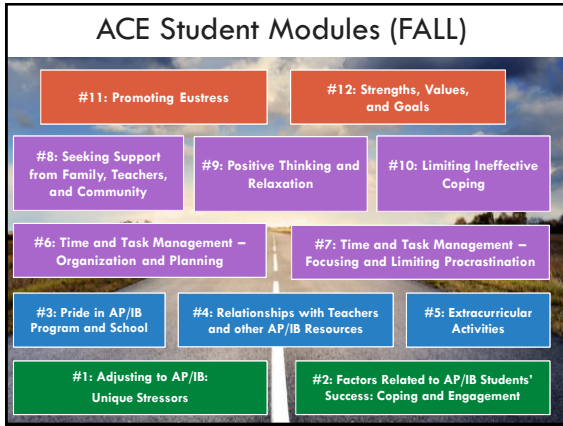
Role Plays

Large and Small Group Discussions

Think-Pair-Share Activities

Student Vignettes and Quotes

Videos



Student Module 2 Coping Chart

Effective Coping Styles	Ineffective Coping Styles
Positive Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell yourself that you can do it, for example that you "will manage" similar situations before. Adopt an optimistic or positive attitude. Think about the bigger picture (your goals or values) to put things in perspective. Remind yourself of future benefits or rewards of finishing your school program, such as getting into college or getting scholarships. 	Withdrawal/Self-Reliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep problems to yourself. Try to ignore feelings of stress. Become quiet (talk less or not at all to others). Try to handle things on your own.
Time and Task Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize the order in which you complete your work. Focus on the work until it is complete. Get and keep materials for school organized. Be purposeful about how you schedule and spend all of your time. Break work into manageable pieces. Use a planner to keep track of activities and assignments due. 	Reduce Effort on Schoolwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop caring about schoolwork. Stop trying (give up). Work less on or just don't do assignments that are less important. Turn in assignments late.
Seek Academic Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get over help for class from tutors. Ask teacher(s) questions about assignments or coursework. 	Use Hurtful Substances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drink alcoholic beverages, such as beer, wine, liquor, etc. Use drugs, such as marijuana, medications not prescribed to you, etc. Smoke cigarettes or use other tobacco products.
Seek Family Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get over help for class from tutors. Ask teacher(s) questions about assignments or coursework. 	Take Short Cuts at School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share (fill-in) assignments with classmates. Copy other students' homework and assignments. Take less demanding classes.
Relaxation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take deep breaths. Focus on calming yourself down. 	Share <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take naps. Sleep to recharge so you can tackle a problem. Sleep to escape or put off the problem.
Coping Styles with Mixed Effectiveness <i>(the coping styles below co-occur with some but not all negative emotional or academic outcomes, so are not targeted in our program)</i>	
Social Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go shopping. Hang out with friends. Have fun with other people to get your mind off the problem. 	Focus on the Negative Features of the Problem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get mad, annoyed, or irritated. Take it out on others (lash out), yell, scream, or swear. Pause or "break out" about the problem without trying to fix it. Keep thinking about work to be done (even about workloads).
Athletic Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play team sports, like soccer, football. Take part in enjoyable extracurricular activities. Exercise (run, go to the gym, dance, etc.). 	Express Strong Emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get mad, annoyed, or irritated. Take it out on others (lash out), yell, scream, or swear. Pause or "break out" about the problem without trying to fix it. Keep thinking about work to be done (even about workloads).
Tech/Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surf the Internet. Play videogames. Watch TV or videos. 	Take Short Cuts at School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share (fill-in) assignments with classmates. Copy other students' homework and assignments. Take less demanding classes.

Student Module 6 Problem-Solving Common AP/IB Stressors

Meet Taylor, a 9th grade AP student. She's preparing for next week's AP mid-term exam. It is the first big test of the quarter and she's feeling a bit overwhelmed.

Step 1: Recognize signs and symptoms of stress

Step 2: Determine the primary stressors

Student Module 6 Problem-Solving Common AP/IB Stressors (cont.)

Step 3: Think of solutions and evaluate the pros/cons of each option

- Option 1:** Take a mental break from school and go shopping with my friends. (Mixed Effectiveness (Social Activities))
- Option 2:** Copy friends study guides and use Cliff Notes to study for the test. (Ineffective (Taking Short Cuts))
- Option 3:** Break the test content up into sections and make a study schedule. (Effective (Time & Task Management))

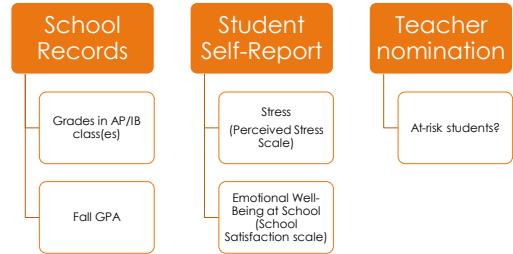
Step 4: Select the best solution and try it out

Step 5: Evaluate the outcome and try again as needed

IDENTIFYING 9TH GRADE AP/IB STUDENTS AT-RISK



MID-YEAR SCREENING: DATA COLLECTION METHODS



INDIVIDUALIZED COACHING MEETINGS FOR STUDENTS (SPRING)

Identifying At-Risk Students

Students with high stress, few positive feelings about school, or grades < B are offered 1-2 individual meetings with an ACE coach



Individual Meetings

Coaches discuss students' strengths, values, and goals, and help them problem-solve and develop action plans that target areas in need of growth

TIER 2 SUPPORTS FOR SELECTED 9TH GRADE AP/IB STUDENTS



MOTIVATION, ASSESSMENT, AND PLANNING (MAP) MEETINGS

- **Goal of MAP meetings:** Help students reflect on and further develop healthy coping and engagement skills that are linked to emotional and academic success in AP/IB courses.
- **Intended Population:** Students who, at mid-year, show or report signs of academic or emotional risk in AP/IB and thus may benefit from brief, individualized support to address academic or emotional challenges in AP/IB.
 - *Academic risk:* GPA < 3.0, grades ≤ C in AP/IB classes; scores < 3 (AP) or 4 (IB) on end-of-course exams
 - *Emotional risk:* elevated stress, negative feelings about schooling experiences (low connectedness)
- **What the Intervention is NOT:** Long-term therapy; Crisis intervention; Mental health support to address issues beyond the ACE Program targets.

