

SUPPORTING THE SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS

Ericka Levy, Psy.D.

School Psychologist

OBJECTIVES

- Define trauma
- Examine the effects of trauma & the pandemic on students
- Discuss how unnecessary referrals to the IEP Team can lead students into the school to prison pipeline
- Discuss steps that can be taken before referring students to the IEP process
- Discuss specific interventions for some of the most common behavioral challenges

TRAUMA

- Individual trauma results from an **event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse **effects** on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well being.

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

- Economic stability
- Physical environment
- Education
- Food
- Community, safety & social context
- Health Care



IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUTH

- Grief & loss
- Increase in depression and/or anxiety symptoms
- Increase in suicide attempts among girls ages 12-17
- Increased anger & irritability
- Increased child abuse
- Increase in PTSD diagnoses*



STRESS RESPONSES IN STUDENTS

- Irritability
- Trouble sleeping at night
- Gastrointestinal issues
- Aggressive behaviors
- Problems with memory or concentration
- Changes in appearance
- Changes in mood
- Changes in behavior
- A loss of interest
- Changes in appetite, weight or eating patterns
- Increase in risky or reckless behaviors
- Thoughts of death or suicide



WHO'S AT RISK FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRALS?

- Male
- African American
- Socioeconomic status (FARM status)
- Poor attendance
- History of suspensions
- Teacher attitudes

THE PROBLEM OF OVER-REPRESENTATION

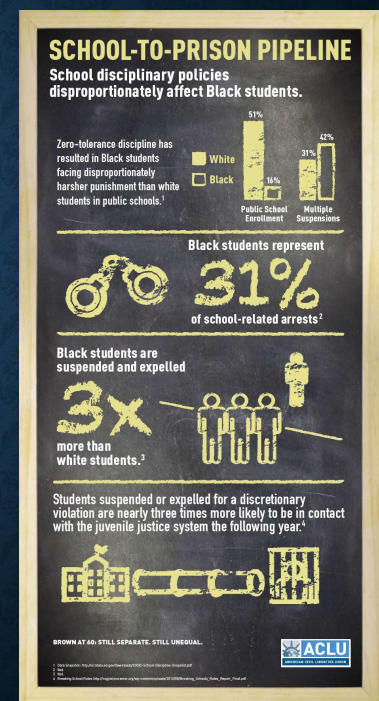
- More likely to attend schools that are under-resourced and performing poorly
- Three times more likely to be suspended or expelled than Caucasian peers
- 2.5 times less likely to be enrolled in gifted & talented programs

THE PROBLEM OF OVER-REPRESENTATION

- 2.5 times more likely to be classified as Intellectually Disabled
- More likely to have under-prepared and ineffective teachers
- Do not participate in a quality afterschool program
- Less than half graduate from high school on time

“SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE”

- Policies and practices that negatively impact students which lead to increased time out of the classroom and punitive discipline measures including suspension, expulsion and arrests for minor offenses



THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE
from education to incarceration

The school-to-prison pipeline is a common metaphor used to describe the ways in which students are pushed out of the education system and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems through policies and practices within schools that involve law enforcement.

FACTORS

- SCHOOL EXCLUSION**
Includes suspensions, expulsion, disciplinary transfers and "zero tolerance" disciplinary codes.
- MINORITY POPULATIONS**
Consequences are often disproportionately placed on minority and low-income populations, with poor students more likely to experience criminalized school discipline during elementary school.
- CRIMINAL JUSTICE TOOLS**
Using tools such as metal detectors and surveillance technology, and importing police officers into schools, to mirror a prison setting.

Students who have been suspended or expelled are **2x** more likely to drop out than students who have not

Black students are suspended or expelled **3x** more frequently than white students

Of students disciplined in middle or high school, **23%** are involved in the juvenile justice system

95% of suspensions, out of the **3.3 million** children suspended from school each year, are for nonviolent offenses such as violating the dress code or "disruptive behavior"

DISRUPTING THE PIPELINE: Multisystemic Therapy (MST) is an evidence-based intervention for at-risk youth and their families. MST helps keep youth out of the juvenile justice system by implementing customized interventions within the home, school & community. For more information, visit www.mstservices.com

