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Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in Residential Juvenile Facilities

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“It is essential that a...facility-wide framework be in place that allows for behavioral interventions and treatment of mental-health, physical-health, and/or substance-abuse needs, so that youth and staff may use the majority of their time focusing on educational gains and developing skills allowing the youth to succeed when they return to their homes, communities, and schools” (p. 162).

—*Lampron and Gonsoulin (2013)*

Introduction

Youth served within our secure juvenile facilities, whether for a short or long period of time or incarcerated numerous times, often enter the system with histories of nonsuccess within our traditional educational systems and communities at large, typically influenced by combinations of abuse and/or neglect, disabilities, trauma, mental health conditions, substance abuse, and other issues (e.g., Leone & Weinberg, 2010; Schubert & Mulvey, 2014). Although these youth present high needs across academic, behavioral, and transition domains, *they must all be afforded developmentally- and age-appropriate, scientifically validated services for successful reentry into our communities.* To better meet these varied and complex needs, the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Justice (DOJ) released the “Guiding Principles for Providing High-Quality Education in Juvenile Justice Care Settings” (2014). The first of the five principles set forth specifically details the need for “a safe, healthy, facility-wide climate that prioritizes education, provides the conditions for learning, and encourages the necessary behavioral and social support services that address the individual needs of all youth, including those with disabilities” (p. 8) that can be met through activities of “a tiered system of services and supports” (p. 9), and that such youth “in juvenile secure care may benefit from programming based on a tiered framework, often referred to as a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)” (p. 11).

This brief defines foundational concepts related to MTSS implementation in residential juvenile facilities. It also describes promising research and provides steps and considerations to review when

making adaptations during the planning and implementation of an MTSS in facilities. Last, it highlights three programs from across the United States that exemplify key concepts covered in the brief, such as obtaining youth and staff buy-in and measuring outcomes. The brief is designed to help State and local administrators and staff during the planning and implementation stages to improve school and facility climate and better support youth.

Key Concepts for MTSS Adaptation and Implementation

MTSS is based on a public health prevention model (Myers & Farrell, 2008) and includes three tiers—universal primary prevention, targeted secondary intervention, and individualized tertiary intervention. When an MTSS is implemented, youths’ needs are assessed with interventions identified and intensified per assessment data (Benner, Kutash, Nelson, & Fisher, 2013). MTSS has also been linked to the provision and structuring of mental health services (e.g., Chafouleas, Johnson, Overstreet, & Santos, 2016) needed by many youth in juvenile corrections.

Facility-wide (FW) takes into account the 24-hours-a-day/7-days-a-week program delivery model under which residential juvenile facilities operate, and programming is any scientifically supported educational or therapeutic intervention delivered by any juvenile staff regardless of discipline foci to a youth or group of youth. Within an FW model, staff across all disciplines (e.g., education, counseling, medical, recreation, security) must maximize all programming time with youth to help remediate skill deficits and promote skill-building so youth can

transition successfully back into and remain in their communities (Jolivet, Kimball, Boden, & Sprague, 2016). Within most facilities, a master schedule has been created to account for programming time by specifying the content for a time period, which staff are to deliver the content, which staff are to supervise and transport youth, where the content will be delivered, and any materials/resources needed for the content.

Climate is related to one’s sense of engagement (e.g., relations and connections), safety (e.g., free from bullying and violence), and environment (e.g., equitable discipline) through their experiences within a specific setting (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, 2015). ED (2014) has identified three strategies to improve climate: (1) a “focus on prevention”; (2) development of “clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and consequences to address disruptive [youth] behaviors”; and (3) assurance of “fairness, equity, and continuous improvement” (p. 1). In the past, juvenile facilities were characterized by punitive, reactive practices that negatively affected climate and, thus, youth outcomes in the facility (e.g., Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Lipsey, 2009).

These concepts are the impetus for adopting and implementing an MTSS with youth in juvenile facilities. In recent years, many entities, researchers, and policymakers have suggested such, specifically referencing the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) MTSS framework (e.g., ED, 2014; Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Lampron & Gonsoulin, 2013; NDTAC [Read & Lampron], 2012; Nelson, Sprague, Jolivet, Smith, & Tobin, 2009). This framework has more than 20 years of school-based evidence of effectiveness in improving student academic and behavioral outcomes (Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2016). To glean maximal outcomes for youth in juvenile facilities, the PBIS framework should be implemented FW, because implementing the framework for only a portion of the day and/or by certain staff may cause confusion between youth and staff, resulting in inappropriate youth behaviors, as well as incongruent roles for staff (Jolivet et al., 2014). Implementation of the PBIS framework during waking hours, referred to as FW-PBIS, provides a venue to address and improve the overall climate of a facility. Thus, “creating the right conditions for learning depends heavily on creating a facility-wide climate that promotes positive outcomes for all youths” (ED & DOJ, 2014, p. 8).

Common terminology within MTSS definitions includes:

- *Continuum of supports* (along the three tiers)
- *Evidence-based* (i.e., scientifically sound; proven results)
- *Prevention-based* (proactive approach)
- *Data-based* (i.e., objective real-time decisionmaking)
- *Applicable to all youth* (i.e., regardless of specific characteristics)
- *Alignment of resources* (i.e., reallocation of resources within and across the setting to support the tiers)
- *Systems-change paradigm* (realignment for improved outcomes)
- *Professional development* (that is purposeful and planned)
- *Collaboration across disciplines* (giving all disciplines a voice)

Jolivet et al. (2016) put forth many examples of what the tiered practices, systems, and data supports might look like in juvenile facilities where FW-PBIS is implemented. For example:

- **Systems:** PBIS-specific funding, coordinators, team meetings, professional development calendar, resource protocols, and academy training.
- **Tiered interventions:**
 - *Tier I:* Education, skill-building therapy, nutrition, recreation, religious services, visitation, mental health screening, Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies (PATHS) program, Prison Rape Elimination Act education, deescalation strategies, restorative practices.
 - *Tier II:* Environmental changes, values groups, mentoring, psychiatric referral, 1:1 counseling, functional behavior assessments, positive behavior agreements.
 - *Tier III:* Wrap-around services, behavior support plan, safety management plan, Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools program, coping cat.
- **Data:** Existing data sources and formats (e.g., tables, graphs, month-to-month comparisons) delineated for each tiered team.

