

Creating a Nurturing and Responsive School Environment to Promote Students' Social, Emotional, and Academic Success

Clay Cook, PhD, LP

Associate Professor

John W. and Nancy E. Peyton Fellow in Child and Adolescent Wellbeing

College of Education & Human Development

University of Minnesota

Core Faculty

Institute for Translation Research in Children's Mental Health

University of Minnesota

crcook@umn.edu



@ClayCook_PhD



Prevention

Cure



The Problems that Necessitate Change

- **1 out of 4 children** experience social, emotional, and behavioral needs that interfere with their academic functioning
- Most children **do not receive indicated mental health services** (Kataoka et al., 2002)
 - Less than 20% of students with mental and behavioral health needs receives services



MYTH

A photograph of a baseball team standing in a cornfield. The word "MYTH" is superimposed in large white letters across the top of the image. The players are wearing white uniforms and are positioned in front of a dense field of tall corn stalks. The scene is set outdoors with a clear sky in the background.

If you build it, they will come

The Problems that Necessitate Change

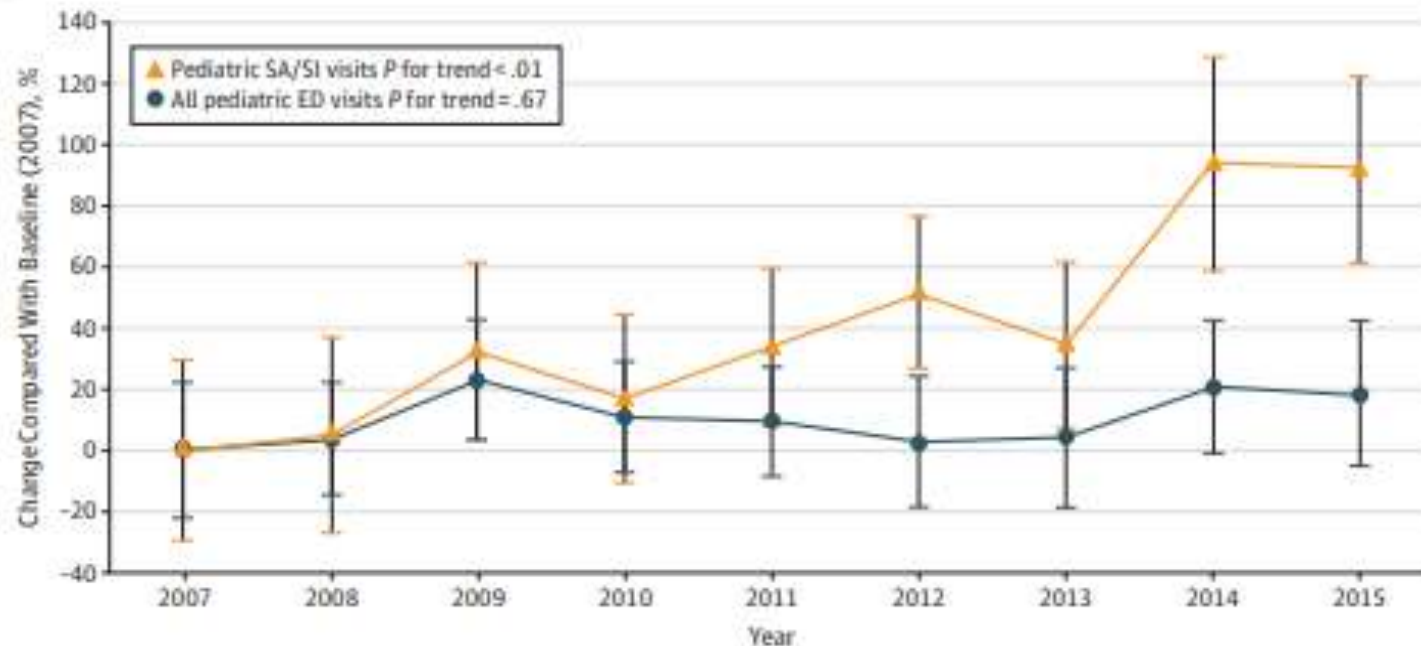
- Services are **unlikely to be evidence-based** (Evans & Weist, 2004; Rones & Hoagwood, 2000)
- **Low levels of effectiveness**, some iatrogenic effects for SMH programs targeting low-income, urban youth (Farahmand et al., 2011)
- **Longstanding disparities** for students of color
 - Less likely to receive effective services
 - More likely to receive exclusionary discipline
 - More likely to be referred for special education under EBD and placed in restrictive settings

Hospitalizations

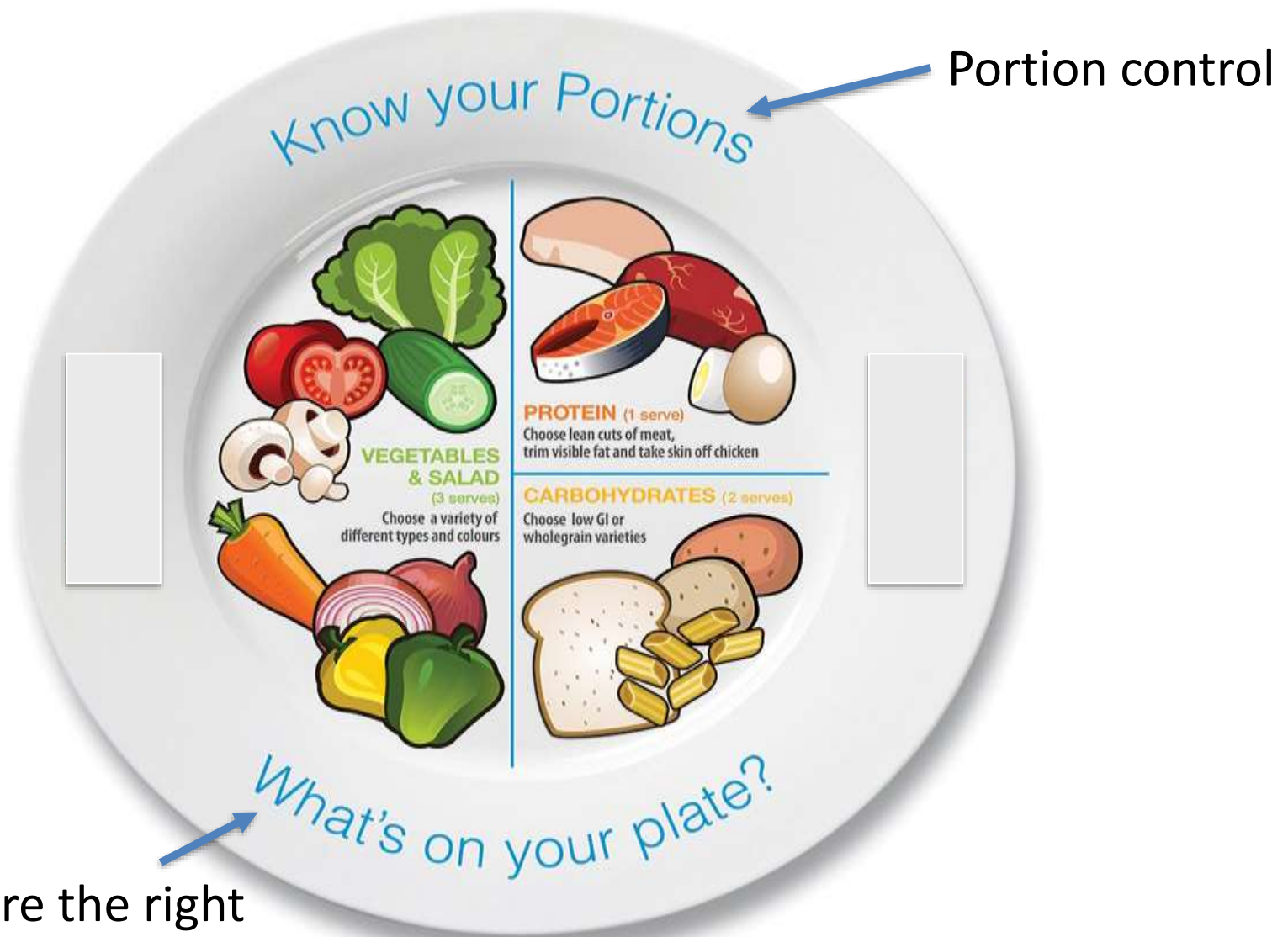
Suicidal ideation & attempts

JAMA Network™

Figure. Associated Changes in Pediatric Emergency Department (ED) Visits for Suicide Attempts (SA) and Suicidal Ideation (SI)



What should go on educators' plates?

