


HOW UNDERSTANDING THE SEL NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES CAN INFORM BULLYING PREVENTION EFFORTS

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1. Students with Learning Disabilities and Bullying
 2. Approaches to bullying prevention: Environmental vs Individual
 1. School climate vs targeted intervention
 3. The role of SEL in bullying prevention
 4. Integrating SEL and school climate
 5. Targeted Prevention techniques
 6. Lessons Learned
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Behavioral Issues

“externalizing” – acting out, aggressiveness

Impaired social skills

Compromised academic performance

Elevated risk for depression and anxiety, especially among bully/victims

WHAT BULLIES AND STUDENTS WITH LD
HAVE IN COMMON

Students with LD are at an increased for being bullies, victims, and bully/victims

What are the underlying mechanisms of these behaviors?



Poor Self-regulation/Deficits in Executive Functioning (Medeiros et al, 2016)

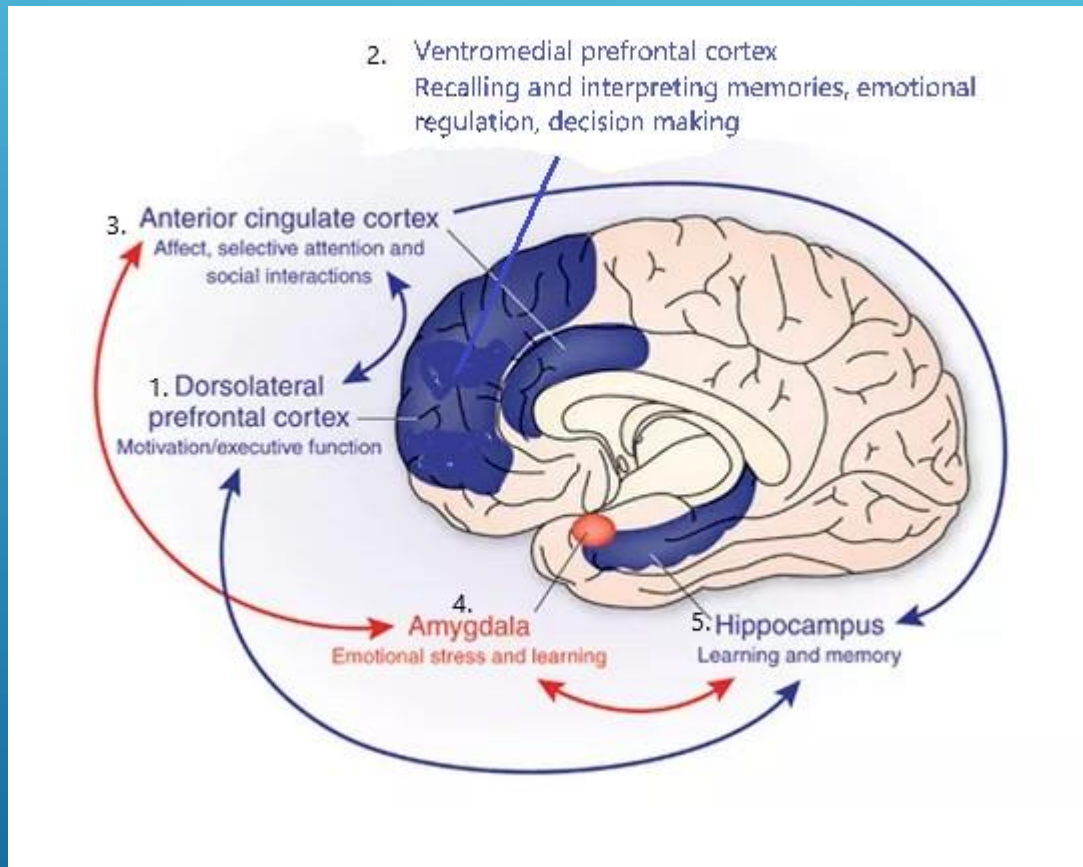
ADHD

*Lower empathy?

NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES



Brain Pathways of Learning and Self-Regulation



The dorsal attention system (1.) governs how the brain interprets and utilizes information from the environment to make decisions based on goals. It receives input from the frontoparietal network (regions 2 and 3), which regulate attention and emotions based on memories and social interactions. Both the dorsal attention system and the frontoparietal network receive input from the hippocampal-cortical memory system (regions 4 and 5), which interprets emotional stress and regulates the formation of memories and learning.

Social Perception

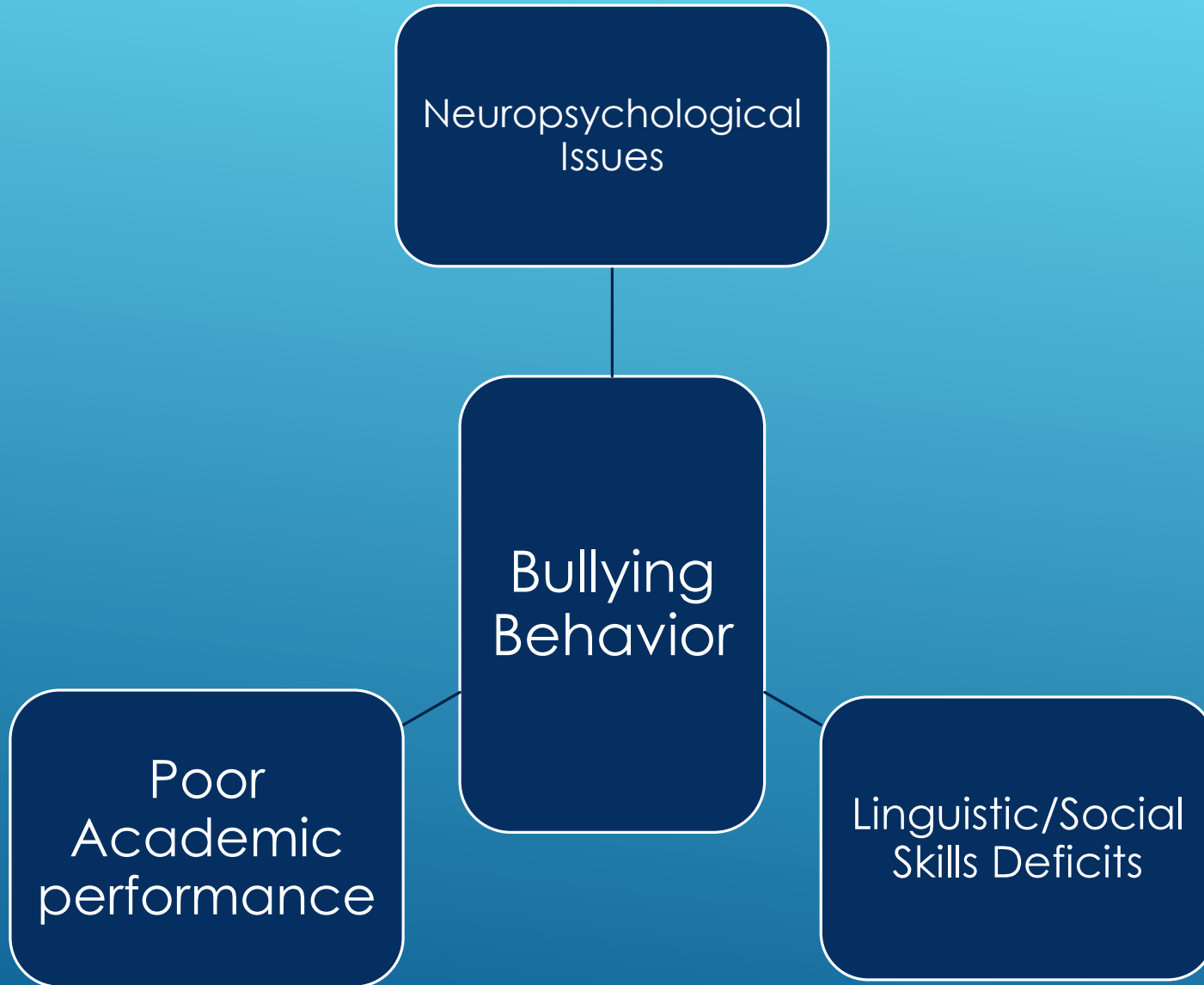
Non-Verbal Communication

Communicative Competence

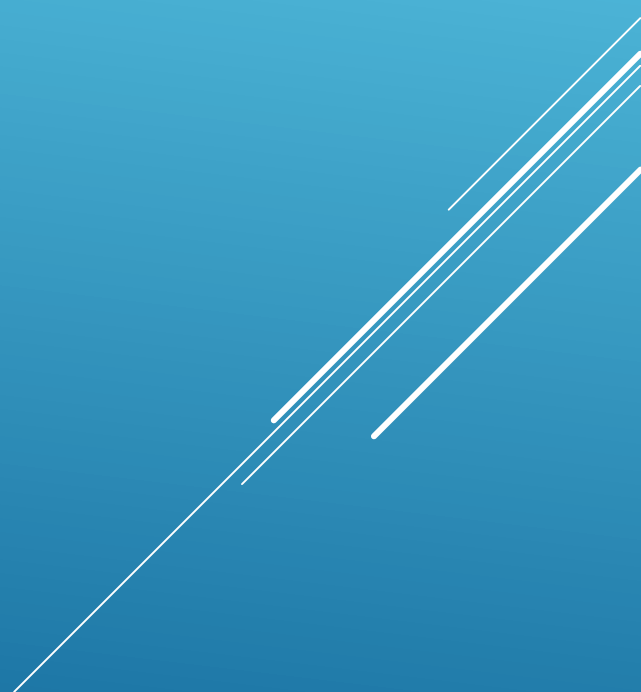
Increased Risk for Anxiety/Depression

PARALLEL SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES





- ▶ How can schools holistically address these issues from the whole child perspective?





WHAT ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

School climate is the study of all of the factors that impact the learning environment (The National School Climate Center)

A positive school climate significantly improves rates of bullying in schools

While many factors encompass the study of school climate, the heart of school climate improvement involves developing a positive environment by bolstering supportive relationships among teachers, students, and leaders

SCHOOL CLIMATE



School climate improvement requires assessing perceptions of the state of the learning environment through surveys, and using that data to undertake targeted interventions and adjustments to school policies and practices.

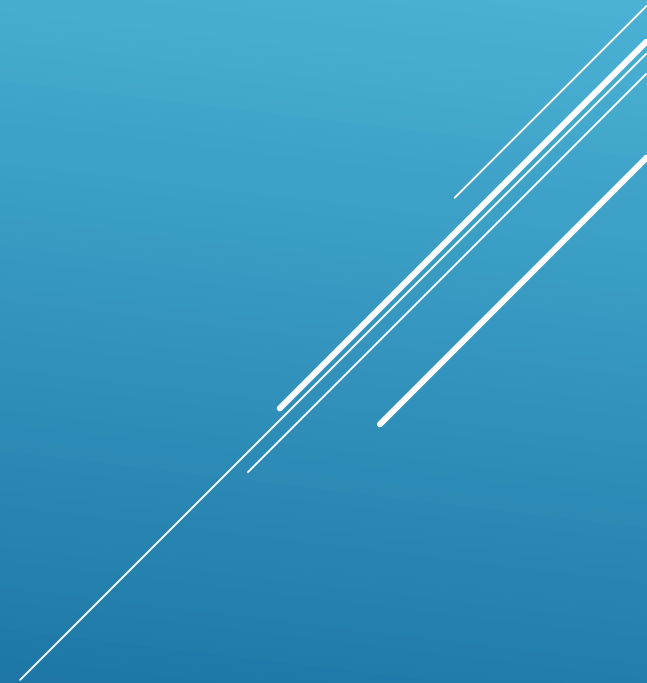
Establishing that students feel socially and emotionally safe and supported is a primary objective of this process

