


# Healthy Adults and Healthy Kids: Integrating a multi-systemic, trauma-informed model of psychological care in schools



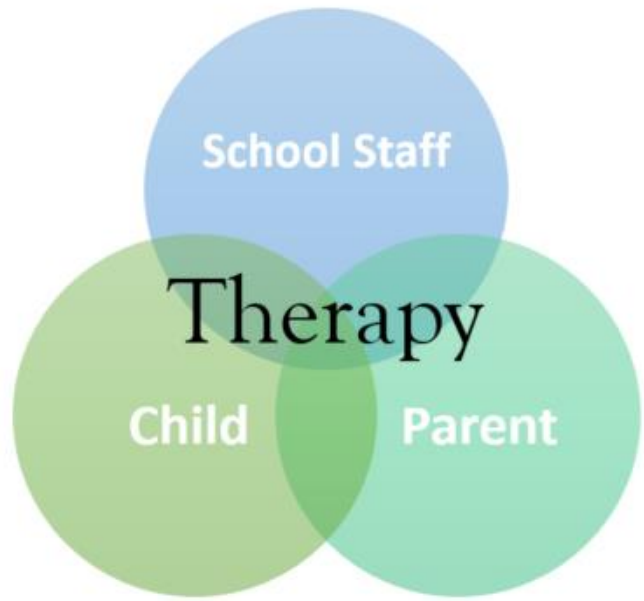
A decorative graphic consisting of a large, light blue dashed circle that frames the text. Various colored circles (solid and hollow) in shades of teal, yellow, green, orange, and pink are scattered around the perimeter of the dashed circle.

Elizabeth P. Minne, Ph.D.  
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Laura Rifkin, LCSW  
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The background features a variety of colorful circles and dashed lines in shades of orange, yellow, green, teal, and pink. A large, light blue dashed circle is centered around the number '1'.

1

# Ecological Model of Care



**Ecological Model of Care**



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◎ Supporting a Whole Child Educational Environment

◎ Mental Health Services for Students—Families—Staff: We close the door to no one.

◎ **A trauma informed lens:** Shifting focus from pathology (what's wrong with you) to personal story (help me understand you)



## Systems

- Staff
- Students
- Parents and families

## Tiers

- Individual
- Small Group
- School Wide

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*“Typically, school counselors offer short term intervention for crisis oriented issues or situations. To have clinicians available through Vida Clinic who could perform much-needed long-term therapy was invaluable. I hope and pray that this partnership is one that continues for a long time to come. The students of [this school] deserve no less.”*

-School Counselor

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*“This is the best program that has come to [this school] ever. I say that with no reservations ... I am wonderfully relieved to know that students in crisis are being served within the walls of [this school] and by an expert... She amazes us all with her knowledge, relationship skills, and careful attention to the details of her clientele. Thank you for the fantastic resource!”*

-School Administrator



A decorative graphic featuring a large dashed light blue circle. Inside and around this circle are various smaller circles and arcs in colors like lime green, teal, orange, yellow, and pink. A large teal arc is at the top, and a large yellow arc is at the bottom left. A teal circle containing a white quote mark is positioned above the text.

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*"It's hard to pick one thing [that was most beneficial from the list of wellness services] since they're so interrelated. But one thing that is so beneficial, not necessarily for me personally but for everybody here at [this school], is to have somebody here on campus that, if it's individual talk therapy, you don't need to leave campus. You set your own appointments. You can come in for an emergency. Like the kids in crisis in the classroom. So I can do the job that I was hired to do and because you don't have to go anywhere."*

-Teacher

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“

*"These services have impacted my work with students because they have given me a way to calm myself before reacting. I was good at it before, but now I have a way to actually think and calm instead of just pushing away the stress feelings."*

-Teacher

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*“We (teacher and student) met with the psychologist to discuss a student who felt she was being bullied. These services helped me to be more aware of what was going on in the classroom.”*

-Teacher

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“

*"Everything has been beneficial. How could I just choose one or two items to list? From breathing to awareness of self-judgment, everything is applicable to my day-to-day life both on and off campus."*

-Teacher



2

Groundwork





# Promoting Mental Health in Schools: The Austin ISD Story

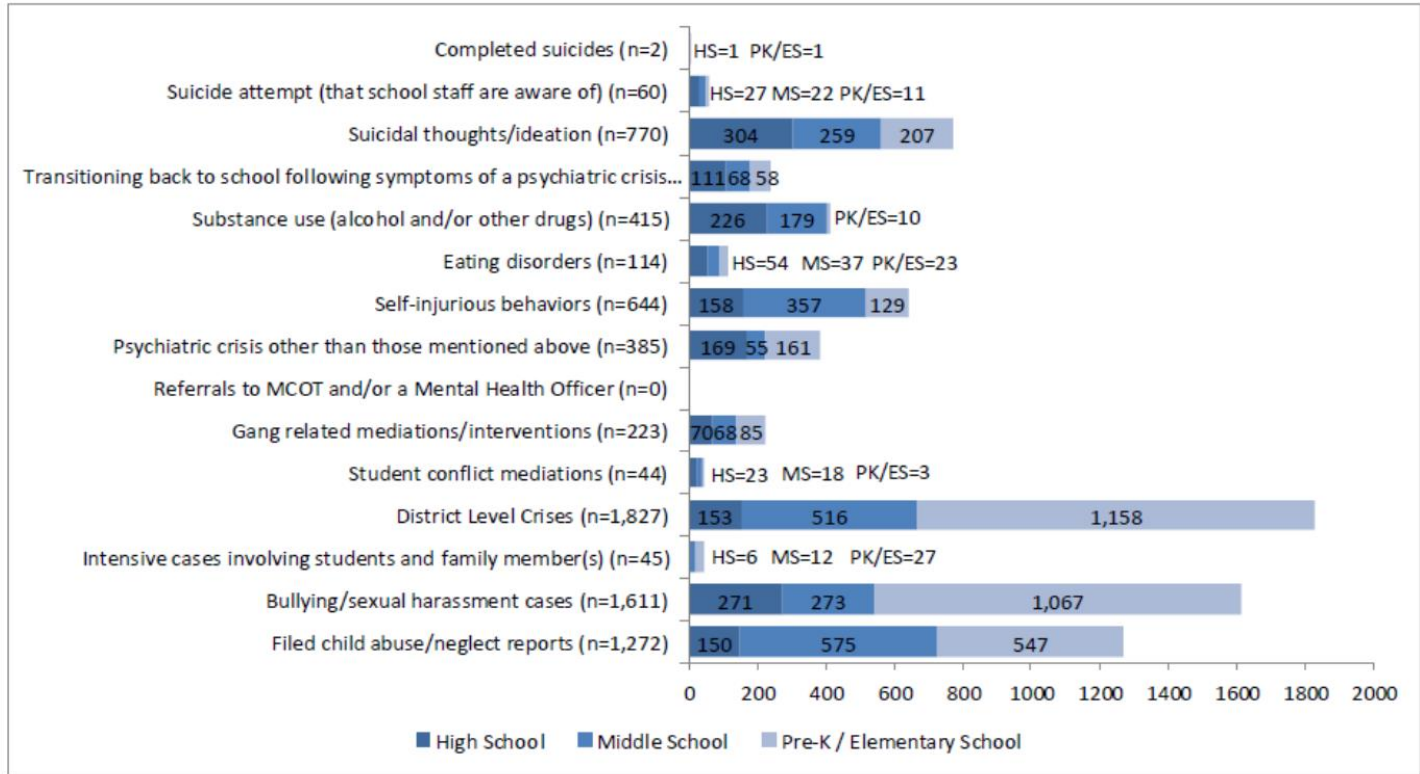
- Began in Spring 2011 with a pilot at Crockett HS.
- 1115 Waiver opportunity, Summer 2011, enabled us to “open” 4 School Mental Health Centers (SMHC) a year for 4 years ( $N = 16$  by 2015).
- Currently, AISD through contractual relationships, operates 19 SMHC’s.
- Students and families can receive mental health services provided by a full-time licensed therapist—a clinical social worker, professional counselor or psychologist—conveniently located at school. SMHCs are overseen by the AISD Department of Comprehensive Health; operating in collaboration with Seton Healthcare, Austin Travis County Integral Care (ATCIC), and Vida Clinic.



