Evidence-based School Counseling Curricula for Elementary School Counselors

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Presenters: Brett Zyromski, Ph.D., Melissa Mariani, Ph.D., and Carey Dimmitt, Ph.D.

Learning Outcomes:
Upon completion of this webinar, participants should be able to:
1. Identify a variety of student data to use for determining program and intervention priorities.
2. Implement elementary-level school counseling interventions that have evidence of efficacy.
4. Explain a variety of strategies for disseminating results of interventions to administrators, parents, school board members and other educational stakeholders.

A Model and Process for Evidence-Based School Counseling


Evidence-based School Counseling (EBSC)

- Dimmitt, Carey and Hatch (2007) define evidence-based school counseling “as the intentional use of the best available evidence in planning, implementing, and evaluating school counseling interventions and programs” (p. ix).

- It is inferred, therefore, that school counselors (a) know what to prioritize – what really needs to be addressed, (b) can identify what is likely to work to meet that need and (c) have the skills to evaluate if the intervention made a difference.

The EBSC Process Model: A Review

A) Assess/re-assess the needs of the students and the barriers blocking their success (Data-Driven Decision Making) – how do you do this now?
B) Either continue using something that is being successful or choose an intervention that the research suggests works with a similar population to yours to remove the barrier(s) to success (Using Outcome Research/Evidence-Based Interventions) – are you targeted?
C) Evaluate your intervention and evolve (Evaluation) – how do you collect data to support your interventions and services and if so, what types?
Natural Consequences of EBSC

1. Prioritization of SC time occurs
2. Equity gaps are closed
3. Program goals are set
4. SC job roles change and evolve to meet student needs
5. Interventions evolve based on results

Critical Components!

1. The needs of the students must be accurately assessed and their voices must be included
2. Interventions must be driven by student needs, not adult preferences
3. Evaluation of intervention results is vital

Step 1: Assessing Student needs through the Use of data

Evidence-based School Counseling

Intervention Evaluation
Outcome Research
Evidence-Based Practice
Data-Driven Decision Making
Assess/re-assess the needs of the students and the barriers blocking their success

Step 2: Using Outcome research to identify evidence-based interventions for your students

Accurate Assessment of Student Needs and Data Indicators

Accurate assessment of student issues is gathered through:
• needs assessments
• the use of student data
• focus groups
• meetings with teachers/parents/students

THEN we can match our interventions to the students’ needs

Key Questions:
• Which interventions should we use to meet our students’ needs?
• Which have been proven to work with a similar population?
Evidence-based School Counseling

Evaluate your intervention and evolve

Intervention Evaluation
Outcome Evaluation

Assess/re-assess the needs of the students and the barriers blocking their success

Either continue using something that is being successful or choose an intervention that the research suggests works with a similar population to remove the barrier(s) to success

Dimmitt, Carey & Kratcz, 2007 and Zyromski & Mariani, 2016

Matching Interventions to Needs

- Often, adults attempt to match interventions to goals instead of matching interventions to needs.
- Goals are often adult driven – interventions are student-driven
- What are students saying are the barriers to success?
- How well we address student needs or support student strengths will directly correlate with how quickly our data changes.

Where Do We Find Evidence-based Interventions? Outcome Research Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC/DASH): http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/
- Fredrickson Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation (CSCORE) – Resources for School Counselors page: http://www.umass.edu/schoolcounseling/resources-for-counselors.php

CASEL Guide - Elementary EB SEL (casel.org)

RTI Levels of Intervention Model

Tier 1
- All Students (100%)
- Preventative, Proactive

Tier 2
- At-Risk Students (10-20%)
- Small Group
- Reduce current problems

Tier 3
- Few Students (5-10%)
- Individualized Support
- Reduce severity, intensity and complications of existing problems

Tier 4
- No Risk/Students (0-5%)
- Reduce new problems
- Preventative

Evidence-Based Practices & Interventions

- Student Success Skills (PreK-12)
- 4Rs (PreK-8)
- Caring School Community (K-6)
- Positive Action (PreK-12)
- Responsive Classroom (K-6)
- School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (K-12)
### Student Success Skills Curriculum

**Student Success Skills Curriculum** is a three part PK-12 model

- **Ready to Learn (RTL)**: PreK – 1st grade
- **Ready for Success (RFS)**: 2nd – 3rd grade
- **Student Success Skills (SSS)**: 4th – 12th grade

### Four Foundational Learning Skills

- Paying Attention
- Listening and Understanding
- Asking Effective Questions
- Encouragement

### Three Keys to Building Resilience and Reducing School Failure

- **Skills**: Cognitive, Social and Self-Management
- **Attitudes**: Healthy Optimism & Self-Efficacy
- **Climate**: Caring, Support, Encouragement