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93MSreUijCg>

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- ▶ Common misconceptions about bullying prevention center on punitive, “hard” approaches
- ▶ School climate utilizes “soft” approach, but also one that is evidence-based and data-driven
- ▶ School climate focuses on importance of relational dynamics rather than individual characteristics/behaviors


HOW DOES SCHOOL CLIMATE DIFFER
FROM OTHER BULLYING PREVENTION
STRATEGIES?



- ▶ Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is “the process of acquiring core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively” (CASEL)
- ▶ Integrating school climate improvement with SEL is a synergistic approach to reducing and preventing bullying while strengthening school communities and enhancing students’ interpersonal skills and resilience
- ▶ SEL Competence is also linked to academic achievement

UNITING SCHOOL CLIMATE WITH SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

▶ BUT

- ▶ **Students with LD present special considerations for SEL instruction**
 - ▶ Curricular format of instruction may not be ideal for students with LD
 - ▶ Heavy reliance on linguistic processing not ideal
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Utilize active/interactive, explicit forms of learning (skill building)

Address the multi-faceted influences on bullying behavior and victimization

Focus on recognizing individual needs and differences and building strengths

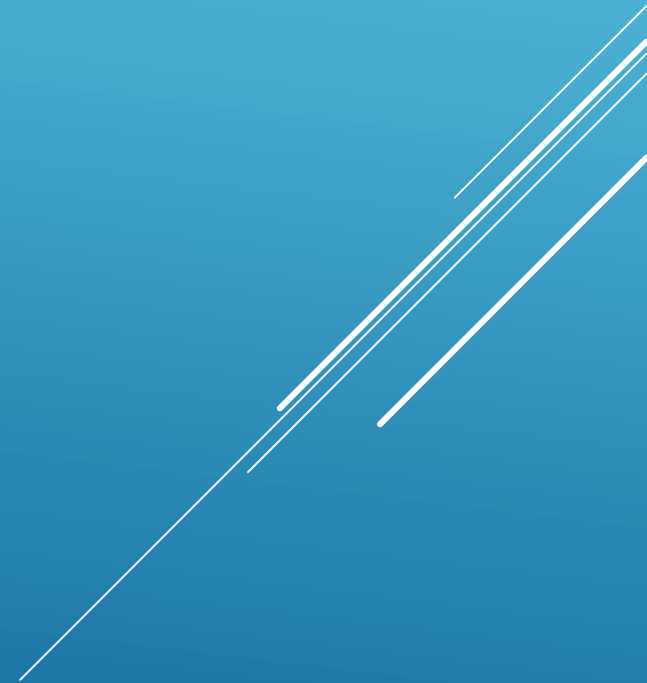
Adopt a social-ecological model to change the environment, not just individual behavior!

TO ACCOMMODATE ALL LEARNING
STYLES, BULLYING PREVENTION MUST



- ▶ Cultural/Environmental- knowledge, values, beliefs
- ▶ Social Situation- individual social contexts that influence social learning
- ▶ Intrapersonal- mastery of self-regulation, self-efficacy

