

Evidence Based Options to Suspension and Exclusion: What Works!

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Topics

- ◆ A. Discipline & Zero Tolerance
 - Zero tolerance - Zero evidence!
 - Need for evidence-based practice
 - Over reliance on suspension and expulsion
 - Revising Policies
 - Two systems of discipline- Special Education
- ◆ B. Alternatives to Suspension & Expulsion
 - "Top ten" alternatives to consider
 - "Top ten" ways to make alternatives work
- ◆ C. A Framework for School Planning about Behavior
 - Positive Behavior Supports
 - The Safe and Responsive Schools Framework



A. Discipline and Zero Tolerance



What is Discipline?

- ◆ The etymology of *discipline*:

From same *Lat.* root as *disciple*:
discipere: "To teach or comprehend"



Purposes of School Discipline

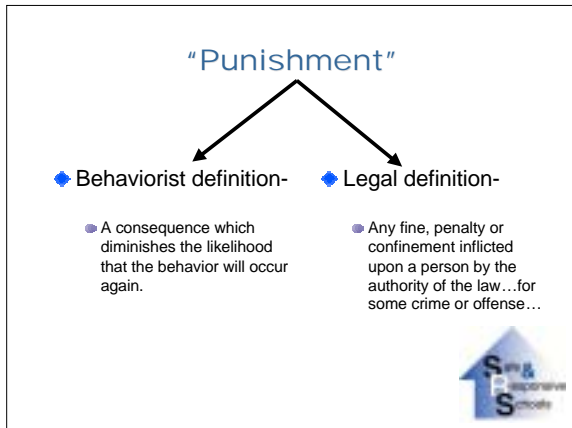
- 1. To change the student's behavior
- 2. To deter or prevent other students from engaging in the behavior (make an "example" of the offending student)
- 3. To maintain a "safe" school environment
- 4. To maintain the "decorum" of the school (propriety of language, dress & conduct according to community standards)



Other "Unspoken" Purposes of School Discipline


- 6. Retribution - create "suffering" inflicted as a "just punishment for a misdeed"
- 5. To get rid of the problem student so adults will no longer have to cope with the student's behavior.
- 7. To assert adult authority by making clear to students the "power" adults have over students
- 8. To serve as a supplemental law enforcement agency, providing consequences for illegal behavior.





Disadvantages of Punishment

- ◆ It does not teach the student alternative methods of behavior that can be used to prevent future behavior problems.
- ◆ It appears to inhibit learning, creates stress, and distraction.
- ◆ It is not an effective method for changing behavior.
- ◆ Punishment provides an aggressive model for the child.




Disadvantages of Punishment

- ◆ It allows the student to project blame, rather than accept responsibility.
- ◆ Activities and settings when receiving punishment tend to become aversive.
- ◆ Punishment may elicit avoidance and escape behavior.
- ◆ Punishment may only effect the child's behavior in specific situations & then only temporarily.
- ◆ Punishment does not eliminate the reinforcement for maladaptive behaviors.




The Roots of "Zero Tolerance"

- ◆ *Zero Tolerance- Harsh punishment for any amount of behavior regardless of the circumstances.*
- ◆ Based in 1980's Drug Programs
- ◆ Picked up in Schools in 1989-1990
- ◆ 1994: Gun Free Schools Act Becomes Law
- ◆ Has led to significant increases in disciplinary removal



Selected Examples:

- ◆ 1998- Nine year old on way to school found a manicure kit with 1" knife – Suspended.
- ◆ 1996- Fourteen-year-old shared two Midol tablets with classmate. Suspended 10 days with expulsion forgiven
- ◆ 1996- Six year old kissed classmate; said the girl asked him to. One-day suspension for "unwelcome touching".
- ◆ 1997 Seventh grader shared zinc cough drop with classmate. Suspended three days.



What Do We Know About School Safety?

- ◆ School security evaluations:
 - Locker searches: 0
 - Metal Detectors: 2
 - School uniforms: 2
 - Surveillance camera: 0 evaluations
- ◆ Published preventive studies
 - Conflict Resolution: 35
 - Classroom Mgmt.: 103



How Effective are Zero Tolerance Policies?

- ◆ We don't really know!
 - "Zero Evidence".
 - Probable negative effects on school climate & students.
 - It does not "teach".
- ◆ Indirect data make it unlikely that these policies make any noticeable positive difference, and possibly are associated with negative outcomes.



