Positive Behavior Supports in Secondary Schools: What's new, what's old, what's up?

- Review discipline patterns in U.S. schools
- Discuss
  - Unique challenges and opportunities for secondary schools
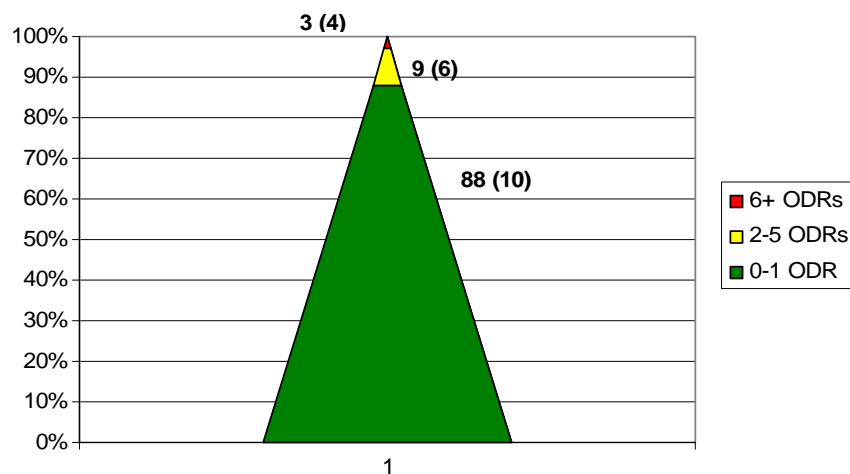 - Practices that support healthy student behavior and effective educator behavior
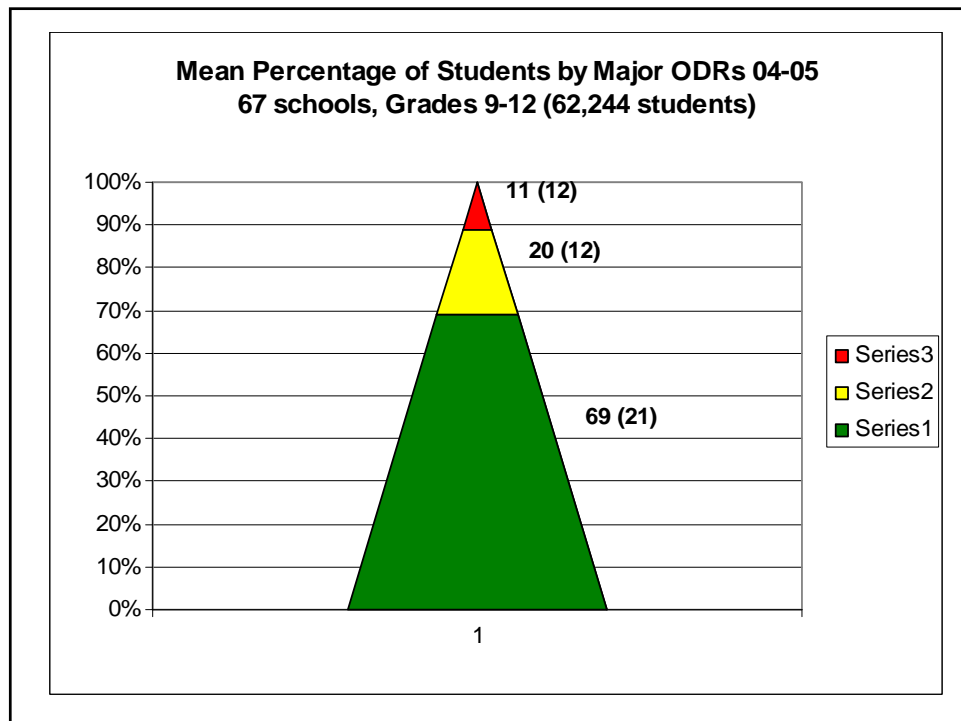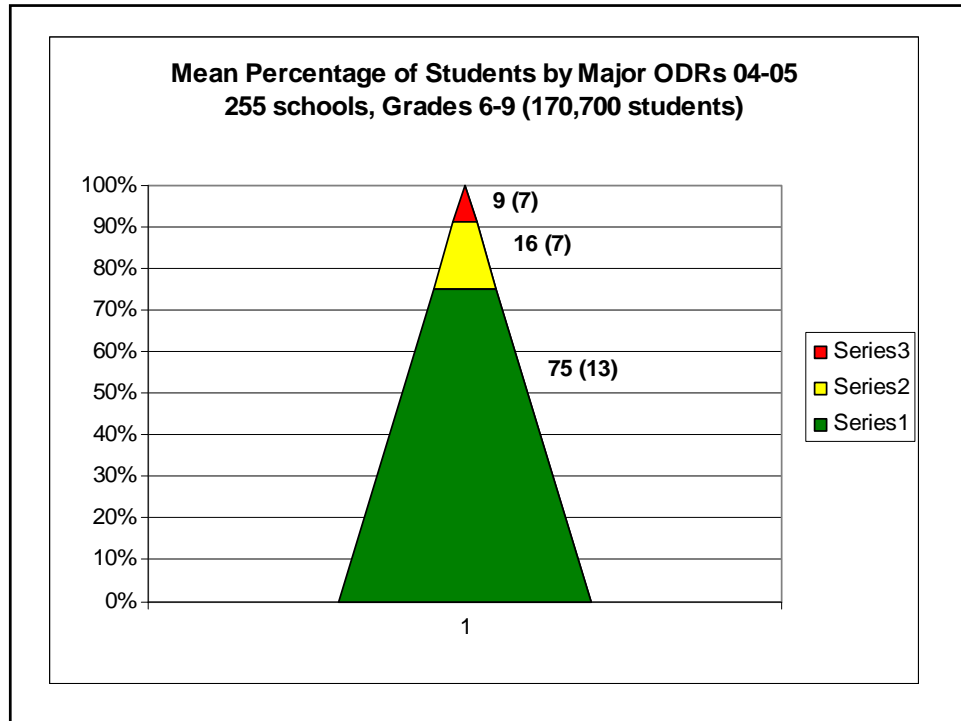
Challenging Behaviors