## Promoting Mental Health in Schools

- SMHC Therapists use evidence-based practices to help students and families identify and treat behavioral issues and mental health concerns.
- Working with the family, therapists complete a thorough clinical assessment, create therapeutic goals with the student, and provide on-going therapy throughout the year. The treatment approach is strengths-based, rooted in therapeutic models such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Trauma Informed Care, and Motivational Interviewing. SMHC Therapists work collaboratively with other school based programs, to create a wraparound model for the whole child.
- Students can be referred for SMHC services through the campus Child Study Team, parent/guardian, or community referrals. Parent/Guardian consent is required in order for a student to receive services.

# Promoting Mental Health in Schools: The Austin ISD Story (August 2014-June 2015)



Source. Counseling services survey, August 2014—January 2015.  
Note. ALC data were not included in this figure.



# Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Learning Support Services	Social Emotional Learning	Comprehensive Health Services	504/dyslexia	School-Based Community Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Child Study System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SEL Specialists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Coordinated School Health Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•School Psychologists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Communities in Schools</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Guidance &amp; Counseling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SEL Parent Coach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<b>School Mental Health Centers</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Social Behavior Skills (SBS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SAFE Alliance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Licensed Mental Health Professionals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SEL Mindfulness Coach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Family Resource Centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Social Communication and Resource Services (SCORES)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Council on At Risk Youth</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Behavior Counselors</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•AISD Mental Health Alliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Special Ed Counselors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Cap City Kids: Social Work Interns</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Crisis Coordination &amp; Response</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Care Coordination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Care Coordination</li> </ul>

# A Collaboration for Mental Health

## Austin ISD:

- Hosts 19 school-based therapists
- Provides a campus referral team, office space and access to students
- Behavioral Health Specialist to coordinate/liaison campus operations

## Austin Travis County Integral Care:

- Contracted by Seton, employs therapists to meet metrics for the 1115 Waiver/DSRIP project
- Program Manager
- Operates 16 clinics

## Seton Healthcare Family

- Implemented original model in 2012
- Manages the 1115 Waiver Project that funds the expansion of SMHC's
- Seton School Nurses serve as Referral Coordinators

## Vida Clinic:

- Private practice owned by Clinical Psychologist, Elizabeth Minne, PhD
- Operates 3 clinics, including the original site
- Locally funded



## School Mental Health Centers (SMHC)

**Referrals & Consent:** AISD provides schools with a referral packet that includes (a) HIPAA/FERPA Compliant Referral Form, (b) Consent to Refer, (c) Authorization for Disclosure & Use of Health Information, (d) Consent to share data

**Providers:** Also require separate parental consent and release of information.

**Collaboration with Campus Staff:** With parent consent: Staffing and Progress Monitoring during CST, Crisis Response.

**Therapy:** On-going sessions as needed, family counseling, groups, crisis response.

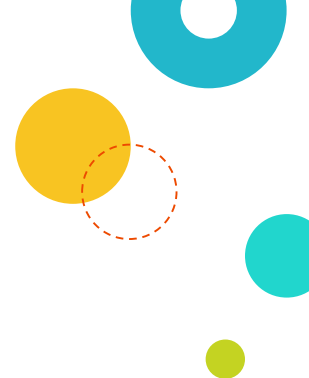


## Advocacy and Advancing SMHC

- ⊙ Invited to testify before the “Select Mental Health Committee” on AISD’s model of SMHC.
- ⊙ AISD recommendations listed in the final report as a model program for school based mental health service delivery.
- ⊙ Testified before the Senate Finance Committee.
- ⊙ AISD Board of Trustees identified “School Based Mental Health Services” as a legislative priority during the 2016-2017 session.



## Next Steps for AISD:

- © Expanding SMHC's into elementary schools beginning in 2017-2018.
- 

A decorative graphic featuring several overlapping circles in various colors (orange, yellow, pink, green, teal, blue) and dashed outlines. The number '3' is prominently displayed in a large teal font within a large dashed circle in the upper center.

# 3

## Youth and Family Services on Campus: Breaking Down Barriers to Care



## Daily Operations and Framework

- We have one full time licensed therapist at each school-based clinic
- On average, each campus sees approximately 100 students over the course of a school year
- Clinical service options include individual, group, and family therapy, as well as crisis support and family/school meetings



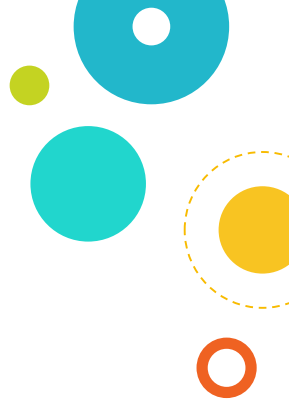
## Daily Operations and Framework

- Our therapists are in-network with most major insurance carriers, Medicaid, and we offer sliding scale and Hardship rates
- Our clinics are open year-round, including summers and holiday break
- All clinicians operate from a trauma-informed care approach to services





## Frequent Reasons for Referral:

- Symptoms of depression
  - Symptoms of anxiety or panic
  - Self-injury behaviors
  - Suicidal ideation
  - Trauma history
  - Family and/or school-related problems
- 

# What is Trauma-Informed Care?

A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed:

- \* **Realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
- \* **Recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;
- \* **Responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
- \* **Seeks** to actively resist re-traumatization.

(SAMHSA, 2012)



# Key Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach

Safety

Trustworthiness and Transparency

Peer support

Collaboration and mutuality

Empowerment, voice, and choice

Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

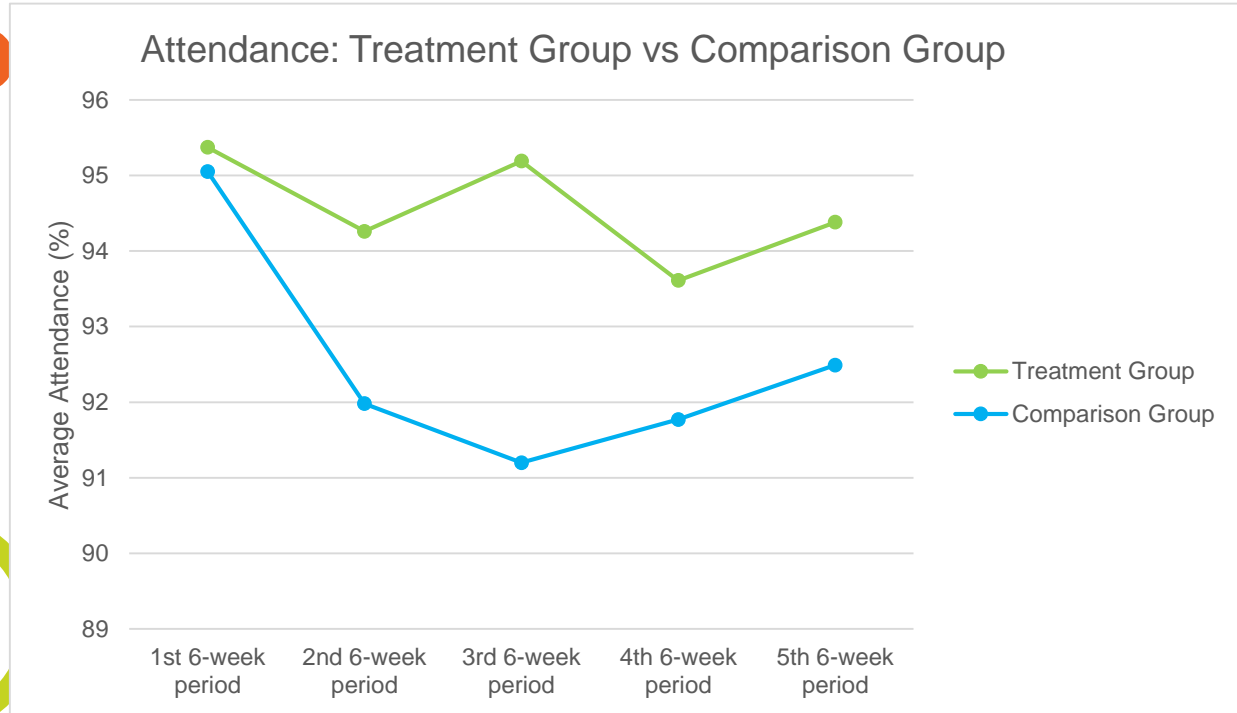
(SAMHSA 2012)