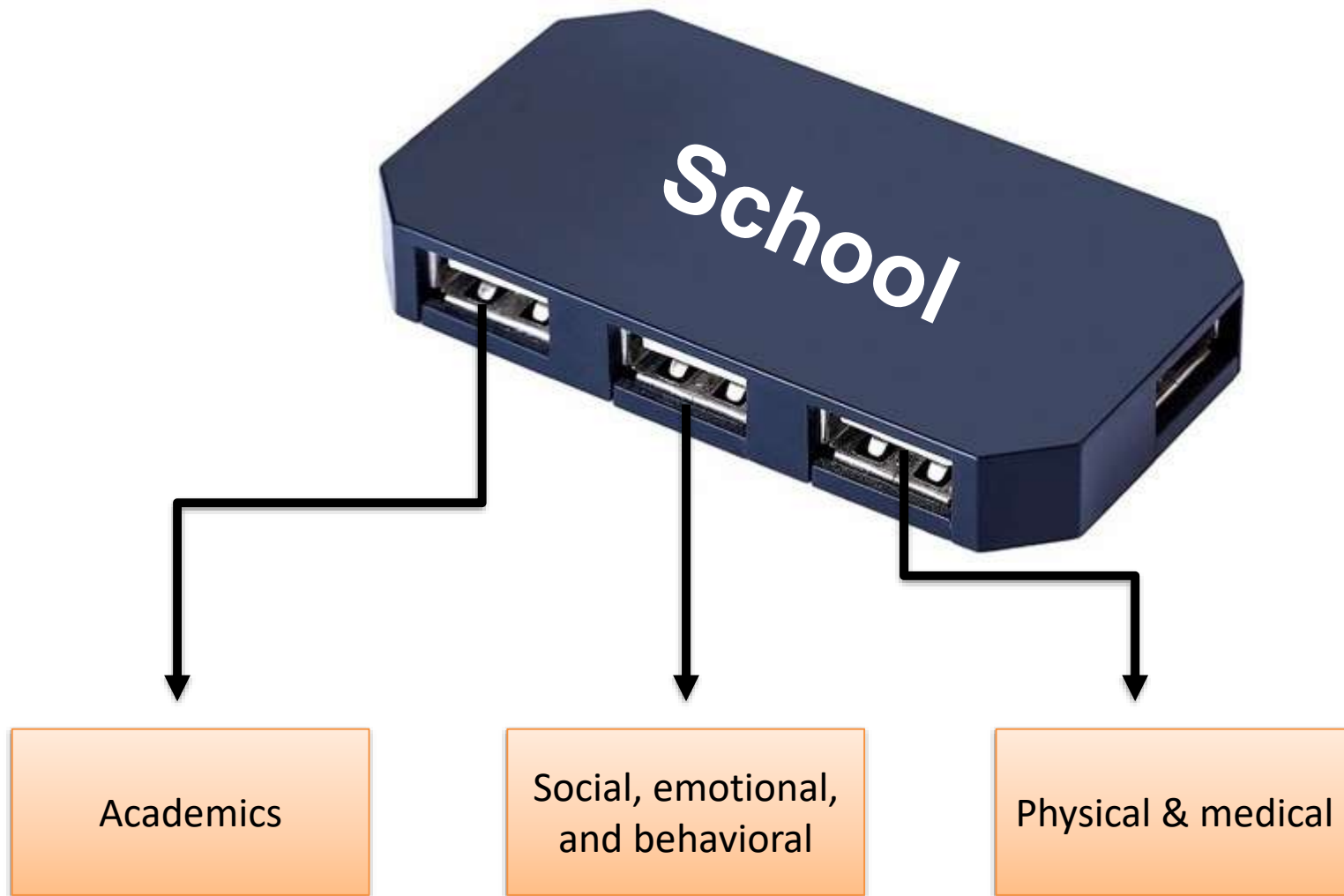


Making sure the right stuff is on the plate

A Tale of Two Gaps...



Schools as the **Hub** of Access



- “If a child doesn’t know how to read, *we teach.*”
- “If a child doesn’t know how to swim, *we teach.*”
- “If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, *we teach.*”
- “If a child doesn’t know how to drive, *we teach.*”
- “If a child doesn’t know how to behave, *we...
...teach? ...punish?*”

(Herner, 1998)

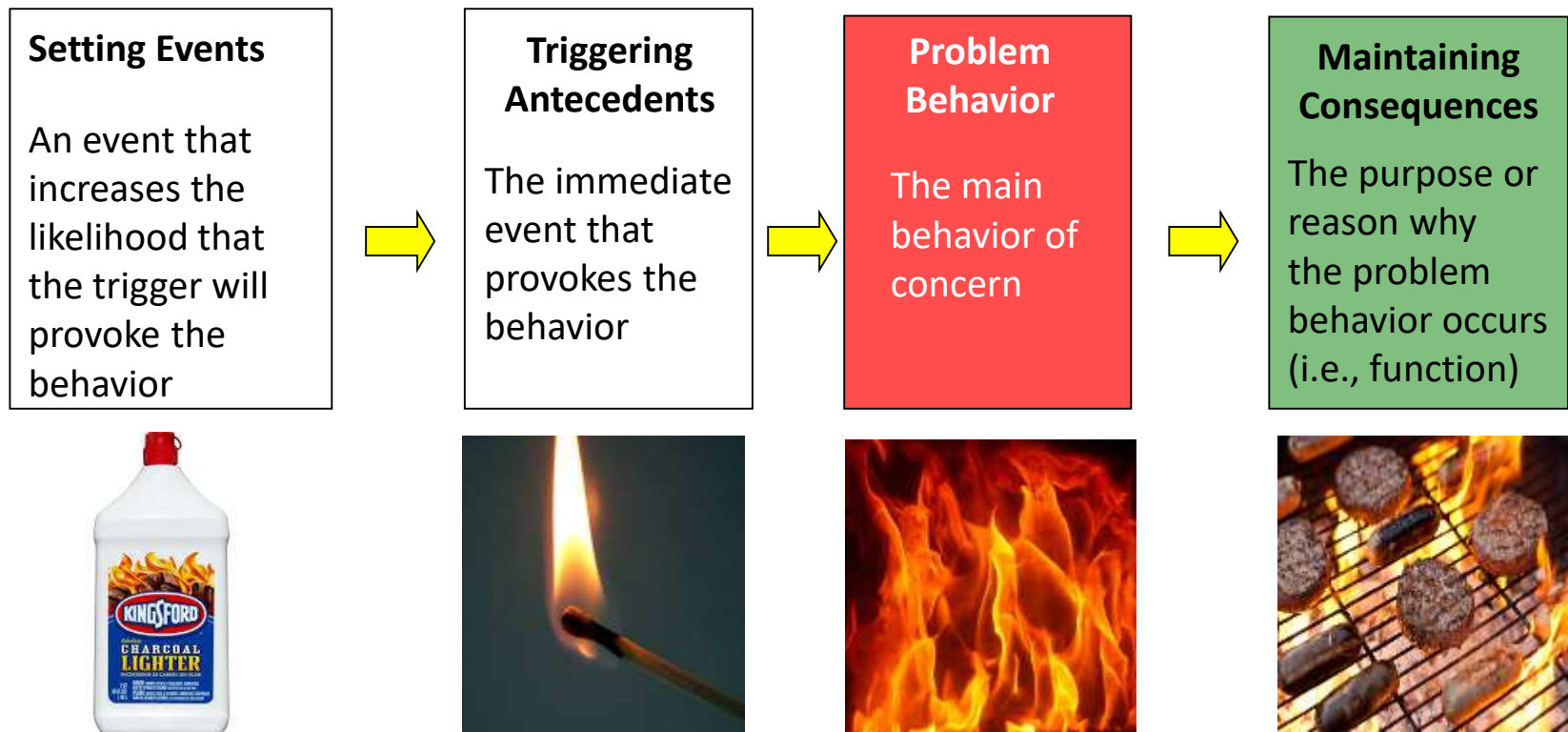
Framing Questions

- What is missing from the environment that the student needs and we have the control over to implement?
- AVOID THESE QUESTIONS
 - What does the student have that we can label or name?
 - What is wrong with this student?
 - What external factor explains why the student is struggling, but goes beyond our control?
 - Parents, poverty, etc.





The Science of Human Behavior



Setting Events

- Factors outside the immediate situation that increases the probability that a given situation will provoke a behavior
- TRAUMA!!!



Examining Educators' Own Vulnerabilities

- Specific situations in which we are more vulnerable to unskillful behaviors that do not align with our values
- Examples:
 - Tired/fatigued (lack of sleep)
 - Stress due to external factors
 - Feeling overwhelmed because juggling multiple responsibilities



Adult Self-Regulation

- Anticipating stress
- Fatigue

3. Setting Events

An event that increases the likelihood that the trigger will provoke the behavior



- Unwanted, behavior

2. Triggering Antecedents

The immediate event that provokes the behavior



- Removal from the classroom

1. Problem Behavior

The main behavior(s) of concern



- Relief from unwanted behavior

4. Maintaining Consequences

The purpose or reason why the problem behavior occurs (i.e., function)



Educator Behavior

What are ACEs (cumulative risk)?

