Addressing Internalizing Concerns through Tier II Supports

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Key Words: Behavior, Mental Health, Tier II

Learning Outcomes

1. Learn about the influence of internalizing concerns on student functioning within schools
2. Identify a range of interventions designed to address internalizing behaviors, including the Resilience Education Program (REP)
3. Explore measures designed to support intervention implementation, including those related to universal screening and progress monitoring
4. Hear from exemplar presenters regarding their efforts to implement Tier II internalizing interventions within their schools

Mental Health Challenges

Two broad categories:
- Externalizing problems
- Internalizing problems*

Problems exist along a continuum
- Low risk
- Subthreshold symptoms
- Diagnosable disorder

Calls for increased emphasis on targeted intervention for subthreshold symptoms
- NIMH, 2015
- Community Preventive Services Task Force, 2019

*The CPSTF recommends targeted school-based cognitive behavioral therapy programs to reduce depression and anxiety symptoms among school-aged children and adolescents who are assessed to be at increased risk for these conditions.

"The CPSTF recommends targeted school-based cognitive behavioral therapy programs to reduce depression and anxiety symptoms among school-aged children and adolescents who are assessed to be at increased risk for these conditions."
Internalizing Problems

Enhanced risk for negative outcomes

- Social rejection
- Academic concerns
- Later diagnosis
- Suicide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disorder</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
<th>Median Onset</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>9 years old</td>
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Disorder Prevalence

Anxiety 31.9%
Mood 14.3%

Tier 2

Reviews of the Tier 2 literature reveal strong attention to externalizing problems (Bruhn et al., 2014; Mitchell et al., 2012)

- Less focus on internalizing problems
- Several calls for increased focus in this area (Kilgus et al., 2015; McIntosh et al., 2014)

Multiple options have been explored

- Check In/Check Out (CICO)
- Courage and Confidence Mentor Program
- Resilience Education Program (REP)

Tier 3

Tier 2

Tier 1

REP – Two Components

Cognitive behavioral instruction (CBI)

- Five lessons, taught across five weeks
- Focus on key skills
- Coping skills
- Problem-solving skills

Modified Check In/Check Out (CICO)

- Check in and out with a mentor each day
- Teacher feedback throughout the day regarding skill use and other positive behaviors
- Connection with parents
REP – Core Characteristics

**Efficiency**
- Takes only a few weeks
- CICO: few minutes per day for teachers and mentors
- CBI: 30-45 minutes two times per week

**Relevance**
- Includes intervention elements already being used in schools

**General**
- General CBI applicable to both depression and anxiety

REP – Theory

**CBI**
- Student-oriented
- Instruct key social-emotional skills

**CICO**
- Ecologically-oriented
- Educators
- Parents and caregivers
- Prompt and reinforce student use of those skills

Overview of REP

Check-In/Check-Out
- CICO occurs for 10 weeks; students receive increased adult attention and performance feedback along with reinforcement of coping skills

Small group CBI Lessons
- Small group lessons occur 2x/week for 5 weeks; students learn coping and problem-solving skills
Theory of Change for CBI

Thoughts

Feelings

Behaviors

Example Trigger: Teacher asks for volunteers

Automatic Thought: “I’ll forget what I was going to say”

Behavior: Put hand down, don’t speak up in class

Feeling: Worry, embarrassment

Example: Thinking Good Thoughts

Thought: I can do this, I know the answer

Behavior: Raises hand

Feeling: Proud, instead of worried
Example: Using STU Coping Skills

Feeling: Recognize that was feeling worried; now calm

Behavior: Takes 5 belly breaths then raises hand

Thought: I can do this, I know the answer

Pilot Study 1
Allen, Kilgus, & Eklund, 2018
- Three students
- Multiple baseline, single-case design
- Direct observation
- Negative affect
- Internalizing problems (e.g., worry, irritability)
- Social engagement
- Visual analysis
- Clear improvement for 2 of 3
- PAND (for 2 of 3)
- Range = .75 - .83
- "Effective"

