Introduction to Evidence-based School Counseling and Updating the Construct

The Evidence-based School Counseling Conference
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Welcome and Goals for Session

- Brief overview of original model of EBP in School Counseling (2007)
- Evolution of the concepts for EBSC in 2021- updating the model so that it reflects increasing awareness of:
  - the critical need for social justice-oriented and anti-racist school counseling
  - the impact of social contexts on education and student experiences
  - the role of intersectional student social identities in school counseling intervention choices and programming
  - the constraints of empiricism and quantitative research
  - what else?
- What is next?

What Do You Think?

- When you hear "evidence-based school counseling" what words come to mind?

- Please go to https://www.menti.com

- Code: 68177423

Evidence-based School Counseling Now

Ecological Context Factors

School
Peers
Family
Community
State
Political Climate
Country
Economy
Technology Access
Media
Covid19
Etc.

Intervention and Program Evaluation

Outcome Research

Evidence-Based Practice

Problem Description
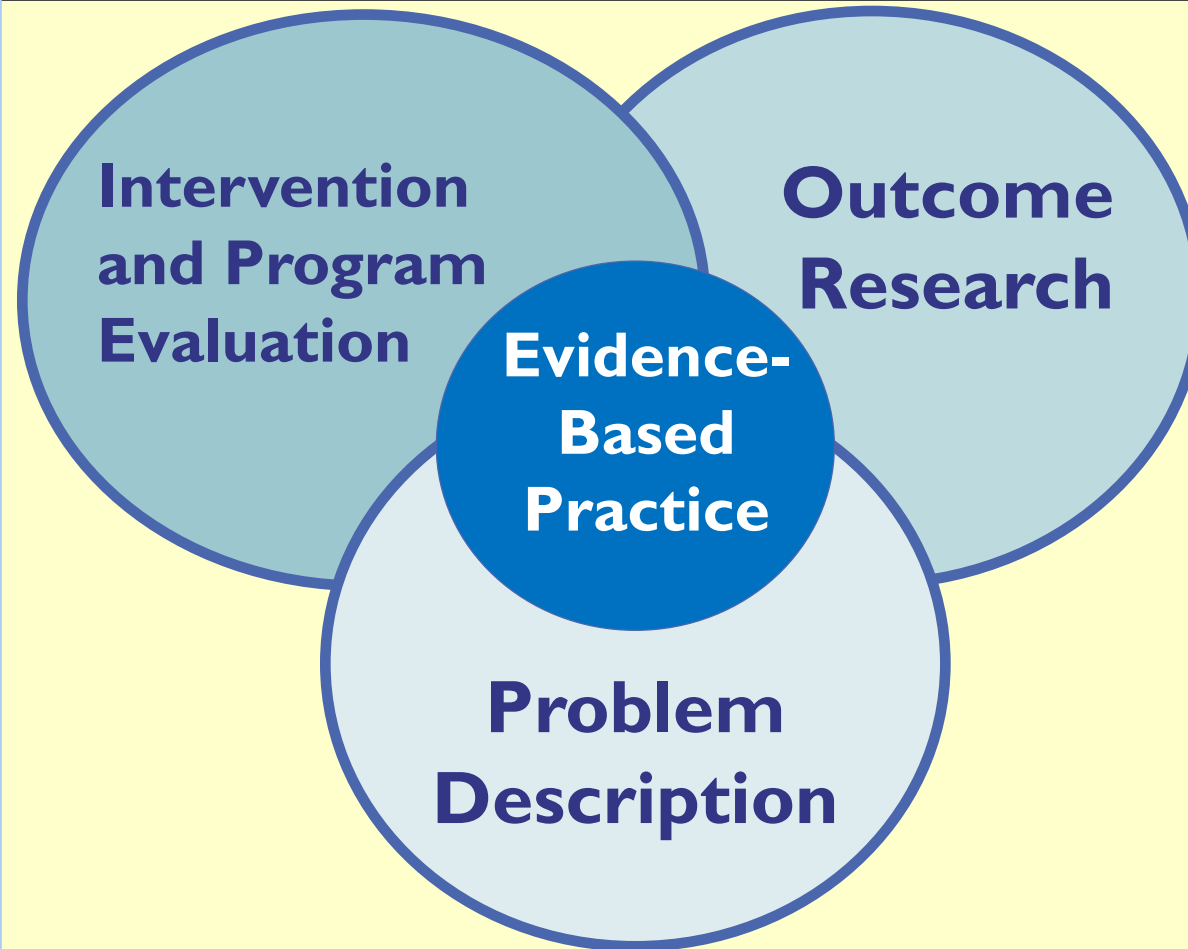
Intersectional Social Identity Contexts

Age
Ability
Gender
SES and Resources
Race
Ethnicity
Nationality
Culture
Religion
Sexual Orientation
Gender Identity
Etc.

