Strength-Based Approaches to Creating Safe, Nurturing, and Supportive School Environments

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Opioid Epidemic
School Shootings
• 1 in 6 school-aged youth: significant impairments in life functioning due to a mental illness (e.g., ADHD, behavioral problems, conduct problems, anxiety, and/or depression)

• 1 in 4 youth growing up in poverty and may be exposed to violence, economic insecurity, loss, hardship, and disruption of life

• 1 in 5 youth experiencing traumatic adverse childhood experiences

• 1 in 4 students bullied by peers

• 1 in 4 students are victims of physical violence by a dating partner

• Suicide is 2nd leading cause of death for youth (ages of 10-24)

Oftentimes, we ask...

“What’s wrong with you?”
A Poem by Abdullah Shoaib

Changing the conversation to...

“What happened to you?”
Now Read From the Bottom Up...

Strength-Based Approaches

- emphasize individuals’ strengths, capabilities, and resources
- allow individuals to see opportunities, hope, and solutions
Positive Youth Development

An intentional, prosocial approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances young people’s strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.

Strength-Based Approaches for Positive Youth Development

**INCREASED:**
- Strengths, Abilities & Potential
- Connection and Engagement
- Social, Emotional, Behavioral Skills
- Readiness for College/Career
- Academic Achievement
- Persistence
- Leadership Skills
- Life Skills
- Life Satisfaction
- School Success

**DECREASED:**
- Mental Health & Behavioral Health Problems
- Alcohol, Tobacco, & Illicit Drug Use
- Social Disengagement & Isolation
- Violent & Anti-Social Behaviors
- Truancy/Dropping out of School
- Credit Deficiencies
- Suspensions & Expulsions
Strength-Based Approaches

- Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
- Climate and Culture Frameworks
- Evidence-Based Programs
  - Character Education
  - Challenge Programs
- Social Media Campaigns
- Youth Leadership Programming
- Relationship Building Strategies
Strength-Based Approaches

Climate and Culture Frameworks
Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development

Whole Child Approach
PBIS is a decision making framework that guides selection, integration and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students.
Strength-Based Approaches

Evidence-Based Programs
The PATHS® curriculum is a comprehensive program for promoting emotional and social competencies and reducing aggression and behavior problems in elementary school-aged children while simultaneously enhancing the educational process in the classroom.
Pros

Cons
Strength-Based Approaches

Character Education
Wise Skills Program

Grade K-2

Grade 3-5

Grade 9-12

Values in Action!
Comprehensive Character Education Program K-12

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Strength-Based Approaches

Challenge Programs
**Rachel’s Challenge**

*Mission* = Making schools safer, more connected places where bullying and violence are replaced with kindness and respect; and where learning and teaching are awakened to their fullest.

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**Mix It Up at Lunch Day** (October 23, 2018)

*Mission* = To ask students to move out of their comfort zones and connect with someone new over lunch to promote healthy, welcoming school environments.
The Great Kindness Challenge®

Easy ways you can improve your school environment.

Pros  Cons
Mission = To uplift, empower, and connect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth around the globe.
We want to congratulate all the Seniors in Warren County who have or will be walking across that stage to receive your diploma! We are proud of your accomplishments and we look forward to seeing where life takes you! No matter what your next step in life is, we hope that kindness makes your goal list! Good luck!

#ODHvfcMAY18

Caring Schools #CommonGood Campaign

1. Deepen students’ care for others and their communities;
2. Increase equity and access for all students in the college admissions process; and
3. Reduce excessive achievement pressure.
Actions to Deepen Students’ Care for Others and Their Communities

• Build a caring, inclusive community via data.
• Engage students in activities that enable them to “talk across the aisle.”
• Implement an evidence-based social and emotional learning or character education program.
• Leverage the power of student leaders to create more welcoming, inclusive, and caring school environments.
• Engage students regularly in meaningful, low-burden, and fun activities that promote empathy and build community.
• Develop a youth capstone exercise focused on ethical engagement.
• Support high-quality, sustained community service.
• Collaborate with parents to promote ethical development.

