Jack Komer

Finished Outline for Manuscript

Working Title: Alternatives to Exclusionary School Discipline: An Outline for Educational Administrators

ABSTRACT: Exclusionary discipline practices are intended to help students learn to act appropriately when in reality they have been shown to lead to negative school outcomes and exacerbate the "school to prison pipeline". This article outlines four promising and lesser known alternative interventions to Exclusionary discipline: Restorative Practices, Check-in/Check-out, Mindfulness-Based Interventions and Cognitive Interventions. The intent of these alternative interventions is to foster positive school outcomes in the greater school and local community. The purpose of this paper is to provide Educational administrators with a practitioner friendly resource outlining current evidence-based alternatives to Exclusionary discipline with strengths, limitations, examples, recommendations and where to go for further information.

Background: Implementation of school discipline has become a hot topic, especially when it comes to exclusionary discipline practices such as suspension and expulsion. These practices are intended to deter violence, illegal activity, and inappropriate classroom behaviors from occurring, but the reality is that these practices can harm students rather than help. It can lead to further illegal actions/ activities such as drug or alcohol abuse, a greater likelihood of a student dropping out, suicide and other negative life outcomes, leading to coining of the phrase "school to prison pipeline" (Taras et al., 2003). Recent studies show that 2.6 million students each year experience out of school suspension, 2.7 million students experience in-school suspension and over 100,000 students are expelled permanently (Jacobsen, Pace, & Ramirez, 2019). All of these disciplinary methods also remove the student from the general education classroom, depriving them of their education.

New models and interventions have appeared in the last few decades as an alternative to these exclusionary practices and try to tackle prevention or intervention of challenging behavior. Some of these approaches are schoolwide and involve significant outlay of resources (e.g. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports, or PBIS). Others are more simplistic in nature but still have a significant research base.

Below we present these lesser known practical solutions grouped into four categories: Restorative Practices, Check-in/Check-out, Mindfulness-Based Interventions, and Cognitive Interventions.

Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices are an umbrella of resources used by educators to form a positive relationship web between students and other members of the school and local community (Kline,

2016). This web is a preventive measure intended to reduce problematic and damaging behaviors. In addition to this preventive measure, Restorative Practices involve an active conflict resolution measure that seeks to repair and strengthen a damaged web of relationships (Kline, 2016). Restorative Practices emphasizes student choice or involvement. For example, when a student commits a behavior that results in disciplinary action; a trained school staff member meets with the student to discuss their behavior. The student agrees to take responsibility for their action, a second meeting will be held. The student receives other discipline if they do not accept responsibility. The second meeting involves the injured party from the behavior, a trained administrator, and the student. In this meeting, the participants work together to discuss how to correct the situation, developing an "action plan" that describes how the student will work to repair the situation and ensure that future incidents do not occur. All participants agree to sign the plan (Anyon et al., 2016).

Strengths of Restorative Practices. Restorative Practices can allow a school district to respond appropriately to a student's misbehavior while also allowing the student a chance to make things right (Kline, 2016). Implementing Restorative Practices has been found to promote greater inclusion which can strengthen students' self-esteem. Restorative Practices also model conflict resolution skills, helping students learn how to manage their behavior appropriately (Kline, 2016). When implemented over time with consistency and fidelity, Restorative Practices can also lessen a student's rate of office disciplinary referrals (ODRs) and diminish exclusionary discipline, particularly students of color (Gregory, 2018).

Challenges of Restorative Practices. While consistent implementation of Restorative Practices can reduce the number of ODRs among students of color, they have not reduced the

gap existing between causasian students and students of color with ODRs (Gregory, 2018).

Further, gaining full cooperation and willingness to change from all members of the school

community appears to be a significant challenge for school communities (Kline, 2016).

Recommendations for Practitioners. Kline (2016) suggests that in order for Restorative

practices to be effective, each member must be an advocate for social justice, reflect on their

actions, instruction, decisions, and beliefs, and determine how that might affect the

implementation of Restorative practices. Gregory (2018) suggests that when training educators

and administrators on Restorative practices, the discussion must include ways to address racial

disparity at a structural level. This will help educators to be culturally and socially competent

and lead to more inclusive and consistent implementation.

Additional Resources for Practitioners.