Evaluating school counseling efficacy related to closing achievement, opportunity and attainment gaps
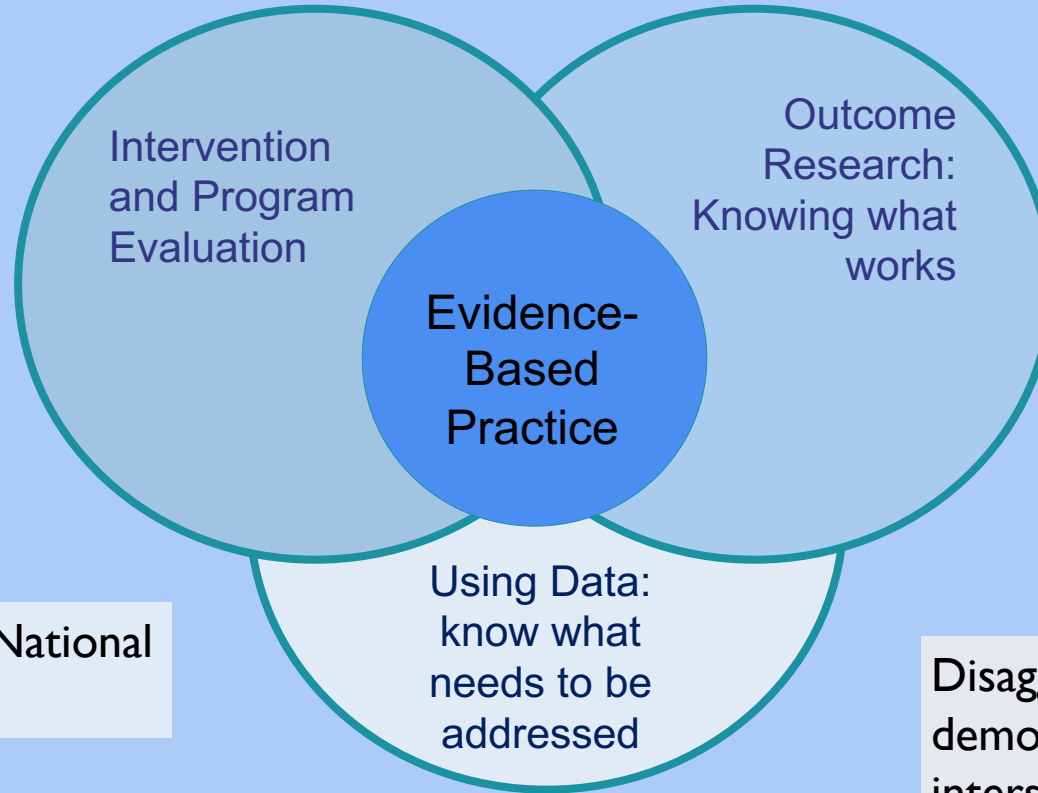
Measuring outcomes related to school counseling programs, interventions, and student competencies

Anti-racist and social justice-focused SC interventions

Collaborating with all school personnel within MTSS programming

Value for qualitative research, critical thinking about empirical research

Intervention and Program Evaluation

Outcome Research: Knowing what works

Evidence-Based Practice

Demonstrating program efficacy with achievement and achievement-related data

Using needs assessments and universal screening to identify mental health challenges and to coordinate appropriate interventions

Linking to ASCA National Model practices

Using Data: know what needs to be addressed

Disaggregating data by student demographics, and considering intersectional student identities when making decisions about programming and interventions

Evidence-based School Counseling 2021

Current Ethical and Accreditation Standards

- The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016) calls for the use of evidence-based practices where available

- The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016) also calls for the use of evidence-based practices in school counseling and in counselor education

- Recent research (Mullen, Stevens & Chae, 2019) indicates that school counselors are interested in implementing evidence-based interventions and want more information about EBP

Some Clarity…

- **Evidence-based practice** (EBP) or **Evidence-based School Counseling** (EBSC) = An integrated use of data, research, and evaluation of outcomes to make decisions about interventions and programs.

  - EBP includes consideration of context factors, student variables, practitioner expertise, and professional wisdom as well as empirical evidence

- **Evidence-based interventions** (EBIs) = Interventions with research rigor at the level required for inclusion in the What Works Clearinghouse or CASEL

  - Almost always randomized control trials (RCT) or quasi-experimental studies

  - Sufficient Power due to adequate sample sizes (big N)

  - Use of reliable and valid measures

- **Research-informed practices** = strategies and activities that are derived from research about effective practices

  - May have research support for the general approach, but lack specific validated intervention (e.g. cross-age peer mentoring, career development counseling)

Updating and Evolving Our Evidence-based School Counseling Model

Data-based Decision Making

➡ Greatest focus historically (Gysbers, 2004)

- SC field now has strategies for implementing data-driven decision-making related to program approaches and interventions (Hartline & Cobia, 2012; Poynton & Carey, 2006)

- The ASCA National Model has clear suggestions and guidelines for the use of data to make decisions

Evolving Data-based Decision Making

- What additional data can be used to create a more accurate picture of our students and their lives?

