Utilizing Instructional Alternatives to Exclusionary Discipline

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When Working In Your Team

Consider 5 Questions

- How does this compare to our priorities?
- What team would oversee this work?
- What should we stop doing to make room for this work?
- How will we assess whether it’s (a) implemented well and (b) working?
Learning Objectives

• Understand the harmful impacts of exclusionary discipline practices
• Learn about instructional supports to provide to students when sent out of class, with an emphasis on classroom reentry
• Reflect on application of discipline policies in a fair and equitable manner
What’s Best for Kids?
Exclusionary Practices

Out-of-school suspensions are more strongly related to negative outcomes than in-school suspensions (Noltemeyer et al., 2015).
What Do We Know?

• Students miss:
  • Academic instructional time
  • Social skill building opportunities
  • Being a part of the larger learning community

• Use of exclusionary discipline linked to:
  • School failure
  • Drop-out
  • Substance use
  • Incarceration
  • Probation

(Rosenbaum, 2020; Wolf & Kupchik, 2017)
Who are most at-risk of exclusion?

• **Students of color**
  - Disproportionate use of exclusionary practices in the classroom contributes to widening the achievement gap for students of color (Losen & Martinez, 2020).

• **Students with disabilities**
  - One in 5 districts in the country suspended over 50% of its Black male students with disabilities (Losen et al., 2015).

• **Students living in poverty and struggling academically**
  - Bias in disciplinary decision persists, particularly for more subjective behaviors (Skiba et al., 2002; Smolkowski et al., 2016).
ODR, Suspension, Detention not a “treatment intervention”

• Never rely on ODR, Suspension, or Detention alone to change behavior.

For substantive behavior change incorporate:

• (1) instruction on appropriate behaviors,
• (2) on-going acknowledgement of appropriate behaviors,
• (3) instructional responses to unwanted behaviors, focused on teaching and reconnecting

BECAUSE WE CAN’T PUNISH SKILLS INTO A KID
A Community of Practice

• Responding to behavior can be difficult. In fact, of teachers who leave the field, 31% report behavior as a fundamental reason. However, about 26% report dissatisfaction with supports received to prepare students (NCES, 2013).

• Collaboration with other teachers is reported as the most influential type of professional learning on teachers’ self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and sources of efficacy (Durksen et al., 2017).

• When teachers feel supported by administrators, educators experience a more positive professional learning community and, which in turn positively influence student outcomes (Park et al., 2019).

How can we support our professional learning community?
How Our State of Mind Affects Learning

• Stress is the result of how a situation is interpreted:
  o psychological responses
  o physiological responses
  o behavioral responses

• Feeling too distressed can hinder learning

• When the amygdala detects a threat, it responds quickly – fight, flight, or freeze responses

(Rudland et al., 2018; Rudland & Wilkins, 2018)
Amygdala

The amygdala’s response is faster than the prefrontal cortex and the hippocampus, the two areas of the brain most needed for academic work.

- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Remembering details
- Storing memories

An anxious, stressed, or fearful state of mind can lead to poor decision-making, impulsive behaviors, and the inability to think with clarity.
Consider the Escalation Cycle

(Walker, et al., 1995)
Stressed & Depressed

Optimal Functioning

Scans from Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research
Supportive Strategies & Happy Hormones

**Dopamine**
The Reward Hormone

**Oxytocin**
The Love Hormone

**Serotonin**
The Will-Power Hormone

**Endorphins**
The Calm Hormone
Tier 1
Preventative classroom practices & Effective responses to unwanted behavior

Tier 1 +
Out of class ISLA supports

Tier 2
Specialized group systems

Tier 3
Individualized, intensive supports
ISLA Process Goals

- Improve behavior supports for students
- Support skill development for students & staff
- Improve student-teacher relationships
- Reduce the use of exclusionary discipline practices and the amount of missed instructional time
Preventative Classroom Practices

In-Class Effective Responses to Behavior

Out-of-Class ISLA Supports

Resolution, Reconnection, & Additional Supports

ISLA Team Guides Implementation:
Data-based decision making, embedded supports in school system
The Secret...

Changing students' behavior is actually about changing our behavior!
Welcome Students at the Door

Own Your Environment

Wrap up Class with Intention
#1: Welcome Students at the Door

Cook and colleagues’ (2018) study in middle schools found that when teachers welcomed students by name at the door, engagement increased by 20% and disruptive behavior decreased by 9%.