FW-PBIS in Juvenile Facilities

Entities such as the ED, NDTAC, Technical Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (www.pbis.org), and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education and National Disability Rights Network (2007) have advocated the adoption of PBIS for promoting educational success and reducing youth delinquency in juvenile facilities. Recently, juvenile justice entities have proactively implemented FW-PBIS as a preventative framework to better structure day-to-day operations and embed evidence-based practices (Fernandez, Doyle, Koon, & McClain, 2015; Jolivet et al., 2016). Research indicates that implementation of FW-PBIS is resulting in:

- **Improved fidelity of implementation** (Jolivet, Boden, & Sprague, 2015; Jolivet, Boden, Sprague, Ennis, & Kimball, 2015; McClain, Fernandez, & Brown-Williams, 2014);
- **Improved staff development and perceived feasibility and effectiveness** (Alonso-Vaughn, Bradley, & Cassavaugh, 2014; Fernandez & McClain, 2014; Jolivet, Boden, Sprague,

Ennis, et al., 2015; Kimball, Jolivet, & Sprague, 2016);

- **Improved staff self-efficacy** (Jolivet, Boden, & Sprague, 2015; Jolivet, Sprague, & Nelson, 2015; Sprague, Jolivet, & Boden, 2014);
- **Increased programming engagement by youth** (Johnson et al., 2013; Nuss & Ellison, 2014);
- **Improved relations between staff and youth** (Jolivet, Boden, & Sprague, 2015);
- **Improved problem-solving on how best to meet youth's needs** (Marten & Withrow, 2014);
- **Improved usage of real-time youth and staff data** (Cassavaugh, Alonso-Vaughn, & Bradley, 2014; Fernandez & McClain, 2014);
- **Increased staff accountability** (Alonso-Vaughn, Bradley, & Cassavaugh, 2015); and
- **Decrease in overall youth behavioral incidents** (Johnson et al., 2013; Jolivet, Kimball, McClain, & Skufca, 2015; Lopez, Williams, & Newsom, 2015; McClain et al., 2014) specifically youth-on-youth and youth-on-staff (Fernandez et al., 2015; Fernandez, McClain, Brown-Williams, & Ellison, 2015).

Adaptations for Planning and Implementing FW-PBIS in Juvenile Facilities

Teams can consider several adaptations to FW-PBIS *when planning for FW-PBIS implementation and for actual implementation* (Sprague, Jolivet, & Boden, 2014). Adaptations across different stages of planning and implementation are described below.

Establish a PBIS Team. A major difference between school-wide PBIS implementation and FW-PBIS within juvenile facilities relates to establishing a PBIS team, including the (a) constitution of the tiered teams, and (b) teaming structures and functionality within a facility.

- **Tiered Teams.** Each tiered team is to specifically include a member from each relevant discipline within the facility. For example, for all tiers, a team would have someone from education, mental health, medical, security, recreation, treatment, facility services (e.g., food services), and any other discipline represented in the facility. These teams would be larger at a facility than at a school, because a facility operating in a 24/7 delivery model has more disciplines than a school operating in a 6- to 7-hour model. Sometimes, a larger team may be helpful in completing action items, but its size may be a hindrance to building consensus. A larger

Agency and Youth Voice—Evidence From the Field

- After more than 2 years of FW-PBIS implementation, agency-level PBIS stakeholders in a juvenile facility (i.e., agency PBIS Steering Committee members) held a positive view of FW-PBIS and reported their perception that it: (a) is effective in meeting the needs of youth and staff; (b) has produced positive culture change across the agency and within the facilities, typically manifested in improved staff-to-youth interactions; and (c) improved the consistency and fidelity of the tiered practices (Kimball et al., 2016).
- Thirty-five youth from eight facilities who were exposed to FW-PBIS implementation for more than 1 year reported three positive themes: (a) Staff had more confidence in their ability to provide support and encouragement to improve youth's behavior. (b) Reinforcement was authentic, motivating youth to change their behavior. Such reinforcement was equitably distributed across youth and accessible to the youth once the youth left the facility. Finally, (c) FW-PBIS was directly relevant to youth's daily lives, including their life outside the facility in terms of the behavioral expectations matching those in their homes, school, and community-at-large (Jolivet, Boden, Sprague, Ennis, et al., 2015).

team may hinder sustainability, because it pulls many staff “off the floor” for meetings that could compromise staffing ratios and disrupt the overall programming schedule for the day. Drawing team membership from all disciplines ensures that each discipline has a “voice” in FW-PBIS decisionmaking processes. This voice may improve staff buy-in, which can be difficult to achieve in juvenile facilities given varying staff shifts, pedagogical perspectives of staff, and different staff roles and responsibilities. Fernandez and McClain (2014) state that “for implementation to be successful, it would require [FW] participation by all disciplines” and that success would begin with team membership.

- **Teaming Structure and Functionality.** Some facilities found that, given their staffing structure, having a different team to address the responsibilities at each tier was feasible, whereas other facilities found they could repurpose existing teams for these responsibilities. Still others collapsed the responsibilities of Tiers II and III into a single team. A few smaller facilities found that a single team could function and perform the responsibilities of each tier by strategically constructing their PBIS team meeting agenda and having specific staff from certain disciplines join in those discussions. These different effective PBIS teaming structures highlight the flexibility of the PBIS framework when adopted within secure juvenile facilities. Sprague and colleagues (2013) found for the various Tier teams that “for many of the facilities our staff development has provided a first-time opportunity for personnel from different disciplines in the facilities to systematically develop and coordinate intervention supports for youth” (p. 129–130). In addition, Fernandez and McClain (2014) reported that “it was the first time the agency allowed the implementation of this big a project to be guided by staff [facility-level] and not directed by Central Office.”

