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Overview

CISNC Introduction

In the 2014-2015 school year, Communities in Schools of North Carolina (CISNC) introduced a framework that aligns site and student metrics and interventions and supports to four areas that have been shown to have the greatest impact on student success: attendance, behavior, coursework, and parent involvement, or ABC+P. Both combined and individually, attendance, behavior, and coursework are among the best predictors of a student's academic success and on-time graduation. While collecting data around ABC+P is critically important to understanding the school and student, it is even more important to use the data to drive high impact intervention and support delivery to empower each student to reach their full potential. To this end, Communities In Schools of North Carolina has partnered with the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to design curricula specifically for CIS within the ABC+P framework to enhance student outcomes in school and success in life. This document is one of more than 50 modules developed to support local CIS staff and most importantly the students that are served. We encourage you to explore all of the modules available online at www.cisnc.org

Using Evidenced-Based Strategies

There are a multitude of strategies that claim to address violence prevention, but there are few that actually do so for all students. We suggest that schools use an evidence-based, decision-making model to ensure that high quality information informs the decisions made.

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education defines evidence-based decision making as routinely seeking out the best available information on prior research and recent evaluation findings before adopting programs or practices that will demand extensive material or human resources (including both funding and teacher time) and/or affect significant numbers of students (Whitehurst, 2004).

Evidence-based practice means delivering interventions and supports to students (clients) in ways that integrate the best available evidence from data, research, and evaluation; professional wisdom gained from experience; and contextual knowledge of the particular classroom, school, district, or state that might impact the design or implementation.

The ABC +P framework is inextricably bound; challenges in one area can lead to challenges in another and often exacerbate a student's issues. This document focuses on student behavior, in particular, a problem behavior. Wang and Fredricks (2014) state, "...problem behaviors often elicit negative interpersonal interactions with teachers and parents, in turn leading to aggravated disengagement from school" (Bachman et al., 2008). Association with deviant peers also provides incentives for truancy and a devaluing of academic achievement (Wang & Dishion, 2012). When students are not engaged, the risk of them becoming involved in disruptive behaviors like truancy, substance abuse, gangs, delinquent behavior and others are higher; and participation in those activities weakens the bonds to

their school environment and families (Steward, Steward, Blar, Jo & Hill, 2008; Wang & Fredricks, 2014). While the terminology may differ across fields, the challenge boils down to a disconnect between students and their schools; this module provides an example of a strategy that will reconnect students to their schools, address students challenging behaviors, and hopefully make schools safer, supportive, and engaging.

Problem/Rationale

School violence is any act of bullying, fighting, use of weapons, electronic aggression (e.g., via email, chat rooms, social media, etc.), or gang violence that transpires on school property, on the way to or from school, at a school sponsored event, or on the way to or from a school sponsored event (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2015). By the time students reach high school, many have experienced some form of school violence. A recent national survey of high school students conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicated that nearly 25% of respondents had been in a physical fight in the past year, and roughly 8% of respondents had been in a physical fight on school grounds. Just over 7% of respondents reported that they had not gone to school at least one day in the month prior to the survey because they felt unsafe at school, or on the way to or from school (Kahn et al., 2014).

During middle school, students experience increased autonomy and focus on peer interactions. Due to this increase, the opportunity rises for increased conflict, but adolescents often lack the skills to negotiate complex decision-making and their emotional immaturity can result in violence among peers (Meyer, 2004).

The current literature identifies three interventions that are most likely to prevent violence among middle school adolescents:

- Promote valuable pro-social problem-solving skills.
- Promote incentive and value of implementing those skills.
- Promote school customs that reinforce those skills while simultaneously diminishing the appeal of violent conduct and mindsets.

The current literature identifies five essential elements or research-based approaches of effective youth interventions/prevention programs:

- A structured curriculum.
- A program or strategy that teaches new skills.
- Activities that allow youth to practice new skills in active ways (i.e., discussions, role-playings, etc.).
- Involve a school-wide or community approach.
- Incorporate high level of adult participation and support (Jones, Doces, Swearer & Collier, 2013).

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to focus on one easy to implement school violence prevention strategy that can be used in middle schools.

Teachers and school staff can promote a safe, positive school climate and encourage positive student behavior with:

- Easy to implement violence prevention activities.
- Additional strategies to promote a safe, positive, school-wide climate.
- Tools and resources to share with parents.

Implementation Plan

Uses

Teachers can use the information provided in this guide to help students understand the importance of a safe, positive school environment, the importance of respecting others, and how to prevent and respond to violence and aggression in school.

Audiences

The primary audience for the lesson is middle school students.

