

Agency-Stakeholder Reflections: Perspectives of State-wide Adoption of the PBIS Framework in Juvenile Facilities

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Abstract

While facility-wide positive behavioral supports and interventions (FW-PBIS) has begun to be implemented within secure juvenile care settings, in a 24/7 model, there is a need to gather the perspectives of agency-stakeholders to better understand the feasibility and sustainability of FW-PBIS within these settings. To date, only two studies have been published that include perspectives of PBIS implementation within secure care. This study extends the current literature, and provides an overview specific to agency-level feedback on FW-PBIS implementation. Surveys were distributed to agency-level decision makers within two states implementing state-wide FW-PBIS for two or more years. Survey themes related to facilitators, barriers, systems, data, and practices, identified using the constant comparative method, are presented. Limitations and future directions are discussed.

Introduction

Youth who are placed in secure juvenile facilities have often been met with punitive actions in response to their behavior (Nelson, Jolivette, Leone, & Mathur, 2010). This punitive approach is linked to an increase in youth displaying undesired behaviors (Myers & Farrell, 2008). In addition to behavioral concerns, incarcerated youth are more likely to be impoverished, have a

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disability, and be diagnosed with mental health needs when compared to peers in typical settings (Leone & Wruble, 2015; Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Scott et al., 2002). More intensive needs, coupled with punitive-based responses, may limit youths' ability to practice prosocial behaviors (Read & Lampron, 2012; Sprague et al., 2013). Researchers, along with juvenile justice initiatives at state and national levels, support and advocate for the use of research-based, multi-tiered systems of support for responding to and preventing inappropriate behavior of incarcerated youth (Fernandez, Doyle, Koon, & McClain, 2015; Fernandez & McClain, 2014; Jolivet, Kimball, Boden, & Sprague, 2016; Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Lampron & Gonsoulin, 2013; Myers & Farrell, 2008; U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 2014).

PBIS in JJ Settings

A research-based, multi-tiered system of support that has been used as a proactive response to youth behavioral concerns is positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS). PBIS, an evidence-based framework, is delivered through either school-wide PBIS (SW-PBIS: Johnson et al., 2013; www.pbis.org) during school hours or facility-wide PBIS (FW-PBIS: Jolivet, Boden, Sprague, Ennis, & Kimball, 2015; Jolivet & Nelson, 2010) in a 24/7 model to meet the behavioral needs of all youth. Although SW-PBIS has been linked to decreases in discipline referrals, improved grades, and an increase in appropriate behaviors within education settings (Bradshaw, Mitchell, & Leaf, 2010; Horner et al., 2014; Johnson et al., 2013), incarcerated youth are served in a variety of contexts (e.g., education, mental health programming, recreation, cafeteria, unit/hall, medical) that extend beyond the school day. The design of juvenile facilities, which incorporates a variety of disciplines/departments, lends to a need for a proactive approach for responding to behavior, used before, during, and after the school day (Scott & Cooper, 2013). Due to this 24/7 delivery model within secure juvenile facilities, FW-PBIS helps to better align with the structure of secure care (Jolivet, Kimball, McClain, & Skufca, 2015; Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Nelson et al., 2010).

The FW-PBIS framework incorporates three tiers for preventing problem behaviors, based on the needs of youth. At Tier I, positively, explicitly stated behavioral expectations are given for youth to follow and taught by staff, along with guidelines of what these expectations may look like in all settings within the facility, with reinforcement provided to youth who engage in the expectations (Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Jolivet, Boden, et al., 2015). Prior to becoming incarcerated, youth may have had little to no experience

with expectations being explicitly modeled and then reinforced. The use of consistent expectations and reinforcement once these expectations are met may better equip youth within secure juvenile care to respond to future problem situations appropriately (Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Jolivet, Boden, et al., 2015; Sprague, Jolivet, & Nelson, 2014). Along with expectations modeled by staff through FW-PBIS, youth are given tools and strategies (e.g., vocational skills, moral reasoning, competency development, social skill acquisition, making better choices, interpersonal skills) to use in the variety of contexts present in secure care (e.g., education, recreation, group, unit/dorm, medical). These tools and strategies may lead to better youth outcomes while in secure juvenile facilities and skills once transitioned back to the community (Lampron & Gonsoulin, 2013; Read & Lampron, 2012; Sprague et al., 2013). In addition to youth, the FW-PBIS framework sets the stage for consistency among staff, who represent a wide variety of disciplines/departments and may not share the same views or expertise regarding effective interventions and supports for youth (Nelson, Sugai, & Smith, 2005).

