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School-Based Mentoring: An Effective Intervention with Students at Risk for EBD

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Brigham Young University
Positive Behavior Support Initiative
Presentation Overview

- Intro
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusion
Risk Factors

- Low family income, large family size, poor child-rearing techniques & parental criminality linked to juvenile delinquency (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson 1999)

- Strained family relationships, family conflict, poor communication skills contribute to rates of depression among children (Merrell, 2001)
EBD

- Estimated 10-20% of school-age children experience mental health concerns (Mash & Dozois, 2002) - many are not identified and do not receive interventions.

- Students identified with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) constitute just less than 1% of the school-age population (Wagner et al., 2005).

- Of those students identified as EBD, approximately 65% are 12 years of age or older (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).
Common School Interventions

- Reactive
- Punishment
- Suspension and expulsion
- School psychologists or counselors
- Special education services
Foundations of Mentoring

- Homers Odyssey
- Extended Families
- Heroic Legends
- Sports
- Business
- President Bush $450 million
Rationale

• Relationships with non-parental adults are vital assets for positive youth development (Scales, 2003)

• Studies of resilience among youth from at-risk backgrounds alerted scholars to protective functions that can be fulfilled by relationships with non-parental adults (Werner, 1995)
What is a Mentor?

- Greater wisdom or experience
- Offers guidance or instruction intended to facilitate growth and development

“There is an emotional bond between mentor and mentee, a hallmark of which is a sense of trust”

(Freedman 1992)
Mentors Can Help By...

- Enhancing Social Skills
- Improving Emotional Wellbeing through Listening & Dialogue
- Serving as a Role Model/Advocate (Rhodes, 2002)
- Advocating Health and Safety
- Promoting Self Sufficiency (Jekielek, 2002)
Benefits of School-based Mentoring

• Less Costly
• Identify More Children via the School Context
• School Resources Staff Administration
• More Convenient for Volunteers
• Time Commitment
• Mentors Feel Safer
• Establish Community Support within School

Dubois & Karcher (2005)
The goal of true mentoring is the development of the youth—not necessarily the solution of specific problems" (Ambrose, 1998)
Positive Behavior Support

Targeted/Intensive: 3-5% high-risk students

Selected: 7-10% at-risk students (mentoring)

Universal: 85-90% of students respond to SWPBS
Question:

Is school-based mentoring an effective intervention for elementary students at-risk for emotional and behavioral disorders?
Setting

- Elementary School in Central Utah
  - 532 Students
  - Over 50% free or reduced lunch
  - Ethnicity
    - 75% Caucasian
    - 21% Hispanic
    - 2% African American
    - 2% Other

- Student Support
  - Principal
  - .50 Advocate
  - .25 Psychologist
Student Selection

- Systematic Screening For Behavior Disorders (SSBD) (Walker & Severson 1992)
  - Screens All Students
  - Internalizing & Externalizing
  - Suggests Risk Level
    - Primary, Secondary, Tertiary
Student Participants

- **N = 17**
  - 76 % male
- **Ethnicity:**
  - 70% Caucasian
  - 24% Hispanic
  - 6% African American
- **Age:**
  - Range 6-11yrs., M = 8.5yrs (sd = 1.84)
- **Free or Reduced Lunch = 81%**
- **SSBD results:**
  - Critical Events: range 1–6, M = 2.73 (sd = 1.62)
  - Adaptive: range 25-44, M = 33.67 (sd = 5.05)
  - Maladaptive: range 14-45, M = 29.60 (sd = 8.47)
Mentors

- Recruited via:
  - Principal and staff, PTA, volunteers
  - Businesses
  - Community groups
  - Church out-reach programs
  - Retirement communities
# Profile of Mentors

## Methods

### Age Range

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>20-30</th>
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### Education

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<td>Some College</td>
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<td>BA/BS Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD MD</td>
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### Employed

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<td>Unemployed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mentor Expectations

- Time commitment
- Reliability and Consistency
- Optimism
- Honesty
- Supportive Acceptance
- Avoid preaching or lecturing
- Good example
- Training
Mentor Skills Training

- Communication skills
- Effective praise
- Listening skills
Mentor Activity Training

- Social Skills Instruction
- Goal Setting
- Problem Solving
Evaluation Design

- 1 Group
- Pre-Test/Post-Test
Dependant Variables

- Social Competence
- Anti-social Behavior
- Academics
- Attendance
- Social Validity
- Mentor Log
School Social Behavior Scales (SSBS)
(Merrell, 2002)

- **Teacher Rating**
  - 64 Likert-scale items
  - Nationally normed
  - Evidence of reliability & validity

- **Social Competence**
  - Cooperates with other students
  - Shows self control
  - Sensitive to others feelings