Secure Staff Buy-In. A consistent challenge for FW-PBIS teams is the struggle to secure and maintain staff buy-in to implement adopted PBIS policies and procedures. The most common reasons for such challenges are heightened within the complexity of a 24/7 delivery model and diversity of staff and disciplines. First, various shift configurations for staff across the disciplines (e.g., education works Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; security works four 10-hour days in a row and then has 3 days off) make it difficult to: (1) initially train/conduct booster

trainings with all staff because numerous trainings need to be scheduled to account for the different shifts, (2) convene staff at the same time so the same information can be shared and heard by everyone, (3) maintain consistency of implementation for staff whose schedule has them away from the facility for multiple days in a row, and (4) convince staff who work the overnight shifts or those who work half-time or are on-call that they, too, need to be knowledgeable on PBIS policies and procedures and implement them.

Second, some staff use the role for which they were hired as a reason for not implementing FW-PBIS. For example, security staff may report that they were hired to keep a safe and secure environment, not to teach youth what to do or reinforce youth who do what they are expected to do. Conversely educators may report that they are there to teach the youth, not address behavioral problems, because security can be called. For FW-PBIS to be effective, all staff, regardless of their role or shift, must implement the policy and procedures. Third, staff may view changes within the facility as the agency’s “latest initiative” that will go away when something else becomes the focus (Fernandez et al., 2015). With such a perception, staff may not actively engage in training activities, nor may they be consistent or engaged in FW-PBIS implementation believing it to be a temporary expectation.

Teach and Model. This component of the PBIS framework—creating behavioral expectations for youth and staff; creating an expectations matrix for facilities; and creating expectations resource guides/protocols—is the most noticeable difference between past juvenile corrections approaches (e.g., telling youth what they should not do and waiting for them to fail to respond) to current approaches (e.g., proactively and explicitly letting youth know what is expected) (Jolivet & Nelson, 2010). The expectations need to be free of links to deviant subcultures such as gangs. For example, within a typical school setting, the following expectations may be appropriate: “Be a Leader of the Pack—You are Part of the WOLF Pack,” where W = work hard, O = own your behavior, L = listen and learn, F = focus on respect, branded in black and gold. But if applied in a juvenile facility with youth who have histories of gang affiliations, such an approach may encourage and reinforce deviancy through the referral to there being a “leader of a pack” (alpha) and a “wolf pack” (beta), similar to gang structures, and the colors may have links to a particular gang. Also, some expectations may

be inappropriate for a juvenile facility population. For example, an expectation such as “Be ready” may imply, even if taught otherwise, that youth may be on alert for something to happen, which could result in their responding in an inappropriate manner as they have done in the past.

These examples highlight the importance of understanding the facility’s population. Behavioral expectations must be applicable both “within” and “outside” the fence, meaning they are explicit, culturally relevant, and able to be reinforced during and after the youth’s incarceration by teachers, employers, family members, and others. Behavioral expectations may be compliance-based, such as “Do as you are told” and “Give me respect” or generalizable, such as “Accept adult instruction and feedback” and “Respect yourself and others.” Finally, expectations need to be both age- and developmentally appropriate. For example, if the population is mostly adolescents with cognitive disabilities, (1) expectations such as “Achieve attainable goals,” “Go for greatness,” “Accept positive instructions,” “Make positive choices,” and “Exceed expectations” may be too complex and numerous for their memory; (2) having two A’s may be difficult to remember; and (3) youth who are not developing in a typical manner may have difficulty understanding the differences between “Go for greatness” and “Exceed expectations,” because both are related to setting and attaining goals.

Reinforce. It is important for the FW-PBIS team to fully understand facility policies before creating expectations and a reinforcement system for youth. This will minimize or eliminate confusion about contingencies as well as prevent introducing situations where an earned privilege could result in a rule violation. For example, if a youth earned the privilege of having an extra soft-covered book in his room for the weekend, but the policy is for all youth to have only up to two books in their rooms at a time, then the weekend staff might incorrectly write up a behavioral incident for the youth. It is imperative that the reinforcement earned by youth can be used only for its intended purpose, or FW-PBIS may inadvertently introduce opportunities for youth misbehavior. For example, if a youth earned access to movie night, then she may not use her “ticket” as a form of currency to barter for other items she wants, nor should another youth bully or steal the ticket from that youth. In a secure juvenile facility, even the most benign tangible item can have reinforcing qualities not

thought of by staff. The team will need to create explicit procedures for the reinforcement system to be followed (e.g., regular staff communication and notations in charts or dorm log books), with all earned reinforcement privileges and activities closely supervised and consumable in nature.

Engage in Data-Based Decisionmaking.

Determining data sources to assess effectiveness of FW-PBIS is probably the most difficult aspect for FW-PBIS teams. Even though many data are collected on a daily basis within facilities, such data are not necessarily used to make decisions, may not be accessible to staff, or may not be presented in a useable format (Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Scheuermann, Nelson, Wang, & Bruntmyer, 2015). Teams need to be aware of the data currently being collected and how they may access it. Once accessed, teams need to think through how they will use the data, questions they may ask when analyzing the data, and how they will address the responses to their questions. Some FW-PBIS teams have reported that they have approached data-based decisionmaking only after they created all other aspects of their FW-PBIS plans—almost as an afterthought. This approach is most likely due to a history of not using data to make decisions and to lack of access to data sources within facilities because data are usually restricted to high-level facility administrators. In addition, most FW-PBIS teams explicitly ask for professional development on what to do with data they collect, how to put it in formats that make sense to them, how to read graphs and figures, how to approach analyzing their data so improvements to the PBIS framework can be identified and occur, and how to communicate data within the confidentiality policies of their agency.