Pilot Study 2
Eklund, Kilgus, Izumi, DeMarchena, & McCollom, 2018
- Three students
- Multiple baseline, single-case design
- Teacher direct behavior ratings
- Internalizing problems (e.g., withdrawal, negative affect)
- Visual analysis
- Clear improvement for 2 of 3
- PAND (for 2 of 3)
- Range = .79 - .83
- "Effective"
Underpowered waitlist control RCT study
Kilpatrick et al., 2019

Students in 4th - 7th grade
- 8 elementary schools & 1 middle school
Randomized to intervention & waitlist control groups
- Intervention N = 21 students
- Waitlist control N = 17 students
Pre- and post-measure data evaluated
- ABEA Teacher Report & Youth Self Report
  Internalizing scales
  Coping skills, social support, perceived control of internal states

Primary Findings
- The effect of REP on internalizing concerns
  - Teacher report: large effect size (\(\eta^2 = .15\))
  - Self-report: large effect size (\(\eta^2 = .18\))

Secondary Findings
- The effect of REP on student-reported coping skills, social support, and control of internal states
  - Large effect size (\(\eta^2 = .18\))

Acceptability
- Positive findings as intervention that is easy to understand and feasible to use

Building an Efficient Targeted Intervention for Students At Risk for Internalizing Problems: The Resilience Education Program (REP)

YEAR 1: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
YEAR 2: FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTATION
YEAR 3: COMPONENT ANALYSES
YEAR 4: PILOT EFFICACY TESTING

Modified CICO
CICO Procedures

Typical CICO
1. Morning check in with REP mentor
2. Teacher feedback and praise throughout the day
   - Daily progress report (DPR)
3. Afternoon check out with REP mentor
4. Home-based reinforcement
5. Progress monitoring via DPR
6. Self-monitoring (fading)

Modified Components
1. Modified DPR targets
   a. Skills aligned with CBI
   b. Other positive behaviors
2. Students self-rate their mood throughout the day

CICO Procedures

Check In:
- Check student readiness for school
- Target behavior goals reviewed
- Daily reward determined
- Encouragement to use CBI skills
- Prompt to have a great day

Teacher Feedback & Praise
At the end of each activity...
- Teacher rates student behavior
  - CBI-aligned behaviors
  - Positive replacement behaviors [need to select]
  - Minimizes attention to inappropriate behavior
- Delivers praise
- Student rates his or her mood
  - Behavior --- Mood

Daily Progress Report (DPR)

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New Pll
1. Faint
2. Fairly good
3. Good
4. Very good
5. Great
CICO Procedures

**Check Out:**
- Provides praise to student
- Receives reward if goal met
- Encouraged to try next day if goal not met and reminder to use CBI skills

**Home-based reinforcement:**
- Student brings home DPR for parents to sign
- Parents provide reward if goal met
- Parents praise student and minimize attention to negative behavior

**Progress monitoring:**
- Plot DPR data every day (% of points)
- Monitor data over time
- Make occasional decisions regarding the need to continue, modify, or discontinue intervention

**Self-monitoring:**
- When student has met high-level goals consistently
- Self-rate behavior throughout the day
- Same check in and out procedures

**REP:** Cognitive-behavioral instruction
REP Intervention: CBI Lessons

Say-Show-Do Direct Instruction Model:
- Define key skill and explain importance
- Provide steps for using the skill
- Model steps for using the skill
- Role-play opportunities
- Goal-setting and homework

Using cognitive restructuring

Using problem-solving strategies

Using coping skills to manage emotions

Setting up your group

Size of group

Number of weeks

Lesson format
- Two 30-minute lessons each week
- One 45-50 minute lesson once a week

Essential REP Materials

REP Lesson binder
Worksheets
Homework sheets
Extra CICO point sheets
Supplemental materials
- Online videos/links
- Feelings thermometer
- Markers/writing utensils
- Cue cards
**REP Lesson Format**