- Sets a positive tone
- Promotes sense of belonging
- Builds trust
- No cost, no prep!
#1: Welcome Students at the Door

https://www.today.com/news/teacher-creatively-brings-back-individual-handshakes-students-t212910
#2: Own Your Classroom: Teach it, Model it, Acknowledge it

Teaching routines **sets students up for success in the classroom**. Research shows students in these classrooms are more engaged in academic activities and disrupt instruction less, resulting in improved progress in school throughout the year (Bohn et al., 2004; Oliver et al., 2011).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My expectation or routine for</th>
<th>How and when I teach it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using cell phones in class</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Entering class late</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Turning in assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>What to do when done with students are done with work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharpening pencils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eating or drinking in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bathroom breaks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Working in small groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silent reading time</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
#3: Wrap Up Class with Intention

• Transitions are predictable times for unwanted behaviors
• Ending class with a routine is a proactive approach

Potential Benefits:
• Builds relationships
• Creates community in class
• Develops predictable routine
• Teacher can use to assess learning
• Facilitates equity of voices
#3: Wrap Up Class with Intention
ISLA Team Guides Implementation:
Data-based decision making, embedded supports in school system
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Behavior</th>
<th>Possible Motivation</th>
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</table>
| Student refused to take off his hood.                                            | Student was cold.  
Student was listening to music.  
Student has a hicky.  
Student hasn’t showered recently.  
Student likes wearing a hoodie.                                                   |
| Student was side talking when teacher was talking.                               | Student needed materials and was asking a classmate to borrow something.             |
| Discussing organisms in class; student said a word that is very similar.         | Student didn’t know how to pronounce it.                                           |
What is an EFFECTIVE RESPONSE to unwanted behavior?

• Calm and respectful
  • When they escalate, we de-escalate
  • Assume positive intent

• Discreet

• Consider WHY the student is doing this

• Focus on building skills

• Response matches level of severity

When little people are overwhelmed by BIG EMOTIONS, it's our job to share OUR CALM, not to join their chaos.
- L.R. Knost.
<table>
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<th>Student Behavior</th>
<th>Possible Motivation</th>
<th>Effective Response</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student refused to take off his hood.</td>
<td>Student was cold.</td>
<td><strong>2021: Allow the student autonomy over what clothes they choose for themselves!!</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student was side talking when teacher was talking.</td>
<td>Student needed materials and was asking a classmate to borrow something.</td>
<td>Discreetly talk to the student about speaking more quietly. Offer help with any materials they need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing organisms in class; student said a word that is very similar.</td>
<td>Student didn’t know how to pronounce it.</td>
<td>Laugh it off! Teach everyone how to pronounce it and what it means.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I started a fire in the lab—on purpose! How about you?

I tapped my pencil on my desk during study time.
Big Deal-O-Meter

- Minor Fighting
- Cursing
- Very High
- Severe
- Extreme
- Catastrophic

Jumping a Student
Weapons
Big Deal-O-Meter

• Sending students out of class is a big deal

• Tool to facilitate staff-wide conversations about which behaviors are “big deals” and require support the classroom teacher can’t provide

• For low-level behaviors, address with in-class effective responses

• For more serious behaviors, addressed out of class by behavior support staff or administrator
What class-wide breaks might look like:

*SQUARE BREATHING*

This is a deep breathing activity that involves breathing while following the shape of a square. Breathe in for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4. Repeat this process for 8-10 repetitions.
Why have a School-Wide Break System?

• To be preventative: take a break before things escalate and then reconnect
• To teach the important skill of de-escalation
• To provide an opportunity for students and teachers to recalibrate
• To identify students who might need more supports
• To reserve ISLA supports (in the office) for students who truly need skill building and reconnection supports before returning to class
ISLA Team Guides Implementation:
Data-based decision making, embedded supports in school system
Sending Students for Support: Best Practices for Teachers

• Be discreet and model respect

• Maintain the flow of instruction

• Communicate to the student what specifically happened so they understand your reason for sending them out for support

• Complete hall pass or documentation according to your school’s procedure
ISLA Space Considerations

Language matters!

Name of the room:
• Positively stated
• Does the room have a negative stigma associated with it? How might you rebrand it?

Signage:
• Safe and welcoming space
• What messages do we want to emphasize to students who need to access this space?
ISLA Space Considerations

Physical set up

• Allows for discreet face-to-face conversations

• What resources can you provide to support students while they are here?
ISLA Triage Process

Is the behavior a safety concern?

• YES = Administrator should work with student to go through ISLA Process

• NO = ISLA Support Staff should work with student to go through ISLA Process

This step is important to pair the right person with the student to provide support and follow safety protocols.
ISLA Process

Provide in-school **instructional** supports (in lieu of exclusion) that include:

- Student debrief
- Skills coaching on appropriate behaviors
- Reentry plan with rehearsal
- Transition supports with a reconnection conversation
Debrief

1. Tell me what happened. Start from the beginning. What was going on in class?
2. What did you do? What did others do?
3. What did you want or need in that situation?
4. How did that work for you? How do you think it worked for the other people in class?
5. If that’s what you needed, what’s another way we can get what you need in this class?
6. What could the teacher do to help you in these situations?
Skills Coaching Process

1. Identify the appropriate skill
2. Teach and model
3. Practice with guided support
4. Performance feedback
5. Communication with staff members
ISLA Team Guides Implementation:
Databased decision-making, embedded supports in school system
Briggs Reconnection Card
Be Safe--Be Responsible--Be Respectful--Choose Kind

Dear ____________________________

I learned that...