Establish a Data-Based Action Plan. FW-PBIS teams work from an action plan of prioritized issues, identify ideas on how to address each issue, identify who is responsible for tackling each issue, and decide on deadlines for completion. With teams that are larger, composed of diverse staff and disciplines who may not have worked together in the past, or represent varying perspectives, it may be difficult to form consensus on multiple aspects of the action plan (Sprague et al., 2013). Aspects of the plan might include what the FW behavioral expectations should be, what the specific examples of expectations may look like on the matrix, how to teach and model the expectations, how to reinforce the youth, and how to use

data to make decisions. Teams have struggled with moving from a focus on negatively stated behaviors (e.g., stop stealing food from other youth during meals, or other “don’t,” “stop,” or “no” statements) to what they actually want the youth to do or positively stated behaviors (e.g., eat your own food, gain permission for movement). This change is especially true given the negative signage typically found throughout juvenile facilities (e.g., posters with lists of negative statements like “no horse playing”), negative direction spoken aloud by staff in daily interactions with youth, and negative lists found within the youth handbooks. Even when positive expectations are identified, coming to consensus within the FW-PBIS team can be difficult (Sprague et al., 2013).

Arrange for High Fidelity of Implementation. Many FW-PBIS teams report confusion on how they and staff are to incorporate the FW expectations and matrix examples into their day-to-day interactions with youth per their specific role/discipline. Such confusion is further exacerbated by staff who do not view teaching and modeling as part of their job description. To assist with incorporation, teams can use their local operating policy mechanisms to support implementation and staff training. Juvenile facilities typically have two levels of policies: those written and approved at the agency level (e.g., PBIS general policy adopted by the agency), and those with specific implementation details (e.g., what FW-PBIS implementation will look like at each Tier) related to the general policy but written and approved for local facility implementation (e.g., approved by the facility director). A FW-PBIS local operating policy template for Tier I can help implementation with fidelity.

The time it takes to use a resource guide/protocol is usually less than 10–15 minutes, depending on the specific expectation and its use within daily facility environments and activities. It is important that within the master schedule, resource guide/protocol activities explicitly note that all staff are expected to use the guides/protocols (see sidebar). All staff can then observe on the schedule that PBIS guides/protocols are to be used by all staff, regardless of shift or discipline, and in all facility environments and activities.

The sidebar includes key components of a policy template. Having this information in a single policy provides the FW-PBIS team with all the components to train staff on implementation procedures. Also, using an established policy

Policy template components include:

(a) which PBIS tier the policy is for; (b) PBIS team coleads, members, and contact information for all team members, as well as names and contact information for agency-level PBIS supporters (e.g., PBIS Coordinators); (c) PBIS purpose; (d) FW-PBIS expectations and acronym; (e) behavioral matrix; (f) supporting posters and matrices for display; (g) resource guides/protocols; (h) youth reinforcement system; (i) staff reinforcement system; (j) data sources, data-based decisionmaking questions for analyses, visuals of data; (k) staff training PowerPoints, email blasts, handouts, and activities; (l) incorporation of youth voice; (m) family engagement connections; (n) youth handbook PBIS insert specifics; (o) PBIS brochure for families, other facilities, and transition purposes; (p) PBIS training schedule; and (q) monthly action plans (Jolivet, Nelson, & Sprague, 2015).

mechanism—where facility directors and other administrative personnel review, discuss, and approve implementation details—signals to all staff that they are supported and required to implement the policy as written. In addition to the policies and team-led trainings, staff-friendly PBIS resource guides/protocols need to be created and implemented on a consistent and predictable schedule by staff and be based on effective teaching principles.

Conduct Ongoing Formative Decision Monitoring.

Accessing, using, and making decisions based on data have been expressed needs and challenges for FW-PBIS teams within juvenile facilities. Agencies that have adapted the PBIS framework Statewide across all their secure juvenile facilities, as well as individual facilities that have made adaptations, have observed many changes in monitoring of PBIS implementation (Sprague et al., 2013). In one State, the agency quickly recognized that the FW-PBIS teams needed real-time access to data to make decisions for implementation fidelity and improvements. Without adding more data collection processes and procedures, the agency worked with their instructional technology members and repurposed already collected agency behavioral data into accessible weekly/monthly reports with tables and graphs.

PBIS resource guides/protocols for juvenile facilities may include the elements of (a) which FW expectation the guide represents, (b) facility location for the expectation, (c) rationale for why this expectation should be displayed within that facility location, (d) specific examples of what that expectation does and does not look like for that location per the matrix, (e) activities for staff leading the guide/protocol and youth to engage in that provide opportunities for practice and proficiency building, (f) how youth are to be reinforced for learning and displaying the expectations, (g) error corrections methods to be used by staff while leading the protocol, and (h) how youth mastery of expectations will be measured.

For example, Tier I teams were provided with a “dashboard” detailing the rate of behavioral infractions, the top infractions of concern (i.e., youth-on-youth and youth-on-staff assaults, confinement, disciplinary referrals), the times and days of day, and overlay of time and day of week (with options to look at month-by-month data across time spans) to see behavioral patterns and trends. The Tier II and III FW-PBIS teams were provided with a “radar” detailing youth-specific information related to their infractions, weeks on a watch list, length of stay, and so forth, all in relation to every youth at the facility (see Fernandez et al., 2015, and Jolivet, Kimball, McClain, et al., 2015). In another State, the team worked with their technology support department and created a real-time searchable data base for use across the Tiers related to all aspects of their FW-PBIS from recording and graphing behavioral infractions, sanctions, and positives, as well as who delivered each, when, and where (see Alonso-Vaughn et al., 2015). Scheuermann and colleagues (2015) also provided insight as to improved data usage by FW-PBIS teams, including (1) moving away from summative data to more formative data evaluations; (2) using specific data analyzing questions each month; and (3) using PBIS data indicators for context, fidelity, and impact. Additionally, because data usage is a relatively new skill and job expectation of PBIS teams, it is imperative that the agency review confidentiality policies related to both facility-level and youth-level data.

Considerations for Successful Adoption and Implementation of FW-PBIS

Agency and/or facility leadership should think numerous considerations through prior to adopting and implementing an MTSS such as the PBIS framework. Adopting a forward vision of transparent communication across all stakeholders and shifting decisionmaking authority to making

changes within an agency and/or facility anchor these considerations, thus overhauling outdated and punitive behavior management systems (Fernandez et al., 2015).