- When conducting needs assessments, how do we make sure to be inclusive for all students?

- Who is visible/invisible in the data?

- Are there other ways to look at this data that might tell a different story?

- What demographic data is avoided because it might not look good for the school?

- What are some of the hard questions that need to be asked based on the data?

- Are we looking at individual counselor-level data, and related outcomes for students? If not, why not?

Research-informed and Evidence-based Interventions

- When school counselors explore research-informed interventions, they are using the best available evidence about which interventions to use to meet the needs of their students (Zyromski & Mariani, 2016)

- Using interventions and school counseling program components with research evidence of efficacy can help to ensure that our work is making a difference and that we are using our time well

- As a school-based practitioner, this was my greatest concern – "what can I do that will work for my students?"

- This aspect of EBP has been slow to be adopted in part due to the historical lack of EBIs and research about school counseling interventions

Evidence-based Interventions

- Today, interventions with evidence of efficacy are in every domain of school counseling work (see next slide)

- Several national organizations identify relevant resources and disseminate information on their websites (see last slide for resources)

- An ongoing challenge is getting the information to practitioners and counselor educators so that they can use what is now known about effective school counseling practice

- **NOW so many more evidence-based interventions!**
  - ➢ CASEL Guide has 23 PreK-Elementary SEL EBIs
  - ➢ CASEL Guide has 11 MS/HS SEL EBIs
  - ➢ WWC has 16 EBIs to support positive learning behaviors
  - ➢ WWC has 22 EBIs to improve graduation rates
  - ➢ WWC has 10 EBIs for K-10 ELL student support
  - ➢ WWC has 16 EBIs for students with disabilities
  - ➢ Need more college and career counseling interventions

Evolving Evidence-based Interventions

- Is there research about efficacy for a broad range of students in multiple contexts, and for different student populations?

- Do we have qualitative outcome studies, or mixed-methods, in addition to quantitative studies? Quantitative studies can be reductionistic and may need the qualitative data to show the whole picture.

- The intervention research does not have to be done in school counseling. What can we use from other disciplines such as psychology or social work?

- Given the limited research, how do we know what works to create socially just and anti-racist schools?

- Do the EBI materials need to be modified to suit the needs of your students? What would be lost/gained by modifying?

- Are all students receiving the intervention?

Evolving Evidence-based Interventions

- Is there equitable access to innovative EBIs?

- As school counselors and school counseling researchers assess, develop, and adopt EBIs, we need to ask who benefits, who is implementing, and how more students can receive the EBI.

- How can we make sure EBIs meet the specific needs of diverse populations?

- How can we ensure that EBIs are impactful for all communities?

(See McMahon & Patel, 2019)

Evaluation of Student Outcomes and Accountability Practices

- SC profession now has strategies for implementing accountability approaches that demonstrate SC impact on student outcomes (e.g. Stone & Dahir, 2011)

- Most SC have some knowledge of intervention/program evaluation and accountability skills (Young & Kaffenberger, 2015)

- The ASCA National Model includes a variety of accountability practices

Evaluating Student Outcomes – Evolving Practices

- Are all students involved in the evaluation process?

- What/who is not being evaluated because it might be problematic?

- What do we do if our evaluation results are not as we hoped?

- How are SCE programs training SCs in intervention and program evaluation? Are we doing an adequate job with this?

How do we develop an evidence-based school counseling model that truly takes into consideration the complexity and ever-changing nature of our students, school counselors, our profession, schools, and the multiple contexts and ecological systems in which we live? And how has the current pandemic thrown all of this into the air?!

What's Next?

- We expand the focus of evidence-based school counseling to include work that reinforces anti-racist practices and also deconstructs inequitable systems

- We continue to identify our best practices and the related research that demonstrates impact not just of interventions but of all aspects of our programs

- More of the K–12 intervention research is done with school counselors

- We hope that school counselors continue to provide fully equitable access to effective school counseling programs

- We continue to develop interventions and programming that improves students' lives

- We continue to demonstrate the impact of our work for students

- What would you add?

Now What Do You Think?

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Resources For EBP and EBIs

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent School Health, Adolescent Health: What Works In Schools | Adolescent & School Health | CDC

- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, CASEL - CASEL

- National Association for College Admissions Counseling, National Association for College Admission Counseling- NACAC (nacacnet.org)

- National Center for Educational Research, National Center for Education Research (NCER) Home Page, a part of the U.S. Department of Education

- Ronald H. Fredrickson Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation, Home | Cscore (cscoreumass.org)

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Evidence-based Practices Resource Center, https://www.samhsa.gov/ and Search SAMHSA Publications and Digital Products | SAMHSA Publications and Digital Products

- What Works Clearinghouse, WWC | Find What Works! (ed.gov) and specific page on post-secondary counseling at WWC | Back To School (ed.gov)

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