



Missouri Interagency Positive Behavior Support Statewide Team (MO IPBS) Part 2

What is the Mission of MO-IPBS?

The mission of the MO IPBS team is to foster collaboration across state services to ensure the delivery of evidence-based, outcome-focused, and person-centered services and supports that improve quality of life for individuals across the lifespan, and to leverage limited state funds by sharing resources for training in positive behavior support, person-centered, and wraparound planning. This document summarizes information shared by the MO IPBS team and by individuals throughout Missouri who are interested in fostering interagency collaboration. For more information about positive behavior support, wraparound, and person-centered planning, please see the MO IPBS Summer, 2013 Report (Part 1).



Inside this issue:

What MO PBS Team Members are Learning from the Community	1
Methods Used for Conducting Interviews	2
MO IPBS Team Members Progress and Strength	3
MO IPBS Team Members Interagency Collaboration	3
School Professionals Appreciate Support	4
School Professionals Goals for and Interest in Interagency Collaboration	5
Behavior Resource Team: Progress, Goals and Challenges	6
Summary and Next Steps	7
Resources and Related Information	8

What MO PBS Team Members Are Learning from the Community

Interagency collaboration across education, human and community services is an essential part of positive behavior support. Children, and adults with disabilities need support across home, work, education, and community settings.

When organizations supporting children and adults with disabilities share a common language, common strategies, and unified problem-solving strategies, individuals and their families often report that their services are improved and feelings of anxiety and stress are decreased.

The MO IPBS team is interested in learning more about the types of interagency collaboration already taking place at regional and local levels and is seeking the experience and recommendations community members have about how interagency collaboration can be improved across the state.

One of the first steps taken by the MO IPBS team was a statewide self-assessment process. This self-assessment included interviews and focus group sessions with professionals, family members, and state professionals. The interviews and focus group sessions focused on the following questions:

- ◆ What types of effective interagency planning is occurring at the regional or local level with Missouri?
- ◆ What additional interagency training, policy, or advocacy is needed at the statewide level to better support individuals across the lifespan at the state and local level?



What MO PBS Team Members Are Learning from the Community, Cont. from Page 1

- ◆ What are the strengths and weaknesses of the MO IPBS Team and what main activities have been accomplished thus far?

Both the interviews and focus group sessions started during the "All Systems Go for Staff and Student Success", 2012 Summer Institute sponsored by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, June 18-20, 2012.

Interviews have continued throughout this year. A wide variety of stakeholders attended this event including education professionals from different areas within schools. Sixteen Behavioral Resource Team (BRT) members, individuals who provide behavioral support to children and adults across the state of Missouri, were invited to attend this event. BRTs are funded by the state through the Department of Mental Health and Human Services.

Methods Used For Conducting Interviews with MO IPBS Team and Teachers and Administrators

Interviews occurred with education, mental health, and state-level professionals.

Twelve school staff members were interviewed including both teachers and administrators. Sixteen Behavioral Resource Technicians (BRTs) participated in a focus group at the MO SWPBS Summer Institute. Nine MO IPBS Team members were interviewed later throughout the fall and winter of 2012.

Interviews, organized as individual and group sessions were recorded with permission from participants. University of Kansas professionals who have been collaborating with the MO IPBS team coordinated the interview and analysis process.

Potential themes were identified across interviews and focus group

transcripts. These themes were then given codes by the individuals analyzing the data, and the themes were refined over time.

Themes appear across and within different types of individuals interviewed. The results of this study are organized by the different voices reflected in the study: MO IPBS Team Members, School Professionals, and BRT members.

In the last part of this section, themes that connect the three stakeholder groups and next steps will be described for expanding the study to capture additional perspectives from regional stakeholders including family members and local and regional interagency teams.



"...it [interagency planning] reminds me of...of a river after a rainstorm. It was very muddy and churning because everybody brought in their own ideas... But we came in from very different ways and I feel like over time, we're ...turning into a nice calm clear stream where we really are headed down the same path and we understand each other."