FW-PBIS has been implemented state-wide within three regions of the United States as the juvenile justice (JJ) agency behavior management/discipline policy, incorporating systems change through policies and teaming structures to improve their outcomes, systems, data, and practices (Fernandez et al., 2015; Fernandez & McClain, 2014; Jolivet, Kimball, et al., 2015; Sprague et al., 2013). To gather perceptions of PBIS within secure juvenile care, two studies have been published that utilized focus groups and interviews to gather these perceptions from JJ stakeholders (e.g., youth, facility administrators, education staff, agency-level decision makers). Each of these studies used the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to identify common themes related to FW-PBIS implementation (Swain-Bradway, Swoszowski, Boden, & Sprague, 2013; Jolivet, Boden, et al., 2015).

Swain-Bradway and colleagues (2013) conducted individual interviews with ten administrators and staff from a variety of alternative education settings (i.e., residential, juvenile justice, alternative) who had implemented either SW-PBIS (residential, AE) or FW-PBIS (JJ) for one or more years; of the participants only two worked within JJ settings. Barrier and facilitator themes were identified from the interview responses. Facilitator FW-PBIS themes included teacher and staff support, evidence-based practices, positive responses to prosocial youth behavior, prioritized data practices, and tiered responses to problem behaviors. Within all of these facilitators was a focus on teaching expected behaviors by staff who had received training to deliver PBIS

content (Swain-Bradway et al., 2013). Barriers to FW-PBIS included lack of staff buy-in, punishment as a response to problem behavior, system needs, and youth characteristics.

While the perspectives of administrator and agency-level feedback regarding FW-PBIS implementation is important, youth feedback also is necessary as positive change in youth behavior is critical and may impact youth while in and out of the facility. Youth perceptions of FW-PBIS may bring awareness to facility-level changes as a result of FW-PBIS implementation. In a study conducted across eight juvenile justice facilities all within a state juvenile agency implementing FW-PBIS for two years, 35 incarcerated youth participated in a focus group at their facility (Jolivet, Boden, et al., 2015). Questions of the focus groups were to solicit youth perceptions in regards to FW-PBIS implementation. Through analyses, three facilitator and three barrier themes were identified. Facilitator FW-PBIS themes included staff confidence in youth, authentic reinforcement, and PBIS relevancy to daily life. Youth stated benefits associated with FW-PBIS implementation as (a) improved positive interactions between themselves and staff rooted in common and known expectations; (b) reinforcements, which were motivating to them and accessible once they reenter the community; (c) and the utility of PBIS both in the facility and in the home (Jolivet, Boden, et al., 2015). The identified FW-PBIS barriers were lack of staff teaching the FW-PBIS expectations, staff inconsistency in FW-PBIS implementation, and new versus old practices in behavior management policies. Youth expressed that for FW-PBIS to be most effective, all staff members needed to be consistent in continued teaching and implementation of the framework as well as avoid reverting to old, ineffective negative practices (Jolivet, Boden, et al., 2015).

Feedback is promising related to FW-PBIS implementation in alternative and JJ settings, but there are several limitations in the previous findings. While the information gathered from these interviews and focus groups gives insight regarding PBIS implementation, the interviews were not specifically targeted to decision makers within JJ settings. Within those two studies, (a) no participants were JJ agency-level members, (b) PBIS implementation varied widely in years of implementation, and (c) some facilities were in the early stages of implementation, while others were fully implementing (Jolivet, Boden, et al., 2015; Swain-Bradway et al., 2013). As previously noted, the 24/7 structure of secure juvenile facilities requires facility-wide supports that include staff from all disciplines/departments across all waking hours (Jolivet & Nelson, 2010). To effectively assess systems, data, and practices related specifically to FW-PBIS,

additional feedback is needed from agency-level decision makers within secure juvenile facilities that have implemented FW-PBIS for multiple years. This input may lead to more substantial recommendations for future implementation, which may improve youth outcomes (Jolivette, Kimball, et al., 2015).

