Programs to Improve School Climate

School Resources to Support Military-Connected Students is a project by the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness an applied research center at The Pennsylvania State University and is funded by the Department of Defense Education Activity Grant number HE1254-19-0009.

For more information on these resources click on the links below:

https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/

https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/

https://www.psu.edu/

https://dodeagrants.org/

Our goal is to provide school personnel with free, evidence-based resources to support military-connected students. This training is part of our Suicide Prevention series.

Important Reminders

Before starting this training, please read the items below carefully and check the box in front of each item to indicate your understanding.

- The following content discusses suicide and may be upsetting to some individuals.
- Follow all district, local, state, and federal regulations. This training is **NOT** intended to replace or override existing procedures or laws.

Introduction

What is the purpose of this training?

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a schoolwide, comprehensive prevention-based framework that helps students struggling with academics, social skills, emotions, or behaviors. Within the context of behavioral and emotional risk, MTSS utilizes prevention programming at the universal level, incorporates strategies to identify students in need, provides targeted prevention to at-risk students, collects data to track progress, and engages in data-based problem-solving and critical decision making. If a student does not demonstrate improvements in response to the universal and targeted prevention efforts, referrals for more intensive interventions should be made.

Many student support personnel including school psychologists, counselors, and nurses, have been engaged in MTSS teams within their school systems. These teams include teachers, administrators, counselors, school psychologists, nurses, and related service providers—and when appropriate, parents and guardians.

MTSS relies on the premise that when all students receive high-quality core instruction, approximately 80% of students should meet grade-level expectations; about 15% of students require supplemental or targeted interventions to meet their grade-level standards; and about 5% of students require intensive intervention.

Objective

The goal of this training is to increase your confidence in your ability to:

Identify evidence-based programs to improve school climate.

How confident are you in your ability to do this now?

Please click on the link below to submit your response.

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Gp3iBHlvhcTluR?modulenumber=suicide08

Verify that you have completed each of the tasks below before proceeding with this training.

> Answered the survey question in the link.
> Clicked the arrow underneath the survey question to submit your response.
> Recorded the ID number provided after you submitted your answer to the survey question. You will need it to complete the survey at the end of this training.

Research

What is most important for me to know?

Within this framework, overall behavioral and emotional risk prevention programs can be put into place to provide a more safe and supportive school climate for all students, which then increases the likelihood that at-risk students will be targeted for additional prevention efforts and intervention—including students who are at risk for suicide and self-harm. A needs assessment may be helpful for identifying and prioritizing concerns. It is recommended that schools wishing to conduct in a needs assessment engage in conversation with their administration.

Following a needs assessment, additional targets for prevention may be needed and could be implemented at a school-wide prevention level. There are many programs that have the potential to support students. However, there are also programs that, while well intentioned, may be ineffective or even harmful. The Clearinghouse for Military Readiness at Penn State has reviewed over 1100 programs to determine the program effectiveness and the potential benefit to families. To view the effectiveness of a particular program, or identify reviewed programs on a specific topic, please visit the Continuum of Evidence.

A number of school-wide prevention programs targeting behavioral and emotional risk have been developed and implemented with a goal of improving school climate for all students. These programs vary across primary focus of intervention to include emotional competency, resilience, school culture, school readiness, and social competency—all of which foster prosocial behaviors and can have an impact on school climate. School climate, safety, and wellness help foster an environment for effective implementation of suicide-specific screening and prevention efforts.

According to the Clearinghouse, programs that are promising or demonstrate effectiveness to support school-wide universal prevention programs are as follows:

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWBIS or PBIS)

One specific type of MTSS that is designed to help promote prosocial behavior and improve school climate is School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWBIS or PBIS). Within the SWPBIS framework, schools provide instruction on appropriate behavior for all students, monitor progress, provide more intensive training to those who are not making sufficient progress, and then continue to monitor progress to determine additional needs.

Students who continue to demonstrate inappropriate or concerning behavior may be referred for further intervention. SWPBIS is a noncurricular prevention strategy that is applied universally (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2009). SWPBIS aims to improve the systems and procedures that promote positive changes in behavior of the staff and students.

https://www.pbis.org/school

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)

A comprehensive program designed for elementary school-age children that promotes emotional and social competencies, reduces aggression and behavior problems, and enhances the educational process in the classroom.

http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/ebp/altthinking

Raising Healthy Children

A social development approach incorporating school, family, and individual programs in order to promote critical elements of strong connections and bonds for children's success in school and life; opportunities, skills, and recognition.

http://www.sdrg.org/rhcsummary.asp

Open Circle

A social and emotional learning program designed for elementary school-age children that aims to proactively develop children's skills for recognizing and managing emotions, empathy, positive relationships, and problem solving; help schools develop a community where students feel safe, cared for, and engaged in learning.

https://www.open-circle.org/

Fast Track

A comprehensive intervention project designed to research lifespan development of children by providing academic tutoring, lessons on the development of social skills, and behavior regulation.

