

Developing Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion

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Agenda:

- ❖ Definition and purpose of discipline
- ❖ Zero tolerance – origin and effectiveness
- ❖ Alternatives to suspension and expulsion
- ❖ Prerequisites to alternatives/
- ❖ Conclusions and Discussion



The etymology of *discipline*:

From same *Lat.* root as *disciple*:
discipere: “To teach or comprehend”

What is Discipline?

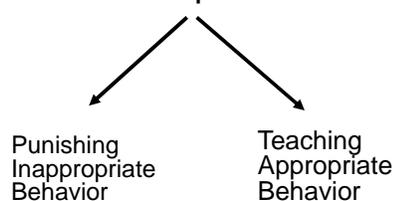
Purposes of School Discipline

- 1. To change the student’s behavior
- 2. To deter or prevent other students from engaging in the behavior (make an “example” of the offending student)
- 3. To maintain a “safe” school environment
- 4. To maintain the “decorum” of the school (propriety of language, dress & conduct according to community standards)

Other Unspoken & Less Forthright Purposes of School Discipline

- 6. Retribution - create “suffering” inflicted as a “just punishment for a misdeed
- 5. To get rid of the problem student so adults will no longer have to cope with the student’s behavior.
- 7. To assert adult authority by making clear to students the “power” adults have over students
- 8. To serve as a supplemental law enforcement agency, providing consequences for illegal behavior.

Discipline



Traditional School Disciplinary Consequences

- ↳ Demotion
- ↳ Lowering grades
- ↳ Detention
- ↳ Saturday school
- ↳ In-school suspension

◆ **Suspension**

◆ **Expulsion**

Classroom

consequences:

- ❖ Writing "I will not ___" a hundred times.
- ❖ Staying after school
- ❖ More homework.
- ❖ Parent conference.
- ❖ Many others.

A Comparison of Discipline and Punishment

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Punishment Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Reactive intervention after problem occurs ❖ Adult imposes arbitrary consequences ❖ Obedience to authority figures taught ❖ Control by external rule enforcement ❖ Psychological and physical punishment employed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Discipline Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Proactive focus on preventing problems ❖ Natural consequences discussed with youth ❖ Respect for social responsibilities taught ❖ Control by inner values expected ❖ Psychological and physical punishment not employed. |
|---|--|

Adapted from *Intervention Techniques for Child/Youth Care Workers* by Mark Krueger. Wash, DC: The Child Welfare League of America, 1988.

Zero Tolerance: Origins & Effectiveness

School Discipline =
Suspension & Expulsion

Zero Tolerance = Harsh
Punishment for any instance of
the behavior regardless of
circumstances

The Roots of "Zero Tolerance"

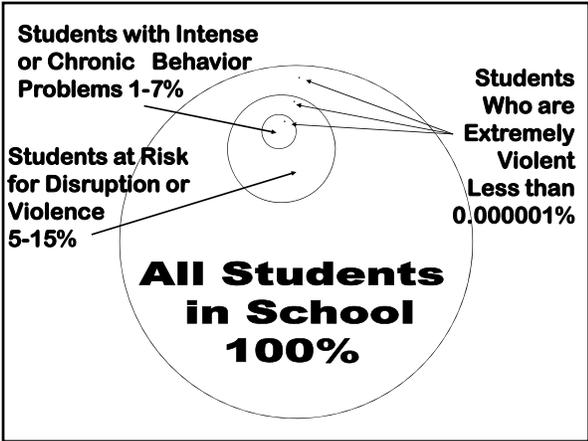
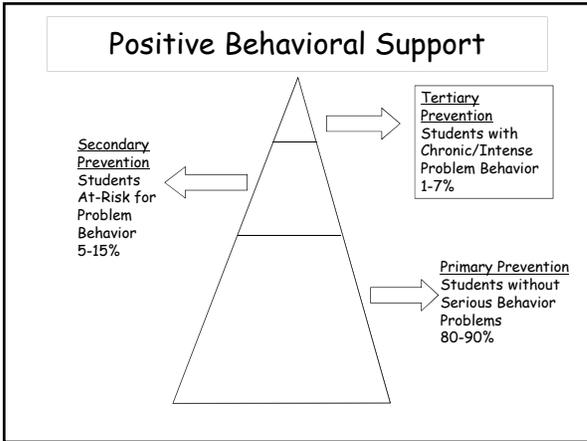
- Based in 1980's Drug Programs
- Picked up in Schools in 1989-1990
- 1994: Gun Free Schools Act Becomes Law
- Has led to significant increases in disciplinary removal

Brandon Kivi, 15, was suspended from Caney Creek High (Conroe, Texas) in October after he possibly saved the life of his girlfriend (a fellow classmate) by lending her his asthma inhaler after she had misplaced hers; that was delivery of a dangerous drug.