- Exist in every school and community (always will)
- Vary in intensity and frequency
  - Mild to Violent
- Are associated w/ a variety of risk factors (no single pathway)
- Present our greatest public health problem!

The context for antisocial behavior in secondary school

– "Strain": schools promote unequal success between students
– "Marxist": some students reject the "precast mold" of adult work
– Social disorganization: schools are a reflection of the larger disintegrated community
– Social control: schools and/or families fail in their role to socialize students; Antisocial Behavior is learned behavior
– Routine activity: schools place perpetrators and victims in a poorly supervised environment
– Impulse Control: Antisocial Behavior is rooted in poor self-control

Mean Percentage of Students by Major ODR rate 04-05
**673 schools Grades K-6 (292,021 students)**

3 (4)

9 (6)

88 (10)

Legend:
- 6+ ODRs
- 2-5 ODRs
- 0-1 ODR

Mean Percentage of Students by Major ODRs 04-05
255 schools, Grades 6-9 (170,700 students)

9 (7)

16 (7)

75 (13)

Series3
Series2
Series1

Mean Percentage of Students by Major ODRs 04-05
67 schools, Grades 9-12 (62,244 students)

11 (12)

20 (12)

69 (21)

Series3
Series2
Series1

SWIS summary 08-09 (Majors Only)
3,410 schools; 1,737,432 students; 1,500,770 ODRs

Grade Range	Number of Schools	Mean Enrollment per school	Mean ODRs per 100 per school day
K-6	2,162	450	**.34** (sd = .49)
6-9	602	657	**.85** (sd = 1.11)
9-12	215	887	**1.27** (sd = 2.39)
K-(8-12)	431	408	**1.06** (sd = 2.60)

Mean Percentage of Students/Referrals by Major ODRs 04-05
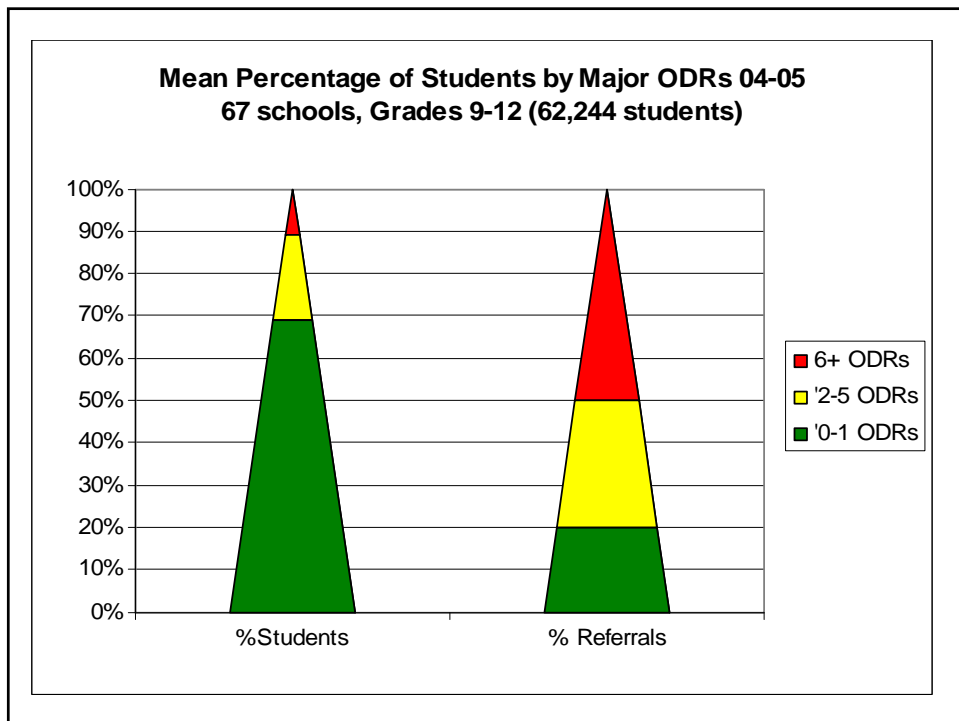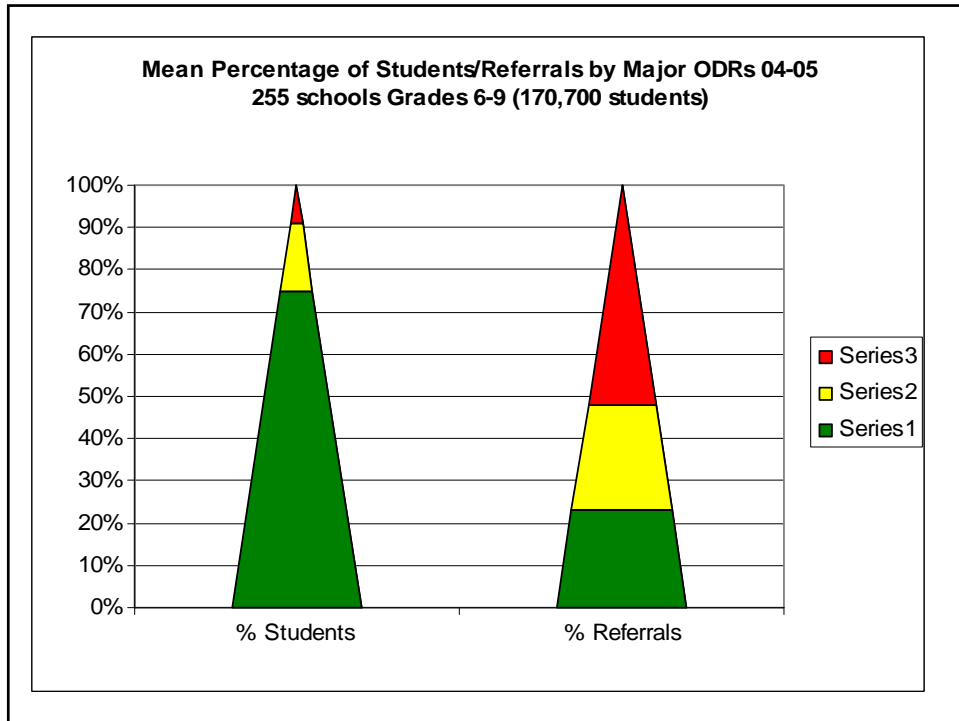**673 schools Grades K-6 (292,021 students)**