This study serves as an extension to Swain-Bradway et al. (2013) by gathering input from agency-level decision makers specifically and solely in JJ settings that have been implementing FW-PBIS for two or more years. The research questions were: (a) What are the facilitator and barrier themes of FW-PBIS implemented for two or more years in secure juvenile facilities as perceived by juvenile representatives and agency-level decision makers? and (b) How has FW-PBIS evolved in secure care settings in regards to agency systems, practices, and data as perceived by juvenile agency-level decision makers?

Method

Participants and Setting

Participants were decision makers within the agencies with a range of 1 to 20 years of working in JJ and were all members of their agency state-wide PBIS team or committee. On one committee there were a few directors of facilities. A committee may consist of a facility director, FW-PBIS liaison/coordinator, agency-level administrator, etc. Agency-level decision makers were asked to rate their overall knowledge of the PBIS framework as either low, moderate, or high. Results revealed that 86% perceived their framework knowledge as high while 14% perceived their framework knowledge to be moderate. Agency-level participants were across western and southeastern regions of two U.S. state juvenile justice agencies (representing 37 facilities) that had implemented FW-PBIS statewide for two or more years in their detention and long-term facilities. Participant demographics are presented in Table 1. A convenience sample was used because only two states were implementing FW-PBIS state-wide at the time of the study. Two researchers, a female with a doctorate with over 17 years of experience working with youth with E/BD and juvenile corrections and the PBIS framework, and a female with a master's degree and ten years of experience working in the field of E/BD served as the data collectors.

Survey and Procedures

The survey consisted of 20 questions: 19 open-ended and 1 set of rankings related to multiple areas of FW-PBIS implementation: (a) thoughts and impressions before and after FW-PBIS implementation (i.e., What were your first

Table 1. Demographics of Agency-level Participants

Role	Area	No. of Years Working in JJ	Actively Supporting PBIS (Yes/No)	Educational and/or Training Background	Highest Degree Completed	Years Implementing PBIS	No. of Years Working at Agency
PBIS Coordinator	Mental Health	14	Y	NG	Doctorate	2.5	14
Manager	Case Management	0 ^a	Y	Criminal Justice	Bachelor	2.5	18
Administrator	Mental Health	20	Y	Counseling	Doctorate	3	17
PBIS Coordinator	NG	20	Y	NG	Master	2	18
PBIS Coordinator	Youth Corrections	20	Y	Sociology	Master	3	1
Deputy Commissioner	Support Services	3	Y	Social Work	Master	2	14
Coordinator	NG	15	Y	Public Administration	Master	2	31

Notes: ^a Known discrepancy pertaining to this question. JJ = Juvenile Justice Facility; Y = Yes; N = No; No. = Number; NG = Not given

impressions/thoughts when you heard that the agency was adopting the PBIS framework, What are your impressions/thoughts now, ____ months into PBIS implementation); (b) agency-level buy-in (i.e., When you heard the agency was going to adopt the PBIS framework, were you in agreement: Yes/No. If so, why; If not, why not); (c) effectiveness of FW-PBIS to address agency and youth needs and outcomes (i.e., What has worked well with facility-wide implementation in relation to the youth served; What has worked well with facility-wide implementation in relation to the agency at-large); (d) facilitators and barriers to implementation and sustainability (i.e., What have been the biggest barriers with facility-wide PBIS implementation in your agency); (e) effective and ineffective usage of data (i.e., What are the least and most effective data sources the FW-PBIS Team/Committee has to make decisions); and (f) practices for improving implementation (i.e., What other agency initiatives do you see benefitting from alignment within the PBIS framework (list/explain why); What PBIS content is needed to improve current implementation). Independent responses were chosen in lieu of focus groups to ensure that there was no undue influence of others' opinions given the hierarchy of agency-level persons sampled. Surveys were given in-person to team members with return self-addressed envelopes. All surveys were anonymous and returned within ten days. There was a 70% survey return rate.