### Delivery Time and Cost

- **RTL Classroom Program**: 5, 30-minute lessons daily or weekly with follow up activities
- **RFS Classroom Program**: 5, 40-45 minute weekly lessons, plus 3 monthly booster lessons
- **SSS Classroom Program**: 5, 45-minute weekly lessons, plus 3 monthly booster lessons
- **SSS Small Group Program**: 8, 40-45 minute weekly sessions
- **Costs**:
  - RTL = $195 (includes manual, big books, CD with audio stories, posters, research)
  - RFS, SSS, SSS Group = $75 (includes manual, CD with guided PPT slides, posters and research)

### SSS Curriculum - Outcomes

- Standardized test scores
- Grades in core subjects
- Behavior
- Social-emotional/Pro-social skills
- Bullying behaviors
- School/classroom climate
- Graduation rates
- Engagement
- Self-esteem, efficacy, motivation
- Wellness factors

### Effect Sizes for Student Success Skills on Standardized Test Scores

- ES for Math = .41
- ES for Reading = .17
- Overall ES = .29

What does a .41 Effect Size in Math mean?

- Grades 4-5: An additional 4/5 of a year’s growth
- Grades 6-7: An additional 1 year’s growth
- Grades 9-10: An additional 1 2/3 year’s growth


What does a .17 Effect Size in Reading mean?

- Grades 4-5: An additional 1/3 of a year’s growth
- Grades 6-7: An additional 1/2 year’s growth
- Grades 9-10: An additional 1 year’s growth


Additional SSS Programs

- SSS Small Group
- Parent Success Skills
- SSS Cultural Translations
  - Spanish
  - Haitian Creole
- SSS for College Success

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)

- @ $400-800/grade, for curriculum and related materials
- PreK-6, 40-52 lessons/grade, designed to be taught twice/week for 20-30 mins.
- Classroom, school, and family materials
- Explicit skills instruction:
  - self-control
  - emotional understanding
  - positive self-esteem
  - relationships
  - interpersonal problem-solving skills
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) - Research

- CASEL = casel.org
- 4 randomized controlled trials
- Students K-5
- Outcomes:
  - Improved Academic Performance
  - Increased Positive Social Behavior
  - Reduced Conduct Problems
  - Reduced Emotional Distress

Tier 1 School-Wide Interventions: Bullying/Violence Prevention

- Second Step Violence Prevention (K-9)
- Steps to Respect (K-6)
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Programs (K-9)
- PeaceBuilders (PreK-12)
- Too Good for Violence (K-8)

Overview of Second Step Violence Prevention

- Elementary program (ages 5-11) teaches empathy, emotion-management, problem solving, self-regulation, and executive-function skills
- 22-28 weekly topics, 5 lessons a week
- @ $200-400/grade, less if bundled for multiple grades
- For families: newsletters, related activities for home, explanation of the curriculum
- Aligned with 2015 ASCA Standards
- For teachers: online training and additional resources
- All lessons have on-line materials available in Spanish

Second Step Bullying Prevention

- Designed to be used with Second Step Program
- Lessons for grades K-3 (ages 5-9)
- Lessons for grades 4-5 (ages 9-11)
- Specifically focused on bullying as an expression of power

Tier 1 School-Wide Interventions: Health and Wellness

- Too Good for Drugs (K-12)
- Life Skills Training (K-12)
- Lion-Quest Skills (K-12)
- Michigan Model for Health (K-12)
- Positive Action (K-12)

Too Good for Drugs

- http://www.toogoodprograms.org/
- @ $70-190/grade
- K-12 Curriculum focusing on:
  - Positive Social Norms
  - Peer Bonding
  - Social Skill Development
  - Social Awareness
  - Self-Awareness
- Students learn and practice setting reachable goals, making responsible decisions, and responding to peer pressure
- 7-10 lessons per grade, family materials, games, posters, and assessments
Tier 2 Interventions for Students at Risk: Integrated Academic and Social Emotional Skill Development

- Coping Cat
- Check and Connect
- Check In/Check Out
- Coping Power
- Group Interventions from Tier 1 Interventions
  - Student Success Skills
  - PATHS, ICPS

Coping Cat Intervention

- Meets SAMHSA's standards for EBP
- Designed for students with generalized anxiety disorder, social phobia, and/or separation anxiety disorder
- Manualized Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment (CBT), and related workbook with client tasks
- Manual available on Amazon for @$22, student workbook is $18
- Ages 6-12 = "Coping Cat" Program, also program for teens
- Parent companion materials

Coping Cat Intervention

- 16 sessions for youth
- 8 skills training sessions on:
  - Physiological components of anxiety
  - Recognition of anxious self-talk
  - Modifying problematic self-talk
  - Developing stress management, distraction, and coping strategies
  - Self-evaluation, success attribution
  - Self-reward for successful management
- 8 skills practice sessions
  - Rehearsal, multiple attempts
  - Social support for group members
  - Generalization to other contexts

FEAR acronym
1. Feeling frightened = recognize physiological signs of anxiety
2. Expecting bad things to happen = identifying anxious cognition(s)
3. Attitudes and Actions that can help = coping strategies
4. Results and Rewards = contingency management
- Use of "Show That I Can" tasks as weekly homework
- Mastery over new skills learned in session