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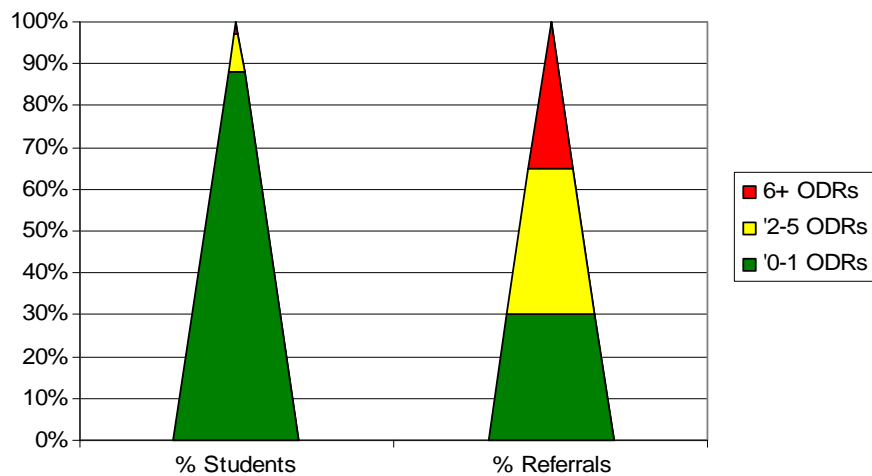
Table 1. Students in 7th to 12th grade reporting one or more health risk behaviors		
Behavior	% reporting the behavior	% reporting at least one other
Regular tobacco use	11	85
Regular alcohol use	11	92
Regular binge drinking	7	97
Marijuana use	14	88
Other illicit drugs	5	95
Fighting	33	56
Weapon carrying	6	89
Suicide attempt	24	100
Unprotected sex	12	76

Why do adolescents disengage from schooling?

– Problems with teacher relationships
– Chronic suspension or expulsion
– Punitive discipline practices
– Poor grades
– Not liking school
– Peers dropping out
– Can't get into desired programs
– Pregnancy/parenthood
– Need to support family
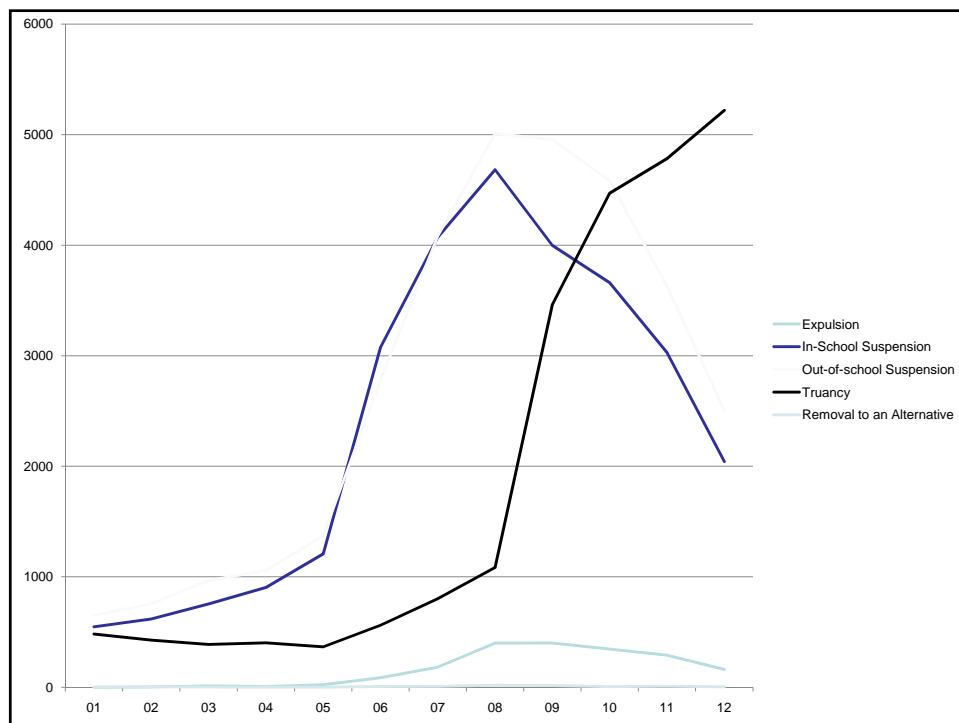
Why secondary school?