http://fasttrackproject.org/overview.php

Second Step

Developmentally appropriate lessons that are supported by music, videos, take-home activities, and stories kids relate to that instill social-emotional skills in students.

http://www.secondstep.org

Resolving Conflict Creatively Program

A comprehensive, school-based, violence-prevention program consisting of 51 lessons and accompanying activities that are tailored to promote positive conflict resolution and understanding of different cultures.

http://engagingschools.org/services/additional-programs-and-services-for-middle-and- high-schools/

Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence

A program integrating social and emotional learning, character development, drug and bullying prevention, and service-learning for positive youth development.

https://www.lions-quest.org/middle-school-social-and-emotional-learning/

Good Behavior Game (GBG)

A school-based program designed to reduce disruptive and aggressive behavior and lessen later anti-social behavior and substance use for participants. The program uses positive reinforcement through team competition and peer influence.

http://goodbehaviorgame.org

Application

How might this look in my professional practice?

Remember that the goal of this training is to increase your confidence in your ability to:

Identify evidence-based programs to improve school climate.

Based on your review of the programs shared in this training that are promising or demonstrate effectiveness to support school-wide universal prevention according to the Clearinghouse, which of the following do you feel meet the unique needs of your school? Click on each program below to learn more. Considerations may include the age of your students, current school climate, most common behavioral problems, cost, time required to implement, etc.

- School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWBIS or PBIS) - https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_744
- Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) – https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_1077
- Raising Healthy Children – https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_1106
- Open Circle – https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_987
- Fast Track – https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_1088
- Second Step – https://www.secondstep.org/
- Resolving Conflict Creatively Program – https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_1000
- Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence – https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_1176
- Good Behavior Game (GBG) - https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/program/fact_sheet_1102

Implementation

How can I effectively implement this content in my professional practice?

Please review the considerations below regarding potential implementation strategies, barriers to implementation, and collaboration strategies related to this content. This will help you coordinate the next steps as you begin to incorporate the information presented in this training into your professional practice.

This information can also be found on a handout that you will be able to download at the end of this training.

Implementation Strategies

- Complete any and all training necessary when implementing a new program.
- Ensure and engage support from all stakeholders including parents, administrators, teachers, and community members.

Overcoming Barriers to Implementation

- Engage in ongoing communication with stakeholders about what your programming entails, why it is important, and what they can do to help support your efforts.
- Consider your timeline carefully for implementation of any new programming. For example, if your district plans on rolling out a new math curriculum in a given school year, it may not be an ideal time to add additional programming. Timing   for implementation can help make your efforts more effective.

Collaboration Strategies

- Engage parents and community members to rally ongoing support.
- Regularly consult with and coach teachers and other staff when implementing new programming.

Resources

Are there any resources available to help me implement this content?

Click on the link below to download a tool that you can use to implement this content in your professional practice.

https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:477777dc-20c0-438b-b7c4-336221b6d1a3

Below you can find other supplemental resources that may be helpful for you in your professional practice.

Continuum of Evidence

The Continuum is a repository of programs that have been reviewed by the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State research and evaluation scientists. Programs are placed on the Continuum with descriptions to help individuals who serve military families make informed decisions regarding how to best serve these unique and valuable families. The Continuum of Evidence can be used free of charge.

https://www.continuum.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/

Program Implementation

The Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State has reviewed the latest research around evidence-based programs, implementation science, and military families to create evidence-informed, easy-to- use resources for professionals. The tools and resources are designed to assist you through the program selection, implementation, and evaluation processes. You can use all of the tools and resources to help guide you through the entire process, or you can pick and choose the tools and resources that work best for your organization and the population you serve. All of the tools and resources are free of charge.

https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/resources/program-implementation-toolkit/

Feedback

How can I help improve this training?

The objective of this training was to increase your confidence in your ability to:

Identify evidence-based programs to improve school climate.

Answer the questions in the link below to let us know how well this training increased your confidence in your ability to accomplish this objective. Once you have answered all of the questions, click the blue arrow button underneath to submit your responses.

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d771mLr9ZgW3kyx?modulenumber=suicide08

Verify that you have completed each of the tasks below.

> Answered all of the survey questions above. You may have to scroll to see all of the questions.
> Clicked the arrow underneath the last survey question to submit your responses.

Additional Readings

Where can I learn more about this content?

The following resources were used to create this training. If you would like more information about the information presented in this training, we encourage you to start here.

Bradshaw, C. P., Waasdorp, T. E., & Leaf, P. J. (2012). Effects of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports on child behavior problems. Pediatrics, 130(5), e1136–e1145. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2012-0243

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this training. If you have any questions or comments, please email us at schoolresources@psu.edu.

Proceed to the next training

Click on the link below to move on to the next training titled *Programs to Prevent Student Suicide*. In this training, you will increase your confidence in your ability to respond appropriately to the possible outcomes on the suicide risk screening tool.

https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_09-programs-to-prevent-student-suicide_201022/

Return to the module directory

Click on the link below to return to the module directory.

https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/modules/