

Preventative Approaches to Reduce School Violence

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Roadmap

- The Power of Prevention
 - Risk and Protective Factor Framework
 - A Public Health Model of Prevention
 - Colorado Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Evidence-Based Prevention Approaches
 - Social-Emotional Learning Programs
 - Restorative Justice
 - Trauma-Informed Schools

The Power of Prevention

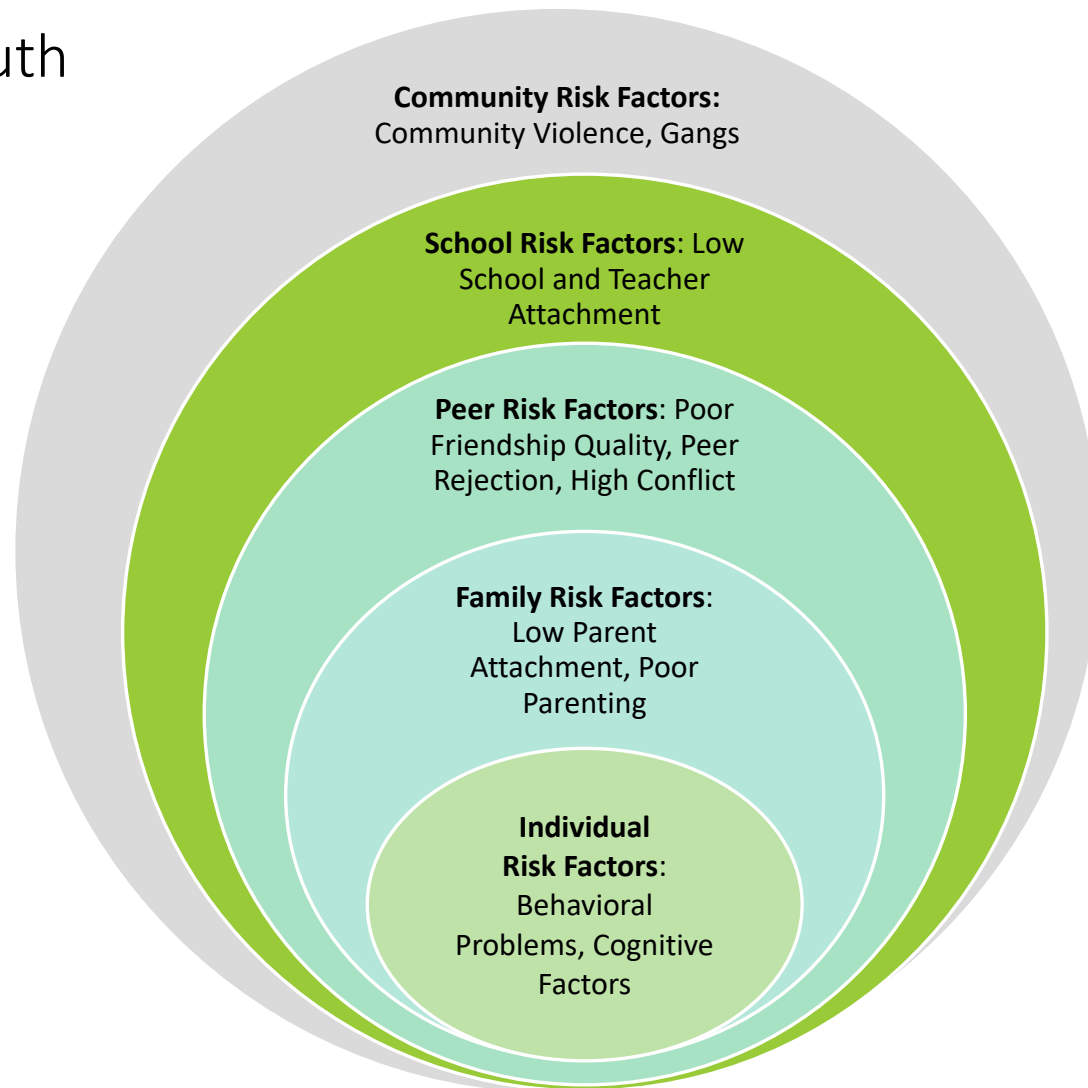
The benefits of taking a preventative approach include:

- Improving the cost-efficient use of resources to improve outcomes for vulnerable youth and their families;
- Reducing overall expenditures at the institutional, local, state, and federal levels to address social problems affecting individuals, families, and communities; and
- Reducing the time spent by community-level systems in addressing more complex, severe, and often retractable problems that many youth and their families face, which then reduces the operational costs of various systems of care.