I can make things better by...


Here is how I'm going to try and prevent this from happening again. Next time I will...


In order for me to be successful, the support I need from you is...


Optional: Something else I want you to know about me (what I'm really good at, what's really hard for me, what's going on in my life) is...


Optional: Something I need you to know about me from a cultural perspective (traditions, beliefs, my family) is...


Respectfully__________________________________________
Dear [Name],

I learned that...
- not to tap my pencil
- and have my head on desk

I can make things better by...
- copy the notes on the board

Here is how I'm going to try and prevent this from happening again. Next time I will...
- copy the notes on the board
- not have my head on the desk and no tapping

In order for me to be successful, the support I need from you is...
- show me how to do this in a way that I understand

(Optional) Something else I want you to know is...
- that I have no clue how to do this type of math!!!
Dear [Name],

I learned that I should be quiet and respectful. I should sharpen just until it's usable. Be quiet during Bell time.

I can make it better by being more quiet and mindful of other people's learning.

Here's how I'm going to try and prevent this from happening again. Next time I will ask the person next to me to tell me when I'm getting too loud. I might try mechanical pencils.

For me to be successful, the support I need from you is to move me up front to the middle. There's a lot of distraction around me.

(Optional) Something else I want you to know is what I'm really good at, what's really hard for me, what's going on in my life is I'm easily distracted. I used to see an OT who taught me some strategies but I forget to do them. Could you say, "Use your exercise" if I'm distracted?

(Optional) Something I need you to know about me from a cultural perspective (traditions, beliefs, my family) is

In sincerely,

Date: 9/16/19   Time In: 9:50   Time Out: 10:05   Staff: [Signature]
What the Reconnection Conversation IS

• **It IS** something we practice with supportive adults
  • ***Skills Coaching is necessary***

• **It IS** something that requires lifelong skill development

• **It IS** a mechanism for sharing sensitive information

• **It IS** a tool that can vastly improve OR damage student-teacher relationships (our words and responses matter)
What the Reconnection Conversation IS NOT

- It is NOT a Think Sheet
- It is NOT something students fill out by themselves
- It is NOT an apology note
- It is NOT something that requires strong writing skills
- It is NOT something we should expect students to do on their own
- It is NOT a long, drawn out, groveling conversation
When Students Return to You

• Allow the student to:
  • Engage in the reconnection conversation with you
  • Rejoin the class activity without a further conversation about it; trust that the point has been driven home.

• Welcome them back into the classroom without punishment, retribution, or a grudge.
Preliminary Data to Support ISLA
ISLA Grant

**Year 1: Formative Development & Usability**
- Design Team
- 2 middle schools
- Model, systems, materials and measures tried out by some staff members

**Year 2: Feasibility & Fidelity Study**
- Design Team
- Same 2 middle schools
- 2 additional middle schools
- ISLA rolled out school-wide

**Year 3: Pilot Study**
- 3 new middle schools for pilot study
- ISLA roll out & on going support

**Year 4: Pilot Study**
- 5 new middle schools for pilot study
- 5 control schools
“Year 1”: School Year 2019-2020

2 Local Schools Identified to participate in “refinement” stage

- Summer training for Tier 1 teams
- Fall all-staff orientation
- Monthly ISLA/ PBIS team meetings
  - Pre-planning with administrator and district support staff
  - Review data
Refinement Through Staff Input

As the ISLA/ PBIS team met during the fall & winter, staff gave continuous feedback via grade level teams & staff meetings.

During winter term staff identified “clunks”, including:

- Time and process for reconnection with teachers
- Concerns about how students are “owning” their part
- Getting information to the office so the debrief is accurate and effective
- Clarity and calibration for which behaviors warrant office/ ISLA process
Problem Solving “clunks”:

Some examples of refining and supporting implementation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified “clunk”</th>
<th>Action Taken by ISLA/ PBIS Team</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time and process for</td>
<td>Each grade level team identified their preference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reconnection with teachers</td>
<td>● 6th grade- at the end of class or at the beginning of class the following day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● 7th grade- before the teacher sees the student next (AP covering class if needed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● 8th grade- reconnect immediately if possible (AP covering class if needed)reconnect during</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prep time/advisory</td>
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Problem Solving “clunks”:

Some examples of refining and supporting implementation:

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<tr>
<td>Concerns about how students are “owning” their part</td>
<td>● Prioritize in-person reconnection (with support) when possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Coach students to consider their perspective vs teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Remind staff about purpose of the reconnection (repairing relationship vs placing blame)</td>
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Problem Solving “clunks”:

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<td>Getting information to the office so the debrief is</td>
<td>Tighten up “pink slip” use, coach teacher to write “call me” if they have additional information to share before debriefing</td>
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</table>
What’s Next?

Support other schools who are beginning

Continuing support for previous schools

Integrating ISLA into district-wide PD and team leader meetings

Ongoing training and support for staff

- Building behavior support EAs
- Office staff
- Administration
- PBIS Team Leaders (to ensure integration into Tier 1)