Criteria for an Effective Intervention

- ◆ Treatment Integrity
 - Used as intended (e.g. based on behavior)
 - Used consistently
- ◆ Non-Discriminatory
 - Equal Protection Clause of 14th Amendment
 - Title VI of Civil Rights Act
- ◆ Data Supporting Positive Outcomes
 - Improved school safety or climate
 - Improved student behavior



Over reliance on suspension and expulsion for discipline

The need for evidence-based practice!
What is the evidence for suspension?



PERCENT OF REFERRALS LEADING TO SUSPENSION BY SCHOOL

School	Percent of Incidents Suspended
1	11.3%
2	13.9%
3	16.5%
4	17.0%
5	17.2%
6	23.3%
7	26.1%
8	30.3%
9	32.2%
10	32.9%
11	34.0%
12	35.0%
13	37.9%
14	38.4%
15	58.9%
16	86.5%

School Contributions to Suspension (Wu et. al., 1982)

- ◆ Attitude and behavior contribute
- ◆ But so do:
 - Overall suspension rate
 - Teacher attitudes
 - Administrative centralization
 - School governance
 - Perceptions of achievement
- ◆ More influence of school than student factors



"One could argue from this finding that if students are interested in reducing their chances of being suspended, they will be better off by transferring to a school with a lower suspension rate than by improving their attitudes or reducing their misbehavior."

--(Wu et al., 1982)



What Behaviors are Students Referred For? *

- White students referred/suspended more for:
 - Smoking
 - Endangering
 - Obscene Language
 - Vandalism
 - Drugs/Alcohol
- Black students referred/suspended more for:
 - Loitering
 - Disrespect
 - Excessive Noise
 - Threat
 - Conduct Interference

* "The Color of Discipline": www.indiana.edu/~iepc



Improved Student Behavior?

- 30-50% of suspensions are repeat offenders
 - "Suspension functions as a reinforcer...rather than as a punisher" (Tobin, Sugai & Colvin, 1996)
- Correlation of suspension and dropout
- Dropout or push-out?



Improved School Safety or Climate?

- ◆ Schools with higher rates of suspension have:
 - Higher student teacher ratios
 - Lower academic quality ratings
 - Pay less attention to school climate
 - Spend disproportionate time on discipline
 - Have less effective school governance



Is Disciplinary Removal Fair?

- ◆ Disproportionality among poor, minorities is consistent finding
 - Not due entirely to SES
 - Do African-American students misbehave more?
 - No.



Is IDEA an Obstacle to Effective School Discipline?

- ◆ Students with disabilities *over-*represented in suspension
- ◆ 75% of principals: IDEA has positive/neutral effect on discipline (GAO)
- ◆ Will using ineffective practice for more children make discipline more fair?



Criteria of Effectiveness for Disciplinary Removal

- ◆ **Treatment Integrity?**
 - Based on classroom, school rather than behavior
 - Very little consistency from school to school
- ◆ **Non-discriminatory?**
 - Consistently overused with minorities, low SES
- ◆ **Effective outcomes?**
 - Correlated with repeat offense, dropout
 - Correlated with poorer school climate



Conclusions:

- ◆ 1. “Zero Tolerance” is not effective discipline.
- ◆ 2. Suspension and expulsion
 - are overused,
 - have negative consequences
 - are generally ineffective in accomplishing their goals.



Policies Related to Discipline

- ◆ District Codes of Conduct
- ◆ School Rules, Values and Procedures
- ◆ Classroom Rules & Expectations



Special Education Discipline

Two systems of discipline, one for general education, and one for special education, seems “unfair”.

What could be done to solve this problem?

- Of the two, which is most fair?
- Which best addresses the purposes of school discipline?



Is there a way to return to one system of discipline for all students?



1. No expulsion for any student!

- Some/many states have enacted laws requiring educational services for all students who are suspended long term or expelled.
 - Nebraska is one example- Rule 17
 - Police departments generally oppose the use of expulsion. Why?
- Shouldn't an alternative program be available for any student?



2. Team decision making & Individual Behavior Plans!

- Providing team decision making
- Could this be done for all students?



3. Individual Behavior Plans!

- Functional behavioral assessment
- Individual behavior plans
 - Could these be done for any student who needed them?



If all students received these three-

- Alternative Programming
- Team decision making
- Individual behavior plans
- Effect on safety?
 - Safer or less safe?
- Effect on fairness
 - More or less fair?
- Effect on outcomes?
 - Likelihood of better or worse outcomes?



Dakota tribal wisdom says that when you discover you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount.