MO IPBS Team Members Identify Progress And Strengths

Several strengths were identified by the MO IPBS Team Members including their team composition, planning processes, and action steps. A number of interviewees found that the diversity and experience of team members has been invaluable.

Team members provided specific examples of progress that has been made over time. Several individuals indicated that the development within the MO IPBS team of a shared vocabulary was an important first step.

Early discussions showed differences in the ways terms are used across different departments within the state and across fields of study.

When asked about how the team and their action-planning

processes have changed over time, a MO IPBS participant said; *“I think that our interactions are probably more frequent and deeper than in... the beginning because we have more clarity of purpose.”*

While another person felt that *“...our plan has become more focused...”*

“I think the years of experience if you totaled it up and the diversity of roles that we’ve all had in terms of social services and education probably make us much more of a group.”

MO IPBS Team Members: Benefits of and Goals for Interagency Collaboration

Team members described the benefits of interagency collaboration although early steps were sometimes difficult.

For instance, one person noted that... *“It was very painful initially, you know, like the logic model and what are we here to do. ... it was like looking very close up at a planet and trying to describe it...”*

Those interviewed in the MO IPBS team felt that the main goal should be on improving quality of life and making life easier for families

seeking assistance.

Although the team is working on state-level issues, most individuals interviewed felt that the goal is to change how services are provided for individuals and their families.

One person described this goal in the following manner. *“(A)...system and infrastructure that is in place so that everybody that is involved in working with the child can be sitting around the table plan together, implement together, track the data together, and make decisions together on one plan versus multiple plans that are that could be at cross purposes of each other.”*

Another participant noted *“.... it’s going to be to the benefit of the kid and to the benefit of the family as well as the people that are carrying out the plan if everybody can work together and be*

on the same page.”

Other individuals focused on the importance of prevention-based strategies and indicated that without efforts that focus on early problem solving, the state of Missouri will be forced to expend more resources and time responding to problem behaviors.

Overall, many MO IPBS team members were excited about moving forward.

After seeing a presentation about the efforts by MO IPBS members to implement a tiered model of positive behavior support with organizations who support individuals with IDD, one person noted that... *“Wow, this is what it’s all about and this is really going to help people truly be on the same page and have the same vision.”*



School Professionals Appreciate Support from MO IPBS and RPDCs

Interviews with school professionals resulted in different themes related to interagency collaboration.

Some individuals interviewed indicated that they are just beginning to think about interagency collaboration as it relates to school-wide positive behavior support. For these participants, the schools and their teams are just starting school-wide positive behavior support implementation at the primary prevention level.

Many positive behavior support trainers value interagency collaboration but do not always address this issue in the first years of implementation. The first years of implementation are meant to establish the internal problem-solving and communication systems.

When asked about collaboration, individuals new to school-wide positive behavior support responded to questions about collaboration by describing their work with professionals representing different state and local education-related systems.

This type of collaboration might be better described as intra-agency collaboration.

One of the partners involved in intra-agency collaboration is the Regional Professional Development Centers or RPDCs.

Professionals from RPDCs help provide districts and schools with training and technical assistance as part of the state's Missouri School-wide Positive Behavior Support effort.

A significant number of individuals interviewed indicated that they were very pleased with the work of the SW-PBS consultants in the Regional Development and Prevention Center (RPDCs).

One individual stated that *"I'm proud of the kind of support we've received... hopefully the funding continues 'cause it really is making a difference."*

Another person indicated that the support they received from the RPDC's training and technical assistance has clearly resulted in positive outcomes for the school, *"We've seen significant decreases in office referrals and we've seen gains in academic achievement as measured by the state assessments and there's countless other schools that mirror that pattern..."*

All of the individuals participating were able to articulate how the Regional Professional Development

Centers provided technical assistance and training to their buildings; and many described their relationship with the centers as a true partnership.

It was clear from those analyzing the interview information that many Missouri schools felt supported by their Regional Professional Development Centers.



