STUDENT-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS

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MODULE STRUCTURE

• Module series goal:
  - Provide information to schools that can lead to improvements in school climate and behavioral outcomes.

• Module narratives provide additional information to accompany PowerPoint Presentation.
  - Endnotes throughout slides correspond to the references in the module narrative.

• Gold star = Resource on Delaware PBS website

WHAT ARE STUDENT-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS?

• Quality of the interactions between students in a school-wide context
  - Peer acceptance
  - Social support
DELAWARE SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

On the Delaware School Climate Survey, student-student relationships is captured by items assessing:

- students (including those of different races) getting along and
- students demonstrating friendliness, caring, and respect toward each other

WHY ARE STUDENT-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS IMPORTANT?

Impact

Mental health & emotional wellbeing

Social & Academic development

School & Classroom climate

Buffer life stressors

IMPACT FOR INDIVIDUALS

Students with positive peer relations tend to have:

- Higher self-esteem and a more positive self-concept
- Greater satisfaction toward school
- Greater academic achievement
- Greater engagement in school
Students lacking peer acceptance and support from peers tend to experience:

- Fewer opportunities to learn social skills & develop healthy friendships\(^4\)\(^5\)\(^\text{15-17}\)
- More internalizing problems\(^4\)\(^5\)\(^\text{15-17}\)
- More externalizing problems\(^4\)\(^\text{15-18}\)
- Drug abuse\(^\text{19}\)
- Bullying from others\(^\text{20-21}\)
- Increased disliking of school or emotional disengagement\(^\text{22}\)
- Greater academic problems, school avoidance, & increased risk of dropping out\(^\text{23-26}\)

### Student Characteristics

- Social skills, especially prosocial skills
- Being friendly, cooperative, helpful\(^\text{8-29}\)
- Nonacademic skills such as musical or athletic ability applied in small groups or teams.
STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Factors contributing to peer rejection: 28, 31-32
  - Aggressive, disruptive, noncompliant behaviors
  - High social withdrawal or shyness
  - Low academic engagement
  - Deficits and deficiencies in the social-cognitive and emotional domains
  - Communication/language deficits
  - Difficulty with inhibitory control and delay of gratification

**The relations between student characteristics and social rejection often are reciprocal.**

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Positive student-student relationships exist in classrooms and schools that include:
  - An authoritative approach: emotional support + structure
  - Teachers who avoid publicly demonstrating a strong liking or disliking toward individual students
  - Teachers/staff who are responsive to social dynamics and peer group affiliations
  - Peer acceptance increases in classrooms and schools in which responsiveness and student-centered practices receive major focus: 37, 44-45

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Positive student-student relationships exist in classrooms and schools that include:
  - Opportunities for supervised student interactions
  - Peer-assisted learning activities
  - Extra curricular activities
  - Service learning opportunities
Behaviors & norms that support prosocial behavior, academic engagement, and promote caring

Behaviors & norms that oppose antisocial behavior

Positive student-student relationships exist in classrooms and schools that include:

Classroom Management & School-Wide Discipline

Contribution Factors

Student-Student Relationships

Recommended Strategies

Curriculum-based Lessons

Student-Student Relationship Building Activities

Examine School Climate Data

Examine data, such as from Delaware School Climate Survey
- Are student-student relationships viewed favorably across students, teacher/staff, and parents?
  - Unfavorable responses would indicate the need for interventions and related staff development.
- Look at responses to specific items on surveys (e.g., Student-Student Relationship subscale).
- Additional data should be gathered and examined to help determine why.
- Share results with focus groups.
CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS

Focus group guide
- Information on:
  - Designing questions
  - Recruiting participants
  - Conducting the group
  - Analyzing data
- Provides examples

from Duke University
(https://assessment.trinity.duke.edu/documents/How_to_Conduct_a_Focus_Group.pdf)