- secondary school teachers often assert that they spend a substantial amount of time dealing with problem behavior of students that disrupt the classroom activities.
- Frequent misbehavior of students will decrease the time spent in instructional activities and thus decrease the time students have an opportunity to learn.
- Proactive behavior management in classrooms is related to positive behavior and academic progress of students.
- Data are lacking about the secondary school classroom experience. In most US secondary schools students change classrooms for every subject – and teachers do not spend much time getting to know individual students

We know very little about a secondary schoolers' day-to-day experience in the classroom

- how those experiences are related to experiences during break times at the school
- how those experiences are related to the students' view of their opportunities to learn
- feelings of support from adults in the school setting
- feelings of safety in the classroom and school.

Challenges of Early Adolescence

- Diverse problems begin to emerge and because problems appearing in this stage often have more negative long-term consequences than problems that develop later.
- Emotional states become less positive and more variable
- Peer associations and friendships change
- Frequent peer harassment and relational aggression occur
- Adult supervision decreases
- Peers become more salient and their influence increases
- Affiliation with deviant peers increases and the use of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs accelerates

Secondary School Organization and Structure Poses Challenges

- Almost half or initial aggressive incidents among youth were reported to occur at school, and adults were not aware of about half of those incidents
- Students experience a substantial decline of teacher support across the secondary school years
- Student perception of teacher support is associated with fewer behavior problems
- Lower delinquency and peer victimization occurs in schools with clear rules and that were perceived by student to be fair

Secondary School Organization

- Schools commonly use punitive consequences that remove students from the classroom and school activities, which are not effective at reducing problem behavior and academic progress
- Removal from school (suspensions and expulsions) increases as a sanction in secondary school
- The increased emphasis on punitive discipline exacerbates behavioral problems at school In far too many cases, the result of these efforts is to exacerbate emotional and behavioral problems, and contribute to rejection by nondeviant peers and the formation of friendships with other rejected students
- These conditions also contribute to delinquency among aggressive students Improvements are needed in secondary school environments so that a more positive influence on social outcomes for youth can be achieved.

Staff Member Practices and Student Behavior

- The largest effect sizes in reducing delinquency are for programs that involve school-wide behavior management interventions.
- School interventions that focus on the school social environment have significant effects on delinquency, alcohol and drug use, truancy and school drop-out, and other problem behaviors.
- Interventions involving school-wide behavior management strategies result in reductions in antisocial behavior
  - vandalism
  - aggression
  - later delinquency
  - alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use

Staff Member Practices and Student Behavior

- Such interventions provide clear expectations, monitor students' behavior, and consistently deliver positive reinforcement for students following expectations.
- Positive changes in protective factors such as academic achievement and school engagement have also been documented for schools using a positive school discipline program along with other prevention interventions.

Why not just focus the "few" kids that are the biggest problems?

- If we only respond to the toughest kids, we will never get to all of them, and we may make more!
- All children and youth need a "village" to return to
- Bystanders (peers, parents/family, teachers, others) are the village!

Effective Secondary Schools

- Shared values regarding school mission and purpose
- Clear expectations
  - Learning
  - Behavior
- Activities designed to promote pro-social behavior and connection to school traditions
- A caring social climate involving collegial relationships among adults and students
- Students have valued roles and responsibilities in the school

Adolescent Perceptual Brain

- Adolescents and adults respond differently to the same images
- Shown a set of photos of people's faces contorted in fear, adults named the right emotion, but teens seldom did, often stating that the person was angry
- This difference in perception was accompanied with differences in functional MRI. Adults used the advanced prefrontal cortex and the basic amygdala. Younger teens relied entirely on the amygdala, while older teens showed a progression towards using the frontal area
- "Good judgment is learned; but you can't learn it if you don't have the necessary hardware"
- Thus, we see that 15 year olds are unbelievably smart – particularly memory and ability to absorb new information and reason through complex problems, UNTIL they do something incredibly stupid