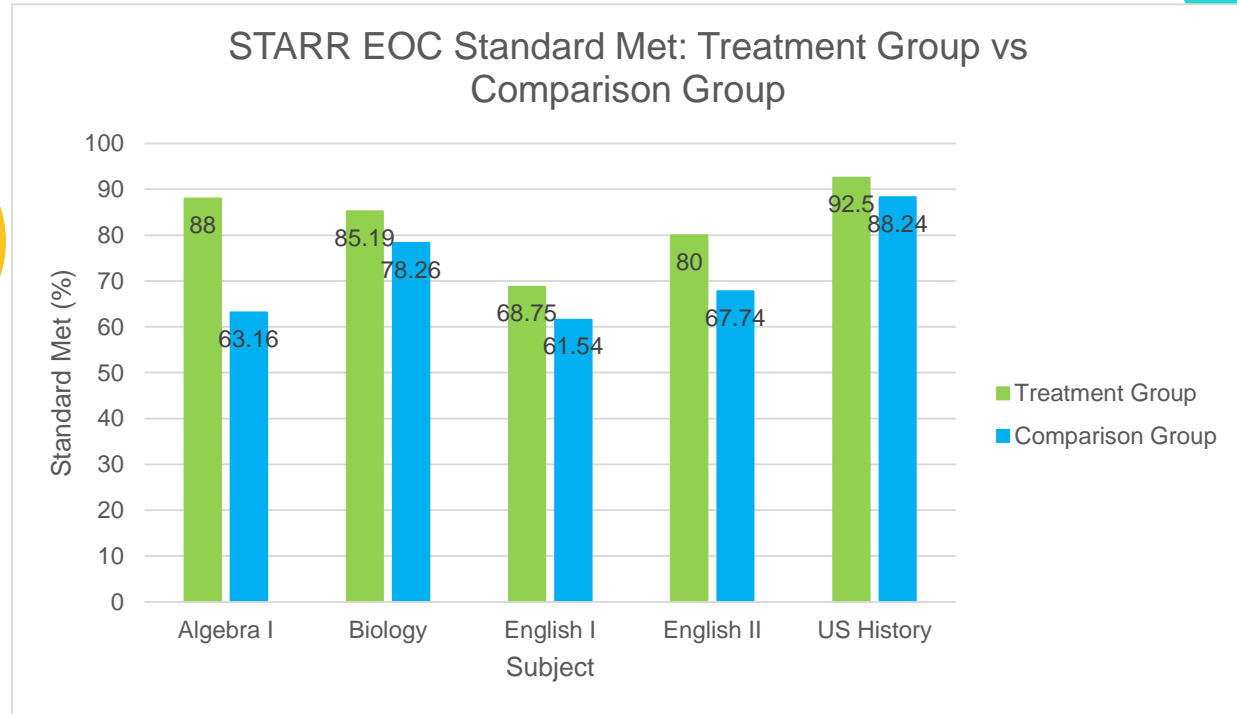
Standard Aggregate Report  
(SAR) Academic and  
Disciplinary Outcomes: 2016-  
2017 School Year