MAP INTERVENTION MULTI-STEP PROCESS

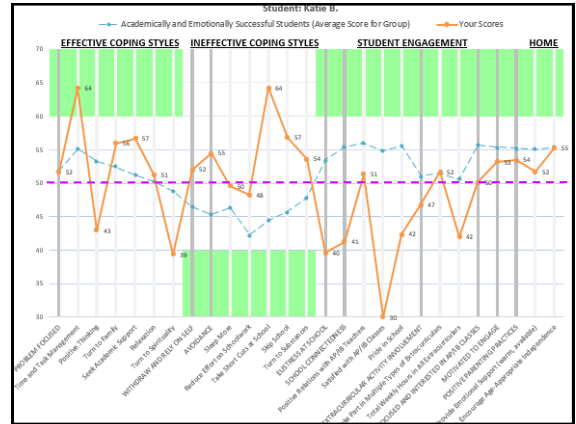
Students identified through the screening process are invited to take part in MAP

Students fill out a survey packet on their current coping strategies, school engagement, and perceived parenting practices.

Research team member enters student's survey data into computerized scoring system to compare his/her responses to a sample of 2000+ AP/IB students across the state of Florida.

Students meet individually with a MAP coach for a 1-hour coaching session (MAP meeting).

Students are offered a second session to review their progress on their goal and/or work towards a new goal.



COACHING HANDOUTS FOR STUDENTS

Problem Solving Process to Action

Step 1: Recognize Factors that are the Impaired State

Step 2: Remember the Potential Benefits of Addressing Your Problem

Step 3: Develop Alternatives/Solutions and Evaluate Possible Benefits

Step 4: Select the Best Solution and Try to Use

Step 5: Evaluate the Outcomes/Your Reaction

Action Plan (Targeted Factor #1)

Target: I want to **improve my grades**

Goal: _____

Step	Action Steps	By (Date)
1		
2		
3		

Additional Step: _____

How will I keep myself accountable to this plan? _____

Who/What can I share my progress? How and when? _____

Anticipating Bumps in the Road

Potential Barriers	Solutions
_____	_____

EXAMPLE HANDOUT

Goal: To accomplish success in IB, to get into a good college, then medical school, I want to improve/decrease/maintain my [ACE Program Target(s)] **Stop reacting to stress by skipping school, get perfect attendance this semester.**

Steps	Action:	By (Date):
1.	Take few minutes in the morning for a positive pep talk	Tomorrow
2.	Ride to school with mom	Tomorrow
3.	Use agenda to record deadlines, schedule time to complete all tasks	Next week

Additional Step: Learn the details of the carpool, and prepare to join it **Weekend**

Sticking to My Plan

How will I keep myself accountable to this plan?

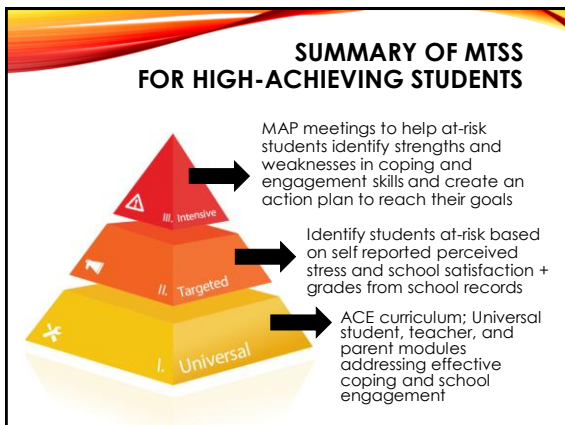
- Stick this paper in the front of my agenda; use perseverance to stick to my time management plan.
- Tell my mom about my positive mindset goal, ask her to help me keep the morning happy which would be good for her too!

With whom can I share my progress? How and when?

Tell my mom about my plan tonight after my softball game, then give her updates a few times a week about how well I'm sticking to it

Anticipating Bumps in the Road

Potential Barriers*	Solutions
Sometimes I get into a down mood when I'm in stressful situations that are not caused by me.	Reach out to my mom on when it's an extra stressful time; she's a good listener and makes me feel better, and helps me remember my goals. Remind myself of other times I have achieved my goals, like when I was brave and chose to go into IB.



KEY CONSIDERATIONS: HOW TO BRING MTSS TO YOUR STUDENTS

Leadership

- Present a compelling rationale to key stakeholders
- Organize job roles for facilitators and coaches
- Plan an outcomes assessment to provide evidence these supports are achieving desired goals

Collaboration

- Need buy-in from teachers, administrators, and youth
- Issues of consent and assent for services
- Partner with content experts to help develop materials and serve as possible interventionists

Intervention Supports

- Procure or create intervention materials
- Develop and set aside time for facilitator trainings
- Monitor fidelity of implementation of intervention and trainings