Transcription and Coding Procedures

The returned surveys were typed verbatim per respondent and all responses were listed by question for analyses. Using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the two data collectors independently identified broad themes per the research questions related to (1) facilitators, (2) barriers, (3) systems, (4) practices, and (5) data. The framework categories were defined as (a) *facilitators*—a practice, policy, or characteristic of the organization that functioned to increase or improve adoption of the PBIS framework; (b) *barriers*—a practice, policy, or characteristic of the organization or personnel that hindered implementation of the PBIS framework; (c) *systems*—the mechanisms put in place by the agency to best support the staff being charged with implementing the PBIS framework across the tiers; (d) *practices*—the individual tools (e.g., interventions, strategies, programs) provided to frontline staff for use in their everyday interactions with the youth; and (e) *data*—the purposeful and accessible tools needed by the PBIS Leadership Teams to make real-time data-based decisions (Horner, 2003; Jolivet, Boden, et al., 2015; Sugai et al., 2010).

First, the data collectors independently read every participant response, wrote out each broad theme (facilitator or barrier) on a separate note card, and listed participant survey responses that supported each theme. Second, the data collectors independently grouped the broad themes within each framework category (barriers, facilitators, systems, practices, and data) and identified under each broad theme several specific themes. Third, after independent coding was completed, both researchers met to compare themes, survey response example by theme, and category. Any disagreements were discussed and reanalyzed based on the predetermined definitions of framework categories. Fourth, themes and responses that did not fit within the definition parameters were removed from analyses; there were no other participant responses beyond those that did or did not fit within determined themes and categories.

Results

Three facilitator and four barrier themes were identified for FW-PBIS implementation from the juvenile agency-level respondents. These themes as well as verbatim participant responses are described.

Facilitators

The three FW-PBIS facilitator themes identified were (a) positive view of FW-PBIS framework effectiveness, (b) positive culture change across agency and within facilities, and (c) improved consistency and fidelity of FW-PBIS practices.

Positive view of FW-PBIS framework effectiveness. All respondents noted a positive perspective related to the effectiveness of the FW-PBIS framework across their agency and in their juvenile facilities. Several respondents noted that FW-PBIS was more effective than past behavior management systems with one stating that FW-PBIS was “the best behavior program I have seen in my career of 14 years” while others noted that FW-PBIS was a “great framework” and a “superior framework” as compared to other options. Eighty-six percent of respondents commented on how implementation had positively impacted the agency related to youth and staff relations and the positive approach to address youth behavior. One respondent stated that FW-PBIS “has moved the agency away from a punitive, fear-based approach to a more humane/effective approach” and another stated “PBIS allows the youth to build on success rather than failure and allows for more coaching and strength-based interactions with staff and the youth.” The PBIS framework was viewed as “a reframing tool to help staff view youth more positively” and provided an opportunity for “building

a more strength-based system of interacting with youth.” One stated “always thought FW-PBIS had promise in a [juvenile justice] environment.”

Positive culture change across agency and within facilities. Seventy-one percent of respondents stated that since implementation of the PBIS framework, a positive culture change was observed with most comments focused on the interactions of youth and staff. Several stated that FW-PBIS had led to “improved staff and youth relations” and a “gradual change in staff, how they interact with youth” was evident since FW-PBIS was implemented. Responses related to youth behavior included how FW-PBIS had led to a “reduction in adverse incidents” and a “change in facility incidents after FW-PBIS started.” In addition, a respondent stated that FW-PBIS led to “improved engagement of youth and staff in treatment.” Lastly, one participant stated that PBIS – “truly can change culture if done right and we see it in incident data now.”

Improved consistency and fidelity of PBIS practices. Over 65% of the respondents mentioned that PBIS had brought about more consistency within facilities and across the agency as a whole. One respondent stated that “benefits in bringing better consistency to our approach” and “consistency across the division” was observed as a result of PBIS implementation by “building [it] into daily training rituals.” Related to fidelity, one noted they “have seen firsthand what can happen in facilities where PBIS is appropriately implemented with fidelity.”