Treatment Group vs  
Comparison Group

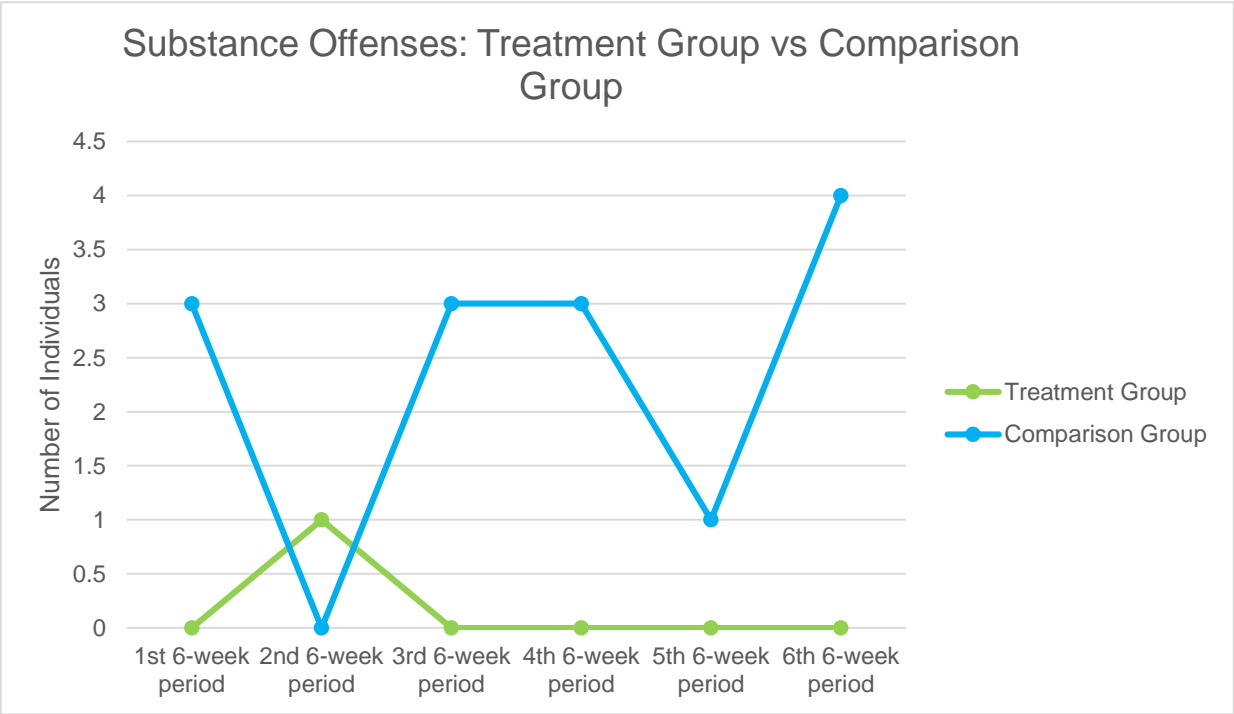
# Academic Outcomes: Attendance



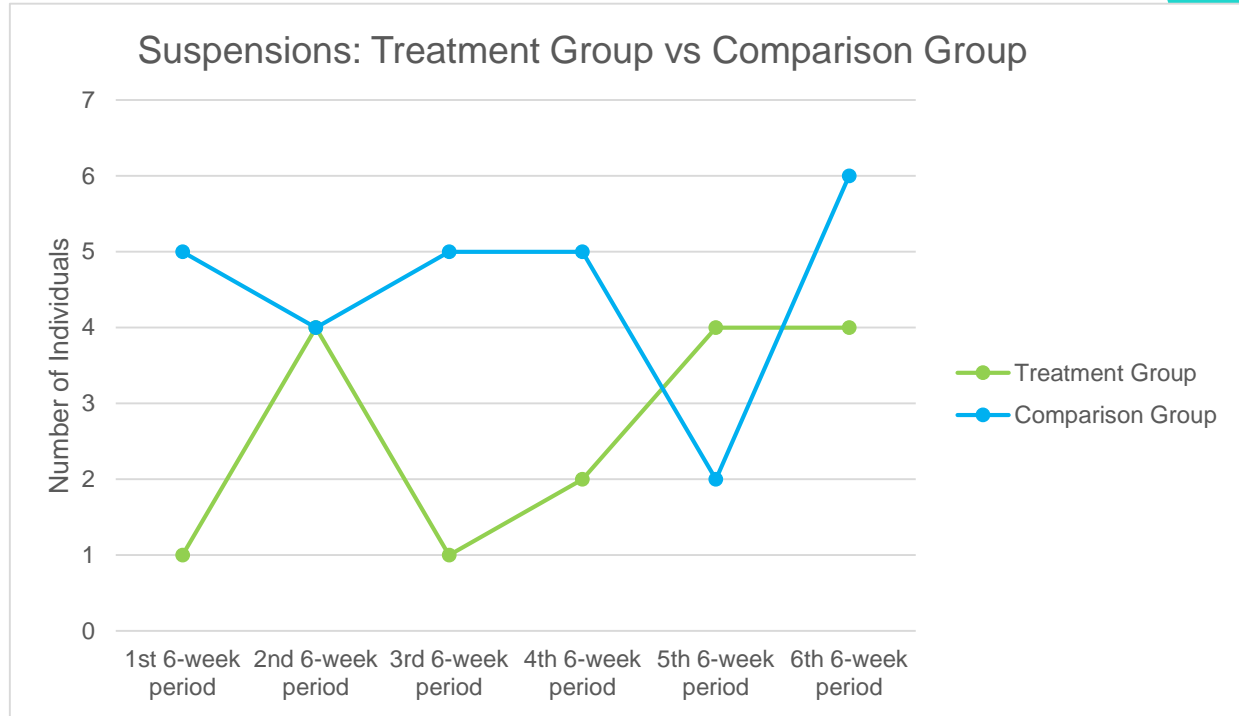
# Academic Outcomes: Standard Achievement



# Disciplinary Outcomes: Substance Use



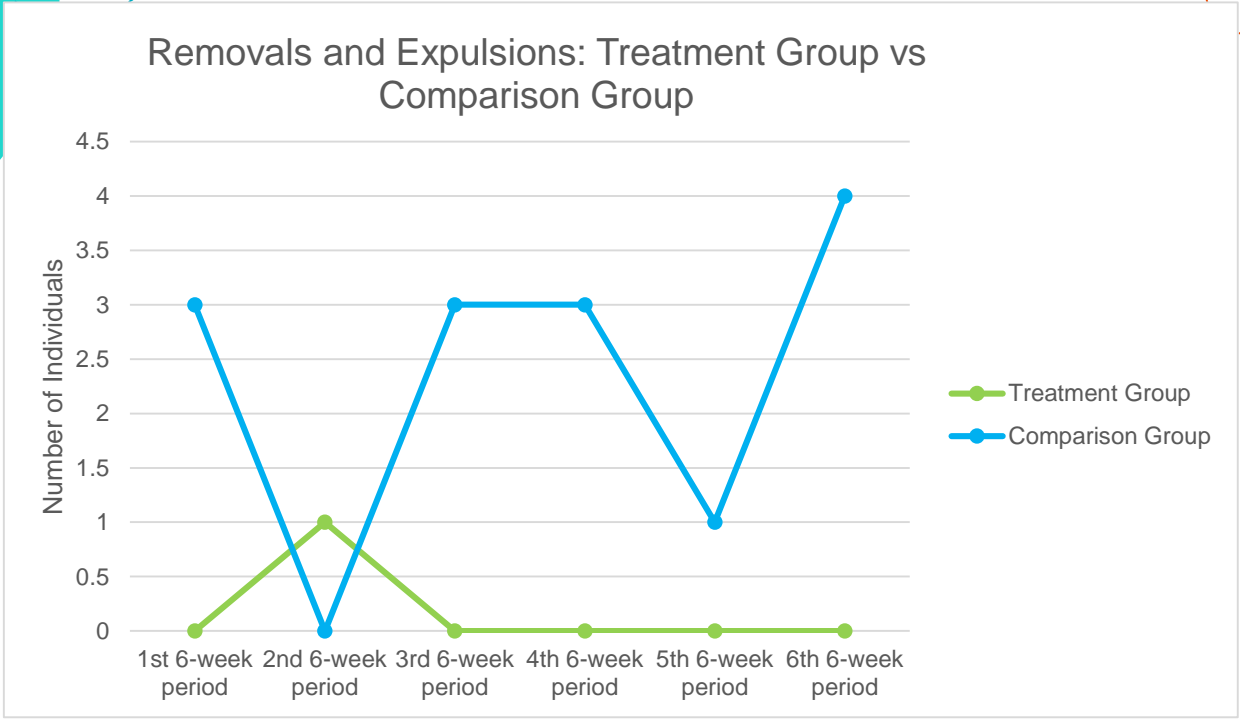
# Disciplinary Outcomes: Suspensions



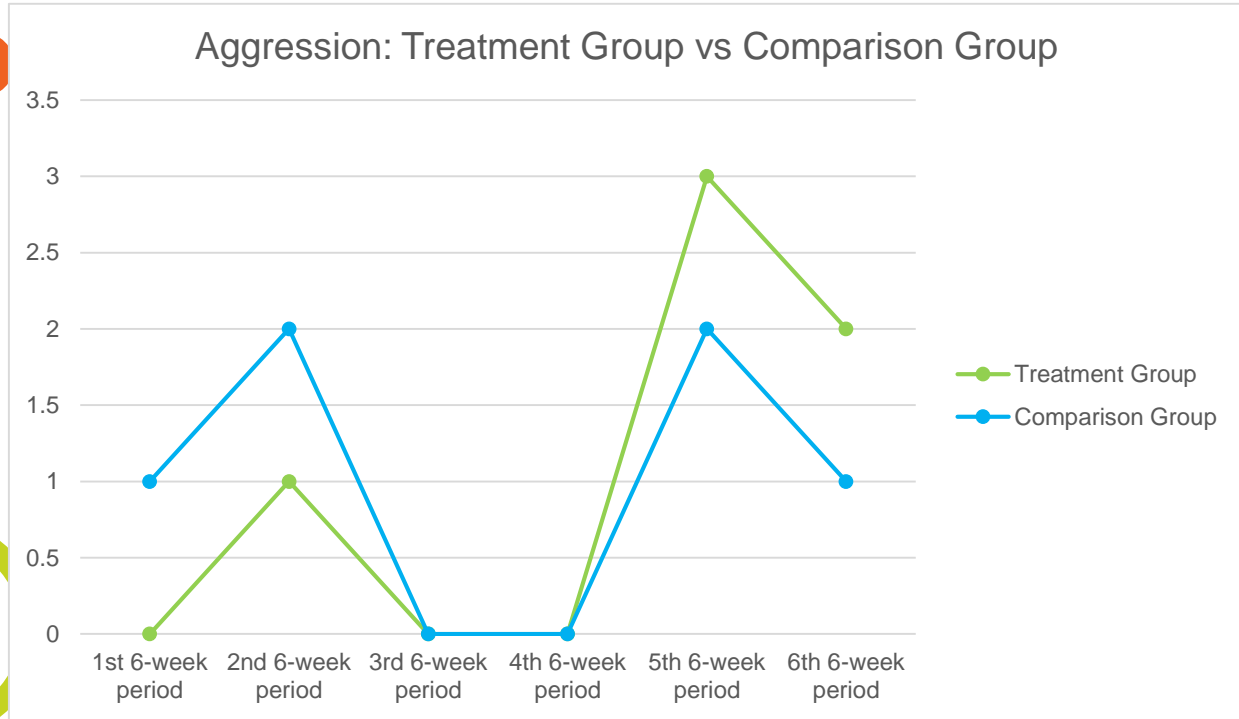
Note: effect of treatment was marginally significant at the  $\alpha = .05$  level



