Positive Behavior Supports & Building Bridges: Proactive Strategies for Schools and Families

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Learning Outcomes

- Overview of the integration of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) and Building Bridges to increase outcomes for schools, students, and families.

Laying the Foundation for the Bridge

The Need:
Nationally

- 1 in 5 Children have a diagnosable mental illness, including substance abuse. (Surgeon General’s report, 1999)
- 5% have an extreme functional impairment
- 75% of youth (ages 6-17) did not receive services*
- For the majority, the only mental health services they receive is in the schools**

* Katoaka, S et al., American Journal of Psychiatry, 2002
** Burns, G. et al., Health Affairs, 1995

In Colorado

- 67,822 children with SED
- 27,987 received services through the mental health system.
- 44% or 30,141 children with SED did not receive any services to address their mental health needs*
- Too few children in Colorado have health insurance, causing Colorado to be ranked 44th nationwide.**

* Population in Need of Mental Health Services, 2003
** Colorado Health Foundation

Impact of Untreated Problems: Schools and Behavioral Health

- 2,297 students were expelled* & there were 68,831 suspensions
- 2,284 students were placed in day treatment, hospital, or residential programs because school districts could not meet their special needs in 2008
- 25% of Colorado adolescents report depression**
- 6.7% of adolescents report attempting suicide**
- 30.6% of adolescents report binge drinking causing Colorado to be ranked 41st in the country**

* for drug and alcohol violations, assaults & weapons & disruptive behavior in 2008-2009
** The Colorado Health Foundation – Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2007
**Impact of Untreated Problems: Youth Corrections**

In FY05-06:
- 59% of the average daily population of committed youth had moderate to severe mental health needs
- 12% of the average daily population of committed youth had severe mental health needs
- 84% of the average daily population of committed youth were at the intervention/treatment level of substance abuse needs

* Division of Youth Corrections data, presented to the JJ/MH Subcommittee in June 2008

**PERSPECTIVE IS REALITY**

**Student Perspective**

- Research* evidence that promoting social and emotional skills plays a critical role in improving academic performance:
  - 10% points higher on achievement tests
  - Better attendance
  - More constructive behavior, less disruptive
  - Like school more
  - Better grade point averages

*“No Excuses Left Behind,” NYT, 2007
Teacher’s Perspective

• 1/3 of teachers leave profession within the first 4 years due to students with behavior problems
• In a poll of AFT teachers, 17% said they lost 4+ hours of teacher time per week due to disruptive student behavior
• 19% more said they lost 2 to 3 hours/week

Institute of Medicine Report

Preventing Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People: Progress and Possibilities

March, 2009

Critical importance of Relationships

• Positive school climate and student connectedness to school are largely based on relationships
• Connectedness is associated with:
  1. School attendance,
  2. Academic performance
  3. Reduced involvement in risk behavior
  4. Reduced drop outs
Report Reinforces the Need for:

• The Public Health Approach used by PBS
• Integrated strategies
• Using schools as the optimal setting for health promotion programs
• A shared agenda, with schools, families & community MH working together to build a continuum of interventions.

Prevention is a Priority

• ½ of all mental illnesses occur by age 14; ¾ occur before age 24
• Need to refocus the mental health system on prevention activities
• Includes training teachers, health and child care providers to support the emotional and behavioral health of young people.

Bridges that Work in Colorado

• Response to Intervention
• School-wide Positive Behavior Supports
• Building Bridges Grant
RtI Means Behavior Too

A legislative mandate in Colorado
Systemic reform that includes:
- Universal screening for behavior
- Problem Solving Process
- System of tiered interventions
- Evidence-based practices at all 3 tiers
- Progress Monitoring/assessment
- Family Partnerships

Six Components of RtI

Behavior and Academics are Linked

Improvements in student behavior and school climate are related to improvements in academic outcomes.

Fleming et al., 2005; Kellam et al., 1998; McIntosh et al., 2006; Nelson et al., 2006; Nelson et al., 1996; Wentzel, 1993

Eight Practices of Colorado Positive Behavior Support

1. Administrative Leadership
2. Team Implementation
3. Define Concrete Expectations
4. Teach Behavior Expectations
5. Acknowledge and Reward Positive Behavior
6. Monitor and Correct Behavior
7. Use Data for Decision Making
8. Family and Community Partnerships
### Numbers of Schools Trained

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th># of SW-PBS Schools</th>
<th># of Schools in Region</th>
<th>% of Schools Implementing</th>
<th># of Students in SW-PBS Schools</th>
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<td>Metro</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<td>653</td>
<td>1,742</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>335,301</td>
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*These regions have missing data and these figures are lower than listed.