THEORY OF TRIADIC INFLUENCE ON BEHAVIOR



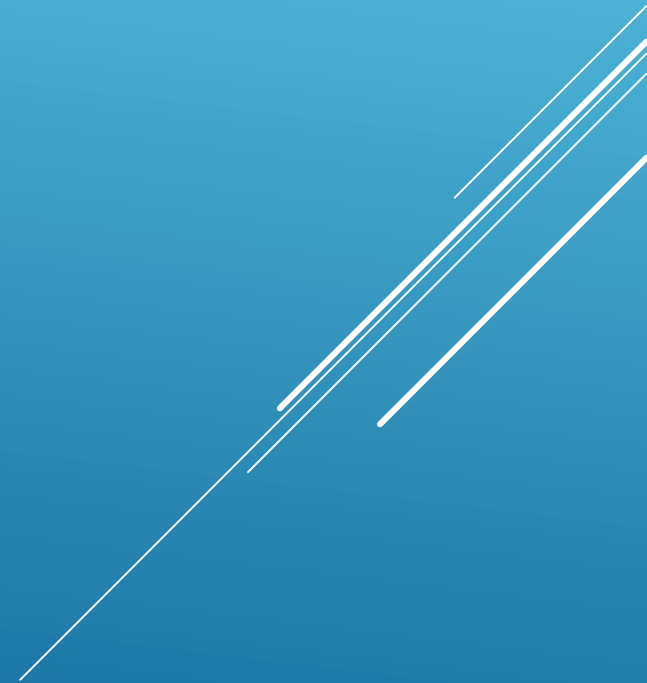
- ▶ Active/Interactive forms of learning may help to increase self-regulation by moderating distal (intrapersonal) influences on behavior
- ▶ Providing physical, social means for learning reduces the demands on linguistic processing skills that are often challenging for students with LD
- ▶ Examples- Role playing, modeling, social skills training

WHY ACTIVE LEARNING WORKS





DEMO-PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION



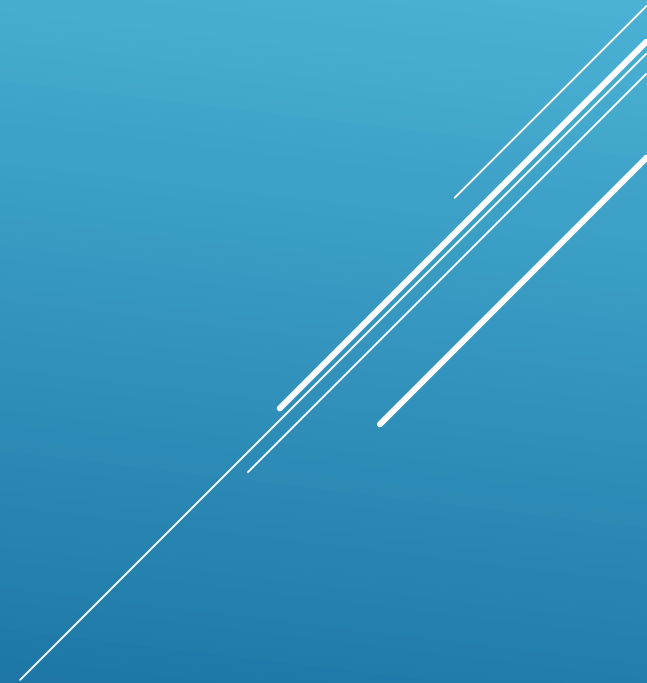
▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbPNzxvQyEA&t=48s>

NORMALIZING DISABILITIES THROUGH INTERACTIVE LEARNING



- ▶ By utilizing school climate as the framework for bullying prevention, schools can sustain the success of targeted interventions over time
- ▶ Integrating SEL practices into daily activities at school provides a way to consistently reinforce SEL skills
- ▶ Integrating school climate improvement with SEL programming aligns structures to bolster bullying prevention efforts

USING SCHOOL CLIMATE TO INCREASE IMPACT OF SEL INITIATIVES



- ▶ School climate and SEL are crucial components of bullying prevention programs, as they address systemic issues
- ▶ Traditional curriculum not ideal format for teaching SEL for all students
- ▶ Active learning is an important element of effective SEL interventions
- ▶ Effective SEL programming enhances school climate, aids in bullying prevention, AND benefits students and teachers!
- ▶ Neuroscience offers key insights into learning disabled students unique needs AND bullying behavior

LESSONS LEARNED!

▶ Thank you!



National School Climate Center

Educating Minds and Hearts, because the 3 Rs Are Not Enough