Growth and Pruning of the Neocortex
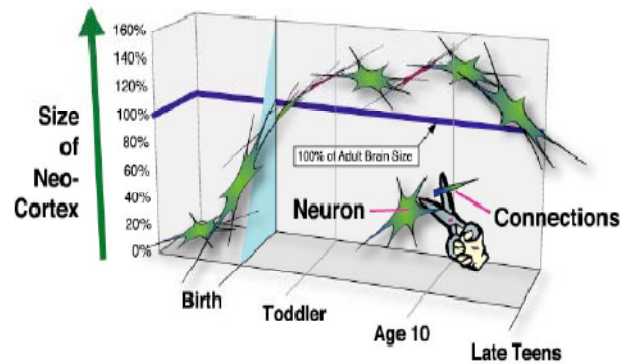
Developmental Stages of Wiring
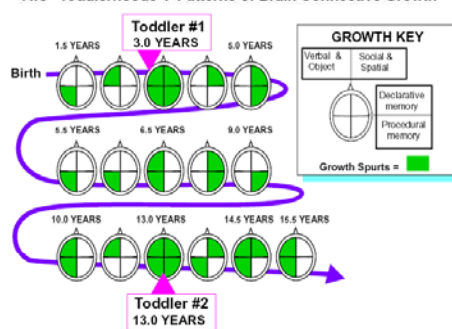
- Neural wiring patterns of early adolescents resemble the wiring patterns of toddlers, in which emotional deregulation is high and egocentrism is high.

    Jeffrey Sprague, Ph.D.   29
(jeffs@uoregon.edu)

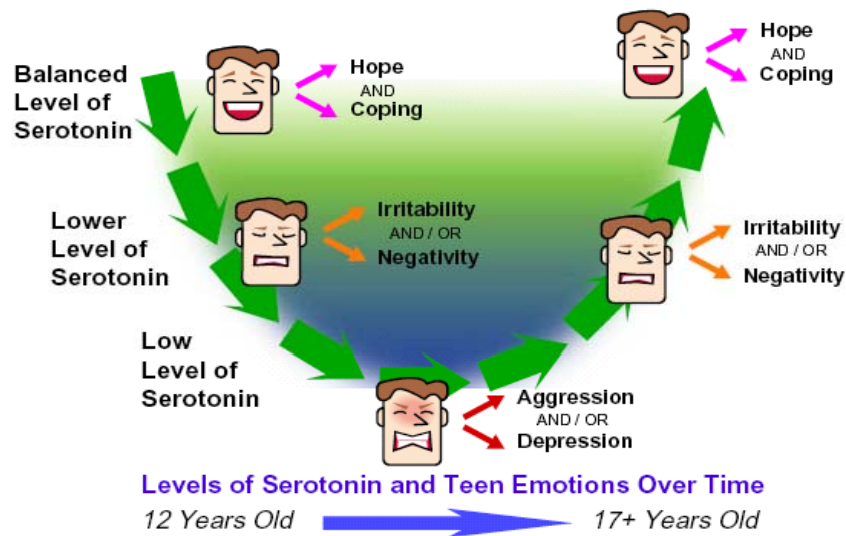## Adolescent Changing Personalities

Balanced Level of Serotonin → Hope AND Coping

Lower Level of Serotonin → Irritability AND / OR Negativity

Low Level of Serotonin → Aggression AND / OR Depression

→ Irritability AND / OR Negativity

→ Hope AND Coping

Levels of Serotonin and Teen Emotions Over Time

12 Years Old ⟶ *17+ Years Old*

The Adolescent Brain

Adolescent Processing of Fear

Teens
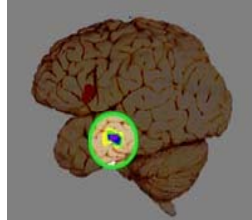
Adults

- Early adolescents to do not process fear in the same way as adults.
- Adults "think about" fear. Teens "react" to fear. Thus, when adults ask, "What were you thinking?" Teens respond, "I wasn't."
- Young people process all emotions differently—especially facial and nonverbal cues.
  - Perception of non-verbal cues is even more biased toward perceptions of threat and danger – hostile attribution bias

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Stress

- When young people are pressured or stressed, the ability to inhibit emotions (stop and think) drops off rapidly
- Exposure to prior trauma (e.g., child abuse, violence) worsens performance dramatically.

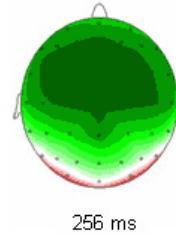7/11/2010   Jeffrey Sprague, Ph.D.   34
(jeffs@uoregon.edu)
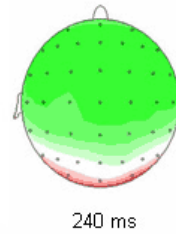
Poor chil

High SES

"Kids from lower
socioeconomic
levels show brain
physiology patterns
similar to someone
who actually had
damage in the
frontal lobe as an
adult,"

"We found that kids
are more likely to
have a low
response if they
have low
socioeconomic
status, though not
everyone who is
poor has low frontal
lobe response."

256 ms

Low SES

240 ms

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Brain Reward Centers

Young Adults (Ages 22-28)   Adolescents (Ages 12-17)

R   L   R   L
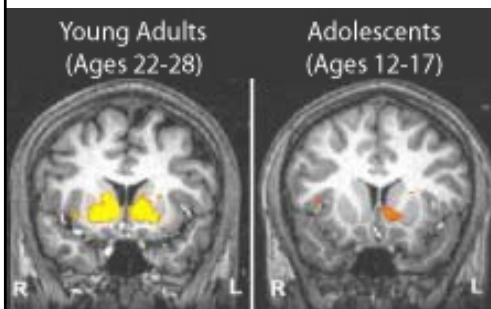
Source: NIH/National Institute On Alcohol Abuse And Alcoholism

- Some children, especially early adolescents show fewer reward signals in the brain to stimuli, meaning that the intensity of rewards must be higher for early adolescents to feel rewarded.

