

From Resistance to Resilience: Strategies for Addressing School Refusal

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Embracing Resilience Consulting

August 17, 2023



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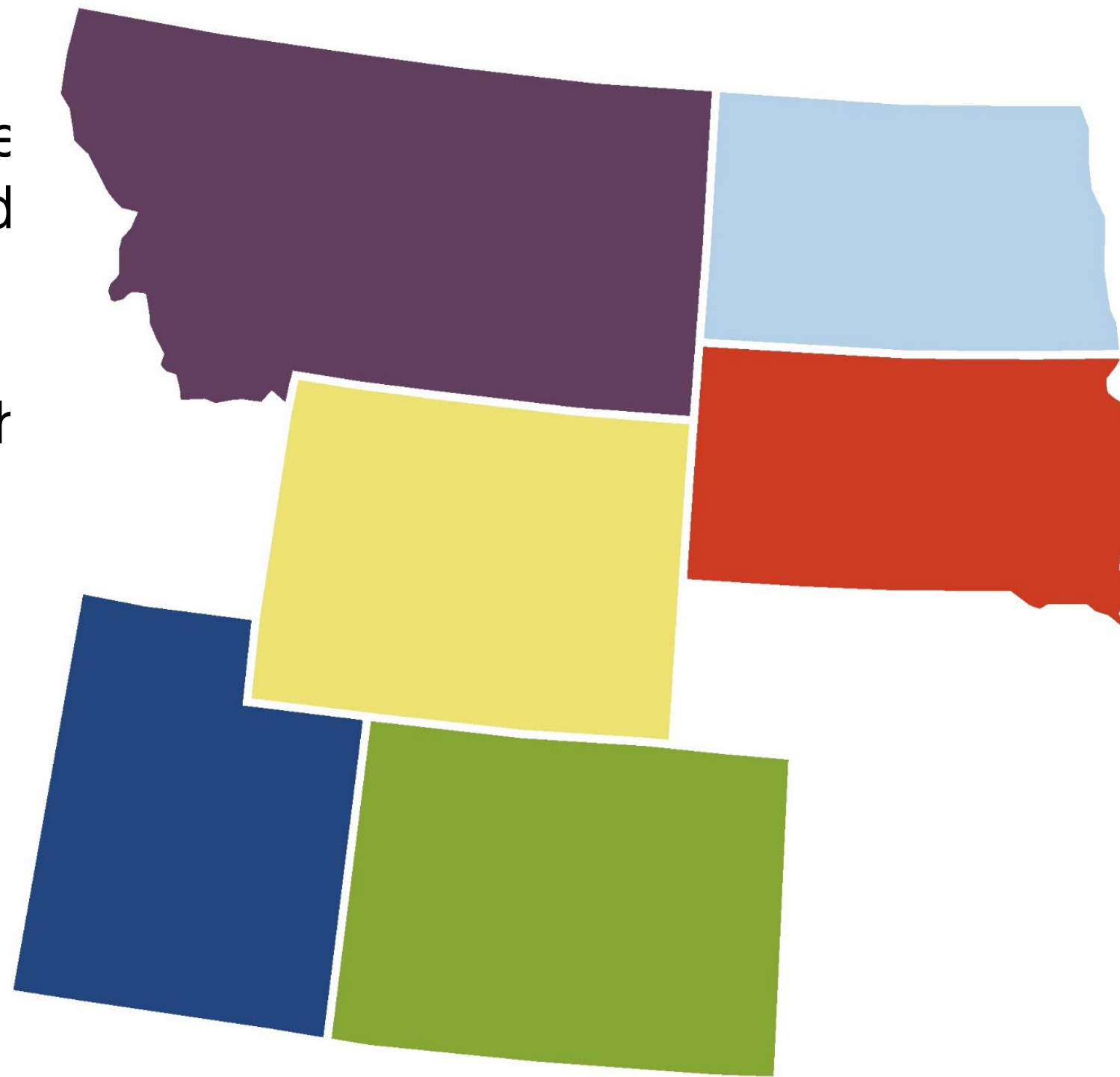
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The work of the Mountain Plains MHTTC is supported by grant H79SM081792 from the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (Mountain Plains MHTTC) provides training and technical assistance to individuals who serve persons with mental health concerns throughout Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming).

We belong to the Technology Transfer Center (TTC) Network, a national network of training and technical assistance centers serving the needs of mental health, substance use and prevention providers. The work of the TTC Network is under a cooperative agreement by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA).



Land Acknowledgement Statement

Today, the University of North Dakota rests on the ancestral lands of the Pembina and Red Lake Bands of Ojibwe and the Dakota Oyate - presently existing as composite parts of the Red Lake, Turtle Mountain, White Earth Bands, and the Dakota Tribes of Minnesota and North Dakota. We acknowledge the people who resided here for generations and recognize that the spirit of the Ojibwe and Oyate people permeates this land. As a university community, we will continue to build upon our relations with the First Nations of the State of North Dakota - the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.