Minneapolis Star Tribune 10/30/03

Raylee Montgomery, 13, was suspended from school in Duncanville, Texas, in September when her shirttail became untucked, a violation of the dress code (raising the number of dress-code suspensions in her 3,500-student school to more than 700 in just five weeks).
 Minneapolis Star Tribune 10/30/03

- ### Selected Examples:
- 1998- Nine year old on way to school found a manicure kit with 1" knife – Suspended.
 - 1996- Fourteen-year-old shared two Midol tablets with classmate. Suspended 10 days with expulsion forgiven
 - 1996- Six year old kissed classmate; said the girl asked him to. One-day suspension for "unwelcome touching".
 - 1997 Seventh grader shared zinc cough drop with classmate. Suspended three days.



Alternatives to Suspension & Expulsion

Are there disciplinary options which might work better, and which might avoid exclusion and the problems it brings?

What follows are ten examples of alternative consequences which could be included disciplinary alternatives

Use you school staff, students and parents to brainstorm options- creating awareness and support!
Formalize these!

(The items listed as examples are not in any particular priority)

Top Ten - #1

Mini-courses

Short courses or modules which students can complete on topics related to their behavior as a disciplinary consequence. Can include workbooks, test, oral reports, etc. Examples:

- alcohol; drugs
- conflict resolution
- anger control
- social skills topics
- appropriate communication skills



Alternatives to Suspension

Top Ten - #2

Parent Supervision

Parents should be invited to brainstorm with the school on how to address the behavior.

One example might be to "suspend" the parent in to school by having the parent follow and supervise the student all day in school.



Alternatives to Suspension

Top Ten - #3

Counseling

Students might be required to participate in or receive some amount of counseling which focuses on behavioral needs and attempts to understand and address student behaviors.



Alternatives to Suspension

Top Ten - #4

Community Service

Programs which permit the student to perform a required amount of time in community service in the school system or in the community.

Examples- Volunteer hours at another school, a soup kitchen, park or other organization where this could be arranged.



Alternatives to Suspension

Top Ten - #5

Behavior Monitoring

A variety of strategies to monitor behavior and academic progress might include cards checked after each class regarding behavior, self charting of behaviors, strategies to provide feedback to the student, etc.



Alternatives
to Suspension

Top Ten - #6

Restitution

Financial or in-kind. Permits the student to restore or improve the school environment. This can be done either to address problems caused by the student's behavior – vandalism, for example- or more generically to help or improve the school environment – such as picking up trash.



Alternatives
to Suspension

Top Ten - #7

Problem Solving/ Contracting

Use negotiation and problem solving approaches to assist student to identify alternatives. Then develop a contract with the student, which includes reinforcers for success, consequences for continuing problems.



Alternatives
to Suspension

Top Ten - #8

Alternative Programming

Changes in the student schedule, classes or course content; assignment to an alternative school or program; independent study or work experience programs. Should be tailored to student needs.



Alternatives
to Suspension

Top Ten - #9

Appropriate In-school Suspension

In school suspension which includes academic tutoring, instruction related to the student behavior problem such as social skills, and a clearly defined procedure to return to class as soon as the student is ready.



Alternatives
to Suspension

Frank Sinatra
"My Way"

Top Ten - #10

Coordinated Behavior Plans

Creation of a structured, coordinated behavior plan specific to the student and based on assessment of the quantity and purpose of the target behavior to be reduced;

should focus on increasing desirable behavior, and replacing inappropriate behaviors.



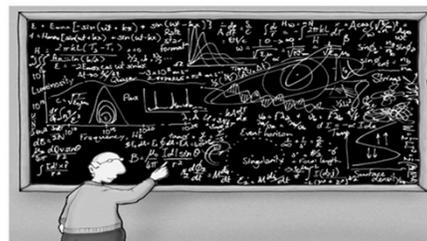
Alternatives
to Suspension

Possible Functions of Behavior

(Neel & Cessna, 1993)



- ⌘ Power/Control
- ⌘ Escape/Avoidance
- ⌘ Attention
- ⌘ Acceptance/Affiliation
- ⌘ Expression of Self
- ⌘ Gratification
- ⌘ Justice/Revenge



"Discipline Alternatives" made simple...