Barriers

The four FW-PBIS barrier themes identified were (a) facility instability, (b) slowness of change related to practices and policies, (c) inconsistent buy-in, and (d) data quality issues.

Facility instability. Respondents stated that facility stability, mostly related to staff turnover, was a common barrier to FW-PBIS implementation and fidelity. This barrier has been noted in the literature as well (Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Sprague et al., 2013). One respondent noted “high staff turnover makes retention and sustained knowledge/implementation of PBIS principles a challenge.” Although this barrier is likely to remain, one stated that “training new staff after turnover” is a solution to alleviate this issue for sustainability purposes. Other instability responses included “instability of facility leadership” and “change in Directors” as potential barriers to implementation. The impact of this barrier is important to take under consideration in regards to sustainability, as facility

staff are often the individuals interacting with youth throughout the day and are expected to teach, model, and reinforce the FW-PBIS expectations.

Slowness of change. Barriers related to slowness of change in practices and policies at the agency and/or faculty level were acknowledged by more than half of the respondents. Some reported difficulties for some staff to be open to a change in every day policies and practices once FW-PBIS was introduced (e.g., “changing old ways of thinking about consequences and reinforcement” and “teaching and modeling . . . staff only want to reinforce”). Others stated that “changing facility management practices” and a “need for policy updates” were barriers that needed to be addressed. One respondent stated that it is “a perception . . . that PBIS is a magic wand that should be able to solve any and all issues” within the agency and facilities.

Inconsistent buy-in. Buy-in from staff, facility administrators, and agency personnel, was a noted barrier that could impede FW-PBIS implementation and sustainability. Respondents stated the importance of “educating staff on FW-PBIS” in order to reach “staff who are not invested.” Additionally, one noted that “low involvement by security staff” prevented “getting all to buy into the philosophy.” This theme of inconsistent buy-in also was noted in survey rankings. A majority of the participants ranked securing staff buy-in as the most difficult task to accomplish in regards to PBIS implementation; all but one respondent ranked buy-in as the most or second most difficult of the categories to accomplish. These results correlate with past feedback received from decision makers in alternative education settings (Swain-Bradway et al., 2013).

Data quality issues. Barriers relating to data were indicated in 58% of the survey responses, indicating that a consistent method of collecting, entering, and analyzing the data is a need within facilities and agencies. One respondent stated that “challenges with getting disciplinary info in the system” was a barrier to implementation as well as one declaring that “delay in data entry” was impeding the success of FW-PBIS in facilities in terms of teams making real-time data-based decisions. Four respondents noted that data were missing or not reported altogether as a significant barrier—“youth radar reports that are not accurate” and “a lot are not entered or not timely.”

Systems

For PBIS to be implemented successfully and with fidelity, support from administrative members is key (Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Jolivet, McDaniel,

Sprague, Swain-Bradway, & Ennis, 2012). As noted by several respondents, if support is lacking from agency or facility administration, this may diminish motivation for staff to fully implement the framework into daily practices. Respondents reported that this support was in place within agencies that had fully supported FW-PBIS and was positively impacting implementation, one aspect that agency-level decision makers were proud of in terms of agency implementation of FW-PBIS. It was noted that “support of leadership and to keep it going,” “support from the top level,” “support with new coordinators,” and “commissioner support and emphasis” were aspects that the agency was most proud of related to systems support for FW-PBIS implementation.

Embracing FW-PBIS at a facility level was a necessary step to make for systems change (Fernandez & McClain, 2014; Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Jolivet et al., 2012). Due to the nature of juvenile facilities, the various discipline departments that help support youth on a day-to-day basis (i.e., security, education, counseling, medical), and youth frequently transitioning between facilities, commitment to implement state-wide was needed for implementation to be successful and sustainable. Several respondents stated that this state-wide commitment was one aspect that the agency was most proud of regarding FW-PBIS—“commitment to progress,” “commitment from the agency as a whole” and “PBIS statewide.” Another noted that “youth understand general expectations if they move from facility to facility.” One respondent stated that these interactions through teaching were evident across facilities—“youth understand general expectations if they move from facility to facility.”