The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND
ACCEPTING OF
DIVERSE CULTURES,
GENDERS,
PERSPECTIVES,
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED AND
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND
FREE OF LABELS

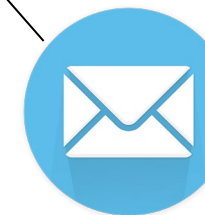
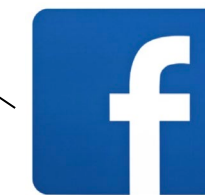
NON-JUDGMENTAL AND
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH
OUR ACTIONS,
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

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From Resistance to Resilience

Strategies for Addressing School Refusal



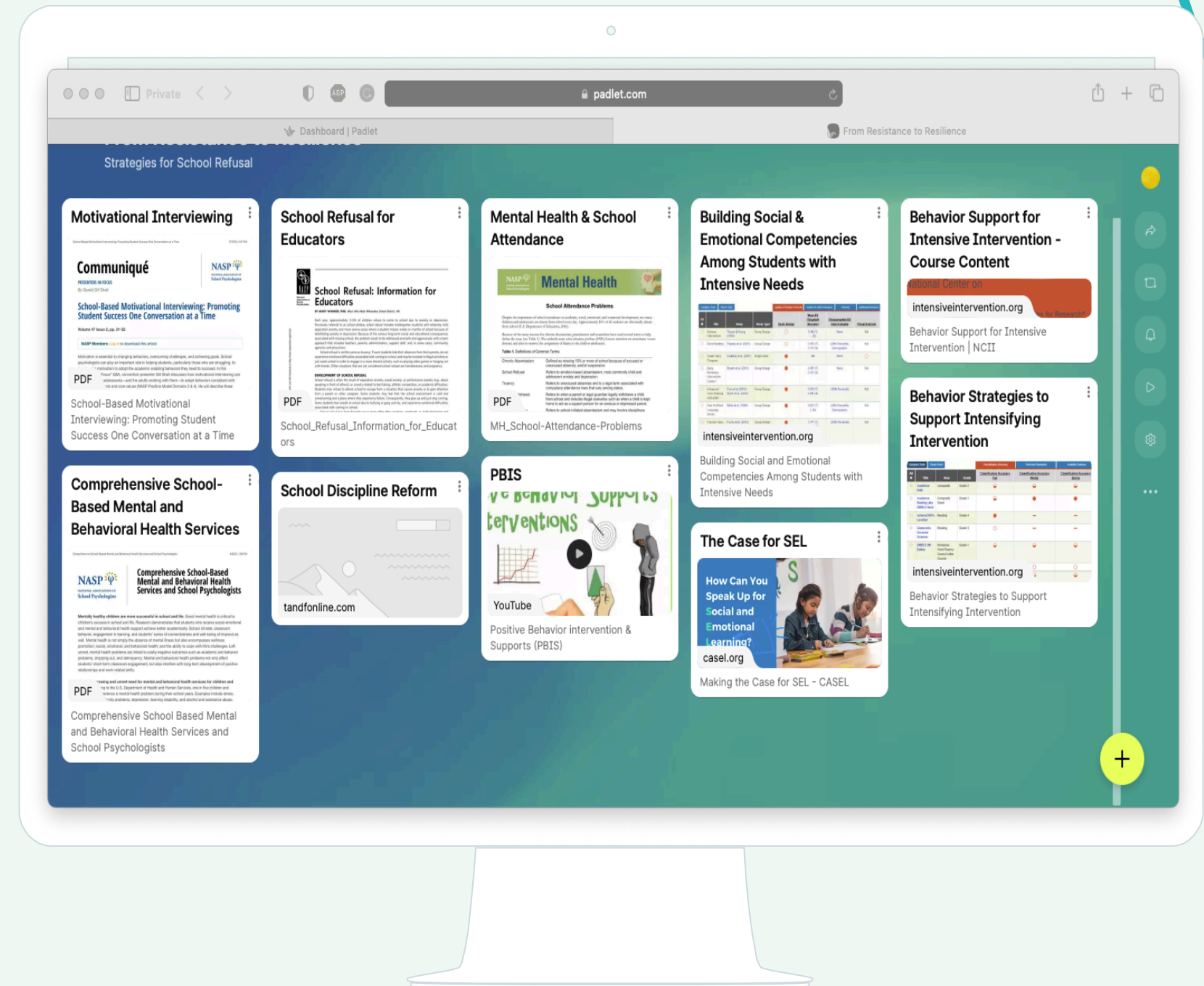
Please join the Padlet

<https://tinycloud.com/RefusalInSchools>



Please join the Padlet

https://tinyurl.com/Refusal InSchools



Housekeeping

- Please mute your microphone
- Feel free to raise your hand
- Please utilize the chat box

HELLO EVERYONE!