However, in education we often try other strategies with dead horses, including:

- ◆ Buying a stronger whip.
- ◆ Changing riders.
- ◆ Say things like, "This is the way we have always ridden this horse."
- ◆ Appointing a committee to study the horse.
- ◆ Arranging to visit other sites to see how they ride dead horses.
- ◆ Increasing the standards to ride dead horses.
- ◆ Appointing a tiger team to revive the dead horse.
- ◆ Creating a training session to increase our riding ability.
- ◆ Change the requirements declaring that "This horse is not dead."
- ◆ Harnessing several dead horses together for increased speed.
- ◆ Declaring that "No horse is too dead to beat."
- ◆ Providing additional funding to increase the horse's performance.
- ◆ Revisit the performance requirements for horses.



Getting off the Dead Horse of Exclusionary Discipline

- ◆ How can we achieve better practice?
- ◆ How can we create supports for positive behavior?

Creating new "discipline":

- Developing & implementing alternatives to suspension and expulsion
- Developing a framework for improving student behavior



B. Alternatives to Suspension & Expulsion



Traditional School Disciplinary Consequences

- Demotion
- Lowering grades
- Detention
- Saturday school

Classroom

consequences:

- Writing "I will not ___," a hundred times.
- Staying after school
- More homework.
- Parent conference.
- Many others.

-
- Suspension
 - Expulsion



Top Ten - #10



Problem Solving/ Contracting

Alternatives
to Suspension

Use negotiation and problem solving approaches to assist student to identify alternatives. Then develop a contract with the student, which includes reinforcers for success, consequences for continuing problems.



Top Ten - #9



Restitution

Alternatives
to Suspension

Financial or in-kind. Permits the student to restore or improve the school environment. This can be done either to address problems caused by the student's behavior – vandalism, for example- or more generically to help or improve the school environment – such as picking up trash.



Top Ten - #8



Mini-courses

Alternatives
to Suspension

Short courses or modules which students can complete on topics related to their behavior as a disciplinary consequence. Can include workbooks, test, oral reports, etc. Examples:

- alcohol; drugs
- conflict resolution
- anger control
- social skills topics
- appropriate communication skills



Top Ten - #7



Parent Supervision

Alternatives
to Suspension

Parents should be invited to brainstorm with the school on how to address the behavior. One example might be to "suspend" the parent in to school by having the parent follow and supervise the student all day in school.



Top Ten - #6




Counseling

Alternatives
to Suspension

Students might be required to participate in receive some amount of counseling.



Top Ten - #5



Community Service

Alternatives
to Suspension

Programs which permit the student to perform a required amount of time in community service in the school system or in the community. Examples- Volunteer hours at another school, a soup kitchen, park or other organization where this could be arranged.



Top Ten - #4



Appropriate In-school Suspension


Alternatives
to Suspension

In school suspension which includes academic tutoring, instruction related to the student behavior problem such as social skills, and a clearly defined procedure to return to class as soon as the student is ready.

Frank Sinatra




Top Ten - #3




Behavior Monitoring

Alternatives
to Suspension

A variety of strategies to monitor behavior and academic progress might include cards checked after each class regarding behavior, self charting of behaviors, strategies to provide feedback to the student, etc.




Top Ten - #2




Alternative Programming

Alternatives
to Suspension

Changes in the student schedule, classes or course content; assignment to an alternative school or program; independent study or work experience programs. Should be tailored to student needs.




Top Ten - #1



Coordinated Behavior Plans


Alternatives
to Suspension

Creation of a structured, coordinated behavior plan specific to the student and based on assessment of the quantity and purpose of the target behavior to be reduced; should focus on increasing desirable behavior, and replacing inappropriate behaviors.



Expanding the Array of Disciplinary Alternatives

- ◆ Generate a list of non-exclusionary alternatives to responding to school or classroom disruption.
- ◆ What would it take to implement these alternatives? Time, materials, costs?
- ◆ What would be the potential benefit?
- ◆ Match consequences with levels of inappropriate behavior.
- ◆ Develop a more sophisticated system of responding to different types of inappropriate behavior.



Prerequisites

What does it take to make these consequences work?

What supports for positive behavior are necessary?



Top Ten - #10

Supports for Positive Behavior

Mediation Programs



Programs which teach students about non-violent conflict resolution, and which permit students the chance to use and experience these in school. Peer-mediation programs may be one example.



Top Ten - #9

Supports for Positive Behavior

Bullying Prevention & Intervention



Programs which teach students about bullying behaviors, and how they can be responded to and reported in school. Specific interventions are created for both bullies and victims.



Top Ten - #8

Supports for Positive Behavior

Early Identification & Intervention



Programs which permit systematically screen students for potential behavior problems, and which provide positive supports for the students identified as at "risk."



Top Ten - #7

Supports for Positive Behavior

Conflict De-escalation Training



Programs which teach staff and students to recognize and to disengage from escalating conflict.