Expanding the Array of Disciplinary Alternatives

- Generate a list of non-exclusionary alternatives to responding to school or classroom disruption.
- Get as many as possible!!!
- Match clusters of consequences with levels of inappropriate behavior.
- Permit individual tailoring of consequences within the levels
- Use data to determine the effectiveness of consequences

A "Tiered" Code of Conduct

| Offense or Infraction | An Array of Consequences |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Minor- Tardiness; Lack of homework; | Mini-course; detention; Parent Supervision |
| Moderate- Insubordination; | Counseling; Mini-course; Community service; Restitution |
| Serious- Drugs; weapons; assault. | Alternative programming; suspension; expulsion |
| Are supportive measures in place? | What are supportive measures for this student? |

Purpose

Develop a more sophisticated system of responding
 --to different types of inappropriate behavior
 --with an expanded array of disciplinary alternatives

Consequences of an Expanded Array of Alternatives

What are the costs of the current practice?
 What would it take to implement these alternatives?
 Time?
 Materials?
 Costs?
 What would be the potential benefits?
 What would be lost if fewer students were suspended, and for less time?
 What would be gained?

Prerequisites!!

What does it take to make these consequences work?
 What supports for positive behavior are necessary to make consequences work?

The worlds best discipline consequences won't work without a foundation in place!!

Top Ten - #1

Supports for Positive Behavior

Gather Data on Behavior- Analyze and Act!

Develop a school data system which permits key bits of data about students to be gathered, analyzed and used to make changes for school and individual students.



These might include: Office referrals; Surveys of parents, students & staff; Grades; Achievement Assessment Data; Attendance; etc.



✓ Data Systems in Place?

- ✓ Objective data about behavior gathered?
- ✓ Data used to make adjustments in programs and procedures?
- ✓ Data used to make decisions about individual students?
- ✓ Data used to correct misperceptions (For staff, students, parents and the community)?
- ✓ See SRS "Planning Data Worksheet"

Potential Data for Planning

- ✦ Absences & tardiness records tardiness
- ✦ Office referrals
- ✦ Academic achievement data
- ✦ Classroom, school & district discipline policies
- ✦ Current programs in place
- ✦ Dropout data
- ✦ Environmental expectations
- ✦ Grades data
- ✦ Perceived needs
- ✦ Office referral data
- ✦ Climate data
- ✦ Risk and resiliency factors
- ✦ School safety data
- ✦ Special Education Referrals
- ✦ Suspension & expulsion data
- ✦ Other pertinent data?

Top Ten - #2

Supports for Positive Behavior

Creating a Caring & Welcoming School Environment

Create a "tone" of belonging, caring and valuing of all individuals; Make everyone feel welcome, and that they belong.

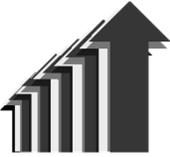


School Climate

Caring & Community In School

- Patterns of Communication and Problem Solving
- Patterns of Authority and Status
- Procedures for Developing & Implementing Rules
- School Relationships with Parents & Community Forces
- Processes for Dealing with Personal Problems
- Curriculum & Instructional Practices
- The Physical Environment

Foster and Promote:



- ❖ Sense of Community
- ❖ Membership & Belonging
- ❖ Caring
- ❖ Academic success for “at-risk” youth
- ❖ Teaching of pro-social skills
- ❖ Connections to family and community

Top Ten - #3

Supports for Positive Behavior

Consistent School Values/ Character Education

Curriculum and organization features of schools that promote the development of fundamental values in children. Create and explicit list of desirable goals for student behavior, teach and apply them routinely...



The Six Pillars of Character (Character Counts!)

Character Education



- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Good citizenship

Top Ten - #4

Supports for Positive Behavior

Conflict De-escalation Training & Practices

Programs which teach staff and students to recognize and to disengage from escalating conflict. ...Support for these practices



The “Peaceable School” Approach

- ⌘ Conflict de-escalation training for all staff
- ⌘ Interest based negotiation training for all staff
- ⌘ Peer and adult/student mediation programs
- ⌘ Improved Communication Skills



Top Ten - #5

Supports for Positive Behavior

Mediation Programs

Programs which teach students about non- violent conflict resolution, and which permit students the chance to use and experience these in school. Peer-mediation programs may be only one example.



Top Ten - #6

Supports for
Positive
Behavior

Positive Office Referrals/ Recognition

Programs which identify and reward individual students for appropriate behavior; permits recognition, reinforcement and celebration of all kinds of "good" behavior.



Top Ten - #7

Supports for
Positive
Behavior

Increased Parent Communication & Involvement

Programs which involve a variety of parents and community members in functions and activities within the school. Improves systems of communication with parents.



Top Ten - #8

Supports for
Positive
Behavior

Efforts to Build Adult-Student Relationships

Programs which offer opportunities for students to develop individual relationships with staff.



Top Ten - #9

Supports for
Positive
Behavior

Early Identification & Intervention

Programs which permit systematically screen students for potential behavior problems, and which provide positive supports for the students identified as at "risk."