# Disciplinary Outcomes: Removals and Expulsions



# Disciplinary Outcomes: Aggression



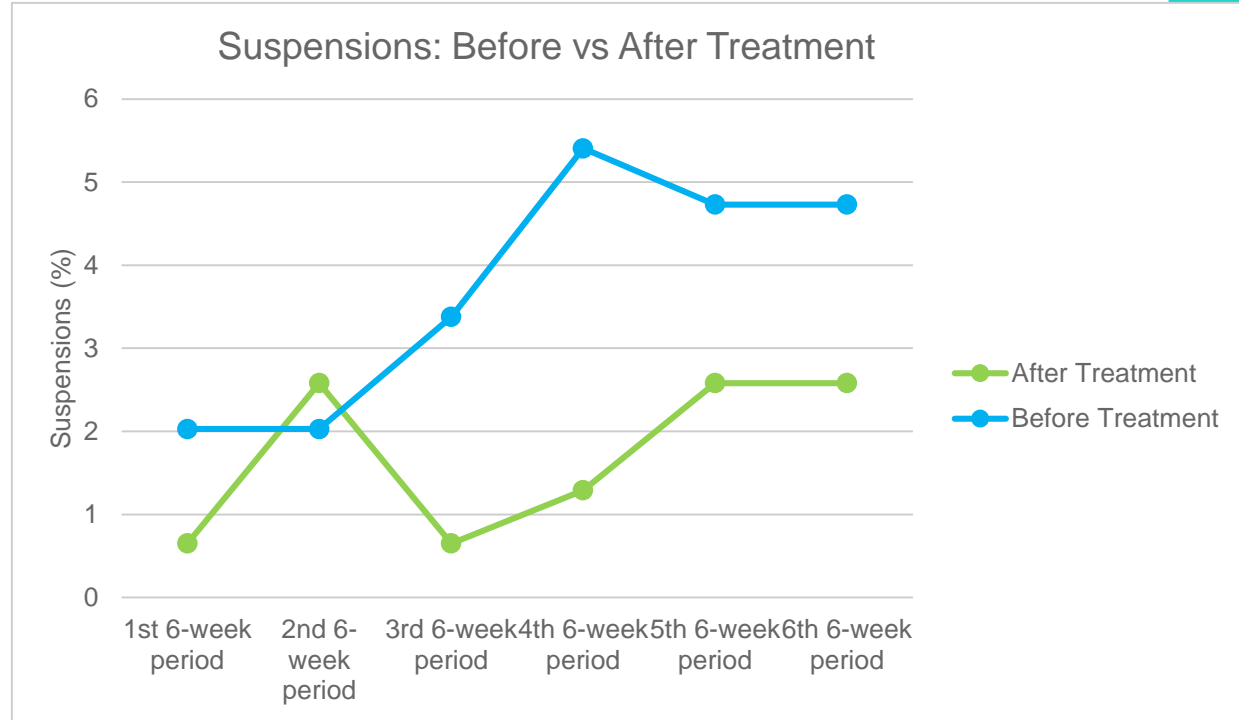
Note: no significant difference at at the  $\alpha = .05$  level



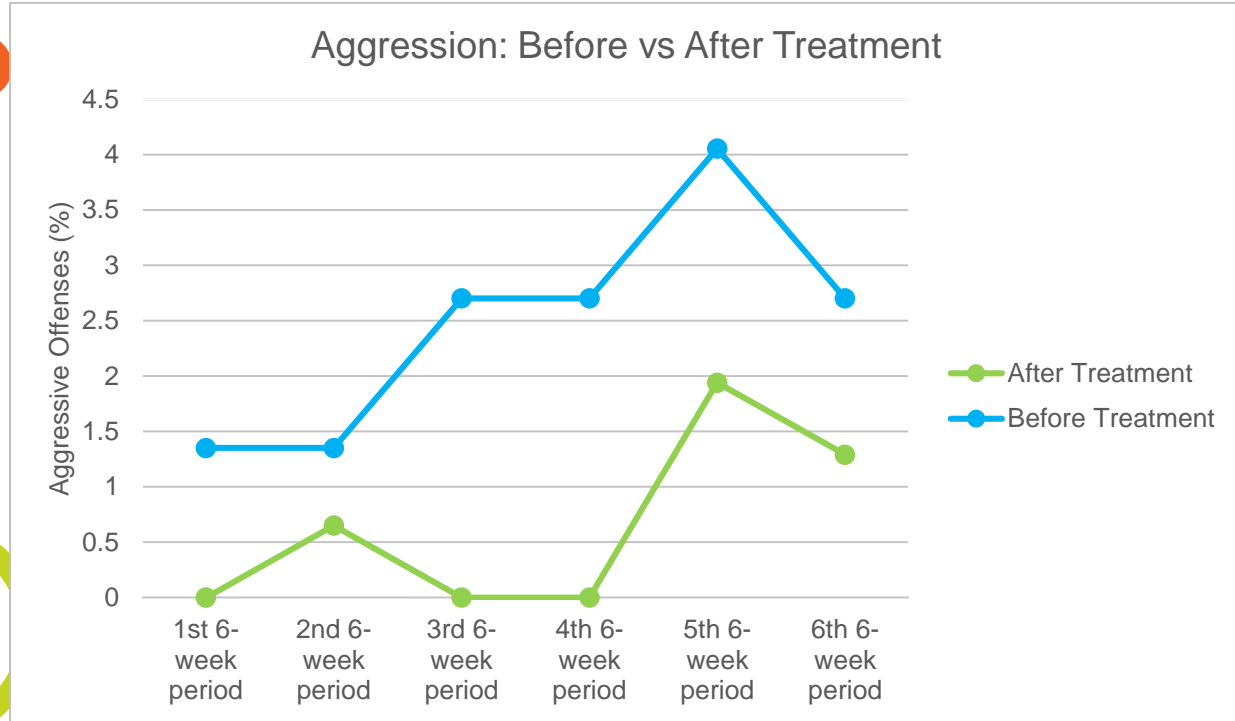
Standard Aggregate Report  
(SAR) Disciplinary Outcomes:  
2016-2017 School Year

Before Treatment vs After  
Treatment

# Suspensions



# Aggression





Clinical Outcomes Based on the  
Strengths and Difficulties  
Questionnaire (SDQ): 2016-  
2017 School Year

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## Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) Scales:

Emotional problems

“I worry a lot”

Conduct problems

“I fight a lot”

Hyperactivity

“I think before I do things”

Peer problems

“I am usually on my own”

Prosocial

“I try to be nice to other people”

## Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) Scales:

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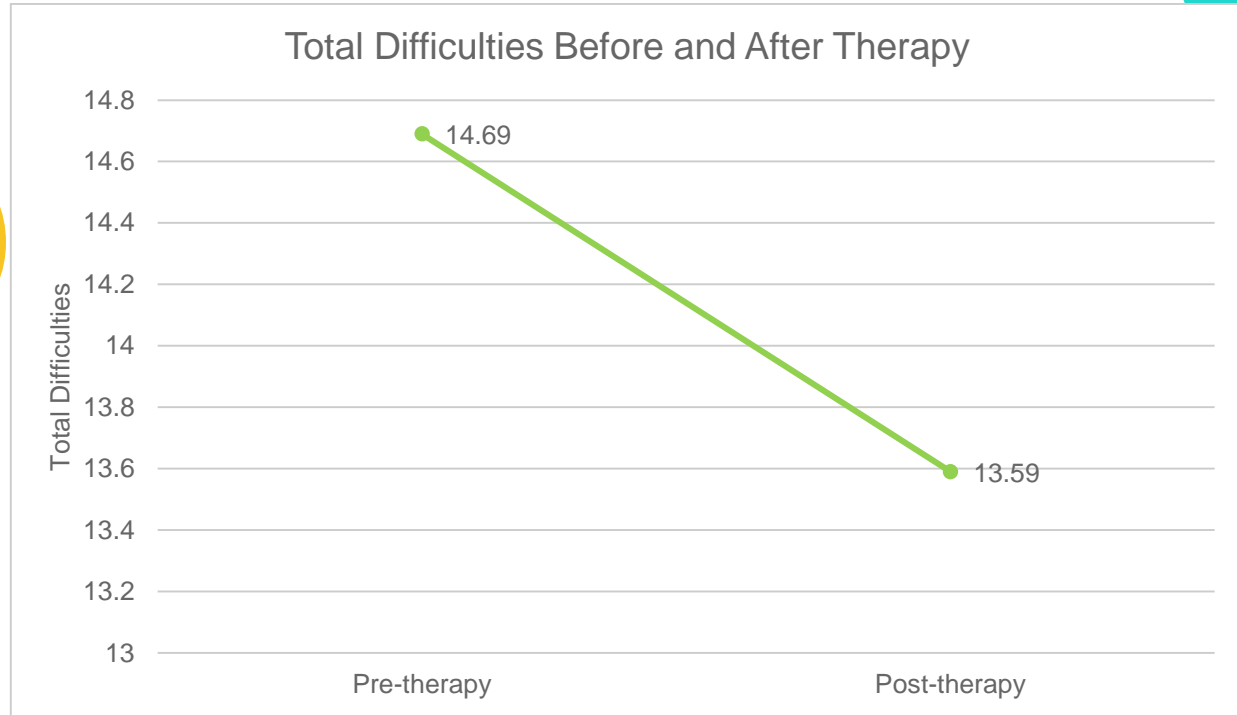
Prosocial