Agency and/or Facility Contextual Variables.

As the PBIS framework is being considered or adopted, numerous contextual variables should be considered at each stage of planning and implementation. Such variables are those influences that are specific for the agency and/or facility and may negatively affect implementation and effectiveness of the PBIS framework. The following is a summary of contextual variable examples specific to juvenile facilities at multiple levels (e.g., Jolivet et al., 2016; Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Read & Lampron, 2012; Sprague et al., 2013):

- **Agency-level contextual variables may include:** (1) competing or outdated behavior management/discipline policies, (2) missing resources due to fiscal reasons, (3) management style (e.g., top down, bottom up) and its influence on facility-level decisionmaking, (4) donation policies for new resources, (5) access to data, and (6) confidentiality regulations.
- **Facility-level contextual variables may include:** (1) administrative and supervisory leadership styles (e.g., authoritative versus democratic), (2) divergent staff pedagogical training and history, (3) staffing patterns and shifts, (4) culture (e.g., positive or negative), (5) missions of safety and security, (6) 24/7 delivery model, (7) competing and/or outdated policies/procedures, (8) programming options, (9) master schedule and flexibility with it; (10) approval processes for new ideas, (11) staff-retention issues, (12) separateness of staff job descriptions and roles/responsibilities, and (13) staffing pattern and ratio requirements.
- **Youth-level contextual variables may include:** (1) histories of deviant and gang subcultures, (2) special populations (e.g., disabilities, mental

health issues/trauma, etc.), (3) length of stay, (4) family involvement, and (5) overall transient nature of youth.

Vision for Sustainability and Capacity Building.

Prior to adopting FW-PBIS, the juvenile agency and/or facility needs to be committed to long-term implementation with or without supports from other separate entities. Such a long-term commitment signals to staff that FW-PBIS is not a passing initiative, the agency and/or facility is invested in its implementation success, and resources have been purposefully allocated for team, staff, and youth success. With sustainability as a clear focus, the agency and/or facility also needs to commit to capacity building in relation to its PBIS knowledge and internal leadership. Such commitment to capacity building can be demonstrated through (1) commitment and opportunities for staff to attend PBIS conferences and other training venues to gain advanced content knowledge to then bring it back to the agency and/or facility, (2) creation of a PBIS strategic plan to promote growth and improved outcomes, (3) pooling of unused positions to create internal PBIS coordinators to support one or more facilities’ implementation, and (4) formation of a State-level juvenile agency PBIS steering committee, comprising personnel from front line staff to administrators, to continuously assess the implementation needs of its facilities.

Priority for Policy Changes to Reflect the Framework.

As with any introduction of new practices, systems change, and/or data usage that may affect or change daily operations, the agency and/or facility needs to review existing policies and make appropriate changes. With the adoption and implementation of the PBIS framework, many policies related to behavior management/discipline, sanctions, release criteria, and reinforcement will need to be edited, as will their supporting documents (e.g., youth and family handbooks, onsite materials) and systems supports (e.g., safety and security protocols). This process offers the agency and/or facility administrators an opportunity to further embed evidence-based practices and new science into the overall functioning of the agency or facility, thus providing new directions to better address the needs of the current youth populations.

Rethinking System Supports. Because adopting the PBIS framework will affect the overall premise and actions related to behavior management and discipline within the facility, agency and/or facility administrators will need to review closely

the immediate and long-term system supports required to sustain such changes. It is common for new ideas to be implemented after a brief training or exposure to the new content; however, with the adoption of the framework, there are many aspects to consider during planning. For example, multiple levels of professional development supports will be needed for FW-PBIS team members so that they can bring back accurate framework content knowledge to the facility. Facility staff (both newly hired and existing) will need ongoing training; and agency PBIS coordinators or liaisons will need further advanced training to support the work of the facility-level teams. It will be incumbent upon the agency to find the resources and time needed for such training and may mean reallocating existing resources or introducing new resources.

Tiered-Practice Perspective. It can be difficult for some agencies or facilities to understand the tiered logic of PBIS. Some will state that they individualize all programming for each youth, or that individualizing each youth's programming is not realistic, sustainable, or resource efficient, nor is providing each youth with every practice available (Jolivet, McDaniel, Sprague, Swain-Bradway, & Ennis, 2012). Within the PBIS framework, a goal is to "work smarter, not harder" and to provide all youth foundational programming and then add programming if their outcomes are not matching their treatment goals. With this change in perspective, Jolivet and colleagues (2012) outlined, for agencies and/or facilities contemplating adoption of the framework, a decisionmaking process on how to evaluate current systems, data, and practices without compromising youth outcomes. It is recognized that some practices are mandated to occur within the PBIS tiered logic by juvenile monitoring entities (e.g., all youth receive Prison Rape

Elimination Act education). Another way to have a tiered perspective is how the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) used their data and new science to edit their practices by removing an ineffective practice (i.e., isolation/confinement) and adding more effective practices (i.e., de-escalation strategies) to maximize youth engagement in programming (Fernandez et al., 2015). It is important for an agency and/or facility to annually review their PBIS practices to evolve with facility-formative data and current science and population needs.

Links to NDTAC Program Highlights

Below is a summary of three secure juvenile justice facilities that are implementing FW-PBIS in Georgia, where the DJJ has been employing PBIS as a behavior management framework in its facilities. These three facilities' PBIS team planning and implementation ideas, triumphs, works in progress, and lessons learned are described in greater detail in NDTAC's program highlights, which were written by PBIS team coleaders and represent a variety of facility configurations and populations and are included in this brief on pages 9–11. NDTAC would like to thank the Georgia DJJ for agreeing to feature its facilities as part of these program highlights, as well as the representatives of the facilities for authoring each highlight.

- **Eastman Youth Development Campus (YDC): PBIS–Youth and Staff Buy-In.** Taylor and Parker focus on how they gained staff and youth buy-in for the PBIS framework. This campus serves up to 330 committed, older male adolescents ages 17–20 for long-term periods and specializes in programming for sexual offenders, those who have substance abuse issues, and those who

have more severe and chronic deviant behavioral patterns.