Top Ten - #10

Supports for
Positive
Behavior

School-wide Discipline Programs

Programs which develop a common terminology and consistent approach to discipline across staff in a school. Responsibilities of students & staff are identified; Consequences consistently enforced.



School-wide Discipline: Making It Work

School-wide
Discipline
Program

- Assess the need among teachers
- Do we need a common discipline system?
 - Should we choose a packaged program?
 - Can we develop our own program?
- Design an in-service plan
 - Successful programs: Set limits, but emphasize positive behaviors
 - Consultation; training; other?

School-wide Discipline Programs



Examples:

- Assertive Discipline
- Boys Town Administrative Model
- Discipline with Dignity
- Cooperative Discipline
- Democratic Discipline
- Discipline with Purpose
- Positive Classroom Discipline
- Responsible Classroom Management

School & Classroom Discipline: What We Know



- Properly implemented strategies can:
 - Decrease suspensions, expulsions, drop-out rates, classroom disruptions,
 - Decrease teacher stress; lower burnout
 - Increase on-task behavior, academic achievement
- Consistency between classroom and school increases effectiveness
- Consequences are identified for positive and for negative behavior.

School Discipline Quiz

Create a picture in your mind of your school discipline system- how this system responds when students fail to follow the reasonable rules and procedures you have worked with them to develop, learn and practice. While it will be very subjective, score your system on the following criteria with 5 being outstanding and 0 being low.

- 1 2 3 4 5 **Clear** (If you interviewed ten students they would all be able to describe the system very much the way you describe it.)
- 1 2 3 4 5 **Segmental** (Rather than an immediately harsh or disruptive response, you use a series of responses that gradually increases in severity.)
- 1 2 3 4 5 **Dignifying** (The responses enhances or maintains students' sense of dignity or self-esteem.)
- 1 2 3 4 5 **Educational** (The responses in your system provide cues that help the students focus on positive behaviors or learn alternative behaviors.)
- 1 2 3 4 5 **Environmental Analysis** (When a problem occurs you ask the question, "What factors might be eliciting this behavior and what might I change to decrease the likelihood that this behavior will occur?")

Others?

Supports for Positive Behavior

Bullying Prevention & Intervention

Programs which teach students about bullying behaviors, and how they can be responded to and reported in school. Specific interventions are created for both bullies and victims.



Seven Principles of Effective Discipline

(From Curwin & Mendler)

1. Seek long-term behavior changes instead of short-term fixes.
2. Stop doing ineffective things.
3. Be fair, and don't always treat everyone the same.
4. Adopt only those rules that make sense.
5. Model the behavior you expect.
6. Teach responsibility instead of enforcing obedience.
7. Treat students with respect and dignity.

Good Teachers

"Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves."

Palmer, (1998), p.11

Good Teachers & Administrators - Make Yourself Attractive to Students!

↳ "You- your own personality and everyday behavior in the classroom- can become your most powerful motivational tool. ...the characteristics that make people will liked: a cheerful disposition, friendliness, emotional maturity, sincerity, and other qualities that indicate good mental health and personal adjustment."

Brophy, 1998

Successful teachers & administrators-

"...focus on helping their students learning what is expected and how to meet those expectations, not on threatening or punishing them for failing to do so. These teachers are clear and consistent in articulating their expectations. If necessary then model and instruct students in desired procedures and remind student when these procedures are needed."

Brophy, 1998

Incidents for Discussion

- A second grade girl calls the principal a "fucker".
- An eleventh grade boy is stopped by the principal in the hallway while he should presumably have been in class. He calls the principal a "fuck-head" and stomps off into his classroom.
- Three junior high students are identified as being the ones who started a food fight in the cafeteria which involved fifty or more other students.

Incidents for Discussion

- A boy allegedly sexually assaults a girl at a city park. No charges are brought. The two students have history class together.
- A fifth grade student calls 911 from school. The Heart Team, ambulance and fire department arrive at school within minutes.
- A sixth grader refuses to stay after school to make up work and "time" that he owes several of the teachers. He accumulates 12 hours of work and time.

Administrators can:



- ✓ Emphasize creating a positive climate – insure that "prerequisites" are in place!
- ✓ Move away from Zero Tolerance policies-
 - ✓ Focus on changing and teaching behavior
 - ✓ Focus on effective discipline
 - ✓ Avoid over representation, and other problems
- ✓ Expand disciplinary options which do not entail removal
- ✓ Make "Codes of Conduct" more sophisticated and positive
- ✓ Insure foundations or "supports" are in place



Teachers can:



- View behavior like academics, as something which needs to be taught
- Focus on changing and teaching behavior
- Focus on effective "prevention" of behavior problems
 - Focus on creating positive climate, respect and dignity.
- Support the creation of more discipline options and consistency across teachers and administrators.

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