School-based Prevention of Bullying and Related Behavior Problems

Catherine Bradshaw, Ph.D., M.Ed.
Professor & Associate Dean for Research, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia

Deputy Director, Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence (CDC)
Co-Director, Johns Hopkins Center for Prevention & Early Intervention (NIMH)
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Congressional Briefing 2/10/15
Does bullying prevention work?

• “Bullying” Prevention Programs
  – 23% decrease in perpetration of bullying
  – 20% decrease in victimization

• Challenges
  – impacts largest among older children (ages 11-14) relative to younger children
  – programs were generally more effective in Europe than in US or Canada
Recommended Core Components

- Teacher training
- Activities for students
- Parent activities
- Multi-component programs
- School-wide
- Continuum of positive supports
- Data-driven process

(HRSA; Limber; Bradshaw, 2013, in press; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011)
Reducing Bullying and Rejection

- School-wide efforts, which involve all school staff, and are implemented across all school settings show the most promise (Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011)
Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)

• Multi-tiered Systems of Support
• Non-curricular, school-wide tiered prevention system
  – Focuses on improving systems (e.g., reinforcement) and practices (e.g., evidence-based programs) through data-based decision making
• Applies a public health approach
  – 80% of student population respond to universal intervention; 20% need additional services
A Multi-tiered System of Support: A Public Health Approach to Prevention and Integration

Universal Prevention
Core Instruction, all students, preventive, proactive

Selective or Targeted Intervention
Supplemental, some students, reduce risk

Indicated or Intensive Intervention
Individualized, functional assessment, highly specific for few

Students within Schools

(IOM, 2009; Walker et al., 1996)
As the magnitude of the problem increases...

- The required resources to address the problem increases
- The need to enhance environmental structures increases
- The frequency for collecting and acting upon information increases

Core Support Programs: Provided to all, intended to reach most.

Continuum of Supports
USDOE’s School Climate Framework for Establishing the Conditions for Learning

School Climate

Engagement
- Connection to Teachers
- Student Connectedness
- School Connectedness
- Academic Engagement
- Culture of Equity
- Parent Engagement

Safety
- Perceived Safety
- Bullying & Aggression
- General Drug Use

Environment
- Physical Comfort/Maintenance
- Rules & Consequences
- Support
- Disorder

(Adapted version of USDOE School Climate Model, N=25,000 Bradshaw et al., 2014)
Summary of PBIS Effects From Randomized Trials

• Significant Impacts for the School Environment
  • *Systems changes* are sustainable over multiple years
  • Significant improvements in *school climate*

• Significant Impacts for Students
  • 32% reduction in *school-level suspensions*
  • Students 33% less likely to receive an *office discipline referral*
  • A positive effect on *academic performance*
  • Significant reductions in *teacher-reported* bullying, victimization, aggressive behavior, concentration problems, and improvements in prosocial behavior and emotion regulation
    • Effects strongest among “at risk” and “high risk” students

(Bradshaw et al., 2008; 2009; 2010; 2012; in press; Horner et al., 2009; Waasdorp, Bradshaw & Leaf, 2012)
What kind of school do you want your school to be?

MDS3 Climate Survey  Date: March 1st-May 15th

Complete the MDS3 Climate Survey.

It only takes a few minutes and is anonymous.

This survey will help us better understand how staff, students and parents perceive your school and to develop ways to help improve school climate.

The MDS3 Initiative is sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education to measure and improve school climate in high schools throughout Maryland.
Impacts of PBIS in High Schools

• General improving trend for all schools
• Significant improvements for PBIS schools
  – weapon carrying
  – being threatened or injured by a weapon
  – skipping school because a fear for safety
  – marijuana use
  – engagement

(Bradshaw et al., 2014; Adolescent Psychiatry)
Reducing Bullying and Rejection

- Universal school-wide prevention models that prevent violence and disruptive behaviors may also impact bullying
  - Classroom management
  - Social-emotional learning programs
NOT Recommended Strategies

- Zero tolerance (i.e., automatic suspension) policies
- Grouping students who bully together
- Conflict resolution/peer mediation
- Providing details on bullying-related suicides
- Brief assemblies or one-day awareness raising events

(HRSA; Limber; Bradshaw, 2013; Duong & Bradshaw, 2015; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011)
Summary of Lessons Learned

• Start with tier 1 supports
• Identify climate and student behavior as school-wide goals
• Data use
• Focus on communication
• Youth voice
• Skills and approaches of an effective coach
• Importance of a strong leadership team and administrator support
• Integration is critical

(Bradshaw et al., 2014; Adolescent Psychiatry)
Integrated Multi-tiered Systems of Support Model

- Social Emotional Learning
- Substance Use Prevention
- Special Education Assessment and Referral
- Bullying Prevention
- Student Services
- School Mental Health
- Restorative Practices

Response to Intervention

(MSDE, 2008; Bradshaw et al., 2014)