“I try to be nice to other people”

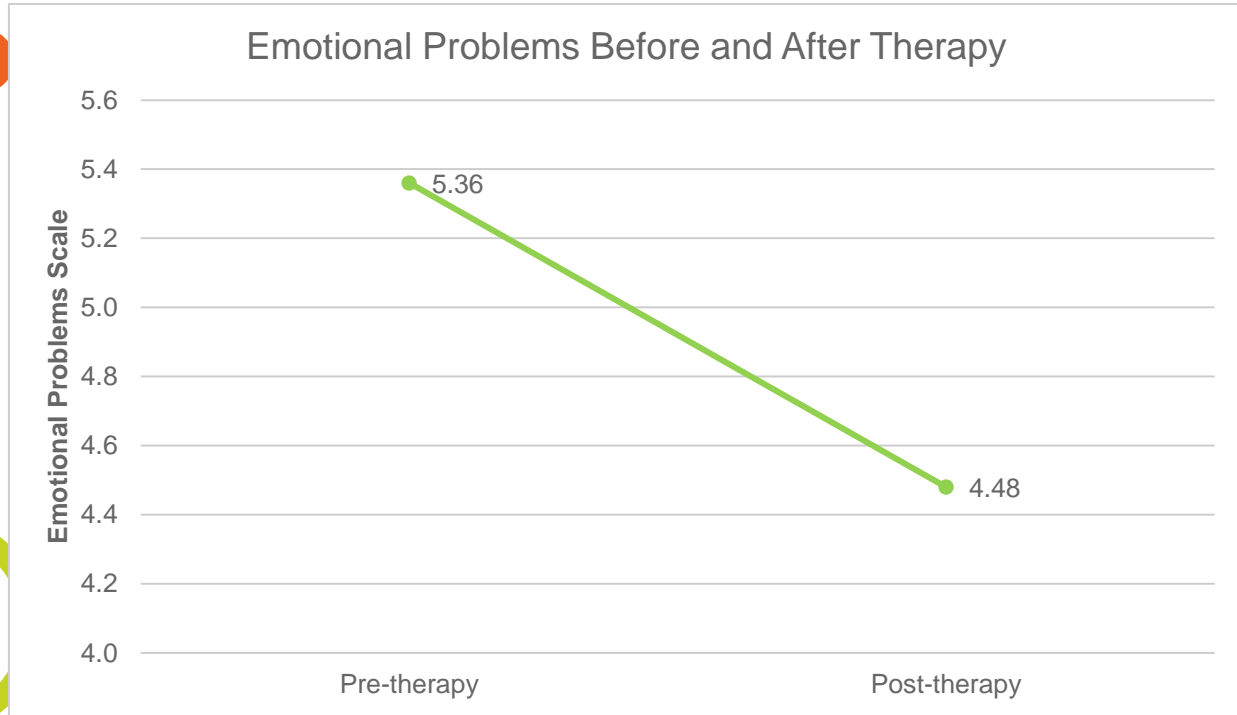
Total difficulties score



# Total Difficulties



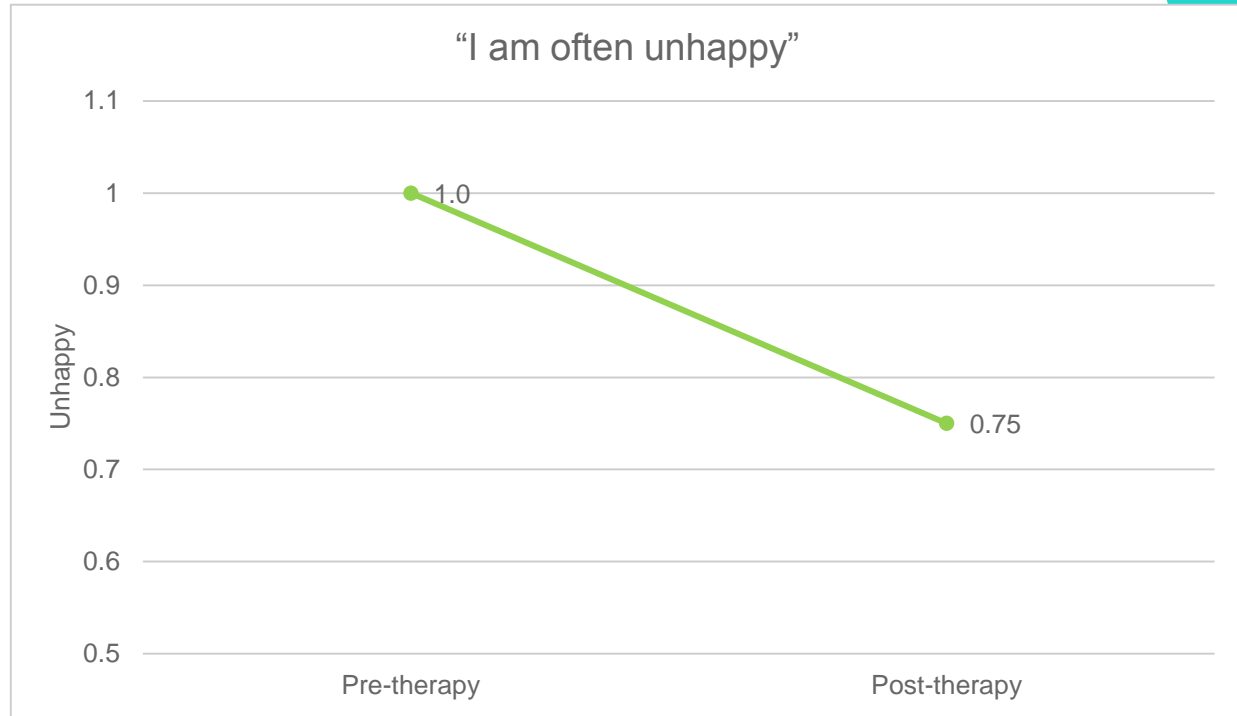
# Emotional Problems Scale



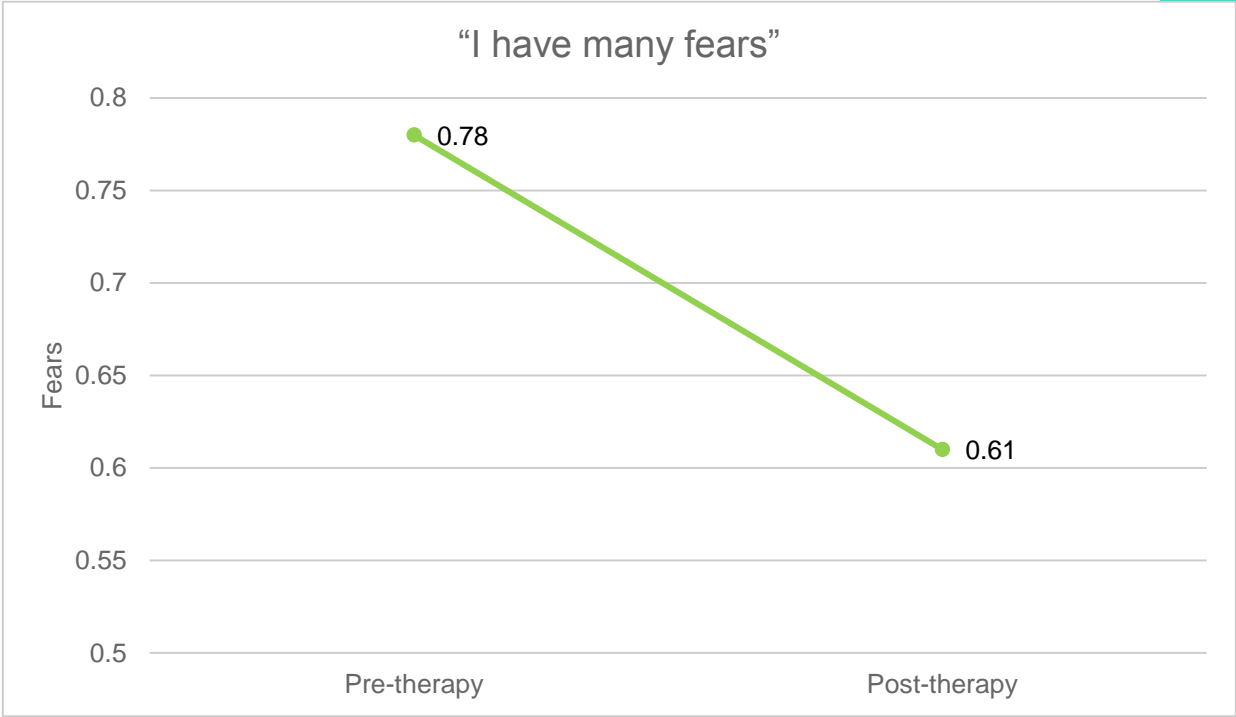
## Emotional Problems: Individual Questions



## Emotional Problems: Individual Questions



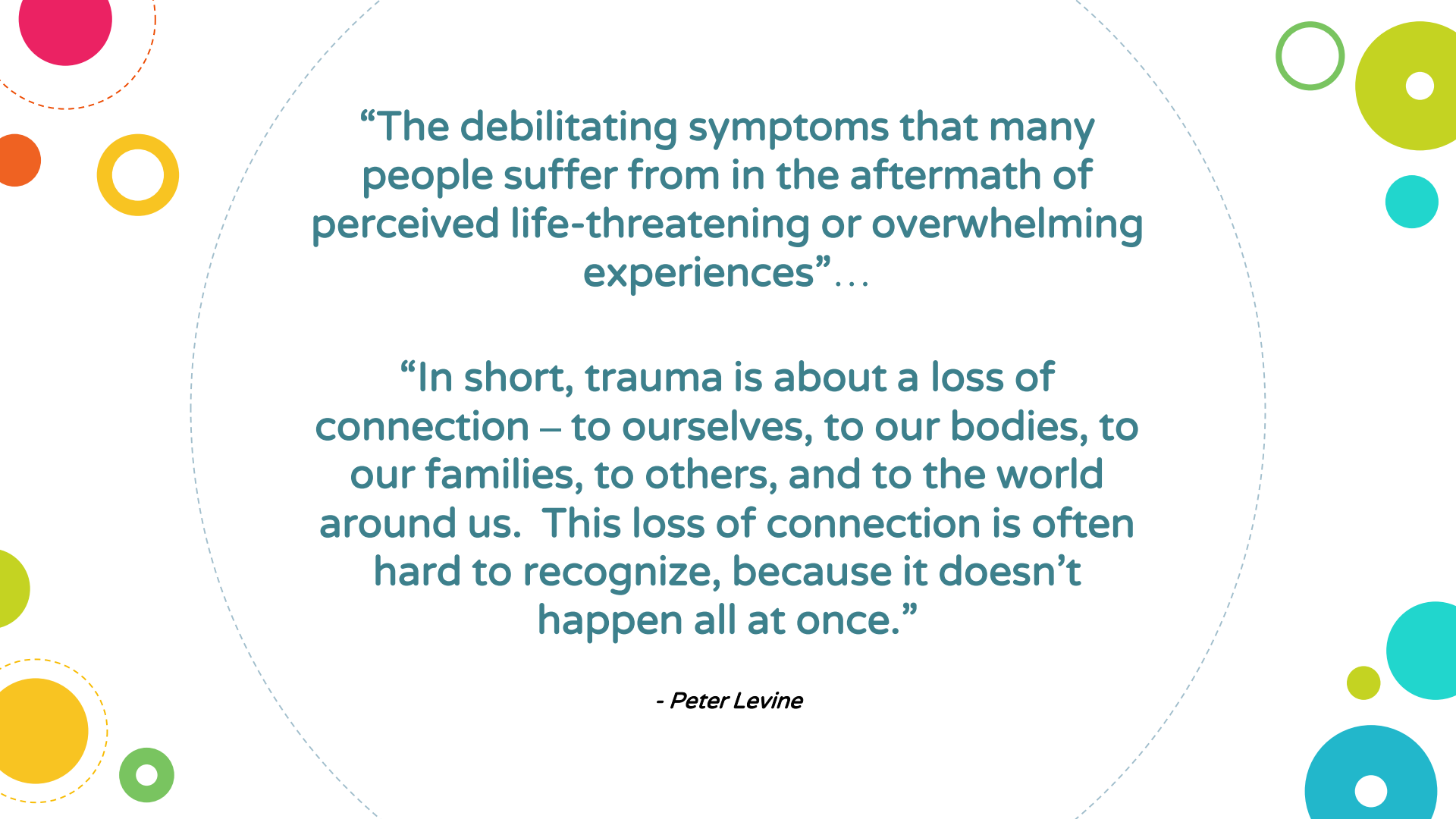
# Emotional Problems: Individual Questions





## Coordination of Care: layering a mental health focus on an educational environment

- Convenient services for youth and families
- Removes barrier of access
- Clinical lens for translating school-related issues
- Therapist helps bridge academic and therapeutic worlds
- Destigmatizes mental health in the community

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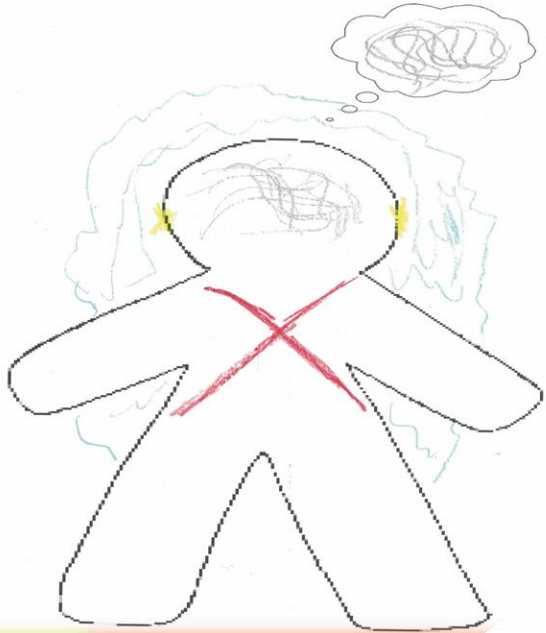
“The debilitating symptoms that many people suffer from in the aftermath of perceived life-threatening or overwhelming experiences”...

“In short, trauma is about a loss of connection – to ourselves, to our bodies, to our families, to others, and to the world around us. This loss of connection is often hard to recognize, because it doesn’t happen all at once.”

- *Peter Levine*

“When faced with a threat, the amygdala triggers a fight-or-flight response, which includes the release of a flood of hormones. This response usually persists until the threat is vanquished. But if the threat isn’t vanquished — if we can’t fight or flee — the amygdala, which can be thought of as the body’s smoke detector, keeps sounding the alarm. We keep producing stress hormones, which in turn wreak havoc on the rest of our bodies.”