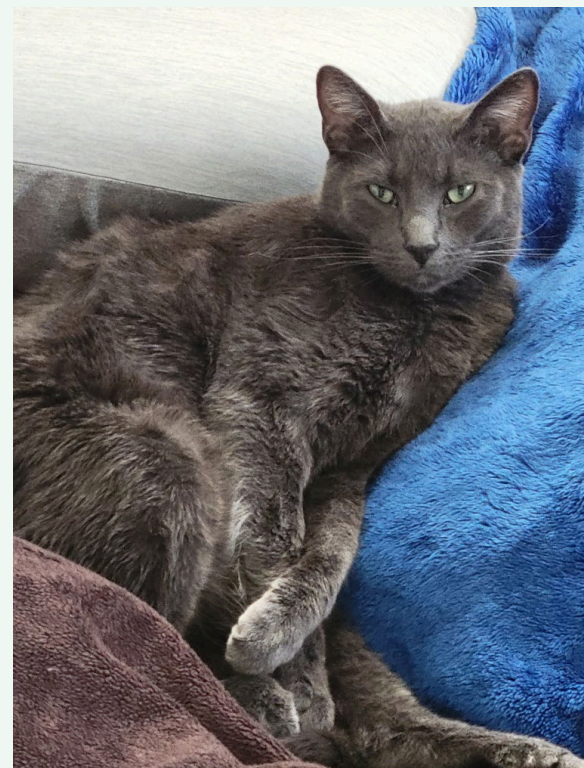
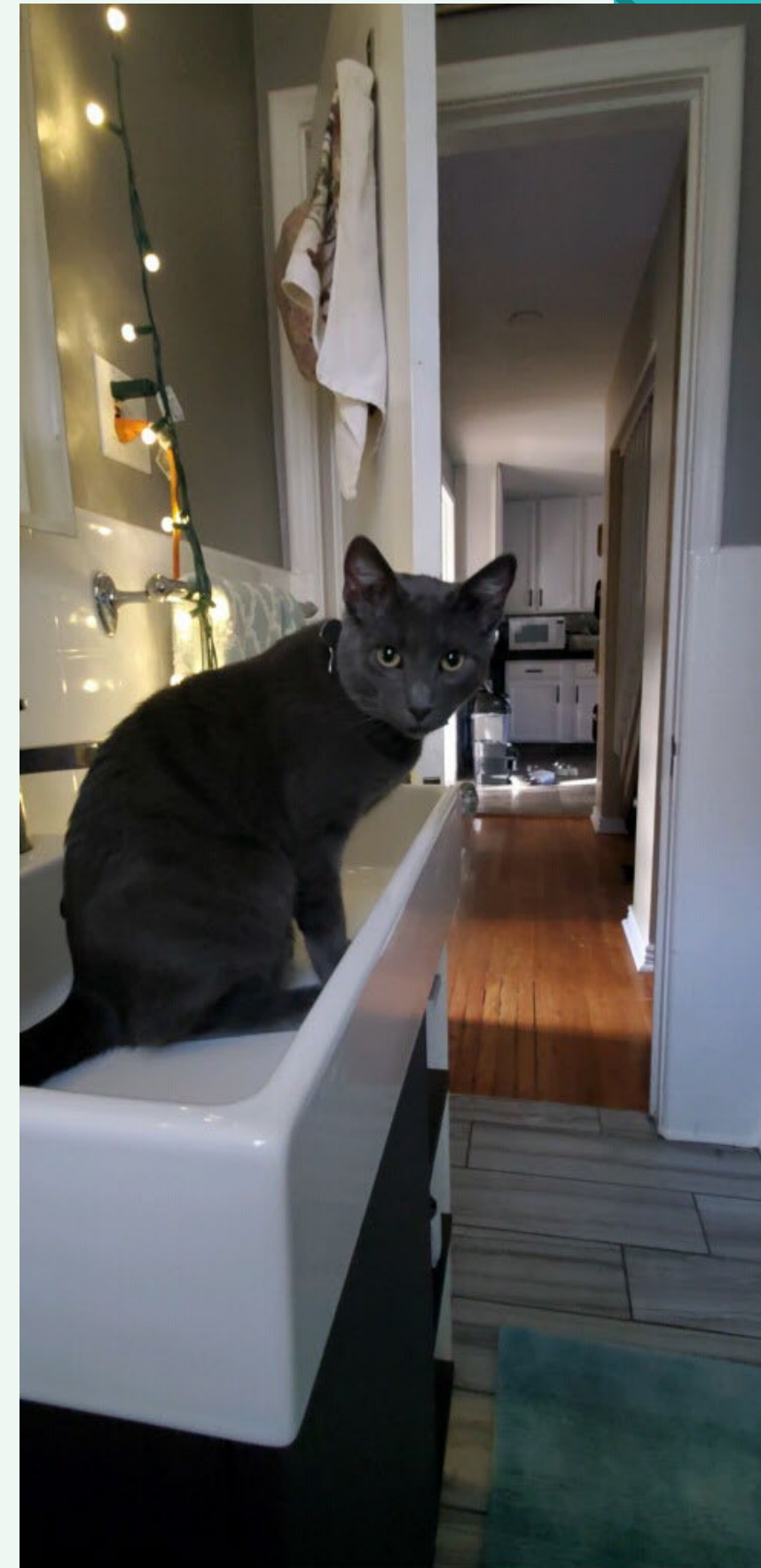
I am Dr. Casey Dupart
PsyD, BCBA, CCTP



EMBRACING
RESILIENCE

Consulting





TOPICS COVERED

- School Refusal Defined
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports
- Assessing School Refusal
- Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Risk & Protective Factors
- Whole School Reform Models
- Mental Health Continuum

- Let's Start
- with a 2 word check-in &
 - Your location



REFLECT:

How are you currently
supporting students with
school refusal?



School Refusal Defined

“A heterogeneous, dimensional construct consisting of extended absences from school, periodic absences from school or missed classes, chronic tardiness & intense dread about school that precipitates pleas for future nonattendance.”

(Kearney, 2008)



School Refusal Defined

- 10% kindergarten & 1st graders missed a month or more
- More common in middle school
- 19% of all high school students are commonly absent



Chronic Absenteeism



What is chronic absenteeism?

Being absent for 10% or more
(18 days out 180 day school
year)

Missing 10% or more of the current school
year
(3 or more days in the first 30 days of school)

Outcomes

“Chronic absenteeism is one of the **strongest indicators** that a student will become disengaged, fall behind academically, fail courses, and eventually drop out of school.”

