SCHOOL DISCIPLINE GAP:
MULTICULTURAL TRAINING WORKSHOP

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WORKSHOP AGENDA

• Opening remarks
• Introduce the topic
• Statistics
• Activity: Guided journey
• Interventions
• Closing statements
RATIONALE

• Several research studies have been conducted to analyze the nationwide school discipline gap and the implications of this growing problem.
  – Important to address it now, as a way to help raise awareness and initiate open discussions

• Why does it matter?
  – There is little research support for the belief that suspensions prevent future misbehavior
  – There is a strong link between suspensions & negative outcomes, such as dropping out & heightened risks to students’ mental and physical well-being.
THE FACTS

- Black students are from 3 to 7 times more likely than White students to be suspended.
- Skiba et al. (2002) found that Black students were more likely to be referred to the office for subjective offenses (e.g., disrespect, threat, excessive noise), whereas White youth were more likely to be referred for objective behavior problems (e.g., smoking, vandalism).
- During the 2000 school year, black students comprised 17% of the U.S. student population but accounted for 34% of out-of-school suspensions.
- Across North Carolina, black 6th grade students are 79% more likely to be suspended for violating school rules than white 6th grade students who violate school rules.
- In a study conducted by Cornell and Shirley (2011), African-American students made up 20.2% of the school’s student population, yet 60.3% of African-American students were referred for discipline as compared to 27% of Caucasian students who made up 60.5% of the student population.
RACIAL IMPACT OF THE RISING USE OF SUSPENSION

Percent of enrollment by race suspended out-of-school one day or more.

Source: Losen, 2011
NORTH CAROLINA BLACK/WHITE SUSPENSION RATES

Source: Losen, 2011
POTENTIAL CAUSES

• Cultural Differences:
  – Common examples of African-influenced norms include animation while talking, overlapping speech, and physical interaction. White students tend to value impulse control.
  – Due to different norms and values, cross-cultural interactions in schools may lead to culturally based misunderstandings, which often results in disciplinary action for African-American students.

• Lack of Support:
  – In a study conducted by Cornell & Shirley (2011), students self-reported that if they felt unsupported by teachers and classmates, they were more likely to engage in misbehavior.

• Situational factors:
  – Various factors- including legal issues, socioeconomic status, and family structure- are commonly linked to aggressive attitudes and behavior. The high prevalence of these situational factors often results in misbehavior in school.
Activity:
Guided Journey
How Do We Change?
SCHOOL-WIDE

• PBIS – Positive Behavior Intervention System
  – Prevents behavior incidents from arising
  – Organized, evidence-based, data-driven

• Even with PBIS, we need a way to deal with behavior incidents that emphasizes:
  – Proactive vs. Reactive
    • The issue with Punitive/Exclusionary
    • Restorative Justice
      – Repairing relational harm that has been done
IN THE CLASSROOM

• Culturally Responsive Classroom Management (CRCM)
  – 5 Essential Elements:
    • Discovering Your Own Culture and Biases
    • Know Your Students’ Cultures
    • Awareness of Broader Context
    • Ability and Willingness
    • Commitment to Building a Caring Community

• Gather Data as a Self-Check
AS AN INDIVIDUAL

• It’s key to the CRCM approach for teachers to become AWARE:
  – About your own cultural identity
  – What is the disaggregated disciplinary data at your school?
  – About your own biases
  – Recognize your impact on your students
  – Evolve

• How?
  – Write your personal story
  – Cultural Proficiency Receptivity Scale
  – Get in touch with yourself
Knowledge of Students’ Cultural Context

• Taking steps to learn students’ cultural perspectives promotes teacher-student understanding
• Increased awareness of students’ cultural background provides teachers with information on etiquette, behavior, communication styles, and types of learning
  – Actively resist stereotypes
• Gaining this knowledge prevents unnecessary discipline referrals

• How?
  – Students work on a family history assignment to investigate their cultural identities and share with the class
  – Home visits
  – Interact with parents and community members with an orientation to learning
AWARENESS OF BROADER CONTEXT

• It is important to be cognizant of the fact that there are different culturally appropriate responses to the same situation.
  – For example, students of color are often misjudged as being disrespectful when in reality that is not their intention. In fact, their response may be completely normal within their culture.

• How?
  – Meet with your PLC/PLT and discuss what student misbehavior looks like. See if some examples of misbehavior are actually students reacting to an unfair system.
  – Create a socially just classroom environment in which students can openly engage in social justice dialogues. For example, engage your students in a conversation about school/class rules and listen to what they have to say.
USE OF CULTURALLY COMPETENT STRATEGIES

• Be able and willing
• Teachers who employ CRCM create a classroom environment using a cultural lens
  – They consider how the classroom can be used to celebrate, empower, and include students of all cultures
    • Create a jigsaw puzzle poster made up of students’ photographs to promote class unity
    • Use a world map to mark students’ or their families counties of origin
    • Display posters that feature a variety of cultural groups
• Culturally-competent strategies are used in classroom discipline and when communicating with families
• Behavioral expectations are clear and consistent
  – Avoids confusion that can lead to inappropriate discipline referrals
• Awareness that teachers and families may have differing views & both are valid
• Approach families as sources of insight into the students’ learning process
CREATE A CARING CLASSROOM

• Extensive research has indicated that connection between establishing positive relationships with students and positive student academic outcomes (Marzano, 2003; Weinstein, et al., 2004; Madrid, 2008; Brown, 2003).
• Students are much more likely to achieve when their teachers believe in them and have high expectations for them.

• How?
  • Greeting students outside of your classroom
  • Greeting students outside of school
  • Get to know your students on a personal level
  • Being aware of what is going on with your students at and outside of school & commenting on important events
  • Asking students for feedback in order to let them know you value them as an individual with unique opinions and contributions
REFERENCES