- **Elbert Shaw Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC): PBIS and Reinforcement.** Headrick and Holliday focus on their PBIS youth and staff reinforcement system using a raffle system. This campus serves up to 30 youth, ages 10–21, on a temporary basis.
- **Muscogee Youth Development Campus (YDC): Relationship Building, Teaching PBIS, and Measuring Outcomes.** Brown-Williams and Medinus focus on how the PBIS framework fosters relationship building between staff and youth, how they trained and supported their staff to teach behavioral expectations, and how the PBIS team uses data to measure outcomes. This campus serves up to 60 adolescent males identified as medium to low risk.

Conclusion

As Read and Lampron (2012) state, "adopting PBIS across a juvenile justice setting will likely represent cultural, philosophical, and practical change for the facility and its staff" (p. 3). Even with such likely changes, the benefits as reported by implementers and researchers, as well as the recommendations for MTSS by Federal entities, calls into question why any juvenile justice agency and/or facility would not implement the PBIS framework as the anchor for its behavior management/discipline system. As more juvenile facilities implement FW-PBIS, the full benefits, additional adaptations, and considerations will be fully realized, leading to better outcomes for youth.

Program Highlight 1—Eastman YDC

By Chasidy M. Taylor and Dwan Parker

FW-PBIS at Eastman YDC

This program highlight explores the process and outcomes of FW-PBIS implementation at the Eastman YDC. Eastman YDC is a 330-bed facility that currently houses 122 juveniles. The secure campus serves 17- to 20-year-old males and offers specialized programs for sex offenders, those with substance abuse disorders, and those in need of behavioral management. Youth at Eastman YDC typically have lengths of stay of 2–5 years. Historically, Eastman YDC has had custody of youth with some of the greatest needs within DJJ. The PBIS framework was introduced to the facility in 2012, with rollout beginning in January 2013. In the beginning, it was challenging to transition staff and youth from a food-based reward system to FW-PBIS, through which youth earn PBIS activities and privileges. These include recognitions like Student of the Month and events like weekly karaoke with a sundae bar, movies, and video games; quarterly sports tournaments; and Graduate Education Program incentive events with the Georgia Education Department, such as movie events and fun days for students with general education development diplomas and high school graduates. Staff and youth were accustomed to the established procedures and neither group liked or wanted change. The FW-PBIS Leadership Team was tasked with creating and implementing new operating procedures that adhered to the FW-PBIS framework and that worked for the facility. DJJ already had agency-wide PBIS policies upon which to build before Eastman YDC's implementation.

Reinforcing Positive Behavior

The facility's motto is "Eastman YDC Panthers are making TRACKS" (Taking Responsibility, Respecting Others, Acting Appropriately, Controlling Emotions, Keeping Focused, and Staying Positive). The behavioral matrix contains specific behavioral examples for each letter of the acronym. Staff members use resource

guides that outline teaching procedures to educate youth about the TRACKS concept so all staff are consistent in their messages. Posters are prominently visible throughout the facility, reminding staff and youth of expectations. When staff observe youth engaging in TRACKS-appropriate behavior, they write the youth a "C-Note", which lists names of youth and staff and the specific behavior the youth was demonstrating. Youth can then use C-Notes to purchase entrance into PBIS events and activities, as well as tangible items.

Youth and Staff Buy-In: Challenges and Successes

Gaining buy-in for the FW-PBIS plan was a challenge during program launch. However, through consistency and the use of retraining and "boosters," as well as having an engaged FW-PBIS Leadership Team, we now have high buy-in from staff and youth. The FW-PBIS plan has been highly effective in teaching and modeling the TRACKS positive behaviors. We have found that program success depends in part on the use of hands-on FW-PBIS training materials for staff throughout our large facility. More than 40 FW-PBIS Resource Guide notebooks have been provided to staff to teach youth the guidelines of TRACKS behavior. The notebooks also contain copies of the FW-PBIS local operating procedures, blank C-Notes, and monthly calendars for scheduled Resource Guide teaching. These notebooks have been a vital part of teaching both staff and youth and maintaining staff buy-in.

When reviewing youth behavioral data, staff found that behavioral incidents decreased before large, scheduled PBIS events. To maintain and extend this decrease in behavioral incidents, the FW-PBIS Leadership Team created "Panther Pop-Ups." As part of the reinforcement system to better secure youth buy-in, Panther Pop-Ups are surprise PBIS events presented with minimal advance notice, in addition to the scheduled events. Panther Pop-Ups were created to remind

youth that engaging in TRACKS and being Disciplinary Report-free (DR-free) are the way to be at Eastman YDC. Depending on the event, all youth who have been DR-free for 1 to 2 weeks and who have 5 to 25 C-Notes are eligible to participate. Panther Pop-Ups may include entertainment or events that youth find highly motivating, such as basketball or other sports, special movie screenings, board games, team-building games or contests, and some events where youth can even compete against staff.

More than 30 percent of the youth were eligible to participate at the first Panther Pop-Up event, where the entry fee was 1 week of being DR-free and 10 C-Notes. More than 40 percent of the Eastman YDC youth were ready to "pay to play" for the second Panther Pop-Up event, when the entry fee increased to 2 weeks of being DR-free and 10 C-Notes. By the third Panther Pop-Up, the behavior-based ticket price was 2 weeks of being DR-free and 20 C-Notes. Nearly 55 percent of the youth attended that event. Based on various data sources and feedback from youth and staff, the Panther Pop-Ups have been a success.

As the Eastman YDC FW-PBIS Leadership Team continues to implement the full FW-PBIS plan using the new Panther Pop-Ups, youth and staff buy-in continues to grow monthly. Eastman YDC youth are recognizing that engaging in positive TRACKS behavior is more beneficial for their overall commitment status than their negative behaviors and interactions of the past. The Eastman YDC FW-PBIS Leadership Team is extremely proud of the way the FW-PBIS framework has evolved and grown toward success.