(Jenson, Sprick, Phosaly, & Olympia, 2013)



Risk & Protective Factors



Child & Adolescent Variables

- Psychiatric disorders such as anxiety and depression
 - Lack of confidence
 - Poor coping strategies
 - Temperament
 - Increased dependency on parents
 - Academic failure and grade retention
- **Consider Age**
 - younger children tend to want to avoid negative affectivity and/or gain attention
 - Older children tend to want to escape aversive evaluative situations and/or receive tangible reinforcement outside of school



Transitions

- Beginning and end of school year
- Entrance to kindergarten
- Move to elementary to middle school
- Periods following vacations and weekends
- Changing schools
- Death of a parent
- Extended illness
- A household move



Peer Variables

- Parental financial stressors
- Lack of adequate health care
- Lack of affordable housing
- Frequent school transfers
- Transportation problems
- Spending time with peers not interested in school
- Spending time with peers who reinforce on another's risky behaviors
- Having few or no friends at school



Parent & Family Variables

- Parent psychiatric illness
- Maternal depression
- Highly anxious parent
- Family interaction patterns: enmeshed, conflictive, detached, isolated, healthy
- Child allowed large amounts of unsupervised time
- Parental substance abuse
- Child abuse
- Parent incarceration
- Children placed in foster care
- Teenage pregnancy
- Parental education level (protective)
- Parents who have high academic expectations, actively engage (protective)



School Climate Variables

- School violence and victimization
- Cyberbullying
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning students who experience physical and emotional harassment or violence
- **Student engagement and connectedness**
 - Having an adult mentor (protective)
 - Challenging and interesting coursework (protective)
 - Students feel accepted and respected (protective)
- Harsh discipline practices



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REFLECT:

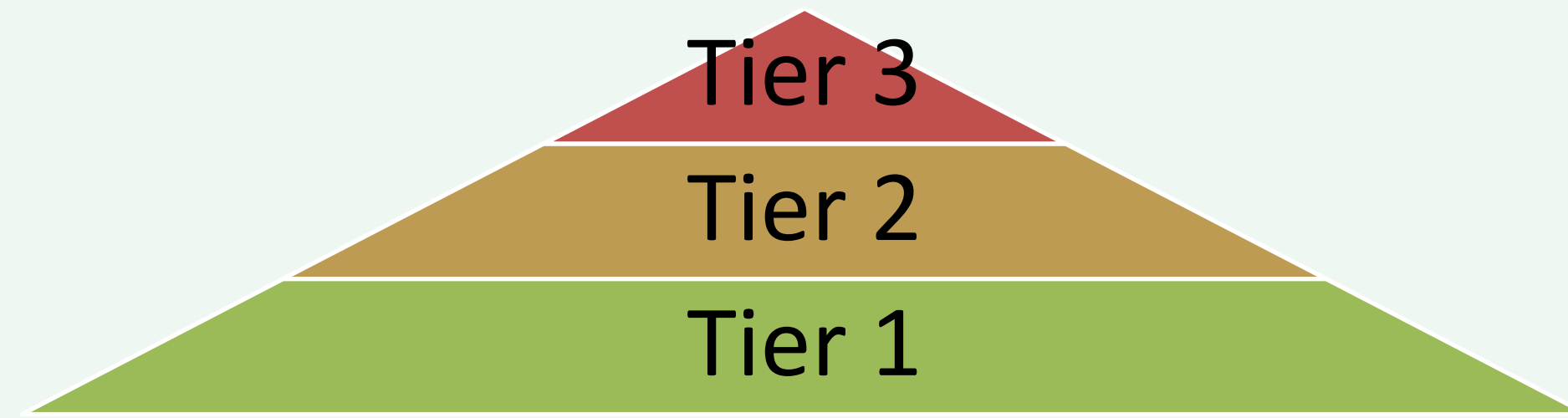
What are some risk and protective factors that you currently see?

What does research suggest?

- Best practice for identifying and assessing chronic absenteeism is to use an **Response to Intervention (RTI)/Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)** framework along with a **variety** of assessment methods