Activities

Listed below are several activities that schools can implement to reduce violent behavior in middle schools. The activity highlighted is designed to decrease aggressive behavior and to improve pro-social behavior.

- **Small group work: identifying feelings, making a choice vs. reacting.**
 - **Teach a lesson early in the school year that emphasizes making smart choices vs. reacting emotionally.**
 - **Choices students should learn to consider are: avoid, ignore, ask for help.**
- Small group work: identification of the problem.
 - Get students to imagine a conflict that could escalate to violent or aggressive behavior.
 - Ask them to describe that conflict: Who is involved and what has caused the conflict? How might each person involved in the conflict feel?
- Small group role play: search for solutions “that exemplify respect for all parties.”
 - Using the scenarios from the previous exercise, ask groups to imagine solutions for those involved in the conflict.
 - Note that this can be very challenging when one party is perceived to be a perpetrator only (such as in the case of bullying). Nevertheless, urge students

to consider solutions that are fair to both parties and not about seeking retribution.

- Small group work: getting students to reflect on what they have learned.
 - Encourage students to thoughtfully consider their approaches to avoiding violent and aggressive behaviors. Urge them to be honest about which approaches they believe will be effective and which will not.
- Whole class: signing of the pledge to commit to choosing respect for themselves and their peers by being violence-free.
 - Save this for the end after students have had time to reflect on and become comfortable with violence prevention strategies.
 - Treat the signing of the pledge as a kickoff for a campaign that students then take out into their communities.

Materials/Equipment/Space

- Spaces for the class to break into small groups.
- Index cards, pens.

Note: For presentations, check for access to computer, Smartboard or data projector and screen, relevant power cords, and remote slide advancer.

Time

- Small group work: 30 minutes

Lesson Plan of Activity

This sample activity will allow students to conceptualize the difference between making a choice and reacting. It will teach them sample choices they should consider, such as avoiding conflict, ignoring conflict, and asking for help with a conflict. However, it will also encourage them to describe what reacting to a conflict might look like. This activity is the first in a series of scaffolded activities and is appropriate for 6th through 8th grade students.

Teachers should:

- Be prepared to offer examples of wise choices and reactions to conflict.

Sample Lesson – Choosing vs. Reacting

Activity	Process Notes
Introduce the lesson.	<i>Let students know that for the next half hour the class will be discussing what it means to make a choice in a conflict vs. reacting to a conflict.</i>
Ask students to jot down three scenarios where violence or aggressive behavior may arise.	<i>Ask students to jot these down on note cards and encourage them to focus on situations that are realistic in a high school environment.</i>



Activity	Process Notes
	<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One person teases or insults another - Excluding people - Someone accused of spreading untrue gossip - Someone destroys another person's possessions - Someone going through someone else's locker - Someone pushes, bumps, or shoves another
Small Group Activity	
<p>For each of the three scenarios, the groups should come up with an emotional response.</p>	<p><i>The responses students come up with here may not be ideal but in many cases will be common responses to conflicts.</i></p> <p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anger and/or Frustration – Lash out, yell - Anxiety and/or Fear – Retreat inward, shut down - Let down and/or Disappointed – Lose trust - Sad – Feel bad about yourself; feel a sense of loss
<p>For each of the three scenarios, the groups should come up with a strategy for avoiding conflict.</p>	<p><i>Encourage students to come up with ways they could avoid conflict.</i></p> <p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use caution in certain places where conflicts tend to arise—lunchrooms, crowded hallways, bathrooms or placed outside the school - Reject the negative engagement - Treat others with respect <p><i>Avoidance can sometimes be good, but it can also make things worse. If you avoid---may lose a friend, may not get what you need, things may not get better.</i></p>
<p>For each of the three scenarios, the groups should come up with a strategy for ignoring conflict.</p>	<p><i>Encourage students to come up with ways they could ignore provocative behavior.</i></p> <p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use self-calming strategies, such as intentional, deep breathing - Take perspective: How big a deal is it? <p><i>Not all provocative behavior should be ignored. While irritating behavior might be best ignored, persistent harassment or threatening behavior should not be ignored.</i></p>
Teacher Led Section	
<p>Summarize the points the groups have made.</p>	<p><i>Share examples of how one can manage conflict (may need a Powerpoint).</i></p> <p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be direct and specific about how you feel - Cool off - Have discussion with the intent of settling the