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- Implement strategies to prevent behavior problems and promote positive student-student relationships
  - Provide models of behaviors associated with peer acceptance
  - Use praise and other recognitions strategically
  - Encourage students to praise and reinforce one another for prosocial behavior
  - Develop class vision with students
  - Consistently communicate and highlight social acceptance
  - School-wide behavioral expectations
  - Classroom meetings
  - School-wide activities
  - Media (newsletter, website)
  - Strengthen teacher-student relationships

EFFECTIVE PRAISE & REWARDS

- Provides general strategies for effectively praising and rewarding students
- Gives specific script examples of what to do or what to say to students
- Activity for staff practice also available.
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

• Implement additional strategies for preventing behavior problems
• Communicate and collaborate with students’ families
• Arrange seating to promote opportunities for positive social interactions and social acceptance
• Closely monitor and respond to social dynamics of the classroom and school
  - Observe peer interactions and affiliations
• Avoid encouraging hierarchical peer social networks
• Encourage students to talk to teachers, other school staff, and peers about what might be interfering with positive relations

SOCIOMETRIC SEATING TOOL

Excel spreadsheet and instruction guide

• Students list 3 peers with whom they would like sit
• Track students’ responses in Excel to see who is (and who is not) nominated by one another

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

• When correcting misbehavior, consider how actions taken might impact student-student relationships
  - Correct privately instead of publicly
  - Always combine correction with recognition of positive behavior
  - Teach skills to prevent behavior from reoccurring
  - Use inductive discipline; communicate impact of behavior on relations with others
CORRECTING MISBEHAVIOR

- Flow chart demonstrating how to:
  - Problem solve with student
  - Follow up to support future positive behavior

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & SCHOOL-WIDE DISCIPLINE
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- In the classroom, consider implementing the Good Behavior Game.
  - Designed to provide the frequent monitoring and reinforcement of targeted behaviors.
  - Handout that provides specific steps to implementing the game.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING ACTIVITIES
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- Provide opportunities for peer-assisted learning
  - Peer mentoring, buddy systems
  - Consider whom you group together
  - Consider grouping students of different races/ethnicities
  - Encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities and sports
  - Play games that promote fun and social interactions
  - Identify and showcase students’ skills and talents to help students to get to know each other
  - Example: “Yellow Pages” activity
YELLOW PAGES ACTIVITY

- Students make advertisements for skills they can offer the class
- Advertisements copied on yellow paper and made into book

CURRICULUM-BASED LESSONS
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- Use multiple opportunities in and outside the classroom to teach lessons on peer relations
  - Highlight lessons within school subjects
  - Focus on student-student relationships during “teachable moments”
  - Highlight and discuss issues pertaining to social relationships in current events
- Adopt a packaged SEL curriculum
  - Lessons on relationship skills
  - Demonstrated improvement in peer relationships
  - Ex: PATHS, Second Step, Responsive Classroom

SEL PROGRAMS

- Resource (Excel sheet) provides expected outcomes for various programs by categories (e.g., academics, classroom quality, etc.)
- Pay special attention to the “Social Skills, Prosocial Behavior, and Aggression” column.
Recommended Strategies
Students with Tiers 2 & 3 support needs

STUDENTS AT TIER 2 & 3
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

• Apply the strategies already mentioned as appropriate at the universal level and for all students
  • With greater frequency and intensity
  • More comprehensive
  • More individualized
• Provide social skills/SEL training related to prosocial skills
  • Universal or Tiers 2/3
    • Incredible Years (pre-k – grade 2)
    • Coping Power (grades 4 – 6)
    • PEERS (middle and high school)
• Where appropriate, develop a behavioral contract

STUDENTS AT TIER 2 & 3
RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

• Ensure targeted students have a supportive relationship with at least one other person

• Work closely with the home in targeting social and academic skills

• Provide more intensive supports
  • Individual counseling, family therapy, or parent management training, and social services
THANK YOU

Based on areas of need identified by data, check out other resources provided through the School Climate and Student Success Module Series. www.delawarepbs.org

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