Understanding a Preventative Framework

- *Protective factors* include individual attributes or environmental characteristics that mitigate the likelihood of problems by delaying, diffusing, or counteracting negative outcomes
- *Risk factors* are individual attributes or environmental characteristics that increase the likelihood of problems

Risk Factors for Youth Violence



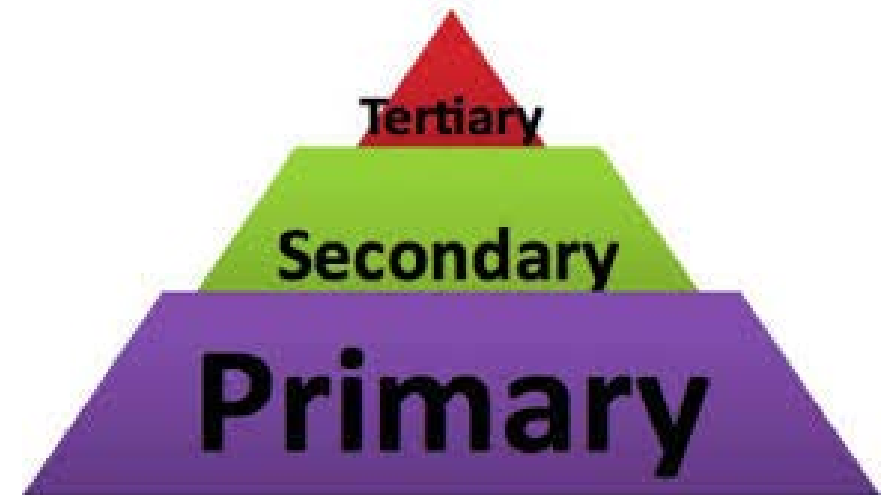
Preventative interventions not only seek to reduce risk but also aim to increase protection and promote resilience.

A Public Health Model of Prevention

Primary/Universal level: intervention targeted to all individuals, regardless of risk level, for the purpose of preventing future problems

Secondary/Selected level: interventions targeted to individuals who have been identified as at-risk for developing more serious problems

Indicated/Tertiary level: interventions targeted to individuals with identified problems that require more intensive services



Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)

- MTSS is the overarching framework for academic and behavior supports for all students
- MTSS is based on a continuum of evidence-based practices designed to support and respond to academic and behavioral needs quickly
- The goal of MTSS is to support system level changes – within the classroom and school, and on an individual basis with each student in need

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

In Colorado, the Department of Education (CDE) has provided PBIS training and support since 2002. The eight principles that guide its implementation in the state include:

- **Establish Administrative Leadership:** state, district and school leaders' active support
- **Develop Team-Based Implementation:** special and general education staff plan and implement
- **Define Behavioral Expectations:** concrete, positive behaviors that every student can remember
- **Teach Behavioral Expectations:** explain, model, practice and process
- **Acknowledge and Reward Appropriate Behavior:** for students and adults
- **Monitor and Correct Behavioral Errors:** consistent consequences for a continuum of behaviors
- **Use Information for Decision Making:** who, what, when, where and how often
- **Build Parent Collaboration:** with schools and community