Additionally, although implementation was state-wide, each facility created and adopted their own FW-PBIS plan to meet the specific needs and characteristics within each facility. One respondent perceived that this systems change helped with buy-in—“did it consistently across the state; yet each facility’s plan is different. This increased buy-in.”

Practices

The PBIS framework emphasizes a continued use of positive approaches to respond to youth behavior; in the past, a more punitive approach was common practice within juvenile facilities (Fernandez & McClain, 2014; Myers & Farrell, 2008; Nelson et al., 2010). Several respondents stated that after FW-PBIS implementation, a positive approach was often used for delivery of practices and was one aspect that was working well in terms of implementation—a “desire to be more positive” and “positive approach to recognition for staff” were

voiced as benefits from FW-PBIS. Another noted that FW-PBIS has impacted a “positive thinking change for youth and staff.”

Youth and staff interactions were mentioned throughout the surveys as a facilitator and positive outcome of current implementation through daily practices. Two respondents highlighted this interaction through the teaching and modeling of FW-PBIS—“is a simple sell to the youth when staff teach, model, and reinforce the expectations” and “allows for more coaching and strength-based interactions with staff and the youth.”

Data

Data are key for sustainability and meaningful implementation of the PBIS framework. To track and organize data, a reliable system that is easily accessible by a variety of facility staff is essential. Several responses included improved data systems as a key source to making decisions related to FW-PBIS effectiveness (e.g., “huge amounts of internal data that can be compressed, teased apart, calculated and recounted”). One indicated that data were related to agency effectiveness—“very proud of our data that demonstrates overall effectiveness.” Two respondents noted that consistent use of data were observed through youth outcomes—“have evidence of positive results where fidelity is high” and “reduction in adverse incidents.” Another stated that while the data sources themselves were useful, the actual users may not necessarily use data consistently and effectively (i.e., “all data sources are effective, it tends to be users that make them ineffective”).

Rankings and Ratings

Participants were asked to rank the following regarding level of difficulty to accomplish within facilities, from most (1) to least (7) difficult: Defining expectations, teaching expectations, youth reinforcements, staff reinforcements, data decision making, PBIS teaming, and securing staff buy-in. Due to two respondents leaving all or some of the questions blank and one respondent placing check marks next to items as opposed to numbers, responses did not account for 100% of the participants. Over half of the respondents ranked teaching expectations as the second most difficult task to accomplish. Among tasks that were the least difficult to accomplish were reinforcing both staff and youth. Results of the rankings are summarized in Table 2.

Participants were asked to rate facility staff buy-in and facility director buy-in of the PBIS framework as either low (less than 40%), moderate (41%–79%) or high (80% or higher). Eighty-six percent of respondents perceived staff buy-in as

Table 2. Rankings of # 1–7 of items most difficult for facilities to accomplish from most [1] to least [7] difficult

Item	Rank #1	Rank #2	Rank #3	Rank #4	Rank #5	Rank #6	Rank #7
Defining expectations	14%	0%	14%	14%	29%	14%	0%
Teaching expectations	0%	71%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%
Youth reinforcements	0%	0%	14%	0%	29%	0%	29%
Staff reinforcements	14%	0%	0%	14%	0%	29%	14%
Data decision making	0%	0%	43%	0%	0%	0%	29%
Securing staff buy-in	57%	14%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%
PBIS teaming	0%	14%	14%	29%	14%	14%	0%

Note: = Highest ranked item; = Second highest ranked item

moderate while 14% perceived staff buy-in as high. In regards to director buy-in, 71% perceived state-wide director buy-in as moderate and 29% perceived director buy-in as high. The lack of perceived high levels of staff buy-in is prevalent throughout the responses and rankings.