"...in the rural area, that's the best thing that's ever happened (working with Regional Professional Development Centers. Those smaller schools are getting the information and they're making changes."

School Professionals Goals for and Interest in Interagency Collaboration

Although many individuals interviewed indicated that interagency collaboration was something that their school and district needed to develop further, most of the school professionals interviewed were interested in interagency collaboration.

There were clearly pockets of interagency collaboration occurring across the state that were quite sophisticated in nature. Some of the individuals spoke of local and regional grants that were awarded to enhance interagency collaboration. These individuals spoke of wraparound planning and systems of care teams where individuals are working together to improve outcomes for children in Missouri.

The individuals reporting more in-depth interagency collaboration efforts were often from schools in urban areas. The participants described formal collaborative partnerships between their schools and local mental health organizations that have been in place for quite some time.

In some cases, mental health agencies sent staff members to work directly within school buildings for partial or full days throughout the school year. Interviewees said that the goal of these mental health staff members was to address the non-academic needs of students.

The types of mental Health Services included supporting families in need of fundamental resources and working with children and family members experiencing significant life stressors that can impact a child's ability to function in the school setting.

Some of these same participants expressed anxiety over the future of financial support for such partnerships:

"They [mental health counselors in the school] are there for the family and provide whatever supports the family or child needs... the problem though is we lost the grant this year, so we're not going to be able to do that. That was very sad. We're going to be back on our own; I worry about, everything being grant funded."

Others expressed concern that funding may be withdrawn for school-wide positive behavior support training and technical assistance

"...I think that if the state were to step back and not offer that support, it would be detrimental..."

The need for assistance to support children and their families was a theme that many participants described as essential.

"It's extremely important because many of our students have challenges we're not equipped to deal with, you know.... so we need a lot of supports.... And also a lot of our students come to us three or four grade levels behind, so we need help. We have to seek out supports and interventions for our students; that's what we do."



Methods Used for Conducting Interviews with BRT Focus Groups

A focus group of sixteen mental health professionals was conducted onsite at the MO SWPBS Summer Institute. Focus group sessions were conducted as in-depth interviews with a small group of individuals who were asked a series of questions.

The interview lasted an hour and the transcript was recorded and transcribed later for analysis.

Although two focus groups of eight individuals each was originally planned, the two groups were combined in the interest of time.

Two individuals from Kansas facilitated the session. These facilitators made sure that everyone had an equal chance to participate in the discussion.

The information gathered from this focus group session provided a different view of interagency

collaboration although many of the themes were similar compared to MO IPBS team members and school professionals.

One unique theme was based on the efforts the BRTs are making to implement positive behavior support across data, systems, and practices.

Behavior Resource Team members provide behavioral expertise across the state. These professionals are contacted when a child or adult is experiencing a crisis resulting in the occurrence of serious problem behavior.



Behavior Resource Team: Progress, Goals and Challenges

The BRTs described the transition that is currently taking place as their roles shift from primarily responding to crises to the more proactive role within their positive behavior support efforts.

That proactive role involves implementing positive behavior support using primary, secondary, and prevention strategies mentioned in Part 1 of this newsletter.

One of the challenges described is that the BRTs are re-educating the people they serve about what their role is within a team.

"It's a whole shift in paradigm of fighting fires to building capacity within the organizations-- whether it's a contracted service provider or residential or day treatment pro-

gram or contracted behavior support provider and building that capacity from the ground up and allowing them to take responsibility and accountability for their systems; and giving them the training and techniques to develop their systems because that's what I see as our role as the BRT is moving to...is helping people build capacity."

Another person indicated that; *"It's been kind of challenging for us to bring this new idea of the tiered system and the universal strategies and it's not that we are going to come in and do this but we are going to teach you those tools, those things to help you to build up those systems of support at that first level to where you less likely have to make referrals to us."*

Behavior Resource Team: Progress, Goals and Challenges, Cont. from Page 6

Other mental health professionals mentioned how helpful it was to be invited to MO SWPBS Summer Institute; that continuing to offer each discipline opportunities for such cross-training will only enhance a sense of shared vision and progress towards on-going action planning and outcomes.