### Number of Students Impacted by PBS in Colorado

### Elementary School Office Discipline Referrals

Per Day Per 100 Students
Middle School Office Discipline Referrals
Per Day Per 100 Students

We Are...
Safe
Respectful
Responsible

PBS Model & Behavioral Health Services
Greater the need – greater the need for collaboration with:
- Families
- Mental Health/Substance Abuse
- Human Services
- Healthcare
- Law Enforcement
- Judicial System
Universal Mental Health Interventions

- Universal screening for behavior
- Defining and teaching behavioral expectations
- A positive acknowledgement system for behaviors
- Social – Emotional Learning (e.g., a universal curriculum, such as Life Skills Training for substance abuse prevention
- Families are partners

Targeted Mental Health Interventions

- Standard Protocol Interventions are evidence-based and delivered with fidelity
- Re-teaching expectations
- Social skills groups
- Check-in Check-out Program
- Targeted social-emotional curriculum, such as Second Steps & Anger Replacement Therapy
- Families included in collaborative problem-solving

Intensive Interventions

- A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) is used to guide the development of an individual Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
- Includes community collaboration and/or wraparound services
- Families provide support at home.
Building a Bridge Together
An Integrated Approach

System of Care: Essential Elements
A system of care is a coordinated, integrated networking of community-based services and supports. Systems are governed by core values, including:
- Child-centered & strengths based
- Family focused,
- Community-based
- Culturally competent

System of Care Framework
**System of Care:**
**Effective in Colorado**

**Colorado Cornerstone School Outcomes:**
- GPA significantly improved within 6 mos. & then maintained through 36 mos.
- Significant decrease in In-School Detention from intake (42%) through 36-mos (22%).
- Significant decrease in suspensions from intake (48%) through 36-mos (22%).
- Expulsions fell from 8.3% to 1.8%.
- Parent satisfaction with child’s school significantly improved from intake through 36 mos.

**Role of the State & Communities:**
**Building Bridges between Systems**

**Building Bridges:**
**Integrated PBS/SOC Approach**
- 18 month grant + 1 year extension to 10/14/10
- Build statewide infrastructure to:
  - Support the integration of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) and the System of Care (SOC) approaches
  - Improve outcomes of students in Colorado.
- Mesa County is the Demonstration Site

- Schools across the county implementing this integrated approach report:
  - Increased collaboration with MH & other agencies
  - Improved outcomes for students

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Building Bridges for Children’s Behavioral Health

Key Informant Interview and Focus Group Results
October 2008

Recommendations

• Increase training on behavioral health for teachers, principals, and other school staff
• Increase awareness of and competence at referring families
• Ensure strength-based strategies such as PBS are fully implemented
• Address barriers to accessing services
• Address bullying and teasing of children and youth with special needs.
• Expand family involvement at both the individual case level and in the many collaborative efforts in Mesa County.

Mental Health Training for School Staff

• "Mental Health First Aid" piloted in Mesa County
  – Research-based curriculum from Australia
  – Designed for first responders
  – Effective cross-system training, but best for those with little prior training in MH
• "Parents and Teachers as Allies" from NAMI
Support for Teachers

- Provide “Scripts” for talking to parents
- “Talking points” for teachers to call parents when students are behind in social-emotional development or present other behavioral challenges
- Response from teachers is extremely positive

Fact Sheets for Teachers and Parents

- Provide tips for teachers and parents to support these students in school
- Highlight specific mental health problems, e.g., depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, conduct disorder, OCD, etc.
- Includes educational implications & proactive instructional strategies
- Drafts at www.csi-policy.org/buildingbridges/brochures-en-sp.html

Social-Emotional Standards

- Initially identified by Mesa SD & endorsed by Grant Leadership Team
- Ultimately included in CDE’s recently approved Health & PE standards
“Emotional & Social Wellness”
3rd Grade Expectations

1. Utilize skills to treat self & others with care & respect
2. Demonstrate interpersonal communication skills to support positive interactions with families, peers, and others
3. Demonstrate positive social behaviors during class

Collaboration with Community MH Centers

- 100% of Colorado’s 17 community mental health centers have school-based services
- Inconsistent & fragmented funding
- BB Grant: Promote school-based services and state policies for increased funding

Issue of Liability for Referring Students

- Not a problem in Mesa County
- Legal research supports school district’s communicating with families
- Need clarification in state policies or statutes
Mental Health Integration Grants in Colorado

- Aurora Community Mental Health Center & Cherry Creek School District
- Adams County School Districts along with District Attorneys Office
- Pueblo School District

Steps to Build Bridges In your community:

- Raise awareness: use your PBS data
- Consider focus groups with families and youth for input
- Connect mental health center work with schools / PBS
- Train parents, school and community partners on mental health and substance abuse concerns and available resources
- Identify and link to community resources and providers
- Link PBS with family organizations

Crossing the Bridge Together
Building Bridges as a Change Agent

Better outcomes come from:

- Fostering family/family organization collaborative partnerships
- Interagency collaboration
- Individualized community-based care
- Evaluating Outcomes!