Top Ten - #6

Supports for Positive Behavior

Increased Parent Involvement




Programs which involve a variety of parents and community members in functions and activities within the school. Improves systems of communication with parents.




Top Ten - #5

Supports for Positive Behavior

Character Education/ Consistent School Values



Curriculum and organization features of schools that promote the development of fundamental values in children. A list of desirable goals for student behavior.



The Six Pillars of Character

(Character Counts!)



Character Education


- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Good citizenship




Top Ten - #4

Supports for Positive Behavior


School-wide Discipline Program




Programs which develop a common terminology and consistent approach to discipline across staff in a school. Responsibilities of students & staff are identified; Consequences consistently enforced.



School-wide Discipline: Making It Work





- ◆ Assess the need among teachers
 - Do we need a common discipline system?
 - Should we choose a packaged program?
 - Can we develop our own program?
- ◆ Design an in-service plan
 - Successful programs: Set limits, but emphasize positive behaviors
 - Consultation; training; other?




School-wide Discipline Programs

Examples:


- ◆ Assertive Discipline
- ◆ Boys Town Administrative Model
- ◆ Discipline with Dignity
- ◆ Cooperative Discipline
- ◆ Democratic Discipline
- ◆ Discipline with Purpose
- ◆ Positive Classroom Discipline
- ◆ Responsible Classroom Management

School & Classroom Discipline: What We Know



- ◆ Properly implemented strategies can:
 - Decrease suspensions, expulsions, drop-out rates, classroom disruptions,
 - Decrease teacher stress; lower burnout
 - Increase on-task behavior, academic achievement
- ◆ Consistency between classroom and school increases effectiveness
- ◆ Consequences are identified for positive and for negative behavior.



Top Ten - #3

Supports for Positive Behavior

Positive Office Referrals/ Recognition



Programs which identify and reward individual students for appropriate behavior; permits recognition, reinforcement and celebration of all kinds of "good" behavior.



Top Ten - #2

Supports for Positive Behavior

Creating a Caring School Community



Programs which permit the student to restore or improve the school environment.



School Climate

- ◆ Patterns of Communication and Problem Solving
- ◆ Patterns of Authority and Status
- ◆ Procedures for Developing & Implementing Rules
- ◆ Student belongingness
- ◆ Relationships with Parents & Community Forces
- ◆ Processes for Dealing with Personal Problems
- ◆ Curriculum & Instructional Practices
- ◆ The Physical Environment



Top Ten - #1

Supports for Positive Behavior

Efforts to Build Adult-Student Relationships

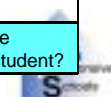


Programs which offer opportunities for students to develop individual relationships with staff.



A Tiered Code of Conduct

Offense/ Infraction	An Array of Consequences
Minor- Tardiness; Lack of homework;	Mini-course; detention; Parent Supervision
Moderate- Insubordination;	Counseling; Mini-course; Community service; Restitution
Serious- Drugs; weapons; assault.	Alternative programming; suspension;expulsion
Are supportive measures in place?	What are supportive measures for this student?



C. A Framework for School Planning about Behavior



Scanning for Effective Practices

- ◆ What are the practices or programs available elsewhere which might be useful?
 - Are they supported by research?
 - Do they match our needs?
 - Do they match our philosophy and goals?
 - Can they be adapted to our circumstances?
 - What are the costs?
 - How much training or other resources are required?



Process and Structure

- ◆ Developing a process
- ◆ Gathering data
- ◆ Using a framework
- ◆ Diminishing chaos
- ◆ Developing a plan



Use Discussion to Identify Gaps & to Create a Plan

- ◆ Use data about existing activities to identify gaps
- ◆ Understand the possible programs to fill those gaps
 - For example, See SRS Project Fact Sheets
- ◆ Identify new elements to be added
- ◆ Identify existing elements to be expanded or rejuvenated
- ◆ Develop an implementation plan



The Safe & Responsive Schools Project

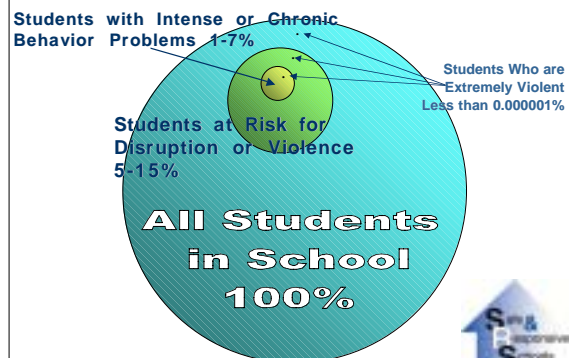
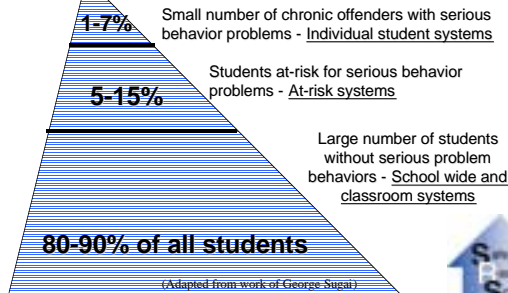
The Safe and Responsive Schools Project designed a process to enable schools to use our best knowledge to develop comprehensive and preventive plans to address violence and disruption.