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Mother treated violently



Divorce



Incarcerated Relative



Substance Abuse

ACEs are
ADVERSE
CHILDHOOD
EXPERIENCES

33% Report
0 ACES

With 0 ACESs

1 in 16 smoke

1 in 69 are alcoholic

1 in 480 use IV drugs

1 in 14 has heart disease

1 in 96 attempts suicide

51% Report
1-3 ACES

With 1-3 ACESs

1 in 9 smoke

1 in 9 are alcoholic

1 in 43 use IV drugs

1 in 7 has heart disease

1 in 10 attempts suicide

16% Report
4-10 ACES

With 4-10 ACESs

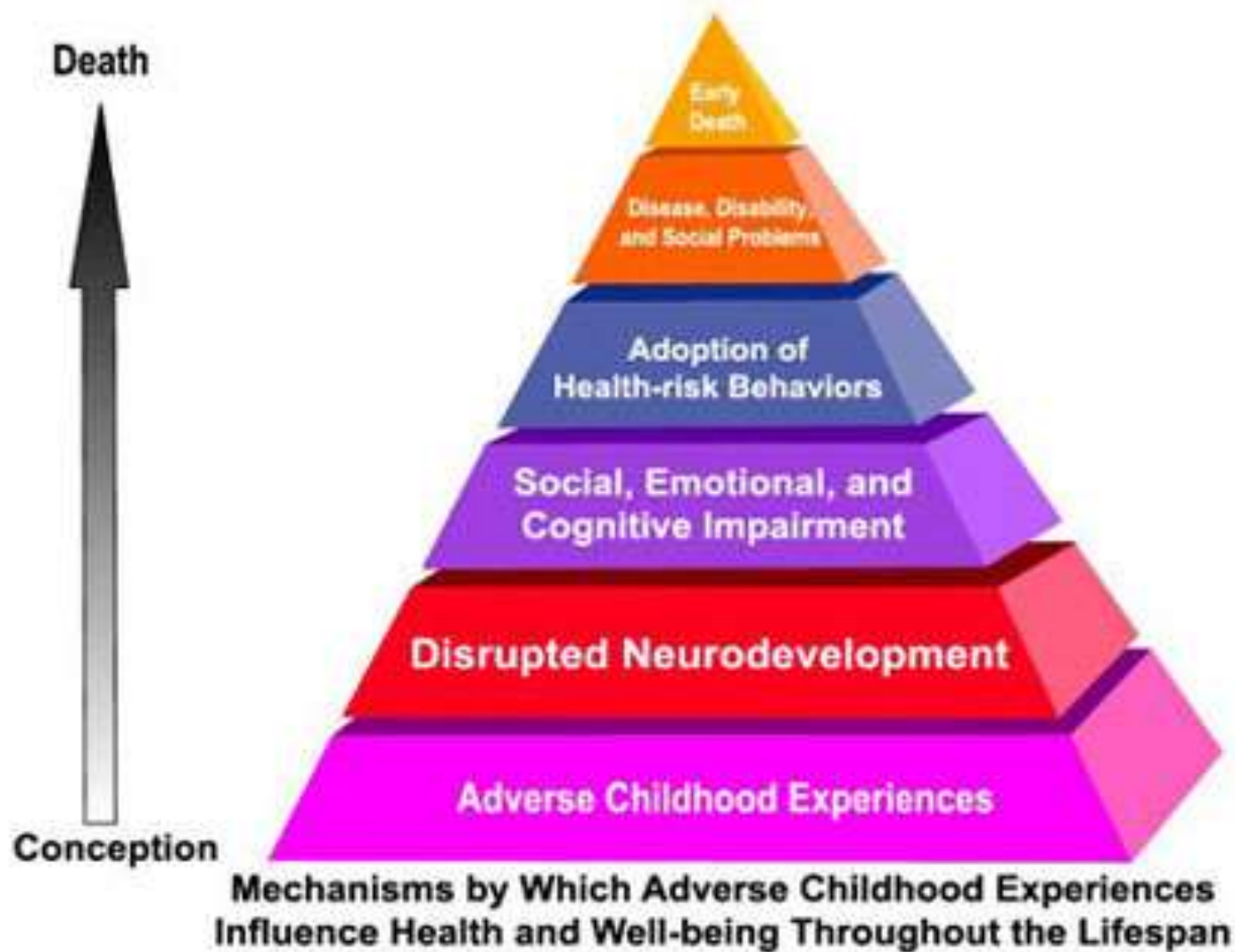
1 in 6 smoke

1 in 6 are alcoholic

1 in 30 use IV drugs

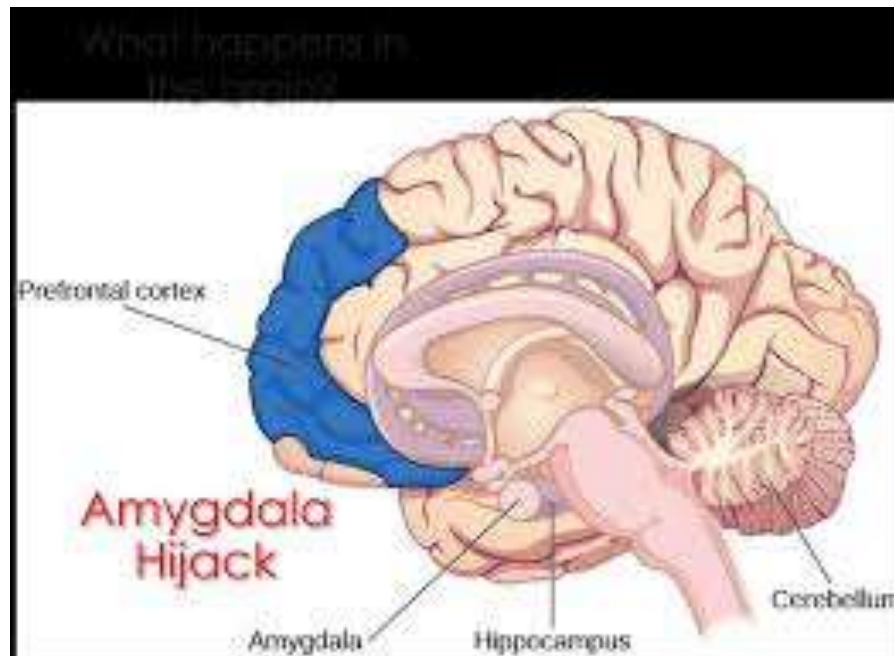
1 in 6 has heart disease

1 in 5 attempts suicide



Emotion Dysregulation

- The emotional system overwhelms the cognitive, rationale thinking part of the system
 - A person loses access to other skills, with the main motivation being to avoid, escape or put an end to an unwanted situation



Is the emotional reaction justified and proportional to the situation? Does it result in impairment?



What not to do

- The truth alone never sets one free
 - Compassion and understanding alone won't address the needs of trauma-exposed students
- Blame game
 - Avoid placing blame on families and the community as being deficient
 - Recognize the social determinants of ACES
- Lower accountability and expectations for behavior
 - Shaping behavior through high accountability and high support



Develop, grow, heal, and recover



Neuroplasticity

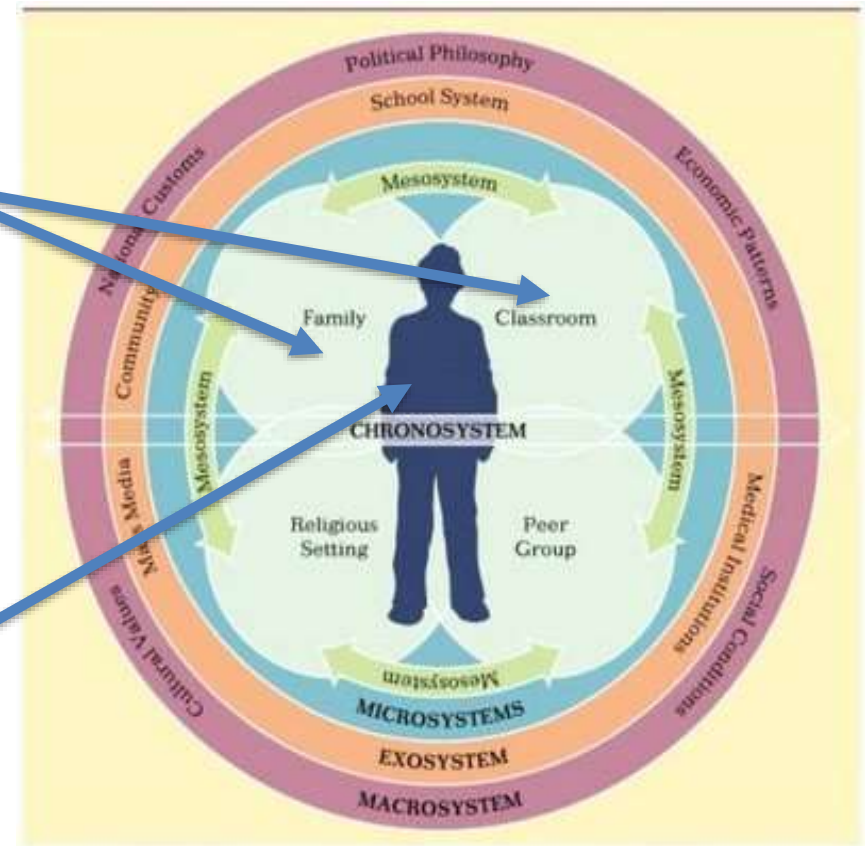
Whole Child Approach Defined

- Policies, procedures, and practices that ensure each child receives what they need academically, socially-emotionally, and behaviorally to.....
 - develop and maintain their wellbeing, engagement, and growth in school
 - and their eventual success in work, civic, and private aspects adult life