(van der Kolk, 2014)







# 4

## Healthy Teachers for Healthy Kids: Meeting the Needs of School Staff



# Healthy Teachers for Healthy Kids

## *Mission*

- ◎ **What:** Individualized, multi-tiered services to promote Trauma Informed Care (TIC) and staff wellness
- ◎ **Why:** A powerful way to address student health and academic success is to attend to the health and wellness needs of the adults who work with them
- ◎ **How:** Promote a culture of sensitivity to children who are distressed and engage the systems of care around them

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“This initiative is designed to positively impact students with unmet trauma needs as well as the educators and other school professionals working with these children.”

—Hogg Foundation



## Healthy Teachers for Healthy Kids *Goals*

- ◎ Parents and school staff will experience increases in **personal well-being** and **self efficacy** in their roles as educators and parents.
- ◎ They will develop a greater awareness of how **student behavior** fits into the **context of the child's life** (i.e., a chaotic home environment, inconsistent caregiving, and/or family conflict).

A decorative graphic featuring a large, light blue dashed circle that frames the central text. Surrounding this circle are various colorful elements: a large lime green circle at the top left, a smaller green circle with a white center to its left, a small blue circle below the green one, a large orange circle at the bottom left, a small pink circle to its right, a large yellow circle at the bottom left, and a large cyan circle at the top center. To the right of the dashed circle, there is a large yellow circle, a large orange circle, a small pink circle, a large lime green circle, and a small cyan circle.

“

“We want everyone in the school community to have positive, meaningful connections – adults-to-students, adults-to-adults, students-to-students.”

—Dr. Minne



# Healthy Teachers for Healthy Kids

## *The ARC Model*

*A framework for intervention with youth and families who have experienced traumatic stress*

### **Attachment**

- ◉ Caregiver affect management
- ◉ Attunement
- ◉ Consistent response

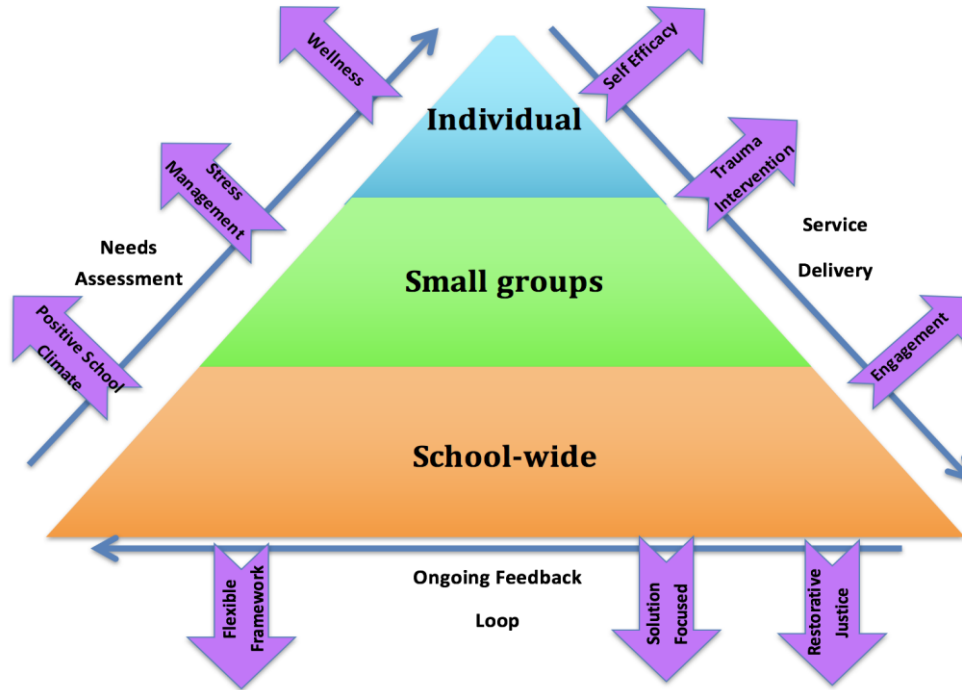
### **Regulation**

- ◉ Identification
- ◉ Modulation
- ◉ Expression

### **Competency**

- ◉ Executive function
- ◉ Self development

# Healthy Teachers for Healthy Kids: *A Three-Tiered Approach*



- Campus-wide talks on relevant issues (i.e., “trauma and the adolescent brain”)
- Small group work to develop skills and build sense of community (i.e., mindfulness workshop)
- Individualized, one-on-one solution-focused consultation

# Healthy Teachers for Healthy Kids

## *An Emphasis on Skill Building*

### CONNECT FOR SUCCESS!

Connect for Success has 3 broad goals to support teachers and their students.

#### GOAL 1: CONNECT

A healthy student-teacher bond impacts student achievement. Healthy connection helps students feel safe at school, so that students feel free to explore and learn. Meeting this goal sounds simple, but it is not always easy!

How to do it:

- Smile at your students. Make a point of being glad to see them.
- Before the learning starts, do a group "temperature check" to hear about how they are doing.
- And at the end of class, put on those "praise goggles" to tell students what they did well that day, even (or especially!) on challenging days.
- Seek out and praise kindness among your students. Make it a goal to find one or two acts of kindness in your classroom every day.
- When students express frustration, ask, "What can I do to help you?" in order to convey your care and concern.
- Showing your sense of humor in the classroom makes a huge difference!

#### GOAL 2: BALANCE

Help students develop ability to balance self-control with self-expression in order to manage emotions appropriately and in context.

How to do it:

- Model stress management – If you feel overwhelmed and need a cool down, show your students your healthy approach.
- Seek to understand how student school behaviors are connected to other life events the student is experiencing. Avoid taking behavior problems personally.
- Ask yourself, "Am I responding in a way that is best for this student?" *Hint:* you say things is just as important as *what* you say.
- Build predictable routines into your classroom, but allow the routines to be flexible when needed, such as when a student experiences a crisis.
- Check your assumptions—observe and question with empathy.

#### GOAL 3: LEARN

Help students cultivate competencies of Personal Agency, Social Skills, and Academics, which are important for healthy development and learning.

How to do it:

- Make learning content relevant to students' lives. Help students connect classroom achievements to future goals.
- Make learning a multi-sensory experience. Create hands-on activities.
- Emphasize personal responsibility in decision-making. To the extent that you can use flexibility in your daily lesson plans, you can ask students to help set an "agenda" for the day, with a range of choices set by you!
- Ask your students for feedback whenever possible. If makes students feel valued and included when their opinions are sought.



Connect



Balance



Learn



Success

WE ARE HERE  
TO SUPPORT  
YOU!

If you have questions or would like feedback about using Connect for Success in your classroom, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at Vida Clinic at:

[Liz@vidaclinic.org](mailto:Liz@vidaclinic.org)

- Teachers come away with a toolkit of practical, easy-to-implement skills
- Tip sheets facilitate the implementation of skills in the classroom
- Grounded in ARC principles (attachment, regulation and competency)



# Healthy Teachers for Healthy Kids

## *Incorporating Student Voices*



- ◎ Campaign for students to pay tribute to their teachers
- ◎ **Strengths-based** feedback
- ◎ Identified **key teacher qualities** that students appreciate in the classroom: a sense of humor, smiling, and calm communication

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“I’ve learned that it takes a village. It takes a lot of people and everybody has struggles. The kids have struggles. The teachers have struggles. Everybody’s story is different, but everybody’s story is the same ... It’s like we’re all in this together.”

—Participating Teacher

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“

“I am more patient and aware with my students. I take time to observe what they may be struggling with as they enter my classroom every day versus being too busy within my own mental time management.”

—Participating Teacher

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“I really love how I feel each time I leave a wellness activity. I equally feel accomplishment and relief. I'm ready to take on the day...and life! ”

—Participating Teacher



## Time for a Mindfulness Activity

...