Actions to Promote Equity and Access

• Capture the strengths of students facing disadvantages.
• Partner with other schools in reciprocal relationships that promote equity and access.
• Provide support to students outside of your school.
• Utilize data to guide continuous improvement.
Actions to Reduce Excessive Achievement Pressure

• Ensure that school staff reaffirm the importance of balance between academic rigor and care for self and others.

• Make a consistent, compelling case to students to consider a wide range of colleges, including colleges that are not typically considered “elite,” and support them in pursuing admission to excellent colleges that are not highly selective.

• Place more value on the quality of students’ academic engagement than on the number of branded or test-driven advanced courses (such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate-designated courses) that they take.

• Take new steps to reduce stress created by overloading on extracurricular activities.

• Collaborate with parents to reduce excessive achievement pressure.
Strength-Based Approaches

Youth Leadership Programming

Start With Hello (SWH) is designed to bring individuals and communities together to foster looking out for and caring for one another. SWH asks students, educators, parents and other community leaders who interact with children to take a simple, yet incredibly powerful, action at lunch – making sure that no one eats alone. This simple action, when taught and put into practice, instills the power and reward of social inclusion – that when you see someone alone at lunch (or across any other experience), say hello, introduce yourself, ask them to join you.
Teenage mothers and young fathers deliver courses in secondary schools to enable pupils to relate to the complex issues of teenage pregnancy, the life-changing consequences of early parenthood, child sexual exploitation as well as healthy relationships.
Strength-Based Approaches

Relationship Building Strategies

Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have.

Margaret Mead
Developmental Relationships Framework

Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people’s lives.

Express Care
Challenge Growth
Provide Support
Share Power
Expand Possibilities

Express Care

Show me that I matter to you
• *Be dependable*—Be someone I can trust
• *Listen*—Really pay attention when we are together
• *Believe in me*—Make me feel known and valued
• *Be warm*—Show me you enjoy being with me
• *Encourage*—Praise me for my efforts and achievements
Challenge Growth

push me to keep getting better

- expect my best — expect me to live up to my potential
- stretch — push me to go further
- hold me accountable — insist I take responsibility for my actions
- reflect on failures — help me learn from mistakes and setbacks

Provide Support

help me complete tasks and achieve goals

- navigate — guide me through hard situations and systems
- empower — build my confidence to take charge of my life
- advocate — stand up for me when I need it
- set boundaries — put in place limits that keep me on track
Share Power

Treat me with respect and give me a say
• Respect me—Take me seriously and treat me fairly
• Include me—Involve me in decisions that affect me
• Collaborate—Work with me to solve problems and reach goals
• Let me lead—Create opportunities for me to take action and lead

Expand Possibilities

Connect me with people and places that broaden my world
• Inspire—Inspire me to see possibilities for my future
• Broaden horizons—Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places
• Connect—Introduce me to people who can help me grow
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• 1 in 4 youth growing up in **poverty** and may be exposed to violence, economic insecurity, loss, hardship, and disruption of life

• 1 in 5 youth have **traumatic adverse childhood experiences**

• 1 in 4 youth have been bullied

• 1 in 10 students have been victim of physical violence by a dating partner

• **Suicide** is 2nd leading cause of death for youth (ages of 10-24)
Just Read
From the Bottom Up...

Pretty Ugly

I’m very ugly
So don’t try to convince me that
I am a very beautiful person
Because at the end of the day
I hate myself in every single way
And I’m not going to lie to myself by saying.
There is beauty inside of me that matters.
So rest assured I will remind myself
That I am a worthless, terrible person.
And nothing you say will make me believe
I still deserve love
Because no matter what
I am not good enough to be loved
And I am in no position to believe that
Beauty does exist within me.
Because whenever I look in the mirror I always think
Am I as ugly as people say?
(Now read bottom up)

by Abdallah Shouib

Thank You!