Whole Child as both Skill Acquisition and the Environment

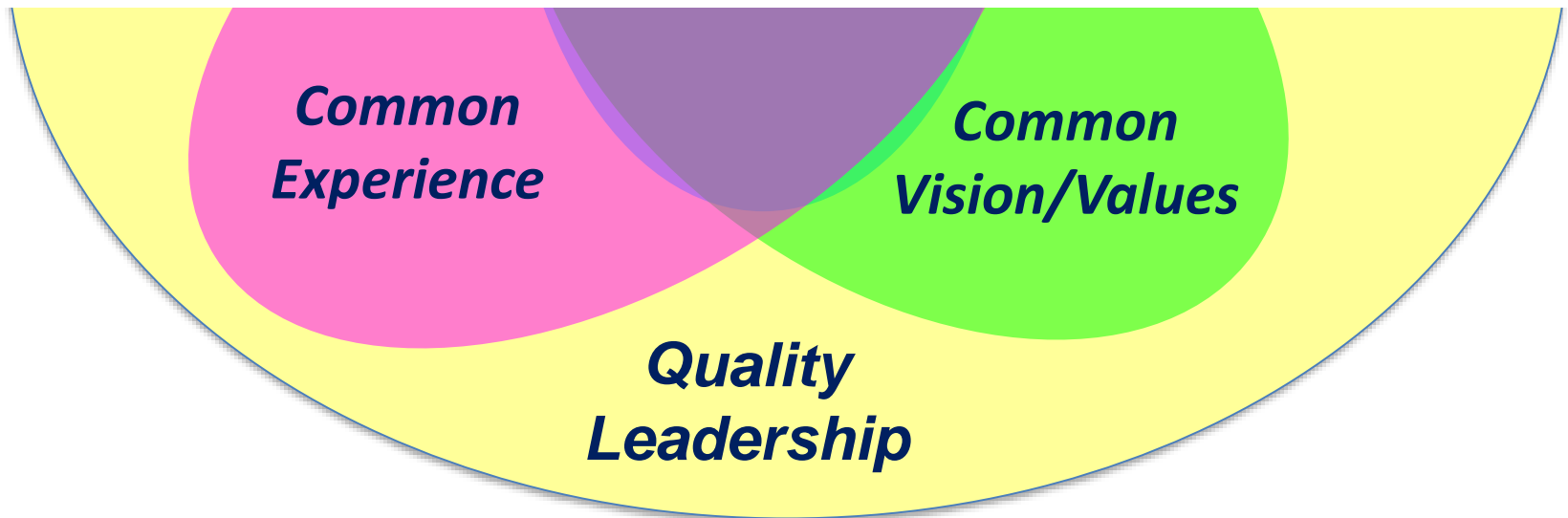
- Social-emotional wellbeing as a function of **Enabling, Healthy Environments**
 - Create the context for engagement and learning to occur
- SEL competencies as **Enablers to Life Success**
 - Knowledge and skill acquisition





“Organizations are groups of individuals whose collective behaviors are directed toward a common goal & maintained by a common outcome”

Skinner, 1953, *Science of Human Behavior*



Safe, Nurturing, Predictable, Reinforcing and Responsive Host Environments



Safe Environment

- Individuals **do not anticipate harm or hurt**, emotionally or physically
- An **environment free of bullying, discrimination aggression/violence**



Nurturing Environment

- Secure relationships that create sense of belonging, respect and safety
- Setting and enforcing limits compassionately and with empathy (teaching that behaviors have consequences)



Predictable Environment

- Predictable environments are **stable environments in which students** can anticipate and trust what is going to happen
- **Adults strive to maintain consistency** in their expectations and reactions to behavior through common language and practices



Reinforcing Environment

- Students/staff are **non-contingently** acknowledge for their value and worth as a person
 - Greetings, check-ins, farewells
- **Contingent** recognition of behavior, effort, and contributions to greater good
 - Praise
 - Access to privileges
 - Rewards
 - Social activities/experiences



Responsive Environments

- **Understands children's basic needs** and seeks to ensure children receive what they need to **develop and grow in a health way**
- Fairness is **about differentiating supports to ensure everyone receives what they need**
- **Early and timely intervention** when struggles / problems first emerge



Social-Emotional Competencies



Enablers

Social competence

Emotional competence

Sense of Purpose /
future orientation

Responsible
decision making

Acquisition of Self-Regulation Skills



Definition

Ability to regulate thoughts, feelings, impulses, and behavior in pursuit of goals and experiences that are not immediately attainable (i.e., delayed gratification)

School as a Recipe Metaphor

- Promoting optimal student outcomes is like a good cooking recipe that involves the integration of **core active ingredients**
 - An active ingredient is a **component** of a recipe that **helps achieve its desired outcome**
 - Single **active ingredients represent necessary** features of the recipe, **but insufficient** alone to produce the desired outcome



The Recipe for Optimizing Student Social-Emotional and Academic Success



What are the ingredients?

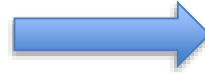
Evidence-Informed Ingredients

- **Environment** – adults in charge create a safe, structured, predictable, and positive environment
- **Relationships** – everyone (staff and students) feels a sense of belonging and connection
- **Instruction** – rigorous instruction to teach students the social, emotional, and academic knowledge and skills necessary to meet the demands of home, work, & civic life
- **Agency: sense of purpose/future orientation** – sense of purpose, properly motivated, and future oriented
- **Relentless family and community engagement** – families and community organizations are partners

Culturally
Competent and
Well Adults

Linking Ingredients to Implementation

Environment: positive, safe, structured, predictable



SW-PBIS & Proactive Classroom Management

Positive relationships for ALL



Establish, Maintain, Restore or Restorative Practices

Instruction to teach students academic, social-emotional, and health skills



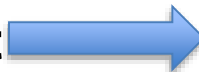
Core academic, SEL & health curricula

Promoting student agency



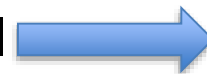
Future possible selves; goal setting; service learning

Relentless family support/engagement



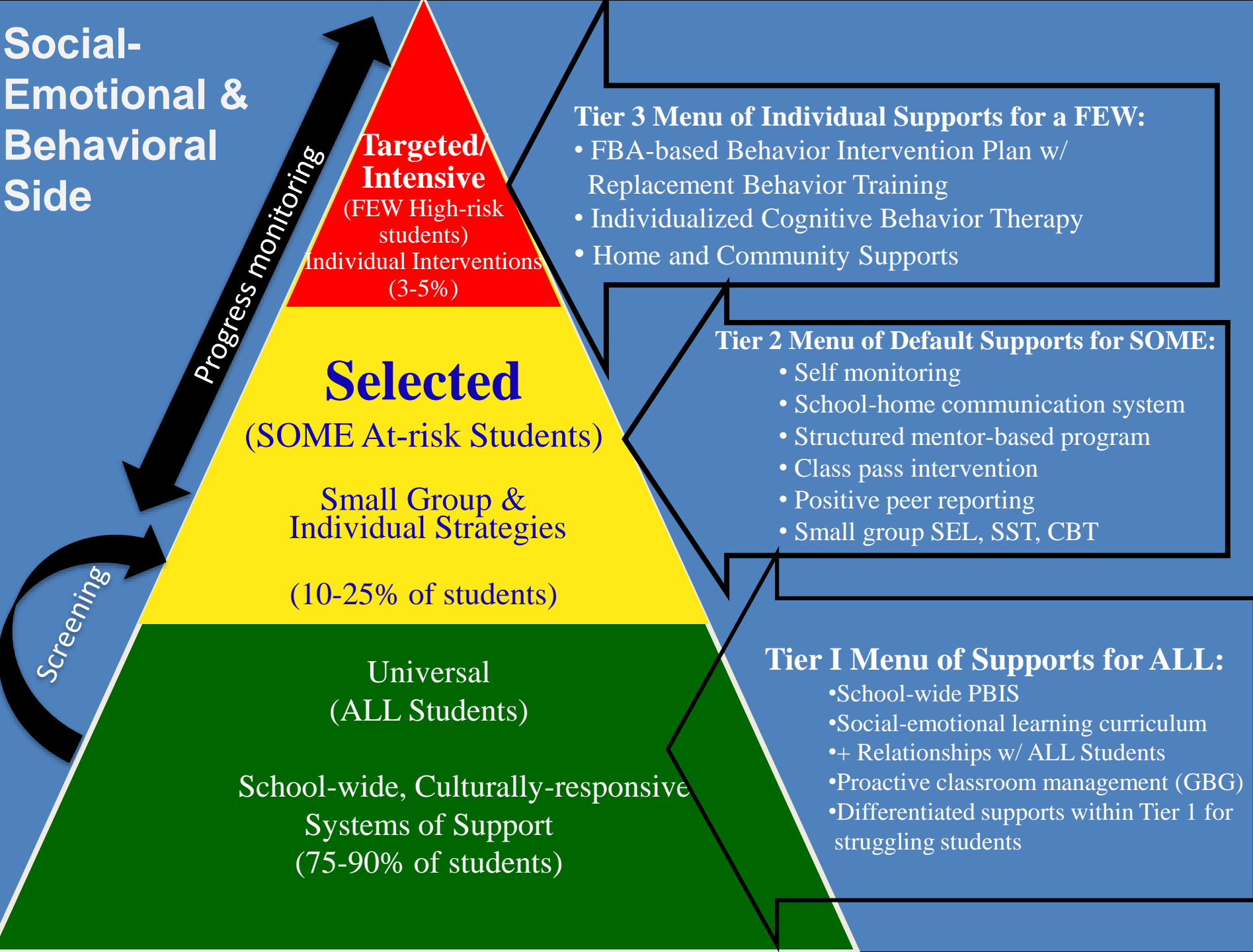
School-home communication system; regular parent training

