

Behavior Screening at Middle and High School Levels

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SWIFT Feature in the Research

Inclusive Behavior Instruction utilizes data to identify appropriate social-emotional supports for all students. The Lane et al. (2016) study demonstrated system wide use of a free online **behavior screener** at the middle and high school levels to identify needs. The authors also demonstrate how to map out current supports and determine which to use based on the collected data.

Research Summary

What

Systematic **behavior screeners** are a crucial tool for schools establishing or seeking to improve a supportive social-emotional learning environment. Positive behavior interventions and supports research that uses **behavior screening** to measure risk of externalizing behaviors (e.g., aggression) or internalizing (e.g., anxious) behaviors typically finds 80% of students are at low risk, 15% are at a moderate risk, and 5% are at high risk. Understanding the number of students experiencing these risk levels allows schools to more accurately make decisions about the type, breadth, and intensity of supports to provide. The purpose of this article was to provide both research and a descriptive demonstration of a systematic **behavioral screening** process and how to use the resulting data to inform practice.

Who

Nine middle schools and four high schools across three states participated in this study. Within those schools, 668 teachers screened 10,000 students. Schools that wanted to learn more about systematic behavioral screening volunteered for the study.

How

The research team selected the Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS)-IE (Internalizing and Externalizing). Previous research on the SRSS, in general, showed consistency, stability, and validity with other similar free, online tools. Studies also demonstrated the ability to predict rates of office discipline referrals (ODRs) and in-school suspensions, as well as the grade point averages of the middle school and high school students screened. The SRSS-IE version, used in this study, focuses on behaviors students tend to internalize (e.g., shy, withdrawn, lonely) as well as anti-social or external tendencies (e.g., steal, lie, peer rejection).

School leadership teams determined a class period during the school day when all students were likely to be present and not involved in an outside placement (e.g., a community internship). Teachers

completed the tool for each student in their class, only once and only during that period. In addition, although most schools conduct systematic screening three times per year (6-8 weeks after the first day of school, prior to winter break, and again in the spring), this study focused on those data collected in the spring.

To demonstrate application of the SRSS-IE, this article used study data to map out a fictional school's behavioral support system. The authors specified the map should include the types of support available, a description of those supports, the schoolwide data used to decide what students need, what type of support (entry data), the data used to monitor student progress, and the criteria that determine when students no longer need a higher level of support (exit criteria).

Major Findings

The authors concluded with the importance of guiding school leaders to (a) ensure teachers are trained in the application of any **behavior screening** tool, how to score the tool, and how use the resulting data; (b) check local laws on systematic **behavioral screening**; and (c) fully inform families of the purpose and use of these data.

Conclusion

This article provided readers a connection to the SWIFT Feature **Inclusive Behavior Instruction** through its research and discussion of systematic behavior screening. The authors also touched on **Family Partnerships** in their recommendation to communicate clearly the purpose of behavioral screening and the use of the resulting data.

Suggested Citation

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