- General objectives
- Concepts taught
- Materials needed
- SAY
  - Provide direct instruction and definition of concepts covering
- SHOW
  - Provide examples through modeling and/or video demonstration
- DO
  - Provide opportunity for students sharing and acting out examples
- Generalize
- Homework
- Summary

**REP Lesson 1: Introduction**

**Objectives:**
- State the group purpose & rules
- Demonstrate familiarity with structure of the group
- State group meeting time & CICO procedures

**Concepts:**
- Getting to know you
- Group purpose, rules, structure, & format
- Establish meeting time
- Describe CICO procedures

**Group rules:**
- Be safe
- Be respectful
- Be kind
- Personal things talked about in group stay in group
- Be open to new skills
- Brainstorm examples of these rules with group & add any new rules

**Group structure:** Can practice SAY SHOW DO using group rules as an example
- Ex: Say the rule of being respectful and an example, such as turn-taking
- Show yourself practicing turn-taking
- Practice doing turn-taking during the Ice Breaker
REP Lesson 2: Identifying Feelings

Objectives:
- Identify and name strong emotions when they occur
- Describe what triggers own emotions
- Describe what happens to thinking and behavior when experiencing strong emotions
- Recognize that we are in control of our own emotions

Concepts:
- When you are having strong emotions, it's hard to think clearly
- Unmanaged, strong emotions can lead to negative behavior and consequences
- We are in control of our own emotions

REP Lesson 2: Identifying Feelings

SAY: Understand and Identify Feelings
- Show the Emotions Wheel

REP Lesson 2: Feelings in Our Body

SAY
Be sure to emphasize that it's okay to have strong feelings, we all have them. Want to emphasize that there are positive ways we can respond to those strong feelings.

Brainstorm body clues that tell us when we're feeling sad, anxious, angry, excited?
**REP Lesson 2: Triggers**

Trigger = something that makes me feel a strong emotion

Examples:
- Taking a test → Nervous
- Losing a game → Sad
- Getting a bad grade → Worried

Brainstorm other examples of triggers and related feelings that students may experience at school.

**SHOW: Example**

Students are working quietly at their seats on a new math assignment that the teacher has just passed out. Maya is not sure how to do the first problem as she had stayed home sick from school the day before and did not hear the lesson on how to complete the problems. As Maya begins to feel sad, she begins to think about what she can do with her strong feelings. She decides to take a big belly breath and raises her hand quietly to ask the teacher for help.

What strong emotions was Maya feeling?
What were the triggers?
Did she take control of her strong emotions? How did she do it?

**DO: Transition into student’s personal experience**

- What is an example of a time when you had a strong feeling or emotion?
- How did your body feel?
- What were you thinking while you were feeling that way?
- How did you respond in that situation?
REP Lesson 3: Using Coping Skills

Objectives:

- Demonstrate the ability to stop escalating emotions
- Identify personal “triggers”
- Use calming down strategies (e.g., belly breathing) to address stressful or anxiety-provoking situations
- Acquire STU skills

Concepts:

- Using coping strategies can decrease feelings of sadness or anxiety
- Staying in control of your emotions helps you make better choices

REP Lesson 3: Using Coping Skills

STU

See the Trigger
Take belly breaths
Use your imagination

REP Lesson 3: See the Trigger

Review Triggers identified with students
Have students volunteer to share triggers and discuss types of emotions that they trigger
REP Lesson 3: Take belly breaths

Imagine your feelings thermometer going down as you take your belly breaths.

SHOW
Teacher tells Sam to go work with the new student in the class. Sam is a little scared at first because she has a hard time meeting new people and is feeling sad because her best friend moved away. But then, Sam begins to use STU skills and calms down (imagine the thermometer going down).

Afterwards, ask students to identify skill steps present within the model.

REP Lesson 3: Use Your Imagination

Let’s practice!

Imagine your feelings thermometer going down as you take your belly breaths.

SHOW
Teacher tells Sam to go work with the new student in the class. Sam is a little scared at first because she has a hard time meeting new people and is feeling sad because her best friend moved away. But then, Sam begins to use STU skills and calms down (imagine the thermometer going down).