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Responsiveness to Consequences

- Adolescents (and students under stress) need higher levels of reward and much more frequently than or adults.
  - Depriving humans chances to receive and percieve reward increases aggression and "anger."
- Adolescents also don't learn as well from "negative" consequences

Think, pair and share

- Given the new science about young peoples brain development, what are the implications for
  - How we teach expected behavior?
  - How we correct misbehavior?
  - How we respond to individual differences regarding
    - The need for reward
    - Responsiveness to punishment

AIM for PBS Success

- Adopt
- Implement
- Maintain

School Wide PBS: **Adoption** Conditions

- School improvement priority
- Principal is an active leader and involved!
- Use of standardized curriculum and procedures for kids and adults)
- Most adults help implement the program
- All kids affected and involved (even the tough ones)
- System for performance-based feedback
- Commitment to sustained implementation

Implementation conditions

- High-quality *leadership and support* provided by a principal or other administrator
- An *internal "champion"* for a program
- Meaningful teacher participation and buy in
- *Access to formal training* and technical assistance
  - Just in time and continuous
  - No train and hope or "drive by workshops"
- Adequate *financial resources* for adoption, implementation, and maintenance of the program
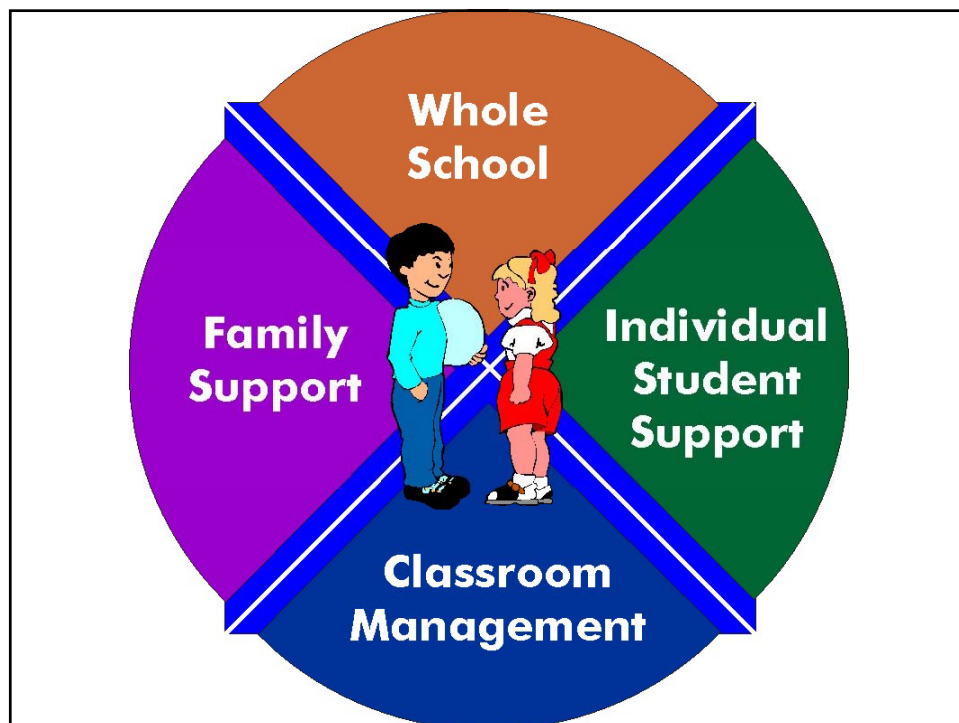
Implementation Practices

- Set clear and high behavioral expectations
    - Safe, respectful, responsible
- Teach and review those expectations regularly
- Define unacceptable behaviors and their consequences
- Develop a system of positive recognition
- Excellent classroom management
- Help manage teacher stress
- Deal respectfully and consistently with students at all times

Whole School:
Building-Level Discipline Teams

- Team meets monthly at school
    - Continuous assessment of school progress and problems
    - Implement discipline systems
- Team provides staff training/coaching across the year and is continuously available
- Team gives status report monthly to all staff
    - Office Referral patterns and updates
    - Successes and Concerns

What PBS practices do you have at your school?

- Positive school expectations
  - Developed and agreed upon?
  - Developed and Posted?
  - Developed, Posted, and Formally Taught?
  - Developed, Posted, Taught >10 Xs a year
  - Developed, Posted, Taught >10 Xs a year and system of positive reinforcement?
- System for performance-based feedback and problem solving?