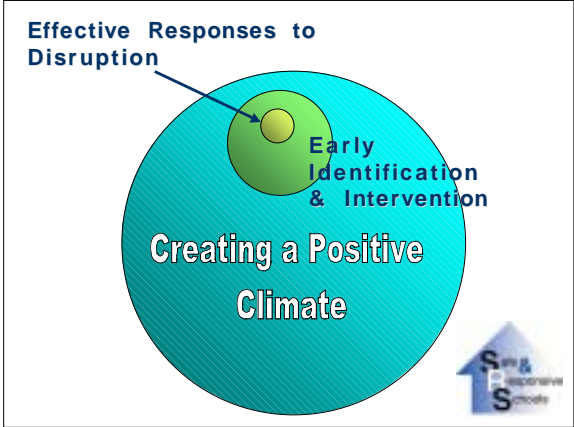
Elements

- ◆ Three-tiered prevention model
- ◆ Aimed at increasing school options
- ◆ School-based needs assessment and team planning process




Thinking About Students






Various Programming Alternatives

- ◆ Which ones do we need?
 - What does the research say about these?
 - We can't do all of these!
 - Can we make some modifications?
- ◆ Don't we already have some of these?
 - Can we refocus some of the things we are already doing?
- ◆ How much will it cost?
 - Training, consulting, materials?
 - Will the benefits be worth the investment?




Identifying Student Needs for Safe and Responsive Schools

- I. Creating a Positive Climate**
 - Applied to all students (and staff)
- II. Early Warning & Early Intervention**
 - Who are the students who need support?
 - Who are the students who are showing signs of trouble?
- III. Effective Responses**
 - Who are the students who need substantial and possibly continuous support?
 - Who are the students for whom coordination across programs and agencies is needed?

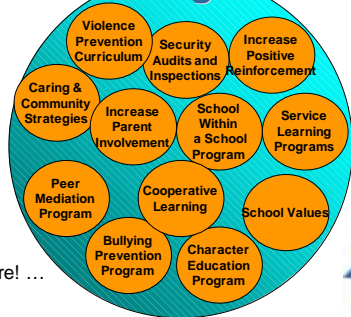



I. Creating a Positive, Welcoming Climate

Provide foundations for good behavior for all students



I. Creating a Positive, Welcoming Climate



And More! ...



II. Early Identification & Intervention

Identify and serve "at-risk" students

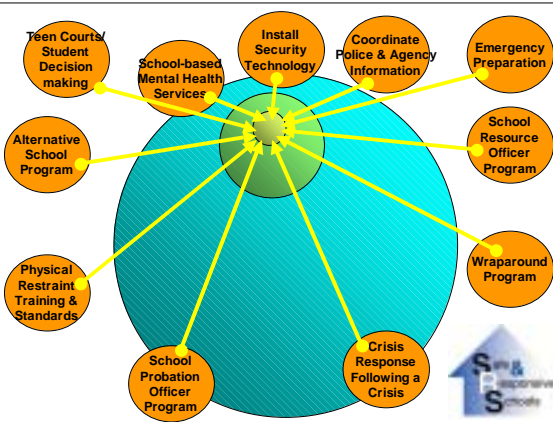


Early Identification & Intervention



III. Effective Responses to Disruption

Preparation and Response for Serious Behavior Problems



Conclusions

- ◆ Avoid exclusionary discipline; discontinue "Zero tolerance"
- ◆ A team-based, needs assessment approach can work
- ◆ Understand and use an array of positive supports and disciplinary alternatives
- ◆ Systematically match programs to school data and needs at each level—especially for "at-risk students"



Resources from Safe & Responsive
Schools Project:

<http://www.unl.edu/srs>

◆ The SRS Guide

- Overview and Framework
- Process Guide
 - Detailed procedures
 - Safe & Responsive Schools Surveys
- Resource Guide
 - Fact sheets
 - Other resources based on comprehensive model

◆ Websites

- Access to materials when available
- Samples of school produced products

◆ Consultation



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