Coping Cat Research: SAMHSA Review

- 16+ outcome study journal articles, several replications
- 3 experimental RCT studies
- 3 outcome studies:
  - Youth aged 6-17
  - Male and female
  - Multiple race/ethnicities for most studies, mostly White
- Measures
  - Anxiety Disorder Interview Schedule (ADIS)
  - 6 instruments used to measure child self-report of symptoms
  - Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) used for parent-report
  - CBC - Teacher Report Form used for teacher-report

Statistically significant findings:
- Decrease in anxiety symptoms 1, 3.5, and 7.4 years after treatment
  - 81% of participants in 2005 study no longer met criteria for anxiety diagnosis after 1 year, sig. less than wait list control
  - 60% of children who participated in Coping Cat, compared to 0% of controls, had normal range for internalizing behaviors
- Increase in coping ability in youth
- Decrease in parent-reported symptoms
- Decrease in teacher-reported symptoms
- Decrease in observed behavioral signs of anxiety
Step 3: Evaluating Intervention Outcomes

Dimmitt, Carey & Hatch, 2007 and Zyromski & Marini, 2016

Intervention Evaluation
Outcome Research
Data-Driven Decision Making

Either continue using something that is being successful or choose an intervention that the research suggests works with a similar population to remove the barrier(s) to success.

Assess/re-assess the needs of the students and the barriers blocking their success.

Evidence-based School Counseling

Context

- 2nd grade students were not at grade level academically
- 2nd grade students were not reaching the proficiency level in the PBIS realm of office behavior referrals
- Teachers reported behavior problems in their classroom, specifically that students in their classroom needed improvement in the following areas:
  - Social skills
  - Problem-solving skills
  - Metacognition skills

Rationale for intervention

- Students will be selected based on office behavior referrals (data) and teacher recommendation
- Group counseling has been shown to positively impact students’ academic achievement and personal growth (ASCA, 2014)
- A Tier 2 small group intervention that focuses on social problem solving skills will prepare at-risk students to be more successful in the classroom, both academically and socially

The Goals

With 2nd grade students identified as having issues with social skills, problem-solving, and metacognition skills:

- Reduce behavior referrals by 25%
- Increase teacher-reported social problem-solving skills by 15% as measured by pre/post evaluations
The Intervention

- 3 groups of 2nd grade students met weekly for 10 weeks
  - One group of four girls
  - Two groups of five boys
- Pre and post-intervention evaluations for each student were given to their teachers in Dec 2014 and April 2015
- Group meetings lasted approximately 30 minutes each week
- Focused on the following topics:
  - Identifying emotions (in ourselves and in others)
  - Coping skills
  - Overreactions vs. appropriate reactions
  - Friendships
  - Conflicts

Results

- The following slides illustrate results of the Tier 2 Social Problem Solving Skills groups
- Results are based on teacher pre/post evaluations (perception data)
- Overall, the groups’ social problem solving skills total score on the post evaluation increased by 16%
  - Specifically, each of the following areas showed improvement and demonstrated statistical significance on a .05 level
    - Taking turns/sharing
    - Working well in classroom
    - Frequency of overreactions
    - Involvement in fights
    - Distracts other children
- Additionally, the office referral data indicates a 53% reduction in office behavior referrals (outcome data)

Results...

Total scores of all post-intervention evaluations indicated a 16% increase in overall social problem solving skills

Results…

Results…

Results…

Results…
Results...

2nd Grade Girls’ Social Problem Solving Group

Shows Understanding of Others’ Feelings

Results...

2nd Grade Boys’ Social Problem Solving Groups

Takes Turns/Shares

Results...

Additionally, our groups resulted in a 53% decrease in behavior referrals for group members

What does this mean?

• We met our goal!!!
• Evidence shows that our Tier 2 intervention was successful
• Social problem solving skills increased by 16%
• Office behavior referrals were reduced by 53%
• Teachers reported that group members showed improvement in each of the following areas:
  - Students that took part in our intervention are now LESS likely to
    - Distract other children
    - Become involved in fights
    - Overreact to situations
  - Students that took part in our intervention are now MORE likely to
    - Show understanding of another person’s feelings
    - Take turns/share

Implications

• Where do we go from here?
  • Because the evidence indicates that our program was effective with second graders, there are multiple next steps that we can take:
    - Attempt the same program with students in first and/or third grades
    - Repeat the program in the next school year for second grade students
    - Repeat the program this year with a different group of second grade students
  • Continue to collect data on successive groups
  • Further evaluate the impact of our program on other critical data elements, such as: attendance, retention rates, and standardized test scores
  • Continue to educate our stakeholders about the impact of our counseling program
  • Communicate our results to other district school counselors at our monthly PLC meeting

THANK YOU!

• Brett Zyromski – zyromski.1@osu.edu
• Melissa Mariani – mmarian5@fau.edu
• Carey Dimmitt – cdimmitt@educ.umass.edu