Skills for Success Components

- **Universal Procedures**
  - School Wide Positive Behavior Support
  - School-wide social skills training
  - Student organization e.g., SAVE or MECha
  - Universal Screening procedures
- **Small Group Interventions**
  - School-based adult mentoring
  - Service Learning
  - Increase academic support
  - Social skills training e.g, self-control, interpersonal skills

Individual interventions

– **Adult mentoring**
  - Advocacy and coaching
  - Frequent and positive contact with caring adult
– **Parent involvement**
  - Frequent contact with parents
  - Parent partnerships regarding school and discipline
– **Alternative discipline**
  - Increased monitoring – home, school, and community
  - Reward system for positive behavior e.g., attendance
– **Multi-agency interventions**
  - Coordinated planning, supervision, and intervention

McGruff High School

- High rates of ODR, suspension and expulsion
  - Drop out
  - Academic failure
  - Etc.
- Moving from assessment to intervention
  - ESB
  - Change in policy and practice

School Facts

- Attendance
  - 89.8% Attendance
  - 8.7% dropout rate
- Student Academic Performance – Low rating
- Behavior
  - 287 students suspended
  - 458 out of school suspensions
  - 41 expulsions

Skills for Success Interventions

- Change discipline policy
  - Eliminate automatic 10 day suspension for fights
- Restructure passing time schedule
  - Reduce number of open restrooms
  - "no pass" during first and last 10 minutes of class period
  - Introduced warning bell system

Set methods to identify antisocial and at-risk youth

- Screen for adjustment problems often
  - Assess prevalence
- Help staff and families understand
  - Adverse childhood experiences
  - Behavioral and academic indicators
  - Long term outcomes if support is not provided
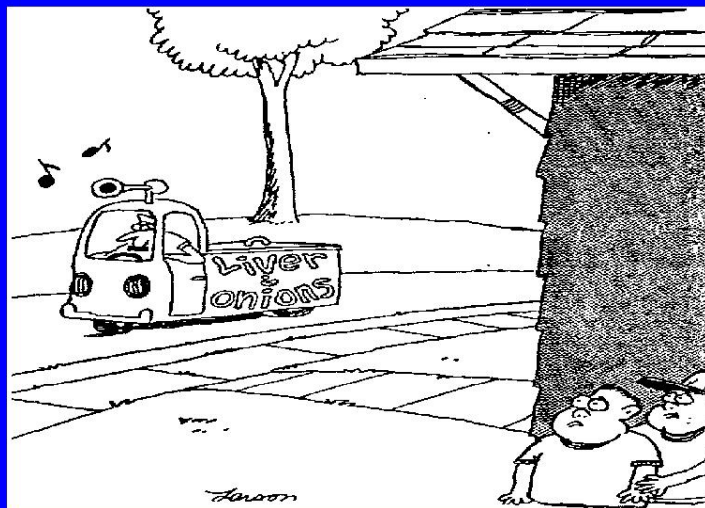
Universal Screening?

- We know who the problem students are already!
- We have enough to do – why look for more students with problems!
- If we wait – the students will come to us!
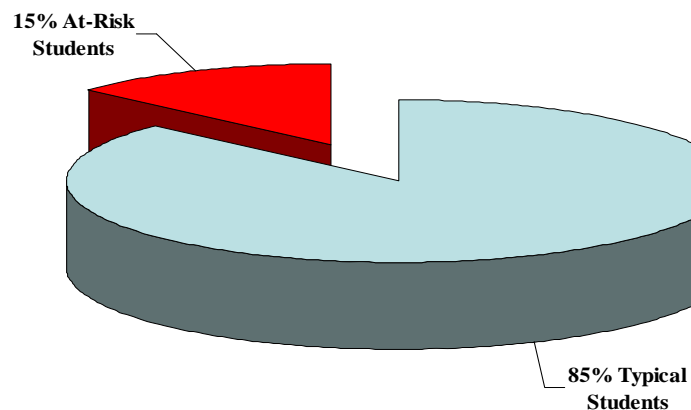- If we identify students – how will we serve them?

What can Universal Screening do??

- ASSIST WITH PLANNING

  – Informs schools about the student population

  – Find groups of students with common needs

  – May help with Resource Mapping of their services

Behavioral and Emotional
Rating Scale (Epstein & Sharma, 1998)

- Protective Factors
- Skill-based
- Considers student as part of school and family system
  - Interpersonal Skills
  - Intrapersonal Skills
  - Family Involvement
  - School Functioning
  - Affective Skills

Percentage of At-Risk Students
(n = 6096 Total Students Considered)

15% At-Risk
Students

85% Typical
Students

Universal Screening Results for Elementary, Middle, and High Schools (1251 At-Risk Students)