Supporting and responding to physical needs



School health center with medical and mental health providers

Social- Emotional & Behavioral Side



What are the ingredients?

- Environmental ingredient
 - A safe, nurturing, predictable, and reinforcing environment



The left side of the slide features a series of vertical stripes in various shades of blue, ranging from light to dark. Overlaid on these stripes are several circles of different sizes, also in shades of blue, creating a modern, abstract design.

School-wide PBIS:

Teaching, Modeling, Cueing and
Reinforcing Common Behavioral
Expectations to Create Positive
School Culture & Climate

Big Ideas of SW-PBIS

- Common language
- Consistency among adults
- Shared understanding of behavior between adults and students
- Code-switching
- Behavioral feedback from the environment
- Turning behavioral mistakes into learning opportunities

School-Wide PBIS:

7 Steps of Implementation

1. Establish 3-5 positively stated, teachable behavioral expectations
2. Create a behavioral expectation by setting matrix
3. Develop a schedule for ongoing teaching of expectations
4. Post expectations in every setting to cue and prompt behavioral expectations
5. Create a motivation system to recognize and acknowledge students for exhibiting the behavioral expectations
6. Develop a progressive method of responding to problem behaviors with clearly defined categories of problem behaviors
7. Gather data on disciplinary sanctions that could inform decision making

Teaching Matrix		SETTING						
		All Settings	Hallways	Playgrounds	Cafeteria	Classroom	Assembly	Bus
Expectations	Respect Ourselves	Be on task. Give your best.	Follow directions.	Have a plan.	Eat all your food. Select healthy foods.	Study, read, compute.	Follow directions.	Watch for your stop.
	Respect Others	Be kind. Hands/feet to self. Help/share with others.	Use normal voice volume. Walk to right.	Play safe. Include others. Share equipment.	Practice good table manners.	Whisper.	Listen/watch. Use appropriate applause.	Use a quiet voice. Stay in your seat.
	Respect Property	Recycle. Clean up after self.	Pick up trash.	Put litter in garbage can.	Replace trays & utensils. Clean up eating area.	Push in chairs. Treat books carefully.	Pick up. Treat chairs appropriately.	Wipe your feet. Sit appropriately.

1. SOCIAL SKILL

2. NATURAL CONTEXT

3. BEHAVIOR EXAMPLES

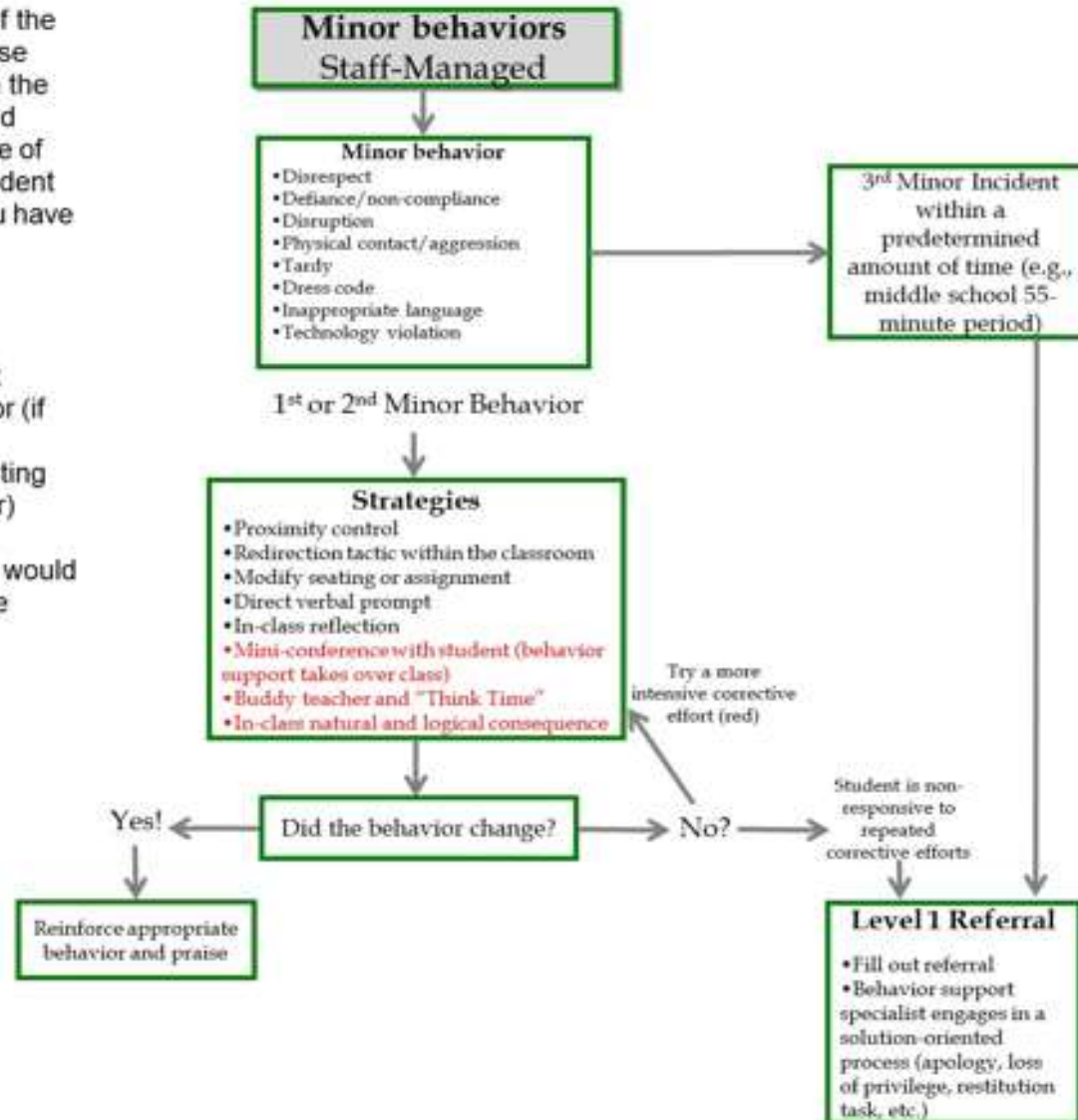
School-Wide PBIS:

Creating a progressive discipline system

The effectiveness of the progressive response system depends on the adult being calm and having some degree of empathy for the student (does not mean you have to agree with the behavior)

Keys:

- Privately correct problem behavior (if possible avoid publically correcting student behavior)
- Try to minimize interactions that would be harmful to the relationships



Responding to Problem Behavior





Proactive Classroom Management:

Prevention-oriented
strategies to promote
academic engagement and
decrease problem behaviors

