IDENTIFY AND EFFECTIVELY RESPOND TO EARLY WARNING

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Takeaways Regarding Safety and Warning Signs

• Schools are relatively safe places that are well positioned to reduce the likelihood of aggression and violence.

• Schools can be made safer by developing a capacity to reduce the likelihood of aggression and violence while also addressing student and staff needs for emotional, physical, and identity safety.

• There are early warning signs, which when understood in context, can signal that a child or youth is troubled and needs support.

• These signs must be assessed and addressed in a culturally and developmentally appropriate in a manner that minimizes harm and maximizes benefit.
Safety is Not Just Physical or Proximate

- Physical Safety
- Emotional Safety
- Psychological Safety
- Identity Safety
- Fair & Equitable Treatment
- Minimization of Toxic Conditions
Takeaways Regarding A Systemic Approach that Uses Warning Signs to Prevent Violence

• Schools should develop the capacity to identify, assess, and respond to the warning signs in a manner that reduces the incidence, amplification, and impact experiences and behaviors that contribute to violence.

• This works best in a caring and supportive school environment that addresses school-created problems and addresses risk through:
  – universal promotion and prevention,
  – early and intensive interventions, and, when necessary,
  – threat assessment.
Work at Three Levels

**Provide Culturally Responsive Individualized Intensive Supports**
Provide coordinated, intensive, sustained, culturally competent, individualized, child- and family-driven and focused services and supports that address needs while building assets.

**Intervene Early & Provide Focused Youth Development Activities**
Implement strategies and provide supports that address risk factors and build protective factors for students at risk for severe academic or behavioral difficulties.

**Build a Schoolwide Foundation**
Universal trauma sensitive prevention and youth development approaches, caring school climate, positive and proactive approach to discipline, personalized instruction, cultural competence, and strong family involvement.
Takeaways Regarding A Systemic Approach that Uses Warning Signs to Prevent Violence

• This systemic approach includes warning signs and threat assessment:
  – Can address other student needs
  – Is consistent with school’s role in developing the academic, social, and emotional skills of students
  – Can support learning and healthy development
  – Is now backed by extensive research and experience, such as:
    » Safe Schools/ Healthy Students
    » Safe and Supportive Schools

• When implemented well, it can avert or minimize the harmful effects of
  – Suspension and expulsion
  – Criminalization of school related services
  – Student alienation and “conspiracies of silence”
  – Wasted resources
Early Warning Signs

- Excessive feelings of isolation or being alone.
- Excessive feelings of rejection.
- Being a victim of violence.
- Feelings of being picked on and persecuted.
- Low school interest and poor academic performance.
- Expression of violence in writing and drawings.
- Uncontrolled anger.
- History of discipline problems.

- Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and bullying behaviors.
- History of violent and aggressive behavior.
- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes.
- Drug use and alcohol use.
- Affiliation with gangs.
- Inappropriate access to, possession of, and use of firearms.
- Serious threats of violence (also an imminent warning sign).
Principals for Using Early Warning Signs

• Do no harm.
• Do not stigmatize.
• Understand violence and aggression within a context.
• Avoid stereotypes and control for implicit bias.
• View warning signs within a developmental context.
• Understand that children typically exhibit multiple warning signs.
  – No one sign alone is sufficient for confidently predicting aggression or violence
• Assess before acting.
• Include mental health experts in the assessment.
• Do not use the signs as a check list.
• Do not confuse with Imminent Warning Signs
Imminent Warning Signs

• Indicate that a student is very close to behaving in a way that is potentially dangerous to self or others.
• These signs may warrant a threat assessment
• These signs include:
  – Serious threats of violence
  – Serious physical fighting with peers or family members.
  – Severe destruction of property.
  – Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons.
  – Detailed threats of lethal violence.
  – Possession and/or use of firearms and other weapons.
  – Other self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide.
Where To Intervene

Societal Factors

School

Family
Teachers
Friends
Classroom

Student
Safe & Supportive School Environments

- Minimize Toxic Conditions
- Support the Whole Child
- Challenge & Engage
- Promote Social & Emotional Skills & Psychological Flexibility