Supporting School-Level Root Cause Analyses of Disproportionate Discipline Outcomes
<table>
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<th>Session Content</th>
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Root Cause Analyses

Dr. David Osher
Why the Root Cause Analysis Guide

- Disparities are pervasive and hard to address
- The fact that they are not just based upon individual factors is reflected in their presence across and throughout multiple systems
  - Health & Mental Health
  - Child Welfare
  - Juvenile Justice & Adult Corrections
  - Education
    - Opportunities to Learn
    - Academic Outcomes
    - Discipline
We often find it hard to:

- Look beyond the symptoms
- Have honest, non-defensive and non-blaming conversations about issues that affect those who experience disparities directly, e.g.,
  - Race
  - Gender
  - Culture
  - Disability
- Transform these conversations into systemic changes
Why the Root Cause Analysis Guide

- Hard problems like disparities are likely to be routinized, systemic, and embedded in what people take for granted.

- We often silo interconnected matters, e.g.,
  - Academics
  - Experience of Climate and Conditions for Learning and Engagement
  - Student Support
  - Discipline

- Small decisions that don’t stand out matter or accumulate.

- We often employ “victim blaming approaches” rather than an ecological and transactional approaches.
Find and Address the Root Causes

- What’s the problem?
- Why is it happening?
- What can be done to prevent it from happening again?
Where to Look for Causes, Needs and Strengths?
What Do We Know About Disparities: Group and Organization Factors

- Race Matters
- Culture Matters
- Ethnicity Matters
- Language Matters
- History Matters
- Poverty Matters
- Local Context Matters
- Families Matter
- Organizational Capacity Matters
- Planning and Continuous Improvement Matter
What Do We Know About Disparities: Individual Factors

- Beliefs Matter
- Knowledge Matters
- Mindsets Matter
- Attitudes Matter
- Motivations Matter
- Biases Matter - explicit, implicit, attribution
- Leadership and Support Matter
Action Planning Guide

- **Audience**: school teams and district teams
- **Goal**: for teams to use a data informed process to examine disparities in school discipline and adjust policy and practices
- **Foundation for the Guide**: *School Climate and Discipline: A Guidance Package and the School Discipline Consensus Report*

Three important areas:

1) Climate and prevention
2) Clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and consequences
3) Measurable equity and continuous improvement
Core team members may serve on various interventions teams. Key is diversity and inclusion.
Question: Do disparities in school discipline exist in our school or district?

Stage 1 Tasks:

- 1.1 Determine Data Needs
- 1.2 Designate Data Gatherers
- 1.3 Identify the Data You Already Collect
- 1.4 Determine Additional Data Needs
- 1.5 Ensure Data Privacy and Quality
- 1.6 Disaggregate Data
- 1.7 Analyze Data for Disparities
- 1.8 Develop Preliminary Findings and Identify Disparity Issues
- 1.9 Prepare to Present Your Findings
Big Risk Questions

How many students are subjected to disciplinary action?

To what extent are students in specific demographic groups experiencing exclusionary discipline?

Which student demographic groups are at the greatest risk for exclusionary disciplinary action?

What is the rationale behind disciplinary actions taken against students? Is disciplinary action taken uniformly regardless of the type of offense or does the severity of the action taken vary?

How have exclusionary disciplinary practices influenced student outcomes? Is the school pushing students out or is the school or district maintaining responsibility for educating students despite the disciplinary actions taken against them?
Question: What are the root causes of disparities in school discipline?

Stage 2 Tasks:

- 2.1 Generate Possible Causes and Explanations
- 2.2 Collect and Review Qualitative Data to Validate Your Conclusions
  - Compendium of School Discipline Laws and Regulations
- 2.3 Conduct a Root Cause Analysis (diagnostic template)
Root Causes of Disparities

Range of Domains:

- Procedural matters (policy on tardiness)
- Practices (curriculum, instruction)
- School climate ad culture (e.g. norms, beliefs, rituals)
- Systemic factors (e.g. class placements)
- Staff attitudes and beliefs

Other Factors:

- Early school history lacked access to clubs, extracurricular activities or challenging curricula
- Capacity Issues (staff skills, tools, training, access to support)
- Intervention issues (limited and less supportive)
- Bias
- Policy Issues
- Attitude, knowledge or behavior
Question: How will you address the root causes of disparities in school discipline?