Afterwards, ask students to identify skill steps present within the model.
REP Lesson 3: Use Your Imagination

**DO**

1. Prior to practice, instructor should remind students that this is a safe space and they have nothing to worry about. This is just for practice.
2. Practice one student at a time – Have student share his/her trigger with the instructor, and then pretend to do the trigger.
3. The student should apply the STU skills to calm him/herself down prior to engaging in the task or scenario. Instructor provides feedback & copious amounts of praise specific to effort and performance.
4. Each student should go once, one at a time.

REP Lesson 3: Using the ABC Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. What was the trigger and how did it make you feel?</th>
<th>B. Did you use a STU skill? What STU skill did you use?</th>
<th>C. What happened right after? How did you feel?</th>
<th>D. Did you do any other coping skill, like doing something you enjoy?</th>
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REP Lesson 4: Preventing Negative Thoughts

**Objectives:**
- Demonstrate ability to stop escalating emotions
- Use cognitive restructuring to reduce negative thoughts and increase positive self-talk
- Use cognitive restructuring strategies with calming down strategies to address strong feelings
- Acquire ability to Think Good Thoughts (TGT)

**Concepts:**
- Using coping strategies can decrease anxiety
- Altering our thinking can prevent strong emotions and bad behavior
- Staying in control of your emotions help you make better choices
REP Lesson 4: Preventing Negative Thoughts

SAY
What does it mean to have a negative thought?
- Thinking badly about ourselves
- Thinking we can’t do something
- Thinking that others are thinking bad things about us
- Thinking that something bad is going to happen to us
- Thinking we shouldn’t even try something

Let’s brainstorm examples of negative thoughts students might have.

REP Lesson 4: Preventing Negative Thoughts

Replacement good thoughts:
- I can do this!
- I will be okay.
- The teacher wouldn’t let me get hurt.
- I can try this new thing.

Let’s brainstorm examples of replacement thoughts that are good.

REP Lesson 4: Preventing Negative Thoughts

SHOW
Paul is walking down the hallway. Chris then bumps into Paul. Chris says, “Sorry!” Paul thinks, “Chris is trying to hurt me!” Paul then thinks about it a bit more and thinks, “No I bet Chris just didn’t see me coming.” Paul then says, “That’s okay.”

Discuss with students what steps Paul used.
REP Lesson 4: Thinking Good Thoughts

DO
1. Notice the bad thought
2. Choose a good thought instead!
3. If I need to, I can use my STU skills

REP Lesson 5: Using Problem-Solving Skills

Objectives:
- Realize they are in control of their emotions
- Understand they are capable of solving problems once they are calm
- Learn the Think and Act process, which involves considering one’s options, making a choice, and identifying the steps to complete the action

Concepts:
- When we’re calm, we can make better choices
- Making better choices helps us to get along better with others and do better at school

REP Lesson 5: Think & Act

SAY
Think
1. Once you have used the STU skills and feel calm...
2. Consider your choices with the situation: what are good choices and bad choices?
3. What will happen if you make a good choice? A bad choice?

Act
1. Make a good choice between your options.
2. Identify the steps for that choice...what will it take to get it done?
3. Do it!

Let’s practice some problem-solving scenarios
REP Lesson 5: Think & Act

SHOW

Jill will not let Madison play the game she is already playing. Jill looks frustrated and angry at first, but then begins to use STU skills and starts to calm down. Jill stops to Think, realizing that she has two choices: (1) steal the game from Madison or (2) patiently wait her turn. Jill decides Act by patiently waiting her turn, so she finds something else to do while Madison finishes with the game.

REP Lesson 5: Using Problem-Solving Skills

Planning for Next Steps

1. How does this compare to our priorities?
2. Who would do this work?
3. Where would this work live (e.g., responsibility)?
4. What should we stop doing to make room for this work?
5. How will we assess whether it’s (a) implemented well, and (b) working?
Thank you!
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