Activity	Process Notes
	<p><i>problem</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Keep your voice calm</i> <p><i>Most steps involve a conversation to deal with the issues. However, there may be other win-win solutions—what are your thoughts.</i></p>
<i>Small Group Activity</i>	
<p>For each of the three scenarios, the groups should come up with a strategy for asking for help regarding the conflict.</p>	<p><i>Encourage students to consider who they might go to for help in this situation. This may include discussion around how students may feel about “telling on” their peers.</i></p> <p><i>Let students know that no idea is too strange/out of the box.</i></p> <p><i>Tell them to use their imaginations to think of what that might help resolve the conflict.</i></p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Mediation (with adults)</i> - <i>Peer mediation (with other teens, maybe from a different grade, class, etc.)</i> - <i>Community mediators</i>
<i>Whole Class Debrief</i>	
	<p><i>Ask each group to share one scenario and the solution they came up with.</i></p>



Tier 2 Intervention and Support Examples

Example #1: Aggression Replacement Training (ART)

ART is a 30-hour cognitive behavioral program for 8-12 at-risk students. The program is broken down into 1-hour sessions that focus on Skillstreaming (modeling, role playing, performance feedback, and transfer training), anger control training, and moral reasoning training.

Goldstein, A., & Glick, B. (1994). Aggression replacement training: Curriculum and evaluation. *Simulation & Gaming*, 25(1).

Example #2: The Student-Created Aggression Replacement Education (SCARE) Program

The SCARE Program is a school-based anger and aggression management program for adolescents, especially those at risk for academic and behavioral problems.

Herrmann, D. (2003). Anger and aggression management in young adolescents: An experimental validation of the SCARE program. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 26(3), 273 – 302.

Resources

The following resources will provide additional information and suggestions for enhancing activities related to school violence prevention. Read through the resources carefully to become familiar with any concepts and instructions as they may pertain to the content and the extension of activities.

The National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention (National Resource Center)

<http://www.healthysafechildren.org/>

Offers resources and technical assistance to states, tribes, territories, and local communities to prevent youth violence and promote the overall well-being of children, youth, and their families.

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments

<http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/>

This website provides information about the Center's training and technical assistance, products and tools, and latest research findings about drug and violence prevention activities; activities that promote the health and well-being of students in elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher education; and school preparedness activities that contribute to improved conditions for learning.

Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

<http://www.samhsa.gov/>

SS/HS is a collaborative effort and comprehensive model to promote mental health among students and create safe and secure schools. The website has resources around bullying, school climate, dating violence, and substance abuse.

The following optional resources provide additional information and concepts, or may be used in sharing with others or to expand the activity. Read through these resources to become familiar with the information and to determine their level of usefulness within the school setting.

Understanding School Violence

http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/school_violence_fact_sheet-a.pdf

This fact sheet, produced by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention, provides an overview of school violence.



Youth Violence

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/yv-datasheet-a.pdf>

This fact sheet, produced by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention, provides a snapshot of data relating to youth violence and aggressive behavior.

Note: All posters, images, and activity guides identified are copyright cleared for non-commercial use.

Measuring Success

Identifying outcomes and collecting data to measure the success of school violence prevention strategies can help the school track quality of implementation as well as the effectiveness of these strategies. Following are some suggestions that schools may find useful to begin measuring success.

Measuring Violence-Related Attitudes, Behaviors, and Influences Among Youths: A Compendium of Assessment Tools (Dahlberg, 2005) offers a robust array of tools for measuring attitudes, behaviors, and environments related to school violence. Typical items are as follows:

Suppose a boy says something bad to another boy, John.

1. Do you think it's OK for John to scream at him?

It's really wrong It's sort of wrong It's sort of OK It's perfectly OK

2. Do you think it's OK for John to hit him?

It's really wrong It's sort of wrong It's sort of OK It's perfectly OK

3. If you're angry, it is OK to say mean things to other people.

It's really wrong It's sort of wrong It's sort of OK It's perfectly OK

http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/yv_compendium.pdf



Appendices

A. Glossary

B. References

C. Research Alignment

Appendix A: Glossary

Following are some key terms used in School Violence literature.

Bullying – is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. (ASPA, 2012)

Cyberbullying – see Electronic aggression

Electronic aggression – is any kind of aggression perpetrated through technology—any type of harassment or bullying (teasing, telling lies, making fun of someone, making rude or mean comments, spreading rumors, or making threatening or aggressive comments) that occurs through email, a chat room, instant messaging, a website (including blogs), or text messaging. (Hertz & David-Ferdon, 2008)

Fighting – an actual and intentional touching or striking of another person against his or her will, or the intentional causing of bodily harm to an individual. (Neiman, 2011)

Internet bullying – see Electronic aggression

Intimidation - to frighten, compel, or deter by actual or implied threats. It includes bullying and sexual harassment.