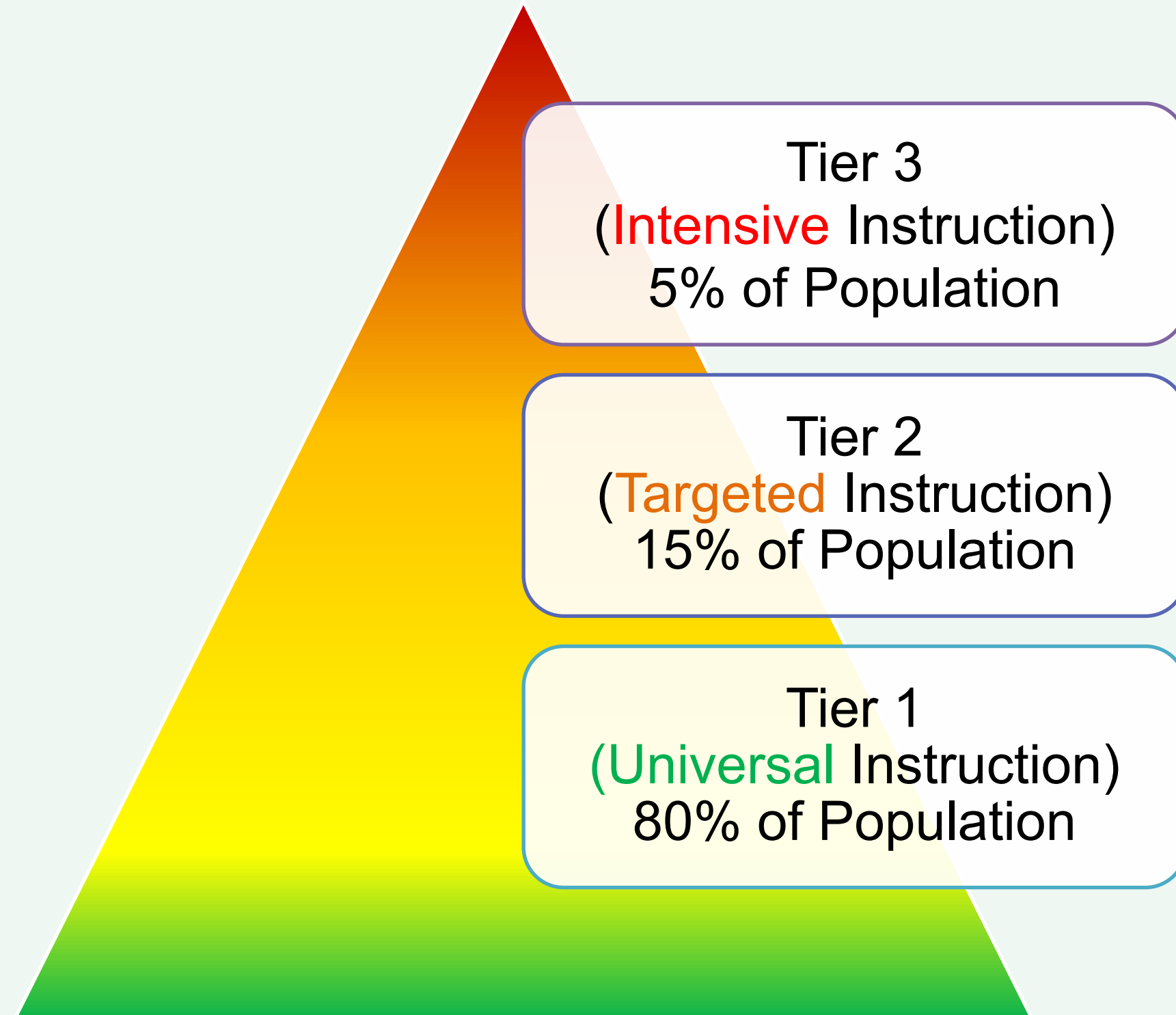
Multi-Tiered System of Support



Multi-Tiered System of Support

Multi-Tiered System of Supports is a framework for implementing systemic, evidence-based practices to maximize student achievement in academics and behavior in preparation for, and leading to, College and Career Readiness.

MTSS Breakdown

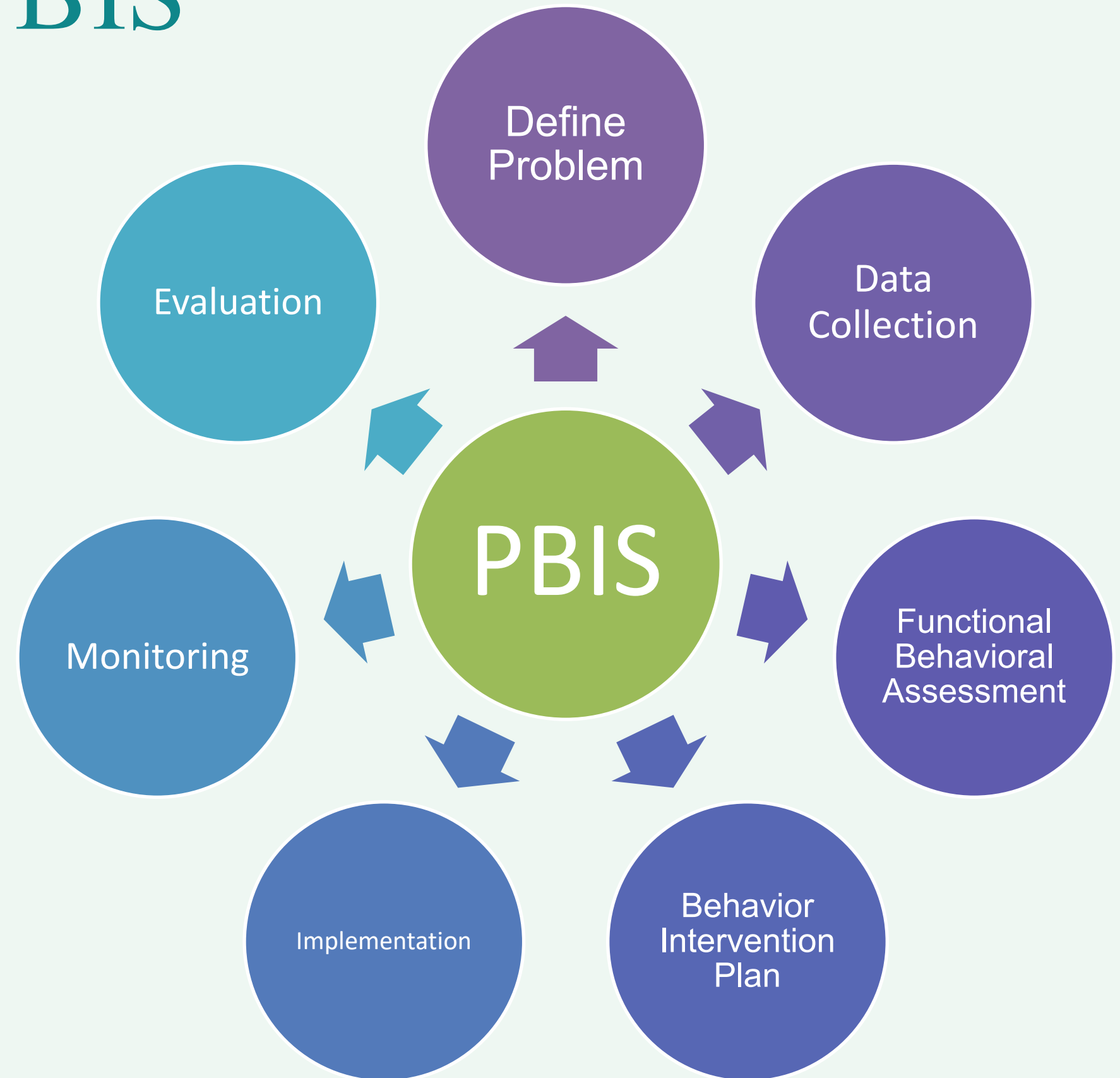


Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)