Evidence-Based Prevention Approaches

Multi-Level Prevention Approaches

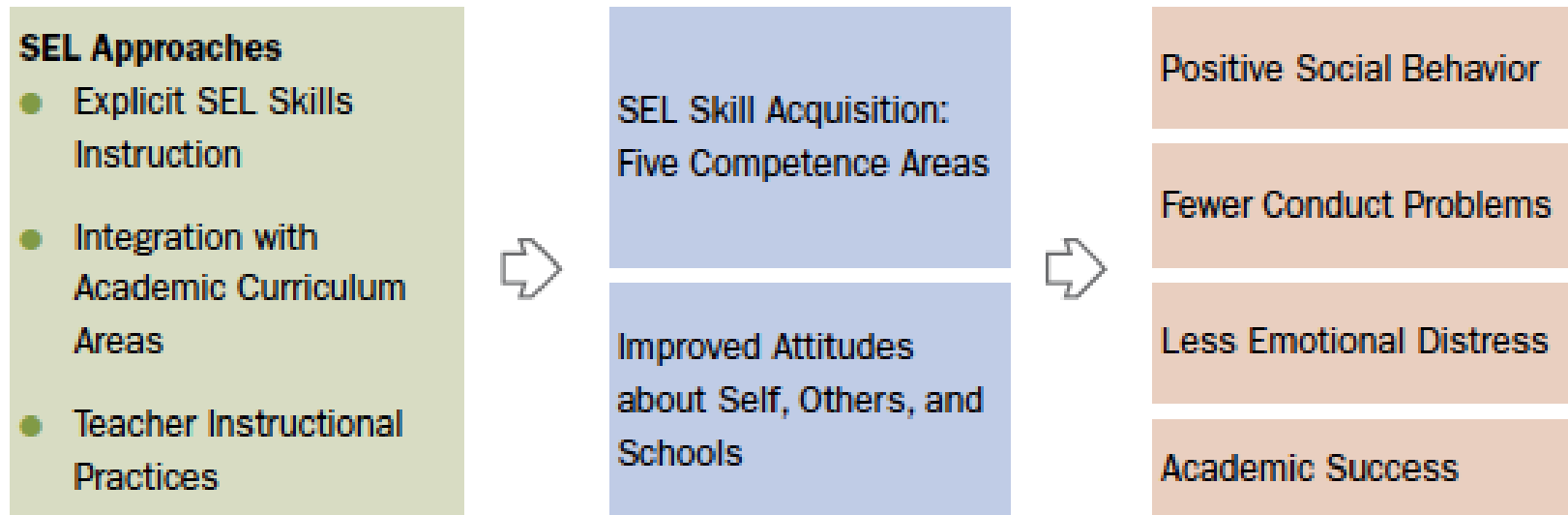
- Social-Emotional Learning Programs – *Universal Prevention*
- Restorative Justice – *Selected Prevention*
- Mental Health Supports/Trauma-Informed Schools – *Tertiary Prevention*

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)



<http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/corecompetencies/>

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)



<http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/outcomes/>

See Durlak et al., 2011

Restorative Justice

Unlike punitive approaches that view harm as intentional rule breaking, restorative justice views harm as a violation of human relationships. Restorative approaches:

- Promote fairness, respect, self-efficacy, and belonging, which are influential in increasing positive outcomes for youth and may work to enhance peer interactions in the classroom and at the school level.
- Focus on repair, resolution, and reintegration through active community participation in meeting the needs of both the victim and the offender after an incident of harm has occurred.
- Seek resolution and reintegration through practices such as formal and informal conferences, mediations, and shared goals among the school community.

After the offender is held accountable and makes amends, they are reintegrated back into the school community (Hopkins, 2002; Van Ness & Strong, 2010; Zehr & Mika, 2004).

Mental Health Supports/Trauma-Informed Schools

When children are exposed to significant and prolonged stress or trauma, they may easily become overwhelmed with the range of emotions and internal reactions they experience.

- This can cause them to become reactive as they may see violent and aggressive behaviors a means for their own survival.
- Trauma significantly impacts brain development and thus alters the ways in which youth see and experience their environment, which can negatively impact their relationships with others.

As a result, schools are increasingly adopting trauma-informed practices to address a range of social, emotional, and behavioral challenges in the classroom with considerable success (Walkley & Cox, 2013).

- The development of a trauma-informed school requires collaboration within and outside of the school itself.
- School social workers are ideally positioned to lead such initiatives as they are:
 - Trained in trauma-informed practices and can provide supports directly to vulnerable students
 - Trained to assist their colleagues in adopting these practices in the classroom and help create to trauma-informed disciplinary practices in schools
 - Trained in the coordination of care for vulnerable youth; therefore they can coordinate between parents/guardians, foster parents, school personnel, mental and physical health providers, and professionals in other systems of care, such as child welfare and juvenile justice (Walkley & Cox, 2013).

Reducing Racial Disparities in School Discipline

Creating a prevention system in schools can help to reduce racial disparities in school discipline by:

- Developing policy-level changes in schools that limit the use of expulsions and suspensions for only serious violations
- Implementing restorative justice approaches, along with universal and tertiary level evidence-based practices
- Providing professional development to teachers and administrators that targets the effective implementation of restorative approaches, promotes cultural humility, and provides alternatives to punitive disciplinary policies (Gopalan & Nelson, 2019).

Questions?

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References

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