Structured Environments

Proactive Classroom Management

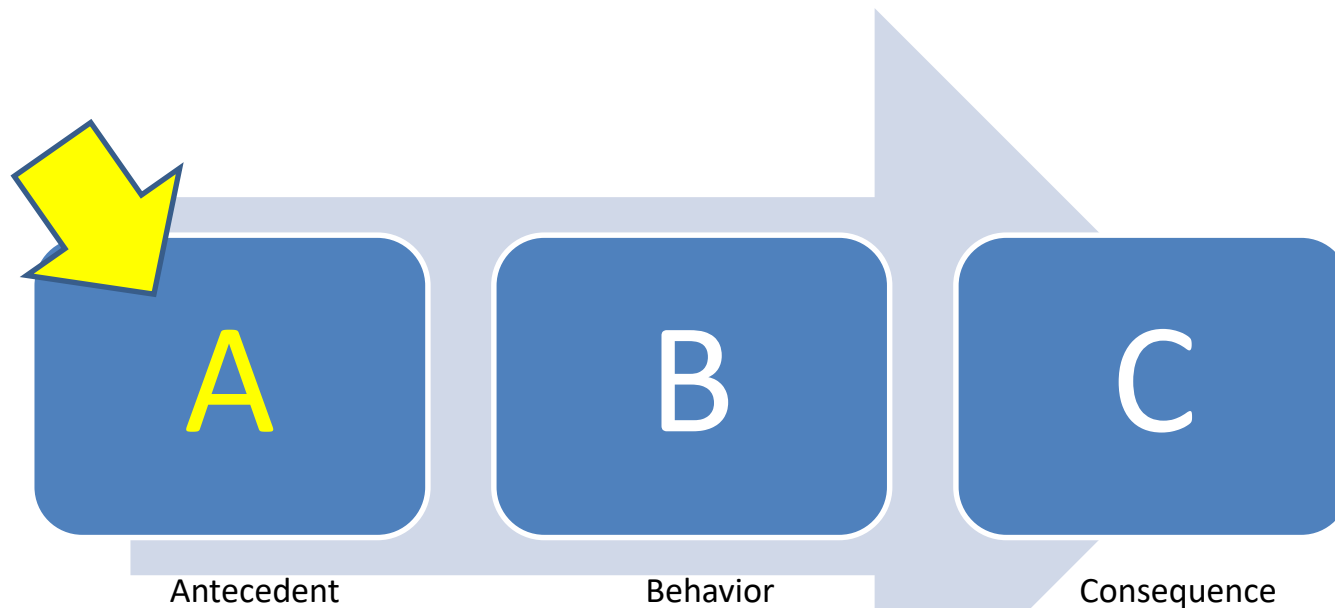
Relationship Strategies

1. 5 to 1 ratio of positive to negative interactions (Magic ratio)
2. Behavior specific praise
3. Smiling and being nice
4. Positive greetings and farewells on a daily basis
5. Communicating competently w/ students
6. Wise Feedback
7. Non-contingent reinforcement

Procedural Strategies

7. Precorrection
8. Organizing a productive classroom (effortless to pay attention, flow, limit distractions, seating)
9. Providing numerous opportunities to respond
10. Providing student choice
11. Ongoing teaching, modeling, and recognition of behavioral expectations
12. Transitions are managed well
13. Independent seatwork is managed and used when needed
14. Teacher proximity and mobility
15. Class-wide motivation system to motivate behavior
16. Goal setting and performance feedback
17. Visual schedule of classroom activities
18. Effective cueing systems to release and regain attention

What is a Precorrection?



A form of errorless learning

Reminding/prompting students how to be successful before they even begin the activity, assignment or task

- Not assuming that students are ready or are thinking about how to be successful
- Rather, providing them with the behavioral answers to be successful in class

What is a Precorrection?

Managing behavior with precorrection:

- Anticipate what activities may cause inappropriate behaviors
- “Getting in front” of problem behaviors
- Example: Gentle reminder of expected behaviors in the hallway before dismissing for lunch

VS.

Managing behavior with consequences:

- Requires waiting until the behavior occurs to respond
- Example: Creating an action plan for three alternatives to yelling at a peer

Steps to implementing precorrection

1. Identify context and anticipated behaviors.
2. Determine the expected behaviors.
3. Adjust the environment.
4. Provide opportunities for behavioral rehearsal.
5. Provide strong reinforcement to students engaging in expected behavior.
6. Develop a prompting plan to remind students about the expected behavior.
7. Develop a monitoring plan to determine the effectiveness of the precorrection plan.
8. Offer students an opportunity to give feedback on this strategy.


PRECORRECTION
Implementation Checklist for Success

Teacher: _____ Setting: _____
Start date: _____ End date: _____ Total days: _____
Notes: _____

	Success Sheet	Not Completed Date
Step 1: Identify context and anticipated behaviors.		
Step 2: Determine the expected behaviors.		
Step 3: Adjust the environment.		
Step 4: Provide opportunities for behavioral rehearsal.		
Step 5: Provide strong reinforcement to students engaging in expected behavior.		
Step 6: Develop a prompting plan to remind students about the expected behavior.		
Step 7: Develop a monitoring plan to determine the effectiveness of the precorrection plan.		
Step 8: Offer students an opportunity to give feedback on this strategy.		

Comments: _____

Copyright © 2010
Lutz, R. L., Henrichs, B., & Evers, P. W. (2010). Supporting students with emotional and behavioral challenges to the next level: strategies that work (2nd ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.



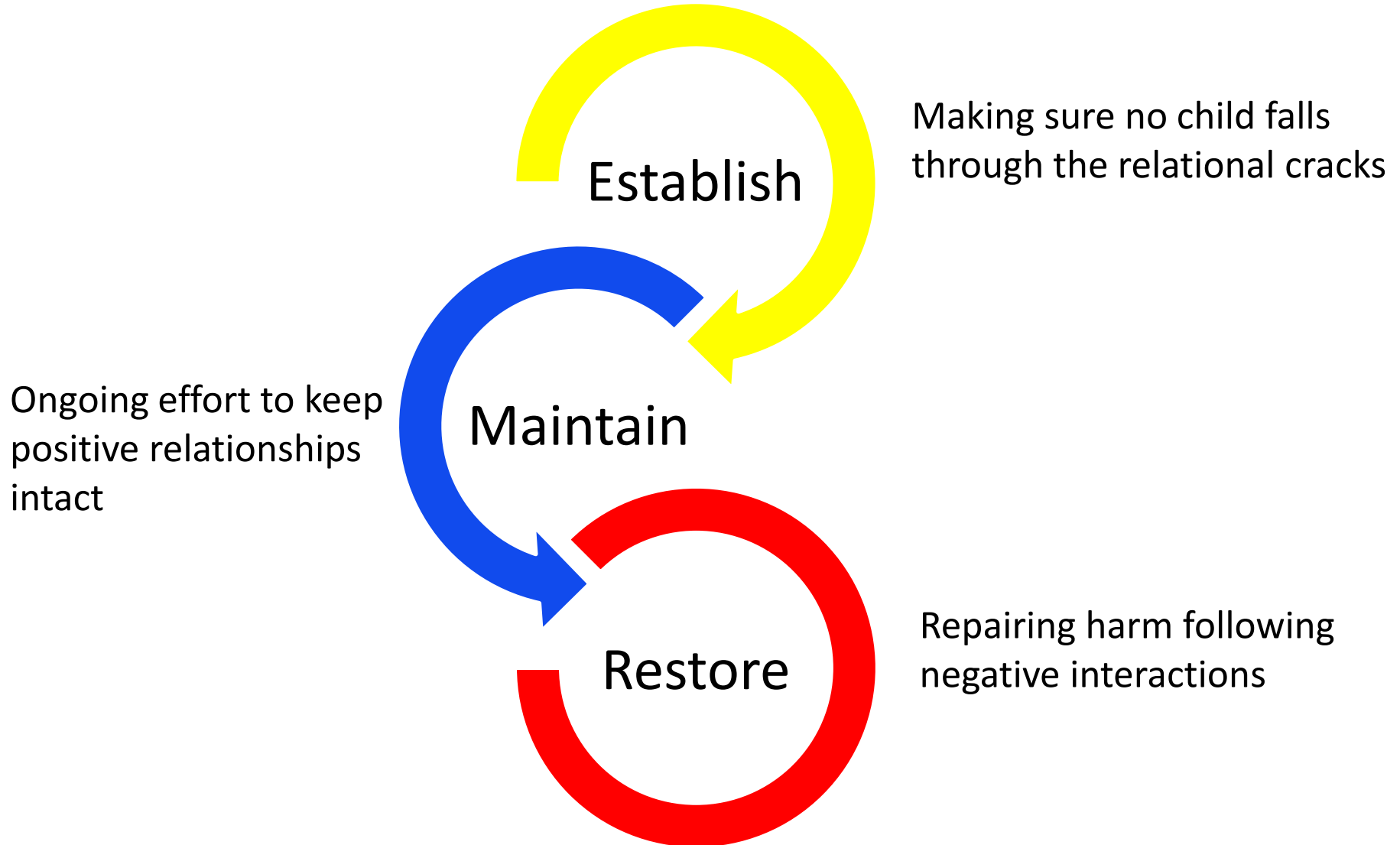
What are the ingredients?