SOURCES: AMERICANS4BAR.ORG | JUSTICEPOLICY.ORG

MST
Services

REROUTING THE PIPELINE

- Classroom teacher know the students the best and are the 1st line of defense when addressing inappropriate behaviors
- Shifting our thinking to be more responsive and less punitive
 - Shift #1/Step #1: Adopt a social-emotional lens
 - What is this student trying to tell me? What issues/concerns are impacting the student outside of school? What does the student need?
 - Shift #2/Step #2: Know your students and develop your cultural competency
 - *Learn and affirm the social and cultural capital your students bring to the classroom.*
 - *How can I use his skills and talents in the classroom? How are these skills helpful in his environment outside of school and how can I can help affirm those strengths?*

REROUTING THE PIPELINE

- Shift #3/ Step #3: Plan and Deliver Effective Student-Centered Instruction
 - How can I adapt my teaching to better meet the needs of this student?
 - Plan and deliver meaningful curriculum that connects to students' lives, communities and world.
 - Your students should understand and care about their purpose for learning.
- Shift #4/Step #4: Move from Punishment to Development
 - How can I support the development of missing skills? How can I support this student to advocate for himself/herself in an appropriate and meaningful way?
 - *Model, reinforce and praise positive, healthy behavior.*

REROUTING THE PIPELINE

- Shift #5/Step #5: Resist the urge to criminalize the behavior
 - Focus on what the student is trying to tell you through their behaviors
 - How can I address that need?
 - While extreme situations may warrant it, be extraordinarily thoughtful about when and why you ask a student to leave your class
 - What are the costs of his or her lost instructional time? What are the costs to your credibility with that student?

BEFORE SPECIAL EDUCATION

- *Students who have emotional or behavioral differences do not necessarily need special education.*
- What is needed is a tiered approach to assist the student.
 - Classroom teacher and school-wide behavior expectation
 - Consultation with specialists in academics, behavior, emotional student needs

TIER 1 INTERVENTIONS

These are implemented primarily by the teacher with parental assistance as needed:

- Increased parent contact by teacher
- Capitalize on student strengths
- Modify teacher response to student (repeat directions, prompts)
- Modify classroom setting





TIER 1 INTERVENTIONS - CONTINUED

- Analyze instructional level vs grade level/curriculum expectations
- Engage student as a helper
- Teacher directed incentive program for targeted behaviors
- Modify student schedule
- Time out plan – structured inside/outside classroom

TIER 1 INTERVENTIONS - CONTINUED

- Conflict resolution
- Teacher directed classroom management plan – behavior contract
- Re-arrange class groups/student schedule to address needs
- Character Counts or other lessons
- Reteach and practice classroom rules and expectations
- Formal home-school communication system between teacher and parent



TIER 2 INTERVENTIONS

Targeted interventions implemented primarily by teacher/grade level team with staff assistance as needed

- Consultation with school-based mental health provider
- Specialist consultation to confirm instructional level match with academic expectations
- Grade level teachers discuss potential functions of behavior and across classes
- Parent/teacher/student meeting with administration and support staff
- Check In/Check out system
- Support from assistant/volunteer

TIER 2 INTERVENTIONS - CONTINUED

- Social Skills instruction
- Small group academic or study skills instruction
- Individual or group school counseling
- Peer Mediation



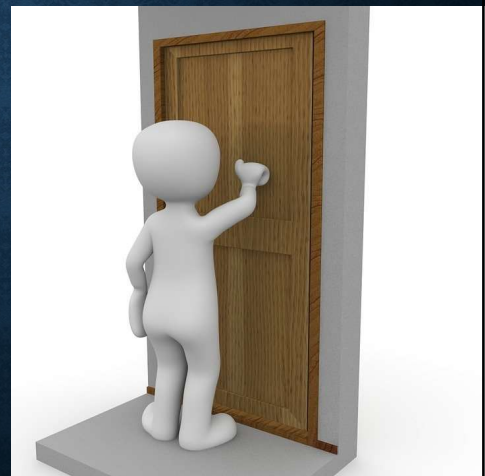
TIER 3 INTERVENTIONS – STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

Intensive intervention implemented primarily by SST and administrator

- SST staffing of student with teacher(s) – formal student support plan
- School psychologist, social worker, behavior specialist for ongoing intervention support – consultation, collaboration
- Formal behavior contract - involve specialists and support staff
- Formal FBA and BIP with incentives and consequences
- Formal check-in/check-out with admin, resource room, etc.