Seeing Families as Collaborators
(Fostering family partnerships)

Collaboration involves:
- Shared responsibility
- Shared goals
- Working together

Through:
- Supportive relationships
- Realistic arrangements
- Responsible information exchange
- Flexible, shared approaches to gauging failure or success

Role of State and Local Family Organizations

- Build and train an army of knowledgeable, competent and passionate family-leaders across the state and local communities.
- Train family advocates to support parents who are accessing mental health and other services for their children.
- Promote policy and system change efforts to ensure positive outcomes for special needs children and their families.
Different Perspectives  
(Interagency Collaboration)

- An educator sees a student in danger of dropping out.
- A health-care provider sees a patient at risk of becoming pregnant.
- A social service worker sees a client who may require public assistance.
- A juvenile justice worker sees a potential runaway.
- A family member sees a sister, brother, daughter or son who has many needs

Universal Strategies for all Families: 1st Tier

- Create a welcoming environment
- Solicit family input
- Provide an orientation
- Establish ongoing communication
- Sponsor social activities
Moving to Solutions

National

What makes parents feel welcome?

Parents feel welcome when they are treated with respect and they are viewed as partners in helping their children.

Building Bridges

Agreeing that...

- PBS & RTI means that parents and caregivers should be treated as equal partners.
- Both teachers and parents benefit when parents are knowledgeable.
- Parents feel more comfortable working with teachers who help and respect them.

Moving to Solutions

National

Making sure that parents are spoken to politely on the telephone when they call the school.

"Even if a parent is at the school because their child’s been suspended, they should feel supported by the school and not feel blamed for that child’s bad behavior."

Building Bridges

- Mesa creating a family resource guide for parents to navigate the systems.
- Peaks model for person centered planning will be implemented to help families and their children during transitions, i.e. middle to high school.

Selective Strategies to Boost Some Families: 2nd Tier

- Connect families with each other.
- Support families where they are and with what they need
- Offer families education and training.
- Take advantage of meetings with the family and child.
- Recruit family members to serve on advisory groups.
Moving To Family Driven Care

National Theme
Parents have experienced poor school customer service.

Mesa Theme
Schools will be better able to meet the needs of special needs children by treating their families respectfully, by providing them volunteer opportunities and information about community resources.

• For parents of children with ED (Emotional Disturbance), it can be anxiety-provoking to be unable to speak with someone at the school who can update them on the status of their child, particularly if that child requires medication or has recently experienced escalating behavioral problems.

Moving to Solutions

Parents feel welcome when their school provides opportunities for them to connect with other parents.

One parent noted that it is clear the school is reaching out to parents “when it throws you that rope.”

Building Bridges

• Include parents in school in-services
• Educated parents feel supported and better connected.
• Educated parents better able to express the “Family Voice.”
• Promote opportunities for equal parent partnerships with schools.
• Mandate family collaboration in RTI and PBS.

Moving to Solutions

National

• Use school in-service training days to increase mental health awareness and evidence-based practices.

• Have every school produce a brochure that gives families information about how to specifically access mental health services in their community

Building Bridges

• NAMI training “Parents and Teachers As Allies” scheduled as an in-service for teachers and parents
  – Addresses stigma on mental health issues
  – For students
  – Parents dealing with these situations
  – Parents not blamed for having a “bad kid”
• Social/Emotional norms adapted to help in with early intervention and referral
**Intensive Strategies for Hard to Reach Families: 3rd Tier**

- Tailor approaches to each family
- Repair relationships between youth, their family and the school.
- Hire Family Advocate/Liaison to work with families

**Moving to Family Driven Care**

**NATION THEME**
- Parents feel overwhelmed and isolated by lack of information

**MESA THEME**
- By implementing PBS across the district it is the belief that Mesa families and children will have a more positive school experience.

**Moving to Family Driven Care**

**National Theme**
- Parents feel intimidated by unequal power.

**Mesa Theme**
- Provide staff training to help meet the needs of children with behavioral health issues
- Funding and staff turnover have an impact.

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For example, how to make the IEP experience less intimidating?

"You feel like if you don't sign right then and there, you don't really want to help your child."
Be worthy of the faith others have in you. -unknown

Resources

• Family Driven Care Are we there yet?  
  The road map for system transformation for family members, educators, and mental health professionals.  May 2007  
  Albert J. Duchnowski, Ph.D.; Krista Kutash, Ph.D.  
  
  Department of Child and Family Studies  
  Luis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute  
  University of South Florida  
  http://cfs.fmhi.usf.edu

Resources to Support Your Efforts

• Way To Go: School Success for Children with Mental Health Care Needs: www.Bazelon.org  
• Colorado Department of Education: Positive Behavior Support homepage: www.cde.state.co.us/pbs  
• Colorado Department of Education Response to Intervention Tools and Resources  
  www.cde.state.co.us/RtiToolsResourcesRti.htm  
• The Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health  
  Colorado Chapter www.coloradofederation.org  
• The Center for Systems Integration www.csi-policy.org
“The way a team plays as a whole determines its success.”
- Babe Ruth

Acknowledgements

- CO SW-PBS Initiative
  - CDE Leadership Team
  - Regional TAC’s
  - Coaches Network
- Colorado Department of Education
- Center for Systems Integration (CSI)
- OSEP TA Center for PBIS
  - IL PBIS network
  - FL PBIS project

Building Bridges
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