Fostering Positive Home to School Relationships

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Objectives

- Understand unique needs of hard to reach families
- Develop strategies to build and maintain positive home to school relationships
- Understand ways to stay safe when working with families

Roll Call! Who is here?!

- Billy and Julie
- Where do you work and with what populations?
- What are your personal views about home visits, specifically teachers doing home visits?

Home Intervention Program

Hammitt Elementary

- 5 Home Interventionists
- Bachelor’s level social workers or related degree
- Caseload of 16-22 students and families

- Every student has an HI
- 1-2 home visits per month with each family
- Bridge between home and school
- Attend team meetings, clinical meetings and IEP’s
- Transition

Home Intervention Program

Hammitt Junior Senior High School

- 2 Home Interventionists
- One for Challenges students
- One for Connections students
- Less home visits, targeting students graduating
- Work with families on future planning, building a post high school plan

What in the world does an HI do during home visits?

- Crisis intervention
- Individual therapeutic time
- Quality family time
- Social skills relationship building
- Assist with resource referral for behavioral &
- Teach parenting skills
- Work with family on resources for basic needs
- Explain their child's IEP

Unique Needs

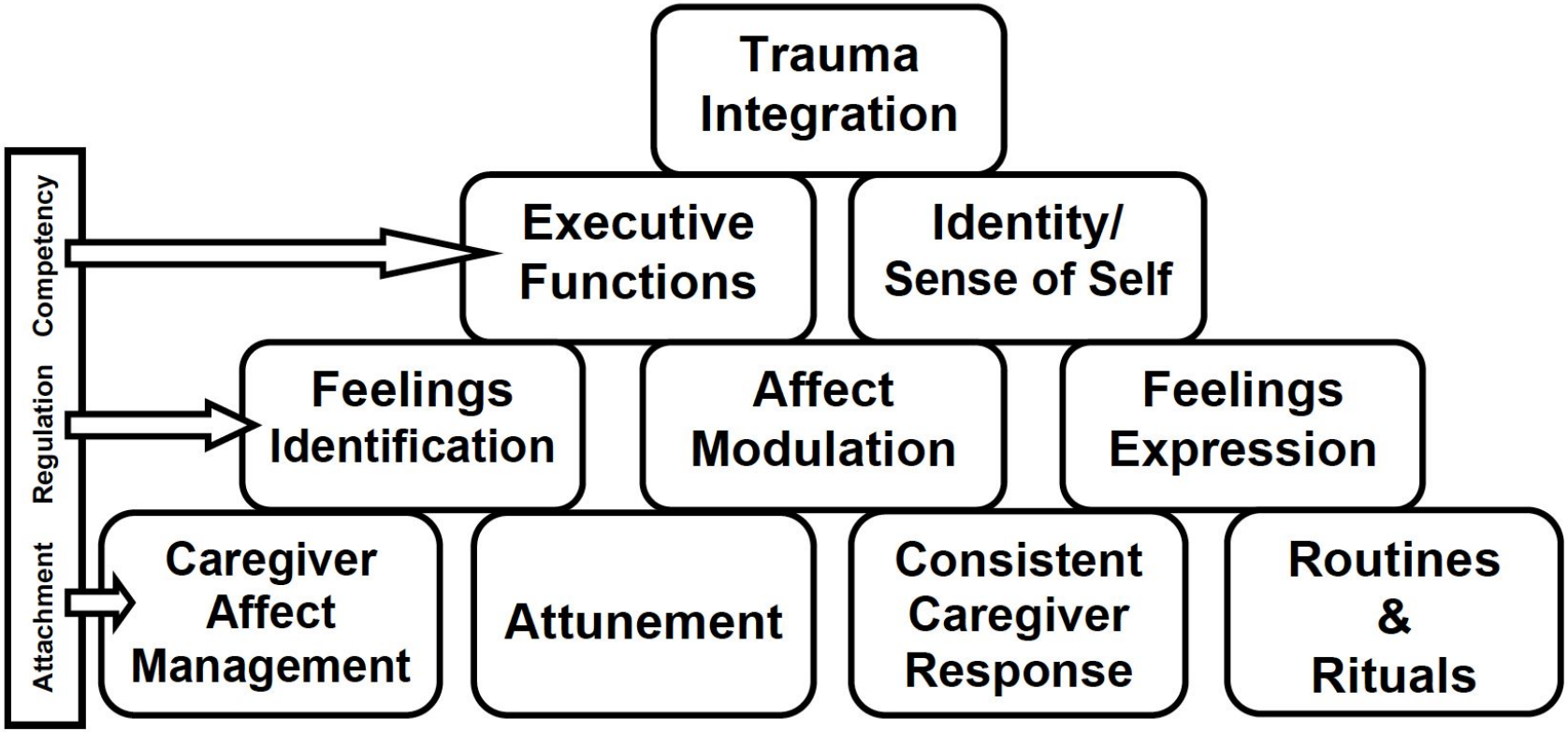
- Reasons families may resist home visits
  - Family's fear
    - Outside entities (DCFS)
    - Disability
    - Cultural (letting people into home)
    - Past experience with school
    - Judgement
  - So how do we overcome these fears?