International Institute on Restorative Practices:

https://www.iirp.edu/

Restorative Schools Toolkit:

https://restorativeschoolstoolkit.org/

An Alternative to Suspension and Expulsion "Circle Up"-

https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2014/12/17/347383068/an-alternative-to-suspension-and

-expulsion-circle-up

Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)

CICO is an evidence-based intervention that addresses support for students within the

secondary level of RTI. The CICO system seeks to increase prompting throughout the school day

on appropriate behavior, increase feedback the student receives, strengthen structure and provide feedback to parents (Filter et al, 2007). A district typically implements CICO in five core steps.

1. The student meets (checks-in) with a trained staff member and receives positive support towards meeting their behavioral goals for the day

2. The staff member gives the student a behavioral point sheet to bring to each of their classes.

3. The student receives structured and scheduled feedback throughout the day, both verbally and noted on their point sheet.

4. The student check-outs with the staff member they met at the beginning of the day. At this check-out meeting, the staff member reviews the student's behavior sheet, to determine whether the student met their goals for the day. If the student has met their goals, they receive positive reinforcement (verbal praise, food, etc). If the student has not met their goals, they discuss how the student can meet their goals next time.

5. The student brings the sheet home for their parents to sign and return the next day (Maggin, Zurheide, Pickett, & Baillie, 2015).

Strengths of CICO. CICO is considered an evidence-based Tier 2 intervention. Implementing CICO often leads to a reduction in the level of disruptive behavior the student displays (Filter et al., 2007). CICO works especially well with students whose behavior is sustained through adult-based attention (Maggin et al., 2015).

Challenges of CICO. One major challenge of CICO is that the process has not been researched in larger groups. It also is less effective on students who display escape-based

behaviors (Maggin et al., 2015). Parental feedback may be difficult to implement if parents are disengaged or the student does not follow through with sharing the sheets with parents. In one study, fewer than 50% of educators reported that parents were frequently involved in CICO (Filter et al., 2007).

Recommendations for Practitioners. Maggin et al. (2015) recommend that CICO be used with students with adult-attention maintained behaviors rather than those with escape-based behaviors. Some school districts have expanded CICO to include practical based reinforcement within the student's general education classroom and provision of academic assistance. CICO should be tailored to meet the specific needs of each student (Maggin et al., 2015).

Additional Resources for Practitioners.

"Development of an Effective CICO" Roadmap provided by Missouri PBIS:

http://pbismissouri.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/5.14-Check-In-Check-Out-Intervention-Development-Checklist.docx

CICO in Practice Guide developed by the NCLII:

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED578043.pdf

The Colorado PBIS Targeted Wikispace page on CICO includes many examples and resources from Colorado schools:

http://copbistargeted.pbworks.com/w/page/95562623/Check-In%20Check-Out%20%28CICO%29

Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs)

Mindfulness is the mental capacity to stay willfully present within one's experiences with an open and non-judgemental attitude, fostering openness and curiosity for exploring one's state of being (Zenner et al., 2014). MBI's incorporate this idea into the classroom teaching students to become more self-aware and manage their state of being. MBIs use emotional self-regulation to ease a student's emotional state, reduce rash and impulsive behaviors, manage new and overwhelming environments, and help prevent overreactions to new stimuli and events (Martinez & Zhao, 2018). Often MBIs utilize meditation or other tools when leading students in the emotional self-regulation process. Martinez and Zhao (2018) used the Muse headband, an EEG device that provides immediate feedback on the wearers' use of meditation. Students were first introduced to the Muse headband to achieve comfort. The students then used the Muse for three minutes a week independently (Martinez & Zhao, 2018). Other studies on MBIs have showed its application on children who display adverse attentional, emotional and behavioral reactions to environmental stimuli (Felver, Celis-de Hoyos, Tezanos, & Singh, 2016).

Strengths of MBIs. Studies have shown that students receiving MBIs have displayed fewer emotional concerns including depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. It has also led students to display improved school behaviors, including classroom/social engagement, emotional/behavioral regulation, and more successful behavioral outcomes such as coping with stress, anxiety and other negative emotions (Felver et al., 2016). One of the largest impacts is helping students discover their own coping strategies, leading to greater emotional self-regulation. It can also lead to a longer attention span during classroom instruction which allows for more focus on lesson content (Martinez & Zhao, 2018).