Discussion

The environmental and discipline/department complexity of JJ settings provides a need for implementation of a consistent, evidence-based approach to address youth behavior, which can be used across facility disciplines/departments, times of day, days of week, and variety of activities (Jolivet & Nelson, 2010; Scott & Cooper, 2013). Perceptions previously gathered from administrators, education staff, and youth within alternative and JJ settings that had implemented FW-PBIS revealed that implementation, and the modeling and teaching of expectations, led to positive approaches to addressing youth behavior as well as improved youth and staff interactions (Jolivet, Boden, et al., 2015; Swain-Bradway et al., 2013). Additionally, based on perspectives of youth, FW-PBIS was viewed as beneficial both within the facility and in the home/community (Jolivet, Boden, et al., 2015). While this feedback is encouraging, it did not include perspectives of decision makers within JJ agencies who support state-wide FW-PBIS implementation. Additionally, much of the stakeholder perspectives were from individuals implementing PBIS only within an education setting. Based on the limitations of previous studies, additional input from decision makers within juvenile care settings was needed to better understand agency-level perceptions, facilitators and barriers to implementation, and the evolution of FW-PBIS over time.

For the first research question: What are the facilitator and barrier themes of FW-PBIS implemented for two or more years in secure juvenile facilities as perceived by juvenile representatives and agency-level decision makers; participants noted that support from state-level agency personnel was viewed as a facilitator to implementation, lending to the sustainability of FW-PBIS implementation. In addition to agency level support, participants stated that an increase in positive culture and improvement in staff and youth relations was evident across facilities. Among facilities implementing FW-PBIS with high fidelity, agency-level participants noted that better consistency in delivery of practices was frequent. While these positive outcomes were perceived, several barriers such as staff turnover and lack of consistency across disciplines also were noted.

For the second research question: How has FW-PBIS evolved in secure care settings in regards to agency systems, practices, and data as perceived

by juvenile agency-level decision makers; respondents noted that FW-PBIS was more effective than previous behavioral management/discipline policies. Stated by several participants, previous behavior management practices were frequently punitive in nature; FW-PBIS allowed for a positive approach in the delivery of practices. The success of FW-PBIS also was linked to the effective use of data sources and consistent practices; participants noted that in facilities implementing FW-PBIS with high fidelity, there was a reduction in behavioral incidents. Related to systems, respondents stated that support from top-level leadership, a commitment to implement FW-PBIS statewide, and encouraging each facility to individualize their plan to best meet their needs, helped with staff buy-in and fidelity of implementation.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the respondents in this study provided feedback that may be helpful to inform future FW-PBIS adoption and implementation in other juvenile facilities, several limitations need to be considered when interpreting the results. First, quality of responses may have been better if in-person interviews were conducted or follow-up discussions as the detail and breadth of answers were limited to the static surveys. The researchers were unable to clarify answers or ask respondents to expound on responses. Future researchers should consider including in-person interviews to gather more detailed feedback as follow-up to surveys or use a focus group with a follow-up survey. Second, two of the survey questions may have been unclear as evidenced by a lack of responses (i.e., What are the least effective data sources the Tier II team has to use to make decisions; What are the most effective data sources the Tier II team has to use to make decisions?) as they were left blank by over half of the respondents and not figured into the analyses. Additionally, when ranking items related to aspects difficult to accomplish within the scope of FW-PBIS, one participant provided check marks as opposed to number rankings while another participant ranked only four out of seven items. Future researchers should consider using forced-choice question options to address this limitation. Third, only agency-level feedback was included in this study; inclusion of youth and facility-level staff feedback should be used in the future to examine aspects of FW-PBIS that affect all stakeholders within juvenile care settings. While agency-level perspectives are helpful, these perspectives may differ from those expressed by frontline staff and youth within JJ related to FW-PBIS implementation and sustainability. Future researchers should consider soliciting feedback from facility frontline staff and youth in tandem with agency perspectives through

interviews and focus groups. Fourth, this study did not include questions related to youth and family outcomes, notably for youth transitioning out of JJ and back to the community. To date, there are no known studies that include youth or family perceptions related to FW-PBIS when transitioning youth from secure care to home. Future researchers should consider extending previous research on youth voice (Jolivet, Boden, et al., 2015), and include questions on the feasibility of FW-PBIS in the home and community for youth transitioning out of secure care, to better understand how FW-PBIS can be adapted to fit within these environments.