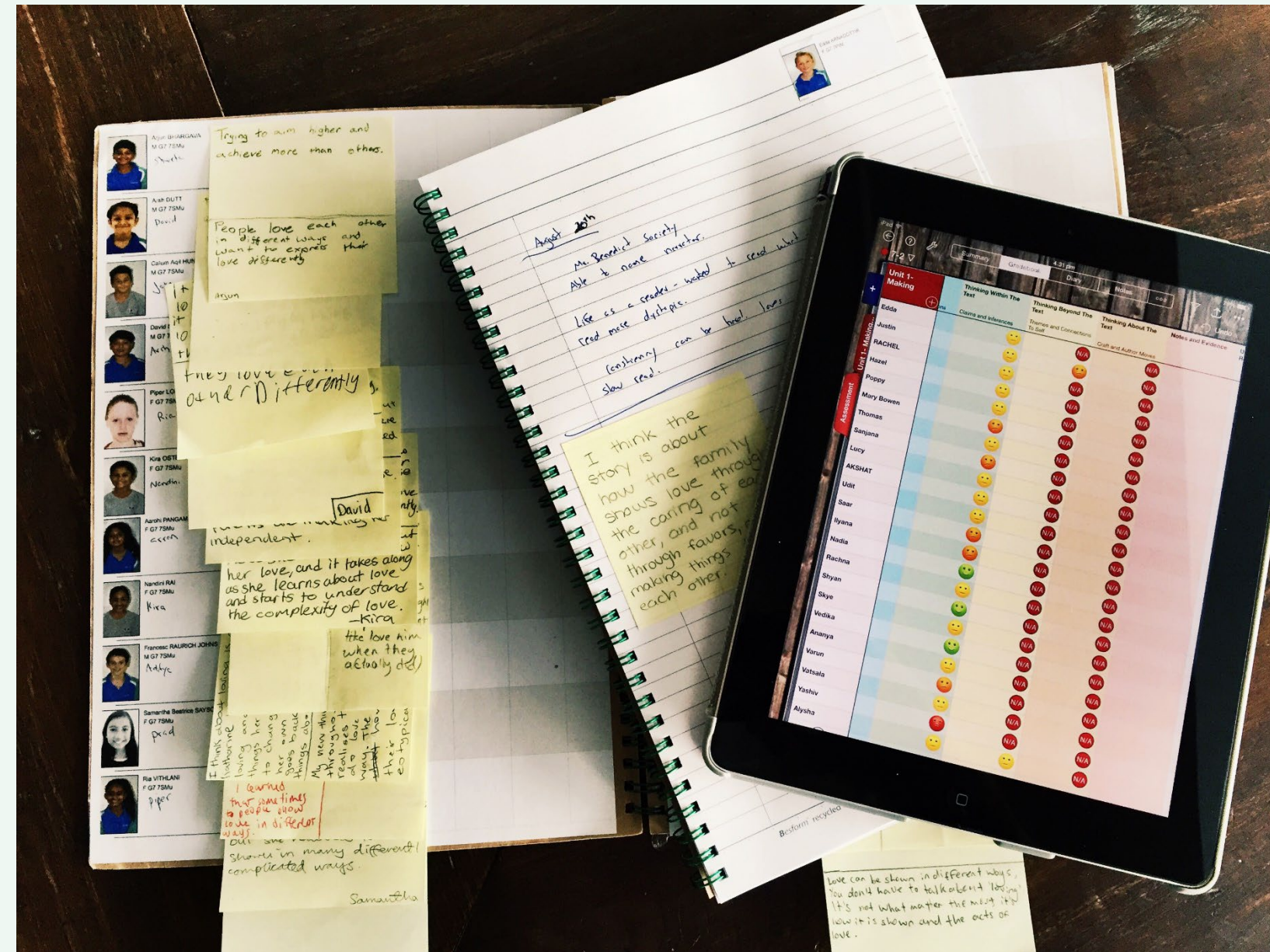


PBIS

- Based on problem-solving model
- Prevents inappropriate behavior through teaching & reinforcing appropriate behaviors



Assessment



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Attendance

- Monitoring the **combined excused & unexcused** rate is valuable
 - Important due to students with high excused absence rates
- Schools often make the mistake of not reviewing this information

Assessment Tools

Academic
Achievement
(record review, test
scores, report cards)

Informal Interviews

Self-Report
Measures

Parent & Teacher
Rating Scales

Functional Behavior
Assessment (FBA)