	Elementary	Middle	High
☐ Average	35%	25%	18%
☐ Below Average	30%	24%	21%
☐ Poor	23%	30%	28%
☐ Very Poor	12%	21%	32%
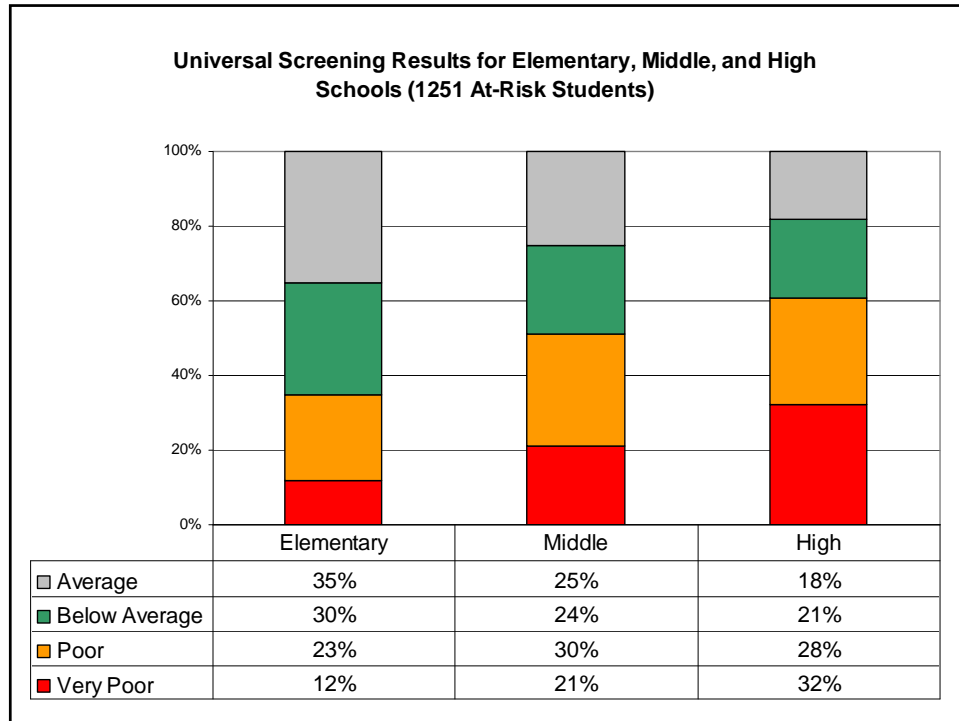
A Comparison of Four Schools

Schools	Total Sample	At-Risk	% At-Risk
A	542	60	**11%**
B	436	73	**15%**
C	234	50	**21%**
D	253	82	**32%**

Universal Screening By Grade Level
(22 schools)

	Interpersonal	Family Involvement	Intrapersonal	School Functioning	Affective
ES (n=473)	45%	28%	53%	54%	39%
MS (n=422)	42%	49%	67%	63%	61%
HS (n=414)	53%	62%	71%	78%	69%
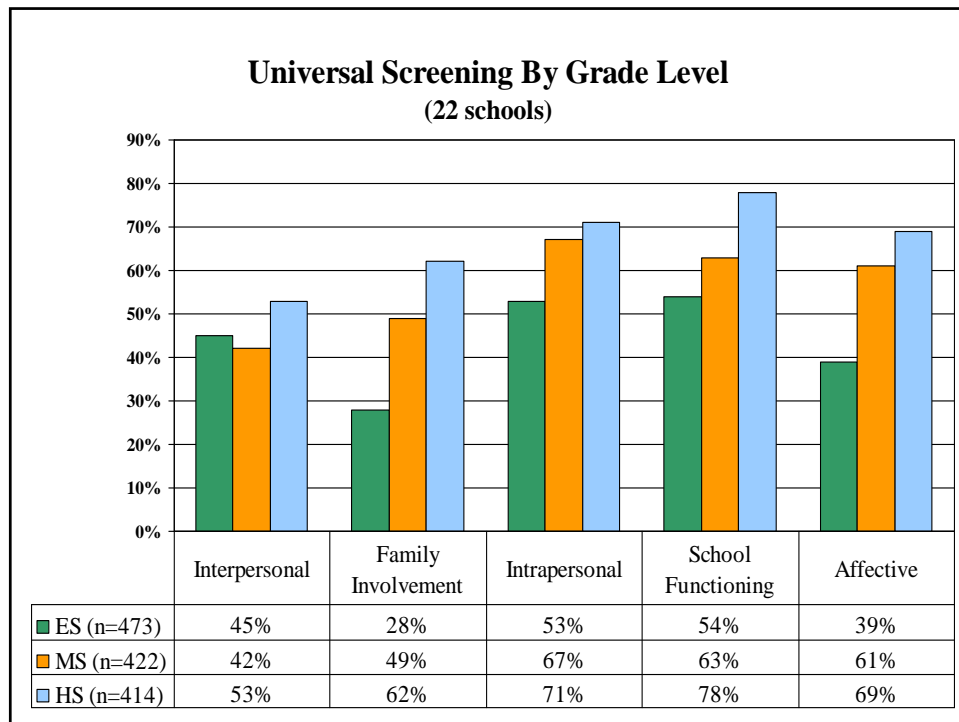
Things to Consider

- 32% At-Risk Population

School Functioning - 31%

- 17% to 28% of students
  - Intrapersonal
  - Interpersonal
  - Family involvement
  - Affective

- 22% At-Risk Population

Intrapersonal Skills – 33%

- 11% - 14% of students
  - Affective
  - Family involvement
  - Interpersonal
  - School functioning

Two Students Data

BERS Scale	Sally	Matt
Interpersonal	Below Average	Below average
Family involvement	Poor	Average
Intrapersonal	Average	Poor
School functioning	Very poor	Below Average
Affective	Average	Very poor

Some Ideas

Sally
- Family Involvement and School Functioning
  - Increase communication with parents
  - Help build system for homework
  - School travel card

Matt
- Intrapersonal and Affective
  - Increase opportunities for healthy peer activities
  - Mentoring
  - Skill building

Some Ideas

- School Functioning
  - Teach study skills
  - Check and Connect
  - Academic support/tutoring
- Intrapersonal Skills
  - Self-management/social skills
  - Recognition system for social skills
  - Coping with Depression
  - Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions for Trauma in Schools (www.sopriswest.com)