- **Antisocial Behavior**
  - Is physically aggressive
  - Is easily irritated
  - Gets into trouble at school

(Merrell, 2002)
Home and Community Social Behavior Scales (HCSBS)
(Merrell & Caldarella, 2002)

- **Parent Rating**
  - Companion to the SSBS
  - 64 Likert-scale items
  - Nationally normed
  - Evidence of reliability & validity

- **Social Competence**
  - Cooperates with peers
  - Shows self control
  - Sensitive to others feelings

- **Antisocial Behavior**
  - Is physically aggressive
  - Is easily irritated
  - Gets into trouble at school or in community

---

Methods

- Parent Rating
  - Companion to the SSBS
  - 64 Likert-scale items
  - Nationally normed
  - Evidence of reliability & validity

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  - Is physically aggressive
  - Is easily irritated
  - Gets into trouble at school or in community
School-based Measures

- Academics
- Attendance
Social Validity Survey

- End of program
- All participants
- Perceived changes in student
- Satisfaction
- Suggestions
Mentoring Log

- Mentors
  - averaged 14 visits over 19 weeks
  - recorded the activities they engaged in with their students.

Categories

- Academic-related 44.5%
- Social 40.8%
- Games, puzzles, etc. 14.7%

Top 3 Activities

- Goal setting 18.4%
- Conversations 15.6%
- Reading activities 13.8%
Social Competence

Social Competence Total T-Scores

- SSBS: Pre: 44.00, Post: 49.75
- HCSBS: Pre: 49.27, Post: 52.82
Antisocial Behavior

Anti-Social Behavior Total T-Scores

SSBS: Pre = 58.94, Post = 53.00
HCSBS: Pre = 48.25, Post = 47.17
SSBS and HCSBS Mean T Scores, Standard Deviations, and Paired Sample t-Tests.

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<tr>
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<th>Pre Test</th>
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<th>Post Test</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Comp Pre-Post</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>49.75</td>
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<td>Anti-Social Pre-Post</td>
<td>58.94</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>53.00</td>
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<td>Anti-Social Pre-Post</td>
<td>48.25</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>47.17</td>
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*p < .05    **p < .01
## Academic Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Paired Sample $t$-Tests.

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<th>SD</th>
<th>Post-mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Skills</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>-6.12***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
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<td>0.76</td>
<td>3.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Expression</td>
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<td>2.80</td>
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<td>Spelling</td>
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<td>1.04</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.94</td>
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<td>Math</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
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<td>Academic Total</td>
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<td>Homework Accountability</td>
<td>1.87</td>
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<td>Citizenship</td>
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<td>3.21</td>
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<td>-3.63**</td>
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**$p < .01$  ***$p < .001$**
Attendance

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<tr>
<td>Absences</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>4.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tardies</td>
<td>8.63</td>
<td>5.63</td>
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</table>
**Comparison: Secondary vs. Tertiary**

SSBS Social Competence Comparison

- **Secondary Pre**: 44.60
- **Secondary Post**: 49.44
- **Tertiary Pre**: 45.00
- **Tertiary Post**: 54.40
Comparison: Secondary vs. Tertiary

SSBS Anti-Social Behavior Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>56.90</td>
<td>51.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>58.80</td>
<td>48.00</td>
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</table>
Student Survey

100% responded that they would like to be in the mentoring program again.

71% noted help with academics as the most important part of having a mentor.

What did you like about having a mentor?

“A friend”
“She’s nice, knows about me and cares”
“Someone to trust”
“We talk, she listens”
Teacher Survey

100% noted positive changes for those students who were mentored.

“I wish more of my students could benefit from it”

“Self-confidence has dramatically increased this school year”

“I love that Martin truly looked forward to this time, as was shown by the big smile on his face each time she appeared at our door. This is worth more than completing 100 assignments on time!!”
Mentor Survey

69% would like to participate again.
40% would like more information on student needs.
36% wanted more contact with the teacher.

“They have touched my life for good”
“I like feeling that I can make a difference in a child’s life”
“It is very rewarding to help a child set goals and achieve them”
“I like seeing them become more self confident”
Parent Survey

83% said they would like their child to participate in the program again.

“He appears to feel better about himself”

“It helps them cope with problems and be better students!”

“We love the program!”

“Boost in self-confidence”
Limitations

• Data from just 1 school
• No control group
• Small number of participants
• Brief intervention
• No measure of relationship strength
Future Directions

- Addressing limitations
- Replicating the evaluation
- Extending the program
- Developing and refining mentoring materials
Resources

Dubois & Karcher, (2005), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring*, Sage Publishing

www.beamentor.org
www.mentoring.org
www.ppv.org

For copies of these slides go to http://education.byu.edu/pbsi/ and click on “resources”