Stage 3 Tasks

- 3.1 Share Your Findings with the Community
- 3.2 Develop an Action Plan
- 3.3 Implement the Action Plan

TIP: clearly define roles and responsibilities and clearly define a review/revise/action planning process….how to sustain this work….
## Action Planning Guide Includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource 1</th>
<th>Glossary</th>
<th>This resource defines a selection of terms underlined in the guide and describes how they apply to addressing discipline disparities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource 2</td>
<td>Discipline Data Checklist</td>
<td>This resource helps determine and track which data you collect, including identifying gaps to be filled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource 3</td>
<td>Data Mining Decision Tree Tip Sheet</td>
<td>This resource offers graphical guidance on data collection decisions to be made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource 4</td>
<td>Disciplinary Disparities Risk Assessment Tool</td>
<td>This resource provides a series of Microsoft Excel-based worksheets with detailed instructions on what data to collect, how to collect them, how to enter them into the tool, how to answer key questions, and how to analyze your results. The tool autogenerates graphic representations of your results. This tool can be used as-is, modified, or serve as a model for designing a tool that can integrate with or import data from an existing school or district database or student management system. The tool also can be used in concert with existing data collection efforts, such as PBIS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource 5</td>
<td>Supportive Data Resources</td>
<td>This resource describes the type of data your school or district may already be collecting under federal grants and initiatives as well as behavioral strategies, such as PBIS or restorative practices, which can inform your disciplinary analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource 6</td>
<td>Action Plan Template</td>
<td>This resource provides a blank template for you to gather important information as you work through each of the three stages, culminating in a complete plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource 7</td>
<td>Root Cause Diagnostic Tree</td>
<td>This resource provides a blank template for you to fill in issues, causes, root causes, and corrective actions as they are identified.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Let’s examine three risk calculations (risk index; risk ratio; risk gap) to identify potential disparities
School “X”

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

- Two or More Races: 10.2%
- White: 29.4%
- Native Hawaiian: 0.0%
- Hispanic: 17.7%
- Black: 30.9%
- Asian: 10.7%
- American Indian: 1.0%

N=401
Purpose: The risk index indicates the underlying rate in which a demographic group (e.g., black students or black male students) receives a disciplinary action or a set of disciplinary actions (e.g., one or more suspensions).

Illustrative Question: What is the likelihood that black students experience one or more suspensions?
Middle School’s In-School Suspensions:

\[
\frac{44}{124} = 35.5\% \\
\frac{9}{118} = 7.6\%
\]
What percentage of students in each racial/ethnic group experience exclusionary discipline? Conditional formatting has been applied to assist you. The darker the shading, the greater the percentage of students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISK INDEX BY RACE/ETHNICITY</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black or African-American</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latino</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expulsion with Educational Services</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expulsion without Educational Services</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-School Suspension</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td><strong>7.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-School Suspension</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral: Law Enforcement</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral: Office</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Related Arrest</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Risk Ratio**

- **Purpose**: The risk ratio can be used to represent the likelihood of a specific or set of disciplinary action(s) (e.g., one or more suspensions) for a target demographic group (e.g., Black students, Hispanic male students) in relation to one or more peer groups.

- **Illustrative Question**: What is the likelihood that Black students will experience one or more suspensions compared to White students?
Middle School’s In-School Suspensions: \[
\frac{44}{124} \div \frac{9}{118} = 4.7
\]
Risk Gap

- **Purpose**: The risk gap can be used to represent the difference in receiving a disciplinary action or a set of disciplinary actions (e.g., one or more suspensions) between a target group (e.g., Black students or Black male students) and a comparison group (e.g., White students or White male students).