Challenges of MBIs. MBIs typically are delivered outside of a student's general education classroom, which limits the time that can be spent on this intervention. This is a significant challenge because students receiving MBIs display stronger results when the intervention is more intensive (Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurz, & Walach, 2014). Also the knowledge and training of the individual conducting the interventions can play a large role in the success of the MBIs. This places a challenge on districts to train teachers in MBI implementation or bring in outside practitioners(Zenner et al., 2014).

Recommendations for Practitioners. Zenner et al. (2014) recommends support of both parents and educators in practicing the intervention both at home and at school, leading to greater success. Also, skill generalization is more achievable when a student receives the intervention within their general education classroom rather than a pullout or resource room (Felver et al., 2016).

Additional Resources for Practitioners.

Ohio Mental Health Briefing on the use of MBIs in Schools:

http://resources.oberlinkconsulting.com/uploads/infobriefs/Final_Mindfulness_Brief_No_3.pdf

Mindful Schools- A non-profit professional development organization that seeks to empower/train more educators to be mindful:

https://www.mindfulschools.org

Evidence Based MBI guidelines in a practitioner friendly format:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a2f40a41f318d38ccf0c819/t/5b28988170a6ad077 81beeb9/1529387171804/smiling-mind-mindfulness-guidelines-for-schools-whitepaper.pdf

Cognitive Interventions

This category describes a larger swath of interventions that work to maintain or strengthen an individual's mental processes, such as paying attention, collaborating, memory, and emotional regulation. The following are two examples of Cognitive Interventions that are implemented in schools. The collaborative problem-solving model involves members of a school's educational team collaborating with students to explore what disruptive behaviors are like, how one communicates effectively with a disruptive student, and how to problem solve a solution to a behavior. Another Cognitive Intervention tackles emotional self-regulation. This intervention is led by trained mentors who work with individual students to select and implement different tools and strategies for tracking their emotions, controlling their emotions and teach how to regain or preserve this control during uncomfortable situations (Wyman et al., 2010).

Strengths of Cognitive Interventions. Implementation of the emotional self-regulation intervention had a positive effect on students' classroom behaviors, disciplinary rates, behavioral self-control, and assertive social skills (Wyman et al., 2010). After successful implementation of collaborative problem-solving interventions, many students displayed significant improvements in their classroom behavior, especially with teacher-student interactions. The collaborative problem-solving model has been shown to reduce the number of ODRs, as well as detentions and suspensions (Green, 2011).

Challenges of Cognitive Interventions. One of the largest challenges faced when implementing Cognitive Interventions is the tendency for parents and educators to view a student's diagnosis or condition as an excuse for their behavior. Which can preclude important analysis of the origins or other explanations for the behavior (Greene, 2011). The collaborative

problem-solving model also seems to be more effective when the mentoring educator is the same sex as the students mentored, which is not always possible (Wyman et al., 2010).

Recommendations for Practitioners. Educators and Administrators should receive strategy-specific training so they can better identify the areas in which a child is struggling; and the potential causes of the concern(s). Cognitive interventions, will work much more effectively when educators and practitioners can get to the root of a child's struggle, which also allows for more compassionate, understanding and caring support (Greene, 2011). Also Wyman et al. (2010) recommends that when implementing collaborative problem-solving, mentors should be matched by sex.

Additional Resources for Practitioners.

CBITS (Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Trauma in Schools) Resources for helping students who may have experienced trauma:

https://cbitsprogram.org/

Cognitive Intervention Strategies for Helping Students Make good decisions

Robinson, T. (2007). Cognitive Behavioral Interventions: Strategies to Help Students Make Wise Behavioral Choices. Beyond Behavior, 17(1), 7-13. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/24011669

Cognitive Behavioral Intervention: Mentorship and Implementation Strategies

https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php/component/k2/item/364-cognitive%E2%80%93behavioral-intervention-for-children-with-emotional-and-behavioral-disturbances.html

Conclusion

One Paragraph summary reviewing the four types of interventions + emphasizing training + planning to support behavior

This article has reviewed four lesser known but promising alternatives to exclusionary discipline: Restorative Practices, Check-in/Check-out, Mindfulness-based interventions and Cognitive Interventions. In order for these alternative interventions to be implemented effectively schools must establish plans for school discipline and train staff members in implementing the plan with fidelity. The strategic planning process should include team-based collaboration on specific conflicts affecting a school and both preventive and active measures for dealing with conflicts (Jean-Pierre & Parris-Drummond , 2018). Alternative interventions when coupled with a strategic schoolwide discipline plan and consistent training to staff on implementing this plan has been shown to reduce negative school outcomes while promoting positive school outcomes, school environments and student mental health.

