

PROMISE for Success: Promoting Resilience and Outreach through Multi-tiered Interventions and Supportive Environments



Cohort:
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Location:
Ypsilanti, Michigan

Focus Areas:
Early Childhood
School-based Health Care
Violence & Trauma

Short Project Summary

Adverse childhood experiences and environments (ACEs) place youth at elevated risk for toxic stress. In the absence of trauma-informed interventions and supports, ACEs may “get under the skin” negatively impacting academic achievement. PROMISE for Success is a multi-tiered, evidence-informed, school- and community-based intervention delivered at an underserved and under-resourced community in Southeast Michigan. PROMISE aims are in accordance with the 4 R’s of Trauma-informed care as follows: a) realize the widespread impact of trauma; b) recognize the warning signs of traumatic stress; c) respond with trauma-informed practices; and d) resist re-traumatization. The PROMISE project is being implemented through a multi-tiered approach involving the school (e.g., students, teachers, parents, and caregivers) and community (e.g., ACEs interactive informational training sessions). Evaluative data and findings of the project will inform tailored recommendations for trauma-informed practices and sustainability for the school and community.

Wicked Problem Description

Sadly, two out of three students will experience a traumatic event by age 16 (NCTSN, 2017). This exposure even in the absence of traumatic stress, is a threat to youths' healthy development. Trauma exposure includes community/school violence, maltreatment, traumatic grief, refugee and other adversities (NCTSN, 2016). Traumatic stress reactions impact academic, behavioral, socio-emotional and other areas of functioning. Peers, parents and caregiving adults (school officials) who interact with traumatized youth are at risk for secondary traumatic stress, suggesting the need for a multi-pronged approach for prevention, supportive services and intervention. A day in the life of a traumatized student is particularly challenging at school, where a present/positive mind, body and spirit are required for success. Intrusive trauma reminders such as sounds, images or situations triggering memories, as well as competing brain functions like fight-flight-freeze are dysregulating and disruptive to student learning. Research informs us of the cumulative effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including behavioral/physical health, family-/community-related consequences. Further, secondary adversities that disproportionately impact urban, underserved communities like the school-to-prison pipeline is interconnected with traumatic exposure/stress. Tragically, a quarter of black boys will be incarcerated in their lifetime (Bonczar, 2015), and the average number of trauma exposures is 14 for youth in juvenile detention (Abram et al., 2004). Suicide rates are rising in urban communities with trauma playing a factor (CDC, 2016). Thus, it is imperative that urban communities "recognize, respond, infuse, sustain, act and facilitate" Trauma-Informed (T-I) and Trauma-Responsive (T-R) practices (NCTSN, 2017).

Strategies Your Team is Undertaking

A multi-tiered approach is being applied to address the wicked problem of traumatic stress. The aforementioned Four R's (realize, recognize, respond and resist) of Trauma-Informed Care are applied at each tier. Tier 1 focuses on universal, school-wide implementation, as encompassing a holistic approach that involves teachers, administrators, students and families is foundational to creating and sustaining a positive and safe school climate. At Tier 1 Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is being implemented virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, school staff have completed a baseline survey that assessed the fidelity of PBIS implementation; school climate; secondary traumatic, COVID-19 and race-related stress as well as resiliency. A follow-up survey will be completed in the spring. Tier 2 focuses on the implementation of virtual Compassion Resilience circles for teachers and parents/caregivers by stakeholder group designed to address compassion fatigue/burnout, build effective relationships with a compassionate presence and promote self-care, wellness and resiliency strategies. Compassion Resilience circle participants provide feedback to aid cultural tailoring and other future implementation recommendations. Lastly, Tier 3, the community arm of PROMISES, focuses on the delivery of interactive ACEs informational training sessions

to healthcare providers and child- and family serving agencies and community organizations (e.g., churches) embedded in the intervention's school's community.

Outcomes

Completed Outcomes

Initial feedback findings were positive following a Trauma-Informed PBIS Classroom Practices training with teacher-reported satisfaction (n = 18) as highly favorable (M=4.72, SD = 0.45). A Trauma-Informed PBIS Staff Professional Development training (n = 37) was also highly rated with over 80% of attendees indicating being extremely to somewhat satisfied (M=4.19, SD= 0.95).

Anticipated Future Outcomes

T-I PBIS implementation survey findings and current PBIS positive incentives such as the school store utilization are in progress. We anticipate 40% student and 80% teacher engagement in utilizing the T-I PBIS practices during the pilot year. Tier 2 data collection is underway to provide evaluation feedback of participants in the Compassion Resilience Circles pilot groups to support tailoring and sustainability. We plan to lead (4-8 group series) 6-week Compassion Resilience Circles for the remainder of the school year. Lastly, Tier 3 ACEs training are convening and collecting the necessary data to implement and integrate organizational policies, procedure, protocols to cultivate resilience in the community and minimize ACEs.

Timeline

Implementation of Tiers 1, 2 and 3 will continue throughout winter and spring 2021. Summer 2021 will consist of data analysis and sharing of findings and recommendations via project reports and dissemination plans such as PROMISE toolkit.

Partnerships

PROMISE composed a Community Advisory Board consisting of representatives across various child/family serving agencies, organizations and systems including education, juvenile justice and physical and mental health. Additionally, consultants from Midwest PBIS and Compassion Resilience are integral to project implementation efforts. A public health cross-sector, multi-disciplinary collaborative team with greater than 20 years' experience leads PROMISE. Clinical Scholars' backgrounds include clinical psychology, social work, public health and medicine.

Evaluation Strategies

A multi-informant strategy primarily consisting of survey data collected prospectively over the project period, will be used to evaluate PROMISE for Success.

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