- Relationship ingredient
 - All students and staff feel welcomed, valued and a sense of belonging and connection to others in school



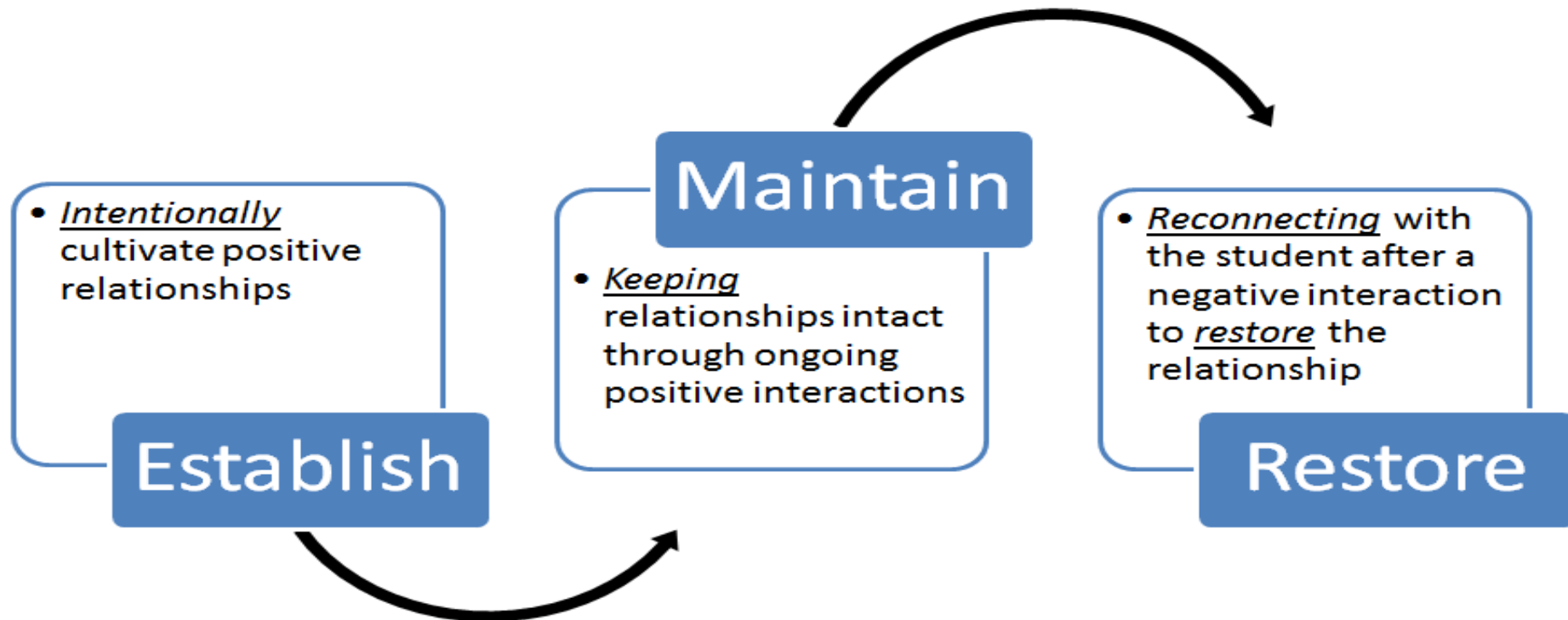
Common Language:

Three phases to every relationship



Establish-Maintain-Restore

- Provides staff with concrete relationship practices
- Embedded within professional learning communities as a continuous improvement



EMR General Things to Do and Avoid

Do

- Correct behavior privately and with empathy
- Positivity
- Greet
- Recognize & acknowledge positive behavior

Avoid

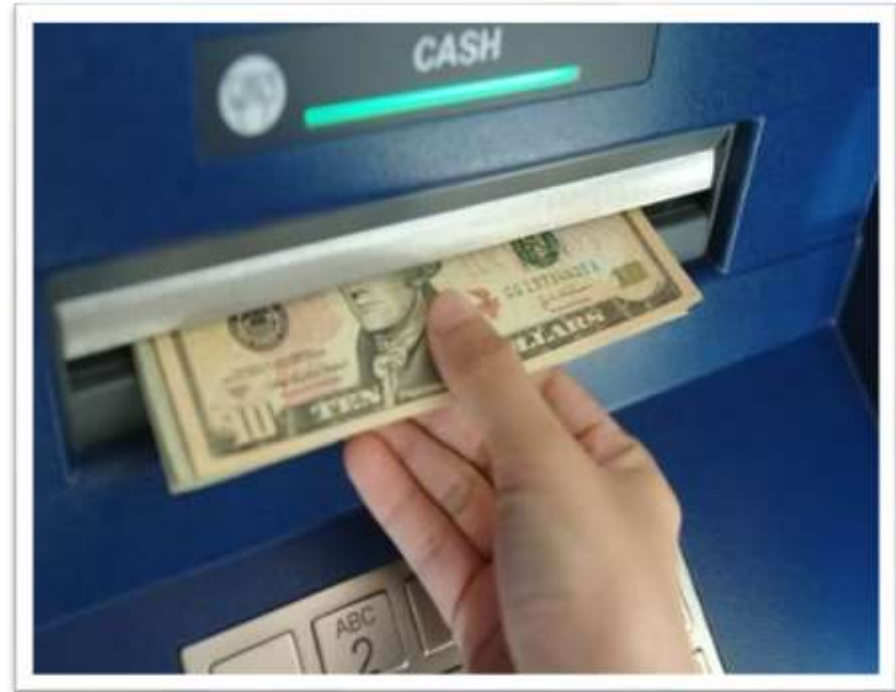
- Publically correct behavior to embarrass or shame
- Negativity
- Ignore
- Take positive behavior for granted

Establish Strategies

The Practices

Banking Metaphor

- Relationships are transactional, like banking:
 - One cannot withdraw from a relationship until deposits have been made



Banking Metaphor

- Types of withdrawals from relationships teachers need to make:
 - Correcting student behavior
 - Motivating a student to do unwanted work
 - Reminding students to show up to class on time
 - Getting students to be okay with failure
 - Encouraging students to try their hardest



Establishing Positive Relationships

Strategy #1

Banking Time

1. Find individual time to spend with a single student to engage in relational conversation
2. Student selects something to do during interaction
3. Adult uses effective communication techniques
 - Open-ended questions to facilitate conversation
 - Actively listen so the person feels heard
 - Express an interest in what the student says
 - Avoid judgment, giving advice, delivering instruction
 - Respond with empathy by putting yourself in your student's shoes

Student in need of **Banking Time**



Establishing Positive Relationships

Strategy #4

Indirect compliments delivered through others

- Identify something to compliment about the student's behavior/performance and relay that compliment through another adult
 - Positive note or call home to parent
 - Positive office referral to administrator
 - Through another teacher or school counselor
- Compliments must be *specific* and *sincere*!
 - Specific = something the student said, did, or achieved
 - Sincere = conveying that one really means it



Establishing Positive Relationships

Strategy #5

Positive greetings and farewells on a daily basis

- Positive greetings (salutations) at the door using the student's name provides an ongoing opportunity to personalize interactions with each student to welcome and demonstrate that the teacher values their presence
- Positive farewells each day by offering words of encouragement, saying thank you for participation, and wishing someone a good rest of the day



NOTE: Be sure to do this for students who need it the most and recognize when students have been absent the previous day

Establishing Positive Relationships

Strategy #6

2x10 Strategy

- Spend **2 minutes a day for 10 straight days** in a row engaging in a conversation that has nothing to do with an instruction or academic task at hand to acknowledge that the student is a person and not just a student

2x10

NOTE: 2 minutes is an approximation of time. If student gives you signals that they aren't up for it, don't continue to push the interaction – timing is key!

Maintain Strategies

The Practices

Without intentional maintenance practices, relationships tend to strain or get worse over time



MAINTAINING Relationships with Students: Ongoing Positive Interactions

Relationships are maintained by
striving for a 5 to 1 ratio of positive
to negative interactions

AKA - the “Magic Ratio”



Maintaining Positive Relationships

Strategy #2

- **Effective Use of Praise:** process of recognizing, acknowledging, and approving
 1. **Behavior specific praise**
 - Contingent, specific, and sincere recognition of a specific behavior exhibited by the student
 2. **Growth mindset-oriented praise**
 - Recognize the student for effort, hard work, growth, a process used



Maintaining Positive Relationships Strategy #2

- **Relationship Check Ins**

- Interaction with no strings attached other than to check in on how things are going
- Capitalize on brief moments to check in with students
 - Open-ended questions
 - Expressing an interest in how the student is doing in general

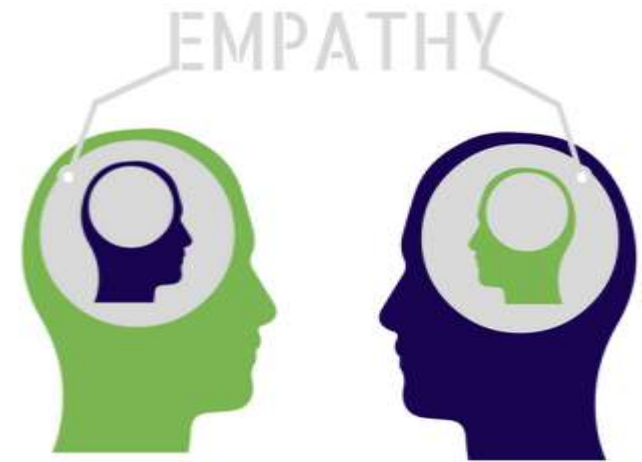


Maintaining Positive Relationships

Strategy #4

Responding to Problem Behavior with Empathy

- Empathy is the ability to decipher what the other person is thinking and feeling in a given situation
- Before correcting behavior begin the interaction with an empathy statement that communicates you are seeking to understand how they are thinking / feeling



