Preventing Problems by Promoting Positive Practices™

Preventing Problems by Promoting Positive Practices (P⁵) empowers school personnel to create a more positive school climate. The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) funded the P⁵ training curriculum, which has school and community-based applications for school resource officers (SROs) and security officers (SSOs) as well as educators. The training and action plan process facilitates the implementation of new positive practices by school personnel.

TRAINING

Broad Goals
The P⁵ training offers innovative research-based concepts and promising practices for SROs, SSOs, and school personnel (e.g., school administrators, school psychologists, and school counselors) to collaborate in improving the four primary elements of school climate: environment, safety, relationships and engagement. Working together, they 1) envision a positive school climate with stakeholders, 2) select the appropriate role (e.g., enforcer, counselor, educator or emergency manager) to address a situation or concern, 3) use a promotion/prevention mindset to promote aspirations and prevent problems, and 4) promote positive practices.

At the completion of training, an administrative educator (e.g., principal, assistant principal or designee) and SRO/SSO work collaboratively to develop an action plan for climate improvement. In addition to climate goals, the multi-disciplinary trainers solicit best practices and allow meaningful dialogue to clarify the roles of educators and SROs in relation to climate change, especially as it relates to addressing school code of conduct violations and school discipline. Ultimately, safer schools and communities are cultivated when educators and SROs/SSOs are jointly trained to improve their interactions with youth by understanding implicit biases, youth development and behavior.

Training Delivery
A school, educational or developmental psychologist in tandem with a practicing SRO/SSO delivers the training curriculum. This multi-disciplinary approach aims to improve training outcomes by engaging key school stakeholders collectively or individually. Training delivery can be modified to fit a one-day or 1.5-day structure.
LEARNING OUTCOMES

Introductory Module: Promoting Positive Practices for a Positive School Climate

- Understand the four principles of the Preventing Problems by Promoting Positive Practices (P5) approach: engage stakeholders, select the appropriate role, use promotion/prevention mindsets, and promote positive practices.
- Understand the four elements of a positive school climate: environment, safety, relationships, and engagement
- Understand the promotion and prevention-focused practices associated with each element

Module 1: School Environment

- Summarize the approach and practices associated with environment design to prevent crime and promote positives
- Summarize the benefits of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Module 2: Safety and Discipline

- Summarize the factors influencing youth development (e.g., the adolescent brain, family and peer cultures, and diverse student worldviews)
- Explain how needs motivate youth behavior and employ strategies to flip negative/antisocial behaviors to positive/prosocial behaviors
- Employ appropriate disciplinary responses based on an understanding of the “whole student.”

Module 3: Relationships and Engagement

- Summarize the factors influencing one’s own development and well-being at work
- Use tools stratgies (de-escalation and communication techniques) to build positive relationships with students (especially subpopulations)
- Explain the research on bias, especially that well-intentioned people (educators and SROs) hold biases which impact their perceptions and actions
- Use tools that help recognize implicit biases and apply techniques to uncover and deal with unbiased-behavioral responses

Module 4: Positive Problem Solving

- Summarize the SARA method of community policing for effectively problem solving
- Apply the SARA problem solving method to solve three distinct problems: 1) prevent problems (i.e., reduce presence of a negative), 2) develop strength (promote a positive), and 3) flip to the positive (reduce a negative by promoting the positive)
- Apply the problem solving model as an individual, in school teams or with students in a classroom, community-service, or event model
POSITIVE PRACTICES ACTION PLAN

At the conclusion of the training, participants begin action planning by selecting positive practices strategies and tailoring them for implementation in their school. Some examples of positive practices are provided below and organized based on the primary school climate domain they impact.

School Environment
- Walk the hallways or patrol locations during specific times when problems arise
- Use wall hangings that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the school members
- Use a recognition wall located in the main office or hallway for students who excelled academically, socially or character (caring behavior or community service)

Safety and Discipline
- Adjust school disciplinary procedures for fairness/equity based on best practices and record progress in comparison to prior school outcomes
- Establish a tip line for students to report threats, concerns and bullying
- Develop a threat assessment and emergency management safety team

Relationships
- Promote belongingness and connection to the school through “get to know you” activities in classrooms
- Teach students how to solve school climate problems using the SARA problem solving model
- Develop a diversity and inclusion campaign that targets bullying, homophobia, sexism, racism, or other school identified concern.

Engagement
- Promote student voices of climate problems through a principal’s council
- Teach and empower students to solve climate problems
- Implement a peer mentoring or youth-led prevention program

IMPACT

Case Study: Baltimore City Public Schools (MD)
The Past President of the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) Don Bridges and a Developmental Psychologist provided a two-day training for 77 Baltimore City School Police officers. These officers discussed risk factors (e.g., drugs, gangs, bullying, shootings) and strengths (e.g., relationships, activists, mentors, church) within the students, school and community. Then, they identified specific practices to implement for improving school culture for 2017-2018.

Case Study: Wicomico County (MD)
After a training in Wicomico County, the educators and SROs collaborated to infuse P5 practices within their school improvement plans for the 2016-2017 school year. Overwhelmingly, participants
report that the information opens their eyes and will help them in their day-to-day work. Participants consistently rate the exercises and videos as “excellent.” One participant stated: “It taught me to be open-minded about cultures.”

Other comments include:

- I learned a lot on how to deal with children and all the different personalities
- Listen! Sometimes there isn’t a problem...kids just want to be heard
- Learning some more in-depth ways to look at dealing with juveniles and staff
- Opens your mind to improve
- Fostered positive attitude to motivate personnel
- Focus on building positive relationships
- Using different strategies to solve problems.
- Evaluating risks
- Valuable resources to use that weren’t used before

**Case Study: St. Mary’s County (MD)**

In St. Mary’s County, SROs and SSOs were trained jointly. SROs were provided technical assistance to improve and implement their action plans. An evaluation was conducted to assess the satisfaction and perceived knowledge improvements of participants:

- 91% reported satisfaction with the training
- 74% reported knowledge gains on adolescent behavior
- 89% reported knowledge gains on the SARA problem solving method

**CONTACT US**

A positive safe and secure school climate awaits.
Contact us now to find out if a training session is right for your team!

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