- **Illustrative Question**: To what extent do Black and White students differ in the likelihood of receiving one or more suspensions?
Risk Gap (continued)

Middle School In-School Suspensions:

\[
\frac{\text{Number of Black students (unduplicated count) subjected to one or more suspensions}}{\text{Total number of Black students}} - \frac{\text{Number of White students (unduplicated student count) subjected to one or more suspensions}}{\text{Total number of White students}} = 27.9
\]
Risk Gap between Racial/Ethnic Minority Students and White Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Expulsion with Educational Services</th>
<th>Expulsion without Educational Services</th>
<th>In School Suspension</th>
<th>Out of School Suspension</th>
<th>Referral: Law enforcement</th>
<th>Referral: Office</th>
<th>School-Related Arrest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-0.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-3.0%</td>
<td>-6.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-0.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>-1.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-0.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interpreting Discipline Disparity Data: Barriers to Reflective Conversations

Dr. Russ Skiba
Barriers to Reflective Conversations

- Belief that discipline disparities are due to poor kids behaving badly
- Our history
- Fear of holding direct conversations about race and culture
“Is ethnicity the problem or is poverty the problem?”

--School Principal

(Skiba et al., 2005)
Can Poverty Explain Disproportionality?

- Discipline and special education placement are related to SES
  - Poverty makes a *small and inconsistent* contribution, but...

- Effects of race remain after taking poverty into account

- Is poverty an alterable variable?
Of 32 infractions, only 8 significant differences:

- **White students referred more for:**
  - Smoking
  - Vandalism
  - Leaving w/o permission
  - Obscene Language

- **Black students referred more for:**
  - Disrespect
  - Excessive Noise
  - Threat
  - Loitering

Possible Contributors to Disparities

- Longitudinal Issues
- Climate, conditions for learning, and learning environment
- Capacity
- Intervention issues
- Bias issues
- Policy issues
- Attitude, knowledge and behavior issues
What History Has Left Us

- **Racial and ethnic stereotypes**
  - Black boys = “lazy”, black girls = “loud”, black men = “dangerous”
  - Expressed through implicit bias, micro-aggression

- **Segregation and Resegregation**
  - African American & Latino: 60% segregated
  - White: 77% segregated
Q: As you may know, a grand jury has decided not to bring criminal charges against a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, over the shooting of an unarmed black teen-ager last summer. Do you approve or disapprove of the grand jury’s decision not to charge the police officer?

Results by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Approve</th>
<th>Disapprove</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET Non-White</strong></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Published: December 2

The Washington Post - ABC News poll
Uncharted Territory: The Fear of Discussing Race

- Does disparity = racism?
  - Cultural responsiveness as a continuum and a skill

- Fear of offending

- Yes, but how do we do it?
Recommendations: “You Can’t Fix What You Don’t Talk About”

- **Data Analysis:** How extensive and where are the racial/ethnic disparities?
- **Be Willing to Discuss Disparities and Their Causes Thoroughly and Reflectively**
- **Develop Interventions that Include Race-Conscious Analysis of Causes**
- **Monitor Intervention Outcomes with Disaggregated Data**
Facilitating Conversations about Race and Discipline

- Develop diverse teams at all levels
  - Include school leaders, board, staff, community

- Leaders can help avoid “clumsy race talk”:
  - Model a willingness to ask probing questions
  - Acknowledge discomfort and “mistakes”
  - Model commitment
  - Take advantage of “race teachable moments”

- Part of long and evolving process
Resources

- **Information on Disproportionality**
  - Equity Project at Indiana University:  www.indiana.edu/~equity
  - Discipline Disparities Collaborative: www.indiana.edu/~atlantic

- **Books & Readings:**
  - Beverly Tatum: “Can We Talk About Race?”
  - Mica Pollock: “Everyday Anti-Racism”
  - Glenn Singleton: “Courageous Conversations”
  - Lisa Delpit “Other People’s Children”
  - Gloria Ladson-Billings: “The Dreamkeepers”
  - Others: Sonia Nieto, Tim Wise, Geneva Gay, Helen Fox, Pedro Noguera

- **Websites**
  - Kirwan Institute  http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/
“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

--James A. Baldwin
Reflections from a Superintendent

Dr. Jennifer Cheatham
Discussion/ Questions and Answers

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