TIER 3 INTERVENTIONS – STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

- Crisis plan development
- Home visits
- Temporary alternative class or program setting to stabilize behavior
- Wraparound service consideration with agencies



FEDERAL DEFINITION OF EMOTIONAL DISABILITY

- (a) "Emotional disability" means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics **over a long period of time and to a marked degree, that adversely affects a student's educational performance:**
 - (i) An *inability* to learn that cannot be explained by *intellectual, sensory, or health factors*;
 - (ii) An *inability* to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
 - (iii) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings *under normal circumstances*;
 - (iv) A general, pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
 - (v) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

23

FEDERAL DEFINITION OF EMOTIONAL DISABILITY

- (b) "Emotional disability" includes schizophrenia
- (c) "Emotional disability" does not include a student who is socially maladjusted, **unless** it is determined that the student has an emotional disability

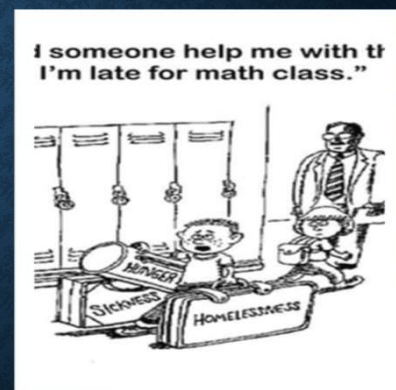
24

SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENT

- Neither IDEA nor COMAR define “social maladjustment”
- MSDE and the Maryland School Psychologist Association (MSPA) recommend that “socially maladjusted” be used to refer to students who behave in socially unacceptable ways for socially unaccepted motives within the environment of the school.
- Disability or Choice
- Can’t or Won’t

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Lead Poisoning, vitamin deficiencies, TBI
- Homelessness
- Family structure
- Community – food insufficiency, crime, supports available
- Students’ other responsibilities – getting younger siblings ready for school
- Vision/hearing difficulties



26

COMMON BEHAVIORS AND HOW TO RESPOND

Common Behaviors

- Refusal and Disobedient
- Anxious or Depressed
- Disorganized

DEPENDING ON HOW
WE RESPOND,
THINGS CAN GET
BETTER OR WORSE.



REFUSAL AND DISOBEDIENT BEHAVIORS



- “NO!!!!”
- PASSIVE REFUSAL –NON COMPLIANT
- EXCUSES AND BLAME
- TANTRUM
- SICK OR IT HURTS



STRATEGIES FOR OPPOSITIONAL BEHAVIORS

- Remember that everyday is a fresh start
- Stay calm
- Develop routines & teach them
- Avoid power struggles
- Be consistent
- Use their interests in lessons
- Teach missing skills
- Build a strong relationship



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY

PRE-CORRECTION



OFFER TWO POSITIVE CHOICES



TAKE A
BREAK: REST
IN A SUNNY
SPOT OR
REST IN THE
SHADE



PRACTICE
READING:
COMICS OR
GAMES



GRANDMA'S RULE



GRANDMA, CAN I HAVE A COOKIE?

YES, PUT YOUR PLATE IN THE SINK FIRST.

ANXIOUS OR DEPRESSED BEHAVIORS



PROVIDING SUPPORT

- Do not yell
- Validate their feelings but not their behavior
- Use silence
- Be aware of your body language
- Respect personal space
- Provide a movement break
- Practice deep breathing
- Reinforce strategies learned during clinical sessions

COMFORT STATION/PLACE/BOX



USE RELAXATION AND EXERCISE



MIRROR NEURONS

We give what
we get



INTERVENTIONS

- Academic instruction/instructional match
 - Classroom support
- Check in, check out
 - Relationship building
 - Set tone for the day
- Peer assistance
 - Relationship building
 - Builds confidence
- Self-management strategies
 - Makes student aware
- Consult with colleagues & across disciplines
 - Unmet need

“If a child doesn’t know
how to read, **we teach.**
If a child doesn’t know to
swim, **we teach.**
If a child doesn’t know how
to multiply, **we teach.**
If a child doesn’t know how
to drive, **we teach.**
If a child doesn’t know how
to behave, **we teach?**
Or punish?”

Herner 1998

ACT LIKE A FLIGHT ATTENDANT



GREET DAILY



MEET NEEDS



REMAIN CALM



SELF CARE IS CRITICAL FOR SURVIVAL

A collage of five cartoon characters in circular frames: Muppet, Minions, Charlie Brown, Bart Simpson, and Tigger.

WHO IS THIS STUDENT?

WHAT TO TAKE AWAY TODAY

- Students and their behaviors are complex
- It is easy to over-identify students so start with the student, the classroom environment, the teacher, the parent as helper
- Use a tiered approach to helping each student
- Most students, with the right interventions early, do not need separate programming

Relationships are key to student progress

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS



Ericka Levy, Psy.D.
erickalevy2000@yahoo.com