Works Cited

Anyon, Y., Gregory, A., Stone, S., Farrar, J., Jenson, J. M., McQueen, J., … Simmons, J. (2016).

Restorative Interventions and School Discipline Sanctions in a Large Urban School

District. *American Educational Research Journal*, *53*(6), 1663–1697.

https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216675719

Felver, J. C., Celis-de Hoyos, C. E., Tezanos, K., & Singh, N. N. (2016). A Systematic Review

of Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Youth in School Settings. *Mindfulness, 7*(1),

34–45. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-015-0389-4

Filter, K. J., McKenna, M. K., Benedict, E. A., Homer, R. H., Todd, A. W., & Watson, J. (2007).

Check in/Check out: A Post-Hoc Evaluation of an Efficient, Secondary-Level Targeted

Intervention for Reducing Problem Behaviors in Schools. *Education & Treatment of

Children, 30*(1), 69–84. https://doi.org/10.1353/etc.2007.0000

Gregory, A., Huang, F. L., Anyon, Y., Greer, E., Downing, B., & Bradshaw, C. (2018). An

Examination of Restorative Interventions and Racial Equity. *School Psychology Review,

47*(2), 167–182. https://doi.org/10.17105/SPR-2017-0073.V47-2

Greene, R. W. (2011). Collaborative Problem Solving can Transform School Discipline. *Phi

Delta Kappan, 93*(2), 25–29. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171109300206

Jacobsen, W. C., Pace, G. T., & Ramirez, N. G. (2019). Punishment and Inequality at an Early

Age: Exclusionary Discipline in Elementary School. *Social Forces*, *97*(3), 973–998.

https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soy072

Jean-Pierre, J., & Parris-Drummond, S. (2018).

Alternative School Discipline Principles and Interventions: An Overview of the

Literature. *McGill Journal of Education, 53*(3), 414–433.

https://doi.org/10.7202/1058410ar

Kline, D. M. S. (2016). Can Restorative Practices Help to Reduce Disparities in School

Discipline Data? A Review of the Literature. *Multicultural Perspectives, 18*(2), 97–102.

https://doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2016.1159099

Maggin, D. M., Zurheide, J., Pickett, K. C., & Baillie, S. J. (2015). A Systematic Evidence

Review of the Check-In/Check-Out Program for Reducing Student Challenging

Behaviors. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 17*(4), 197–208.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300715573630

Martinez, T., & Zhao, Y. (2018). The Impact of Mindfulness Training on Middle Grades

Students' Office Discipline Referrals. *Research in Middle Level Education Online, 41*(3),

1–8. https://doi.org/10.1080/19404476.2018.1435840

Taras, H. L., Frankowski, B. L., McGrath, J. W., Mears, C. J., Murray, R. D., & Young, T. L.

(2003). Out-of-School Suspension and Expulsion. *Pediatrics, 112*(5), 1206.

https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.112.5.1206

Wyman, P. A., Cross, W., Hendricks Brown, C., Yu, Q., Tu, X., & Eberly, S. (2010).

Intervention to Strengthen Emotional Self-Regulation in Children with Emerging Mental

Health Problems: Proximal Impact on School Behavior. *Journal Of Abnormal Child

Psychology, 38*(5), 707–720. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-010-9398-x

Zenner, C., Herrnleben-Kurz, S., & Walach, H. (2014). Mindfulness-based interventions

in schools-a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology, 5*, 603.

https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00603

Zolkoski, S. M., & Lewis-Chiu, C. (2019). Alternative Approaches: Implementing Mindfulness

Practices in the Classroom to Improve Challenging Behaviors. *Beyond Behavior, 28(*1),

46–54. https://doi.org/10.1177/1074295619832943