

The Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) Program Fact Sheet

Program

The Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) model provides a multi-level approach which includes the establishment of universal prevention elements such as: clarifying expectations for faculty members; establishing clear and consistent rules; teaching expectations to all students; enhancing student social and problem-solving skills; affording students the opportunity to practice expectations; and reinforcing appropriate behavior. BIST provides secondary and tertiary levels of support through an array of progressively intense levels of assessment and interventions, matched to the types of skill deficits exhibited and identified needs, for students who require more teaching and practice to develop social and behavioral skills. This multi-level approach parallels several other proactive discipline models (Sugai, Sprague, Horner, and Walker, 2000)¹.

A primary feature distinguishing the BIST program from other proactive discipline plans is that BIST does not solely provide teacher training workshops. A key element of the model is the establishment of an ongoing partnership between school personnel and BIST consultants who meet monthly with school personnel in a collaborative problem-solving capacity, in support of their ongoing professional development.

Grounded in Theory

The BIST program is well-grounded in behavioral theory (Anderson & Kincaid, 2005)² and combines strengths-based and resiliency principles (Benard, 2004)³ within the context of the ecological, person-in-environment model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)⁴. BIST strategies are person-centered and based on the core conditions of congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1986)⁵.

The BIST program simultaneously engages school administrators, teachers, parents, and students in a proactive/preventative, problem-solving school discipline plan, designed to teach social and behavioral skills, enhancing the academic and social growth of students. This ecological approach requires the skills necessary to engage issues at all levels, in multiple modalities, and in a collaborative way (Gutierrez, Yeakly, & Ortega, 2000)⁶.

Evaluation

Evaluations by the Resource Development Institute (www.rdikc.org) in schools that implemented BIST on a school-wide basis consistently revealed substantial reductions in the number of office discipline referrals (ODR's) after implementation compared to the number of ODR's prior to implementation.

Grade Level	City Size	Number Yrs Evaluated	ODR's per 100 students Prior to BIST	ODR's per 100 students last year of Evaluation	Percent Change
Middle School ⁷ (6-8)	Less than 250,000	5	216	72	- 66.6%
Elementary ⁸ (K-5)	Less than 250,000	4	113	11	- 90.3%
Elementary ⁹ (K-5)	Less than 250,000	2	96	14	- 85.4%
Elementary ¹⁰ (K-5)	Less than 450,000	7	111	12	- 89.2%

Conclusions

Disruptive behaviors are dealt with by the teachers in the classroom resulting in students staying in the learning environment of the classroom more often after implementation of the BIST program compared to the control groups (years prior to implementation). Serious rule violations which threatened the safety of students or included threats continue to be referred to the office. From 2% to 3% of the overall student body received half of the ODR's in the latter BIST years of one study¹¹. School administrator, staff and teachers emphasized the importance of having the BIST consultant working with them on an ongoing basis. They indicated that learning to implement the program takes time, practice, and the regular opportunities for collaborative discussion of student concerns and barriers to implementation as they arise.¹²

The results of multiple evaluations suggest that the positive effects from implementing the BIST model on a school-wide scale appear to be substantial, cumulative and sustainable over multiple academic years.

¹ Sugai, G., Sprague, J.R., Horner, R.H., and Walker, H.M. (2000). Preventing school violence: The use of office discipline referrals to assess and monitor school-wide discipline interventions. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 8, 94-101.

² Anderson, C.M., & Kincaid, D. (2005). Applying behavior analysis to school violence and discipline problems: Schoolwide positive behavior support. *Behavior Analyst*, 28, 49-63.

³ Benard, B. (2004). *Resiliency: What have we learned?* Oakland, CA: WestEd Publishing.

⁴ Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

⁵ Rogers, C. R. (1986). Reflections of feelings. *Person-Centered Review*, 1, 375-377.

⁶ Gutierrez, L., Yeakly, A., & Ortega, R. (2000). Educating students for social work with Latinos: Issues for the new millennium. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36, 541-557.

⁷ Boulden, W.T., Twillman, N. (2008). *Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) 2008 Middle School Evaluation Report*, Kansas City MO: Resource Development Institute.

⁸ Boulden, W.T. (2009). *Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) Elementary School Implementation 2009 Evaluation Report*, Kansas City MO: Resource Development Institute.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Boulden, W.T. (2009). *Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) 7-Year Elementary School Evaluation Report*, Kansas City MO: Resource Development Institute.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Boulden, W.T., Twillman, N. (2008). *Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) 2008 Middle School Evaluation Report*, Kansas City MO: Resource Development Institute.