For more information on PBIS at Eastman YDC, contact Chasidy Taylor, PBIS Leader (ChasidyTaylor@dji.state.ga.us) or Dwan Parker, Recreation Director/PBIS Member, (DwanParker@dji.state.ga.us).

Program Highlight 2—Elbert Shaw RYDC

By Monica Headrick

FW PBIS at Elbert Shaw RYDC

This program highlight explores FW-PBIS implementation at the Elbert Shaw RYDC Georgia, where the DJJ has employed PBIS as a behavior management framework in its facilities. The PBIS framework is one of the ways the staff at Elbert Shaw RYDC are meeting DJJ's mission by holding youth offenders accountable for their actions through the delivery of services and sanctions in appropriate settings and by supporting the youth in its community to become productive and law-abiding citizens. The PBIS framework is based on the development and implementation of a behavior management system that fits the facility culture, youth, and goals and aims to better support and meet the needs of youth in care by teaching and modeling the positive behaviors expected of them and reinforcing those expectations.

The staff at Elbert Shaw RYDC teach and model HONOR—Be Honest, Care for Others, Show Noble Actions, Own your Behavior, Be Respectful—which staff implement throughout the facility. Each area in the secure facility, including intake, student units, recreation zones, medical complex, and education, has a behavioral matrix posted with the required HONOR behaviors. Staff members immediately acknowledge youth within the FW-PBIS reinforcement system whenever the youth display behaviors that meet these PBIS expectations. The premise for using a behavioral reinforcement system is that, to change a youth's behavior, adults' behavior needs to change as well. Changing behavior has required FW buy-in to PBIS. This buy-in is linked directly to FW HONOR behavioral expectations and helps to establish and encourage new positive behaviors. The reinforcement system provides a venue for equal and fair opportunities for youth and staff to be recognized through their behavior. Both youth and staff have the opportunity to receive positive reinforcement based on their behaviors—youth when they engage in the HONOR expectations and staff when they implement HONOR with fidelity.

During intake, youth are introduced to the PBIS framework through the "Elbert Shaw RYDC Education Handbook" and to the HONOR acronym, expectations for the facility environments, and the reinforcement system. The Elbert Shaw RYDC houses up to 30 youth, ages 10–21, who are incarcerated for a wide variety of charges and with a range of detention timeframes. Once intake

is completed, our juvenile detention counselor answers any questions or concerns from the arriving youth. As new youth transition from intake to general population, they will observe posters displaying the HONOR acronym and expectations posted in all areas of the facility. They will hear staff use consistent language as they teach and model HONOR and encourage youth to engage in the expectations. Youth will begin earning verbal praise, privileges, and tangible reinforcements for meeting the expectations for each area in the facility.

Reinforcing Positive Behavior

The Elbert Shaw RYDC uses STRAWs—"saw terrific really awesome work"—as part of our reinforcement system. Youth may receive a STRAW for showing personal growth in problem areas and displaying adherence to HONOR expectations. Each STRAW is a printed certificate that is filled out by any staff member acknowledging the observed HONOR behavior. The staff member verbally recognizes the behavior and then gives the STRAW to the youth. A copy of the STRAW is placed in the STRAW chest for a record of what is accrued through the week and for daily and weekly drawings. Once a STRAW is earned, it cannot be taken away.

Because youth at Elbert Shaw RYDC are in temporary secure care while awaiting placement, staff opted for daily and weekly reinforcements, such as extra phone calls to someone on a youth's approved contact list; participation in an HONOR advisory lunch with the director, where they discuss matters of concern to youth; a nonagency-issued hygiene product; and special visits with the youth's family. An integral part of the HONOR system is to allow youth to attain positive reinforcements while holding them accountable for actions that do not adhere to the expected behaviors. The adoption of the PBIS framework does not supersede any agency policy on how to address inappropriate youth behaviors (e.g., Alternative Education Program Module, Disciplinary Reports, Special Incident Reports). Hopefully, as fidelity to the FW-PBIS framework is achieved, the occurrences of inappropriate youth behavior will decrease.

Implementation Fidelity by Staff

Success with HONOR at Elbert Shaw RYDC is predicated on high fidelity of implementation of our FW-PBIS plan by all staff, no matter shift or role.

Staff also may be awarded STRAWs. Security and administrative staff modeling and implementing the HONOR expectations, per our local operating procedure, can be given STRAWs by their supervisors and peers. Staff members who are recognized are given a copy of their STRAWs, and a copy is included for a raffle drawing each month during our monthly staff meeting. Prizes include a specified parking space, free lunch or certificate, or items donated by the community.

Conclusion

When PBIS was introduced to this facility, many staff (including leadership) were skeptical. As the framework evolved, the team's opinions changed. The team can now see positive effects on the youth and staff. We have observed decreases in youth inappropriate behaviors. What makes PBIS successful at the Elbert Shaw RYDC is the facility culture. We want what is best for the youth in our care, which allows positive change to take place. Members of the FW-PBIS Leadership Team meet monthly, but certain staff meet weekly to discuss any youth with behavior challenges and potential improvements. The staff will then meet with the youth to share suggestions that might help them to improve or meet expectations. This way, the FW-PBIS Leadership Team is aware of what is working and not working, and can quickly remediate youth errors. The priority for the facility is still safety and security. The PBIS HONOR framework enhances youth's ability to demonstrate consistent, unified, positive behavioral expectations for daily living; to move in a positive direction; and to clearly communicate expectations.

This approach is helping to minimize the opportunities for youth to engage in problematic behavior and providing an effective system for youth to engage in and create positive opportunities. Youth at Elbert Shaw RYDC will be able to build life skills and receive enhanced support to motivate them to improve themselves, which helps complete the mission of our agency. In the words of the Elbert Shaw RYDC director, "We want youth to leave this facility better than when they arrived."

For more information on PBIS at Elbert Shaw RYDC, contact Monica Headrick, R.N., D.H.A., Nurse Manager, Elbert Shaw RYDC (MonicaHeadrick@djj.state.ga.us).