Effective Interventions



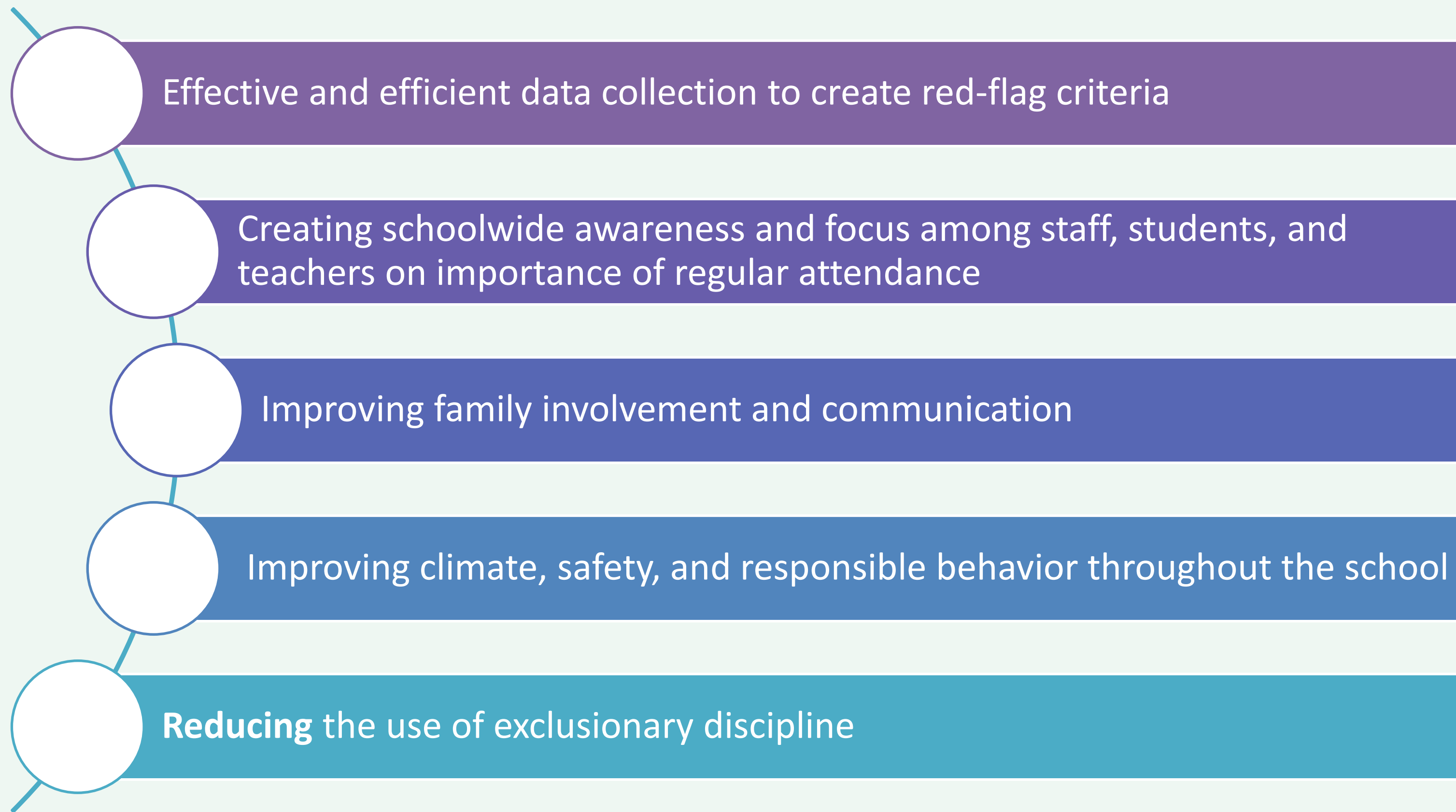
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Tier 1

Universal

Universal Practices

- Create a **positive school climate** (building positive relationships, implementing Social Emotional Learning curriculum, bullying prevention, & culturally responsive practices)
- Implementing **evidence-based** academic interventions
- Use positive behavior intervention and supports fair discipline practices
- Clearly **defined** and well-publicized attendance policies
- Build strong school-community partnerships



REFLECT:

What are some universal procedures that you can implement?

Tier 2

Targeted



- *Group and/or individual therapy* for anxiety and depression, and computer assisted counseling or anxiety
- High quality asthma management
- Family interventions
- Sending letters home, contact via telephone, contact person at school, home visits, providing the following: alarm clocks, bus passes, winter clothes, and RTI/MTSS meetings to set attendance goals
- Check & Connect
- School-Community initiatives to provide services

Tier 3

Intensive



- Cognitive-behavioral therapy for anxiety and depression based on the function of school-refusal behavior
- Interventions for family
 - Parent training, multisystemic therapy
- School-based interventions
 - Research-based academic interventions and a safe place at school for breaks, referring to RTI/MTSS team, providing intensive Check and Connect
- Community-based interventions
 - Providing coordination between school, family, and community

Behavior Intervention Plans

BIPs



BIP Development

- Develop **clear & measurable** definition of target behavior
- Identify & plan for teaching more acceptable **replacement behaviors** that serve the same **function** of target behavior
- Determine **antecedent & setting events** that **lessen** the likelihood of the target behavior
 - Curriculum and/or instructional strategies

BIP Development

- Identify consequence manipulations that make the target behavior ineffective, irrelevant or inefficient
- Consideration of contextual fit:
 - Data collection procedures that directly measure the **target** the behavior to be **decreased** and the **replacement** to be increased
 - Timeline for implementation, evaluation, & follow up