ARC Model

- **A:** Attachment~work on strengthening the family system through giving support, teaching skills and working on relationships
- **R:** Regulation~work on identifying feelings & learning to cope and manage emotions and behaviors
- **C:** Competency~focus on resiliency, empowerment and identity

- Blaustein, M. & Kinniburgh, K. (2010). *Treating traumatic stress in children and adolescents: How to foster resilience through attachment, self-regulation, and competency.*

- https://arcframework.org/what-is-arc



The Core Building Blocks of the ARC Model
(adapted from Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010)

How can I use this in the Classroom?

- Creating a safe space:
  - routines and rituals-greetings, transitions, goodbyes
  - Meeting the student where they are at
  - Build relationships:be welcoming, open, and understanding
- Social skills instruction
  - Zones of Regulation
  - How Does Your Engine Run?

Considerations of Different Populations

- Working with students in general education
  - May be more willing to have initial contact and home visits
- Working with students in special education
  - May be more difficult to start home visits

What Does the Research Say?

- Core services~research completed to look at the “Best Clinical Models for Hammitt”
- Intervention in the natural setting or community is best
- Case worker must have a relationship with the client for it to be successful
- Starting with a positive teacher-student relationship can be a huge asset in getting a family to schedule

How to build relationships with difficult to reach families

- It’s hard, but well worth it!
- Look at family needs to see how we can best serve
  - Food bank
  - Wish list
  - Gas cards
  - Listen to their agenda
- Honoring where the family is at
  - No home visit
  - Meet in community
  - Meet at school

What Can the Teacher Do?

- Build relationship with student first!
  - This is key and can make all the difference
- Keeping it positive…use the initial time to send home positive insights about students
- Asking for convenient means for notes home
  - May have to get creative with notes
- Be open and understanding
  - Put yourself in their shoes

Staying Safe

- Be aware of school policies…are you allowed to do this??
- What is the purpose of going on the home visit?
- Have someone go with for the initial home visit if you don’t know the family
- Some homes you just shouldn’t go to and have to be okay with that
  - How can you be visible in the neighborhood or present outside of the school environment
- School social worker can help facilitate

Safety

- Be aware of belonging
  - Some uninvited friends may come back
    - Fleas, bed bugs, roaches
  - Can happen at school when families come to visit
- Don’t try to be a hero!
  - If you know the area is not safe, do not go
  - If the home isn’t safe, do not go!

Medication

- What are your roles and responsibilities?
- Are we allowed to suggestion medications?
- Data data data!

Benefits

- Communication
  - difficult conversations
- Meeting student needs
  - basic needs
  - social/emotional
  - academic
- Understanding family perspective
- Collaboration
  - curriculum
  - future planning

References

- Good Reading!
  - *The Elephant in the Playroom: Ordinary Parents Write Intimately and Honestly about Raising Kids with Special Needs* by Denise Brodey
  - *Freeing Your Child from Negative Thinking: Powerful, Practical Strategies to Build a Lifetime of Resilience, Flexibility, and Happiness* By Tamar E. Chansky, Ph.D
  - *Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom* By Kristin Souers with Pete Hall
  - *Easy to Love, Difficult to Discipline: The 7 Basic Skills for Turning Conflict into Cooperation* By Becky A. BAiley, Ph.D
  - *Getting Special Needs Kids Ready for the Real World: Special Education from a Love and Logic Perspective* by David Funk

Questions? Comments? Follow up?

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