NDTAC Program Highlight 3—Muscogee YDC

Betty Brown-Williams and Charles Medinus

Building Relationships at Muscogee YDC

This program highlight explores FW-PBIS implementation at the Muscogee YDC, a 60-bed, all-male secure facility designed to house medium- to low-risk youth who are incarcerated for the first time. Given its unique architectural construction, it is equipped with a standard razor wire fence perimeter, but it fosters the image of a village, with cottage-like residential buildings and small groups of youth walking from cottages to school and afterschool programs. The average length of stay for youth here is 6–8 months. Many youth can step down to a lower level of care before their release date if they meet certain criteria. Therefore, it is important that relationship-building begin at the onset of the youth's admission to the facility. Beginning at intake, mental health professionals, medical staff, general counselors, and teachers meet with youth to learn more about them and be better prepared to provide effective services. Muscogee YDC uses the term "cottage culture" to include behavioral, normative, functional, cognitive, and structural elements. To establish this culture, staff and youth learn to share ideas, values, ways of problem-solving, and rules for living that foster a positive environment for behavior change. The culture offers opportunities for all staff to be involved in the youths' daily activities, to establish relationships with them, and to create more of a family atmosphere.

FW-PBIS Leadership Team

This team includes a cross-section of staff who have demonstrated positive leadership and commitment to the agency mission. Its responsibilities include developing a FW-PBIS Local Operating Procedure (LOP) with the mission statement, purpose, behavioral expectations and matrix, lesson plans and resource guides, youth reinforcement system, staff reinforcement system, data decision processes, and other materials (e.g., data collection checklists, PBIS brochure). The team is responsible for training facility staff on PBIS principles and procedures for implementing and monitoring the FW-PBIS plan and collecting and reviewing data to evaluate effectiveness. The FW-PBIS Team reviews PBIS dashboard and team implementation checklist data, makes any necessary changes to the LOP (e.g., a more specific refresher training or a security shift based on an increase in incidents in a particular area), and ensures that all staff and youth are trained on any changes to the LOP.

Teaching the PBIS Framework

FW-PBIS expectations are symbolized in the acronym FUTURE—Following the rules, Using honesty, Taking responsibility, Understanding self-worth, Respecting everyone, Establishing positive behaviors—which is taught to all youth during orientation and via training boosters by juvenile detention counselors. FW-PBIS is taught to staff during orientation and via boosters conducted on the basis of the results of monthly data reviews. Staff training is based on curriculum being taught to youth during orientation. All staff use the FW-PBIS Team-created resource guides that are available in education classrooms, housing units, recreation areas, and every area of the facility where youth are located. Staff who work in specific areas are responsible for teaching lesson plans and reinforcing the behavior that youth are expected to demonstrate. Youth are familiarized with "FUTURE bucks" rewards and taught how to earn them upon displaying FUTURE behavior. Staff reinforce youth behavior with "bucks" and praise. Youth may spend their bucks for weekly FW-PBIS events, such as game night or movie night. Every week, the events change so students never become uninterested or unwilling to work for the incentives and to account for changing youth interests. On a monthly or quarterly schedule, special PBIS events such as open choice night are also available for youth to purchase with earned bucks. Because these special events include several activities, additional entrance criteria linked to youth behavior are required, along with a specific amount of bucks.

Measuring Outcomes

The PBIS data dashboard captures youth-on-youth and youth-on-staff assaults, Alternative Education Program Module referrals, and self-harm incidents. The Leadership Team uses these data to identify the rate of occurrence of Special Incident Reports that youth receive for undesirable behaviors. This tool helps the Leadership Team focus on areas and times when incidents occur more frequently and allocate resources in areas where youth behavior tends to be consistently more positive. When incidents are repeatedly high in specific areas, the team plans for how to reduce incidents in those areas. The team uses additional data from (1) monthly feedback from the facility PBIS coordinator, who participates in team meetings, reviews the LOP, and conducts impromptu observations including classroom instruction, group activities, and PBIS events for FW-PBIS implementation; and (2) feedback from biannual onsite visits, with permanent product review from an outside agency representative. The FW Evaluation Tool (FET;

Sprague et al., 2013) measures the fidelity of the main features of FW-PBIS, taking into account implementation in secure care facilities. The team receives a report comparing past scores and detailing features of success, areas for focus, and possible solutions.

Challenges and Successes

The Leadership Team was faced with several challenges: creating the LOP and training materials, gaining staff buy-in, and changing daily staff practices. The FW-PBIS Team strived to minimize behavioral hotspots and receive positive monthly feedback from the DJJ PBIS coordinator. The FW-PBIS Team was performing very well until January 2014, when data fell below target on criteria across nearly all FET features and coincided with increases in youth hotspots and misbehavior. The team reexamined all data sources, created an action plan—that included more training for all staff and specific departments and more support for training—and scheduled youth and staff retraining sessions. The team shared data with staff and set goals for the next FET. Input revealed that staff turnover, the introduction of new youth each week, job demands, and unclear priorities affected the success of FW-PBIS implementation. Since then, per the dashboard, Muscogee YDC has remained at or above criteria across six of the seven FET features and has seen decreases in inappropriate youth behaviors.

Today, the program's greatest success is gaining high staff buy-in and staff's ability to build positive relationships with youth by teaching, modeling, and reinforcing expected behavior. The Leadership Team now facilitates smaller but more frequent booster training sessions with staff to maintain fidelity to the LOP that the Leadership Team has created. FW-PBIS has allowed staff to continue relationship building with youth through both language and process. Through the use of unified and consistent language, youth are correcting behaviors more often and without being prompted. Expectations are clear and familiar to all youth, who are aware that their positive behaviors will be reinforced. By consistently reviewing data, the Leadership Team is more quickly able to identify hotspots and prepared to provide booster training whenever needed. The consistent use of the PBIS framework is strengthening the mission of safety and security at Muscogee YDC and promoting positive behavior change in the youth under our care.

For more information on PBIS at Muscogee YDC, contact Betty Brown-Williams, Assistant Director of Programs (BettyBrown-Williams@djj.state.ga.us) or Charles Medinus (CharlesMedinus@djj.state.ga.us).

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