

# Implementing effective social skill instruction across the continuum of SW-PBS supports

Tim Lewis, Ph.D.  
University of Missouri

Lisa Powers, Ph.D.  
Special School District of  
St. Louis County



# The key

**BEHAVIOR** is functionally related to the  
**TEACHING ENVIRONMENT**

# Small Group / Targeted Interventions

## Consider

- Not fixed group
- Student's needs vary across continuum over time and within academic/social area
- Least intrusive but matched to student need

# Important Themes

- Part of a continuum – must link to school-wide PBS system
- Efficient and effective way to identify students
- Assessment = simple sort
- Intervention matched to presenting problem but not highly individualized

# Important Themes

*Common misperception is that these strategies will “fix” the student and the classroom teacher does not need to be an active participant since “specialists” or outside staff are often involved in the intervention – Important to stress that these interventions will require high level of involvement among ALL staff within the school building*

# Small Group / Targeted Interventions

- Data
  - Systematic way to identify at-risk students (e.g., office referrals, teacher nomination, rating scales)
  - Measure progress and fade support slowly
- Practices
  - Within class first option
  - Pull out programs must have generalization strategies
  - Link small group with school-wide rules and social skills
  - Academic & social strategies
- Systems
  - Training for ALL staff on procedures
  - Options for students who transfer in during school year

# Social Skill Instruction

# Functional Perspective

*“Inappropriate” social skills meet student need and until we teach an “appropriate” skill and alter the environment, they will continue to use the inappropriate*



# Assessment: Student Identification

(Data, System)

*Emphasize the use of existing data / assessment sources such as ODR, visits to discipline room, teacher referral, number of “buddy room” visits*

# Assessment: Skill Selection

(Data)

- Teacher Ratings
- Ratings by others
- Direct Observation

*Must address the importance of discussing cultural, language, and other factors that impact perceptions of “appropriate” social skills*

# Lesson Components

## (Practices)

- rule for when to use the skill
- set of useful skill variations
  - teach the rule (TELL)
  - demonstrate the skill (SHOW)
  - students practice the skill (PRACTICE)
  - review and test the skill (PRACTICE)
  - assign homework (PRACTICE)

*Teaching social skills follows the same format as teaching academic skills*

# Promoting Maintenance and Generalization

## *Strategies To Use During Training* (practices)

- Use naturally occurring examples within role plays
- Use naturally occurring reinforcers
- Use language of school-wide PBS system
- Pinpoint activities students likely to engage

# Promoting Maintenance and Generalization

## *Strategies To Use During Training* (practices)

- Train in the targeted setting
- During training, include peers the target student(s) likely to encounter in the problem setting
- Use a number of trainers or other adults during training
- Continue training for a sufficient amount of time

# Promoting Maintenance and Generalization

*Strategies to Use Within the Target Setting (system, policy)*

- Prompt students to display skill (Pre-Corrects)
- Reinforce displays of skills in generalized settings using language of school-wide PBS system
- Enlist a variety of others to prompt and reinforce skills in generalized settings
- Individual contracts and behavior change plans
- Group contingencies

# Top 10 Lessons Learned Developing Targeted Groups: Social Skills Clubs

Lisa Powers, Ph.D.

Michele Kelk, Ph.D.

Kate Bell, Ph.D.

Special School District of St. Louis County

# #10. School-wide systems firmly in place

- Allows for efficient allocation of resources
- Increases implementation by all staff/faculty
- Student is “set-up” for success
- Applied across all school settings



# #9. Develop a Student Selection/Screening Process

- Develop an efficient referral system
  - Risk factors
  - Universal screening procedures
  - Discipline referrals
  - Teacher/Parent/Student nomination
- Skill Deficit
- Performance Deficit
- Perception Deficit
- Function of Behavior

## #8. Identify and Implement Empirically Validated Curriculum/Materials

- Bully Proofing your School
- Cool Tools: An Active Approach to Social Responsibility
- Good Talking Words
- Second Step Violence-Prevention Curricula
- Stop and Think
- Skillstreaming
- The Social Skills Curriculum
- The Tough Kid Social Skills
- The Walker Social Skills Curriculum: The Accepts Program

# Free Curriculum

- <http://pbiscompendium.ssd.k12.mo.us/>
  - Electronic curriculum
  - 84 social skills lessons
  - Lesson design
  - Age appropriate activities
  - Role play rating sheets
  - Age appropriate homework sheets
  - Assessment surveys
  - Progress reports

**FREE!!!**

# Social Skill Areas

- Cooperation Skills
- Assertion Skills
- Friendship Skills
- Empathy Skills
- Self-Control Skills
- School & Classroom Skills

# #7. Train and Support Social Skills instructor(s)

- Instructor fluency
- Professional Development
  - Model social skills instruction
  - Use a Direct Instruction Model format
  - Provide practice with feedback during training session
  - On-site coaching supporting participants implementation of social skills
  - Integrity of Implementation Checklist

# #6. Plan for Group Management and Group Membership

- Group Membership
  - Activities/Ice Breakers
- Behavior management
- Teach group expectations
  - Group rules
  - Role play rules
- Reinforcement procedures
- Consider size of group

# #5. Implement an Effective Instructional Model

- Advance Organizer
  - Attention
  - Rationale ~ Rule for when to use the skill
  - Goal/Expectation
  - Review
- Teach ~ Teach the rule/Skill steps
- Modeling ~ Demonstrate the skill
- Role Play ~ Students practice the skill
- Post Organizer
  - Review and Test
  - Preview
  - Cue Use ~ Assign homework

# #4. Plan for Generalization

## Communication Communication Communication

- Coordinate classroom lessons connected to targeted group social skills
- Public posting, skill and skill steps
  - *Schoolwide*
  - *Classrooms*
- Monday Memo: *Skill of the Week*
- Discuss *Skill of the Week* during staff meetings
- Reinforcement tickets weekly, skill connected to schoolwide expectations (*include skill steps*)
- Frequent feedback to staff/student connected to reinforcement tickets
- Schoolwide video
- Visual cues or prompts for students posted in student folder



# #3 Evaluate Academic and Behavior Outcomes

- Grades
- DIBELS/CBM
- Attendance
- SSRS
- ODR
- Surveys (Parents, Teachers, Students)
- Integrity of Implementation Checklist

“It taught me more how to become a better person and pull my grades up and now I am never in the office.” 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student


“What I like best about the program are the skills that were taught. If I could practice these skills a little more it would be helpful.” 5<sup>th</sup> grade student

# #2 Share Success with Staff/Community/School Board



Celebrate!

# # 1 Use Research to Guide the Development and Restructuring of Social Skills Groups

- A Big Thanks to PBIS.org 
  - Research is Trustworthy, User Friendly, & Accessable
- Peer Reviewed Journals