Implications for Facility Educators

Based on the feedback received from agency-level decision makers, the authors present several suggestions for educators and staff members working within the school setting of secure juvenile care facilities, to address identified barriers. Although facilities are comprised of many disciplines across a 24/7 timeframe (hence the need for FW-PBIS across the facility), youth spend a large portion of their day in school and may eventually transition back into a more traditional school setting. It is important that PBIS practices be relevant for youth during the school day, with supports in place to help the transition from inside to outside the fence.

Facility instability. While facility instability related to staff turnover and changes in leadership may be uncontrollable, school-based staff can take proactive measures to address turnover should it occur. The first suggestion related to facility instability is to ensure that one of the members of the facility-wide PBIS team is a school representative. This allows perspectives related to PBIS within the school day to be consistently present, and for information related to FW-PBIS to be regularly relayed back to all school staff. Second, as suggested by respondents in this study, training new staff members may serve as a response to difficulties with sustainability of PBIS practices; training should occur for all staff, including those working within the school setting. In addition to training new staff, ongoing training refreshers related to FW-PBIS should occur.

Slowness of change. School-based staff may have difficulty being open to change as it relates to FW-PBIS. Giving staff a voice as it relates to FW-PBIS is imperative; school staff should have opportunities to give suggestions related to PBIS implementation within the school setting. For example, reinforcements given to youth during school may be more limited due to instructional obligations and delivery of academic supports. Allowing educators and other

facility staff a voice related to FW-PBIS implementation within the school setting may aid in their willingness to adopt and/or sustain PBIS practices.

Data quality. Related to data quality, school-based staff must have adequate time to enter in data related to youth behavior. Allocating time for school staff to enter data may help to address this barrier. Additionally, membership of school staff on the facility-wide PBIS team may assist with reporting and analyzing data in a timely manner, and to make real-time data-based decisions. Consistently providing school staff with youth incident data as it relates to fidelity of FW-PBIS practices also may help increase the quality of data entry.

Inconsistent buy-in. Buy-in has been a common theme discussed in the literature (Swain-Bradway et al., 2013). Within the school setting (and across all facility disciplines) it is important that both educators and security staff are invested in the FW-PBIS framework. Both school and security staff serve youth during school hours. Therefore, collaboration between these disciplines may help to improve buy-in and better consistency of PBIS practices. Inclusion of school staff on the FW-PBIS team also may improve buy-in and allow school staff to have valued input into PBIS practices per youth needs. Reinforcing school staff for modeling facility-wide expectations and reinforcing youth for engaging in these expectations also may promote buy-in.

Conclusion

Youth served in JJ settings often have intensified needs when compared to youth in more typical settings. Evidence-based, multi-tiered systems of support, such as FW-PBIS, may provide incarcerated youth with the systematic supports needed to display the appropriate behaviors that are expected in their school, home, and communities (Algozzine, Putnam, & Horner, 2010; Jolivet & Nelson, 2010). While agency-level perceptions on the effectiveness of FW-PBIS have been gathered, additional perspectives from other JJ stakeholders (i.e., staff, family) are needed to assess the feasibility of PBIS and long-term implementation in a variety of settings. This feedback may aid efforts in more consistent implementation of FW-PBIS across states and facilities, and expanding implementation from the facility to the home. We propose that future researchers include a transition-focused PBIS component, with training modules that are delivered by facility staff to both youth and families, while youth are preparing to transition from secure care. Before transition-focused FW-PBIS can occur, youth and family voice should be solicited through the use of focus groups and interviews. This will help extend previous studies by moving

to incorporate questions related to FW-PBIS “inside and outside the fence” (Jolivet, Boden, et al., 2015). To date, no known studies have been conducted that include youth and family perspectives as they relate to FW-PBIS and the realities that are faced at home and in the community—a true measure of the sustainable behavioral effects of FW-PBIS. With approximately 55% of youth reentering secure juvenile facilities within a year of release (Mathur & Nelson, 2013), efforts to better understand and meet the behavioral needs of youth and families must be explored.

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