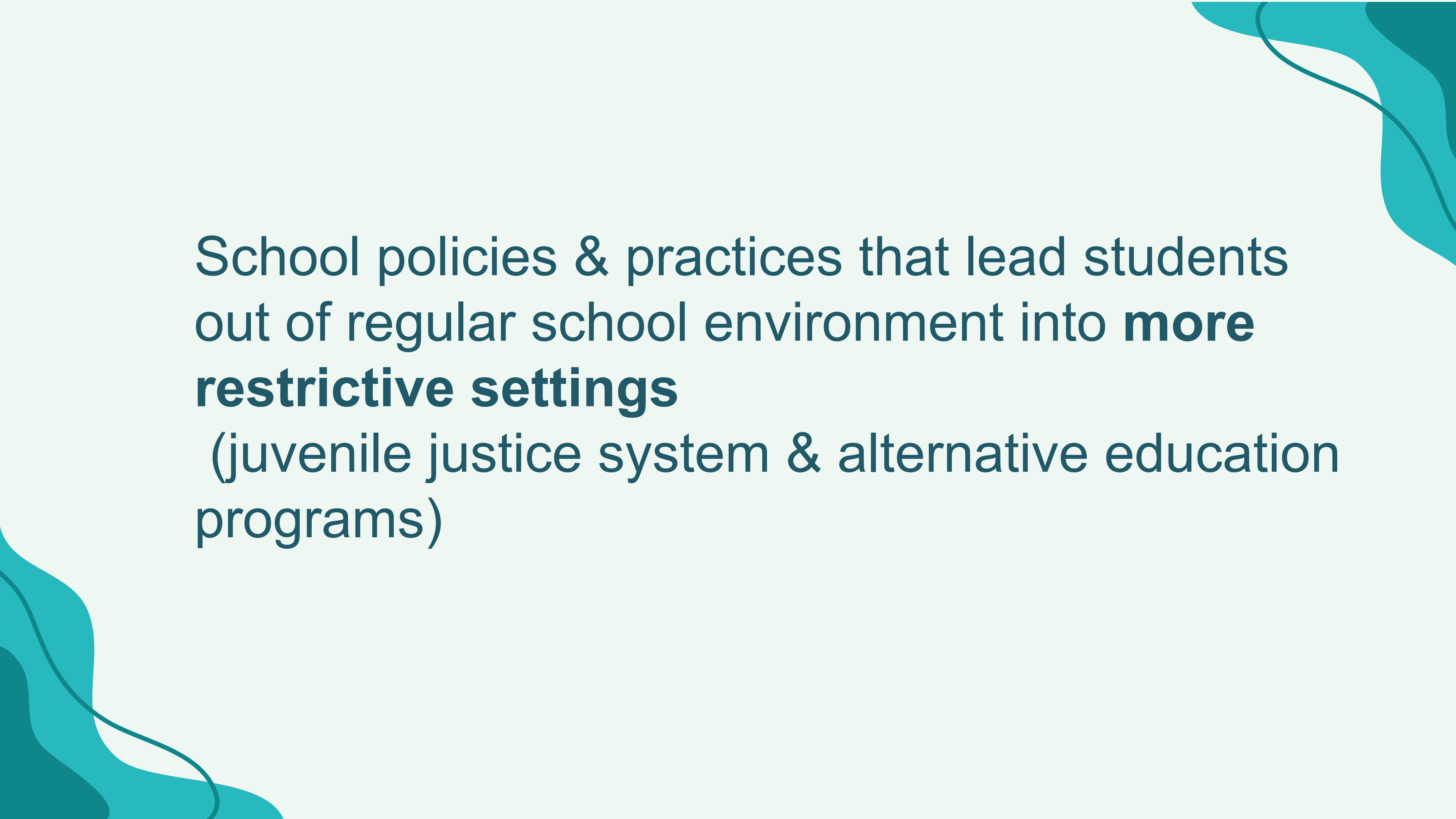
REFLECT:

What are some strategies you can implement across the tiers to address school refusal?



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Be Mindful of the School to Prison Pipeline

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School policies & practices that lead students out of regular school environment into **more restrictive settings**

(juvenile justice system & alternative education programs)

What does research suggest?

- Significant disproportionality in the use of out-of-school suspension specifically in **children of color & children with disabilities**
- Weir (2016), Black students are 3.8 times more likely to be suspended than white students
- 3 times more likely to be referred to gifted & talented programs with Black teachers



What does research suggest?

- Students with at least one out-of-school suspension are **up to 10 times** more likely to drop out
- Discipline is utilized more for students of color despite engaging in same behaviors as white peers
- The “Black Escalation Effect” (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015)

(Gonzales, Richards & Seeley, 2002, Wraight, 2002)



Student disengagement, alienation, & truancy can occur when diversity issues are not addressed

So what can we do?



Evaluate all school discipline strategies, so they have a beneficial impact on student behavior & school safety

Replace one size fits all disciplinary strategies with graduated systems that align with an infraction level

Increase educator training in culturally responsive classroom behavior management & instruction

Conduct systematic efficacy research to compare outcomes with & without zero-tolerance policies & practices

Increase positive representation of people of color & other marginalized groups throughout building

How does Cultural Responsiveness help?



Acknowledges legitimacy of cultural heritages of different ethnic groups as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, & approaches to learning

Builds bridges of meaningfulness between home & school experiences

Uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles

Teaches students to know & praise their own & each other's cultural heritage

Incorporates multicultural information, resources, & materials in all subjects & skills

REFLECT:

What are some ways you can improve your strategies?

Consider Mental Health





“

Approximately 2-5% of children struggle with coming to school due to anxiety or depression



Continuum of Mental Health Services

Intensive Community Interventions
with School Support

Intensive School Interventions with
Community Support

Targeted School Interventions With
Community Support

Early Identification of Students With
Mental Health & Behavioral Concerns

School-Based Prevention & Universal
Interventions

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

Reach out for any questions.



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