One of the participants described this change in focus as part of a systems change approach: *“I think that planning goes beyond the person-centered orientation to a system’s orientation.”*

The BRTs have described the first efforts to change their role as both challenging and rewarding. The opportunity to observe the school-wide systems and

processes was described as very valuable.

Other participants focused on the issues related to continuing to design more efficient training systems as the BRTs continue facilitating positive behavior support efforts with organizations and families.

An individual in the focus group session indicated that strategies for systematically reaching out to all of the organizations is needed. This participant also noted that it may be useful to identify creating better communication systems with agencies interested in positive behavior support.

As with the school professionals, the BRTs mentioned the concerns about the stability of funding for some of their wraparound or interagency efforts:

“We had a grant through our CPS [Child Protective Services] agency about three years ago that actually brought a wraparound steering team together of all of the agencies; many of the state players and there were several componentsand that grant went away; it kind of fell away, but some of us continued to stay so we have built those relationships and we still know who to call in our area...”

Summary and Next Steps

Although each of the stakeholder groups discussed different issues they have encountered in their work, you can see a number of themes connecting these individuals. These themes include:

- An emphasis on using systems change to create positive proactive environments,
- Common language and common strategies are needed to improve collaboration across services,
- A need for structured

opportunities for improving interagency collaboration and to learn more about what resources are available in the community,

- Recognition that local and regional areas can build on strengths already in place within both formal and informal collaboration efforts,
- The importance of working together to create the best outcomes for individuals and their families, and

- The perception that decisions about funding can create challenges for interagency collaboration.

Follow-up interviews were conducted at the 2013 MO SW-PBS Summer Training Institute, Pay it Forward with School-wide PBS for School Success. The interviews conducted have provided an important first step in the MO IPBS assessment and action-planning process.

In addition, two regional pilot areas within Missouri are currently working on the develop-

ment of tools, resources, data, and processes that may be useful to other regions across Missouri.

Interviews will be conducted with the regional team members in these areas to continue gathering input from the variety of stakeholders that are naturally part of interagency collaboration.

The team hopes to collect interviews from the wide range of individuals who can contribute to the MO IPBS team’s evaluation of interagency collaboration in Missouri.

Resources And Related Information

Missouri Interagency Positive Behavior Support Team (MO IPBS) Presentation from the 2012 Association for Positive Behavior Support Conference

<http://www.pbskansas.org/files/apbs2012f10.pdf>

Overview of Missouri School-wide Positive Behavior Support

http://pbs-dev.missouri.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/MO_SWPBS_OVERVIEW_2012.pdf

Missouri School-wide Positive Behavior Support Website

<http://pbissmissouri.org/>

MO SWPBS Annual Report

<http://pbissmissouri.org/about/publications>

Missouri Transition Coalitions

<http://transitioncoalition.org/transition/index.php>

Association for Positive Behavior Support

www.apbs.org

National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

www.pbis.org

Community Mapping Tool

http://www.swpbs.org/schoolwide/files/community_mappingworksheetfinaldraft7-11-08ATHv5.pdf

Free Self-paced Online Positive Behavior Support Course

A free online course on Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is now available through e-Learning for Educators at <http://www.elearningmo.org/accessing-fba/>. Developed by Dr. Lori Newcomer, assistant research professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia, this self-paced course provides an awareness of the process for implementing FBA, including behavior basics and the principles and procedures of behavior.

Throughout the course, participants use case studies to become familiar with the FBA process, view tools for information gathering, and see examples of how to use assessment information to develop effective support plans that are linked to the function of the behavior. A self-assessment is also included to check understanding of the course materials.

Questions or comments regarding this course may be directed to Ginger Henry at Ginger.Henry@dese.mo.gov.