Primary prevention – prevention efforts that (1) are intentionally designed to reduce dysfunction or promote health before the onset of disorder and (2) are population focused, targeted either to the whole population or to subgroups with known vulnerabilities. (National Research Council (US) and Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on the Prevention of Mental Disorders and Substance Abuse Among Children, O’Connell, Boat, & Warner, 2009)

Risk factor – factors that can increase the risk of a youth engaging in violence. (The presence of these factors does not always mean that a young person will become an offender.) Risk factors include: prior history of violence, drug/alcohol/tobacco use, association with delinquent peers, poor family functioning, poor grades in school, poverty in the community.

School Violence – is any act of bullying, fighting, use of weapons, electronic aggression (e.g., via email, chat rooms, social media, etc.), or gang violence that transpires on school property, on the way to or from school, at a school sponsored event, or on the way to or from a school sponsored event. (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2015)

Selective prevention - refers to strategies that are targeted to subpopulations identified as being at elevated risk for a disorder. (National Research Council (US) and Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on the Prevention of Mental Disorders and Substance Abuse Among Children et al., 2009)

Universal prevention - strategies that can be offered to the full population, based on the evidence that it is likely to provide some benefit to all (reduce the probability of disorder), which clearly outweighs the costs and risks of negative consequences. (National Research Council (US) and Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on the Prevention of Mental Disorders and Substance Abuse Among Children et al., 2009)

Violent incidents - include rape, sexual battery other than rape, physical attack or fight with or without a weapon, threat of physical attack with or without a weapon, and robbery with or without a weapon

Youth violence – includes violent acts—such as bullying, slapping, or hitting—and other forms that can cause more emotional harm than physical harm. Others, such as robbery and assault (with or without weapons) can lead to serious injury or even death. (“Understanding Youth Violence,” 2015)

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Appendix C: Research Alignment

Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness	Implementation
<p>Farrell, A. D., Meyer, A. L., & White, K. S. (2001). Evaluation of Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP): A school-based prevention program for reducing violence among urban adolescents. <i>Journal of Clinical Child Psychology</i>, 30(4), 451–63. doi:10.1207/S15374424JCCP3004_02</p>	<p>Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP), like most universal violence prevention programs, focuses primarily on situational and relationship violence. The goal of RIPP is to increase adolescents' capacity and motivation to respond to developmental challenges in ways that facilitate social skill acquisition and acceptance of personal responsibility.</p>	<p>N = 626 6th/7th graders</p>	<p>Rates of disciplinary violations for violent behaviors were 2.2 times greater in the control group compared with the intervention group, and rates of in-school suspensions were 5.0 times greater.</p>	<p>Students are instructed in the use of a social-cognitive problem-solving model and specific skills for preventing violence. The curriculum was implemented in twenty-five 50-min sessions that generally were taught during social studies or health education. Sessions were conducted weekly except for 3 weeks in February while school staff focused on achievement testing. A manual (Meyer&Northup, 1995) was used to increase the consistency of implementation across schools.</p>
<p>Farrell, A., Valois, R., Meyer, A., & Tidwell, R. (2003). Impact of the</p>	<p>See previous entry.</p>	<p>N = 1,487 6th graders from three intervention schools (N=752) and</p>	<p>Students at the control schools reported increasingly higher</p>	<p>See previous entry.</p>



Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Effectiveness	Implementation
<p>RIPP violence prevention program on rural middle school students. <i>Journal of Primary Prevention</i>, 24(2), 143 – 167.</p>		<p>three control schools (N=735).</p>	<p>rates of aggressive behaviors over time relative to students at the intervention schools. By the final follow-up this difference was statistically significant (d = 0.17).</p>	
<p>Simon, T., Ikeda, R., Smith, E. P., Reese, L., Rabiner, D., Miller-Johnson, S., ... Allison, K. (2008). The multisite violence prevention project: Impact of a universal school-based violence prevention program on social-cognitive outcomes. <i>Prevention Science: The Official Journal of the Society for Prevention Research</i>, 9(4), 231–44. doi:10.1007/s11121-008-0101-1</p>	<p>The GREAT (Guiding Responsibility and Expectations for Adolescents for Today and Tomorrow) student curriculum is grounded in a social-cognitive framework designed to promote problem solving skills, self-efficacy for nonviolence, goals and strategies supporting nonviolence, and individual and school norms against the use of violence.</p>	<p>N = 5,581, across 37 schools</p>	<p>Students at universal intervention schools reported higher posttest levels of Goals and Strategies Supporting Aggression (d=0.11, p<0.05), and Individual Norms for Nonviolent Behavior (d=0.10, p<0.05) than those at comparison schools.</p>	<p>Instructors use behavioral repetition and mental rehearsal of the skills, small-group activities, experiential-learning techniques, and didactic modalities to increase students' awareness and use of nonviolent options in order to alter their attitudes toward and engagement in aggressive behavior.</p>