Steps to responding with empathy

- **Start with an empathy statement**
 - “You seem bored with today’s class and I know firsthand how challenging things can be when class seems boring, It’s tough to stay on task. HERE IS THE DEAL”
- **Label the perceived problem behavior**
 - “Right now you are talking out loud and distracting other students from doing their work.”
- **Describe the appropriate alternative behavior**
 - “Instead of talking out loud, I need you to start working quietly on the assigned work.”
- **Provide a rationale for appropriate behavior**
 - “if you can quietly on your work, other students can get their work done and I’ll circle back to you to figure out what’s boring and see if we can make it go away.”
- **Put the student in a decisional dilemma**
 - “You have a couple of choices. One is you can get back to working on this assignment and I’ll come back to see if we can make class seem less boring. The other choice is to continue to talk out loud and distract others. If you continue with this, you’re going to miss out on being able to work with others in group. I’m going to give you a few moments to figure out what you want to do.”
- **Deliver feedback**
 - “Thanks for making the right choice, Now, tell me what’s bothering you about today’s class.”

Restore Strategies

The Practices

Restore Relationships

Goal

- **Reconnect** with the student after a negative interaction to **repair** harm through a skillful communication to ***restore*** the relationship
 - Reconnect and repair in order to restore (R³)

Actions

- Find a window of opportunity to reconnect with the student, select from 1 of 5 skillful communication techniques, and deliver it genuinely and authentically to the student

When is Restore Needed?

Changes in student's behavior	Your internal feelings	Following a negative interaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- changes in eye contact- starts ignoring your instructions- argues, debates, challenges more than usual- starts shrugging when you ask questions- becomes more withdrawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- you don't like/are annoyed by the student	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- argument/disagreement- removal from class- unintentionally embarrassed the student- misunderstanding (e.g., student takes constructive feedback personally)- student gives you negative feedback (can be about other teachers or the school in general)

These MAY indicate a need to restore the relationship.

Restorative Communication Techniques


1. Letting go of the previous interaction
 - fresh start
2. Ownership for the problem
 - acknowledging one's own mistake/missed opportunity
3. Empathy statement
 - Showing effort to understand the student's perspective
4. Statement of care
 - separating the deed from the doer
5. Collaborative problem-solving
 - working together to find a win-win solution

Matching the Technique to the Student

Technique

- Letting go conversation
- Ownership for the problem
- Empathy statement
- Statement of care (separating deed from the doer)
- Collaborative problem-solving to identify a win-win scenario


Student



Student who needs to hear
adults make mistakes

Matching the Technique to the Student

Technique

- Letting go conversation
- Ownership for the problem
- Empathy statement 
- Statement of care (separating deed from the doer)
- Collaborative problem-solving to identify a win-win scenario

Student

Student who wants their
perspective / feelings
recognized

Matching the Technique to the Student

Technique

- Letting go conversation
- Ownership for the problem
- Empathy statement
- Statement of care (separating deed from the doer)
- Collaborative problem-solving to identify a win-win scenario

Student

Student who thinks the adult does not care for or want them in the class because of their behavior



Matching the Technique to the Student

Technique

- Letting go conversation
- Ownership for the problem
- Empathy statement
- Statement of care (separating deed from the doer)
- Collaborative problem-solving to identify a win-win scenario

Student

Strong willed student who likes to have input on the solution moving forward



What are the ingredients?

- Knowledge and skills ingredient (i.e., teaching and learning)
 - Teach the knowledge and skills that enable students to meet the demands of civic, work, and private aspects of life

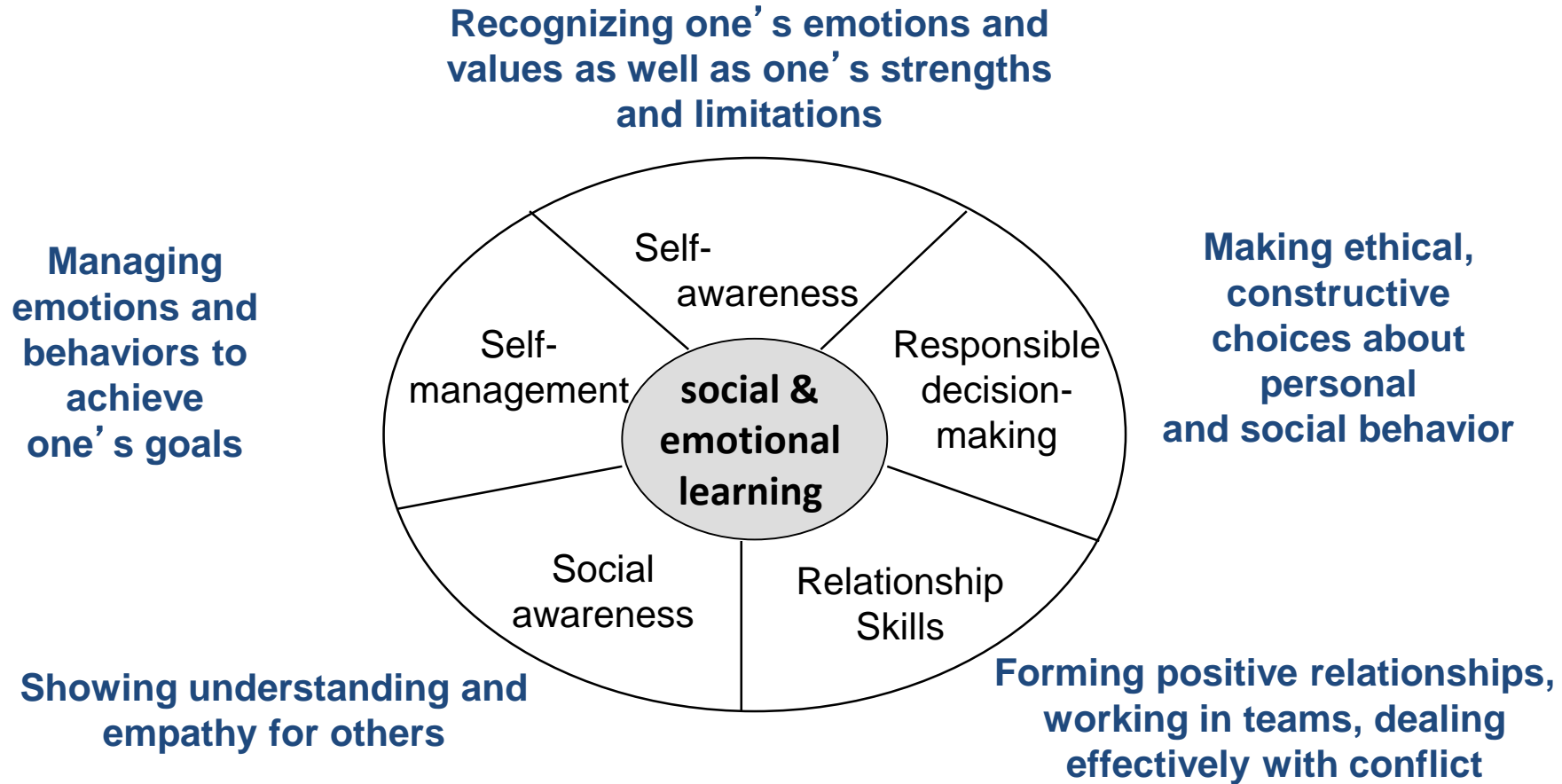


A decorative vertical bar on the left side of the slide, featuring several thin, light blue vertical stripes of varying widths. Overlaid on these stripes are several blue circles of different sizes, some solid and some with a gradient, creating a modern, abstract design.

Social-Emotional Learning:

Adopting a curriculum that supports students to learn self-regulation and decision-making skills that lead to increased resilience and school and life success

What is Social and Emotional Learning?





Implementing an SEL Curriculum

- Delivery
 - What?
 - Selecting a high quality curriculum
 - When and where?
 - Time and day of the week
 - Homeroom, advisory period, health class, other classroom setting
 - Who?
 - General education teacher, health teacher
 - Master scheduling issue

Isn't this the responsibility of homes?

- How many of you are a parent?
- How many of parents have the knowledge and skills to teach literacy, math, writing, STEM?
- Teaching social-emotional skills goes beyond the knowledge and skillset of most parents





INSTITUTE FOR
TRANSLATIONAL
RESEARCH
in Children's Mental Health



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



SMART
School Mental Health Assessment
Research & Training Center



UNIVERSITY *of*
WASHINGTON

crcook@umn.edu



@ClayCook_PhD