The Power of Relationships to Affect Change

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SCAN ME

"A person is a person through other persons; you can't be human in isolation; you are human only in relationships."
— Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Takeaways for Today

1. Know Your why, Own Your Why
2. Ground Our Work in Research
3. Current Trends in Student Mental Health
4. How our New Learning can Inform Our Work

Advocating
Consulting
Liaison
Referral
So we...
Support
Encourage
Empower

Know Your Why
Own Your Why

Let's Acknowledge Impact of Last Few Years!

We can only give to others the depth of positivity and wellness we have obtained ourselves"

The Antidote for Compassion Fatigue by Mana M. Johnson

- *Being an PPW or SW is tough work under normal circumstances*
- *Personally & professionally impacted*
- *Energy and passion can get depleted*
- *Stress, Chronic Stress, Burnout, Compassion Fatigue experienced*
- *Normalize self-care, embedded in how you take care of yourself for refueling & refreshing*

I See You… I Hear You!!!!!!!!

A little About Me....

Professionally:

- President-Elect, Maryland School Counselor Association (MSCA)
- Currently: Resource Counselor, Northwood High School (MCPS)

30+ yrs Educator:

- *High School & Middle School Counselor*
- *Child and Family Therapy Intern*
- *High School & Middle School Teacher*

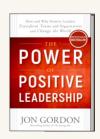***Personally:*** *Mom of 4 humans, married 27+ years*

Know Your Why, Own Your Why

My vision statement represents my authentic self, core values as a person, as a professional.

Personal Vision Statement

Believer in Education

Love Through Service

Living Authentic Purpose

Which superhero or TV character do you identify with most? Why?

Grounding our Work in Research

#1
Acknowledge Rich Cultural Traditions Which Already Exist

African American Communities

Jacqueline Mattis and other Black researchers have found that even in neighborhoods with limited resources, high levels of social capital not only exist but are used as a means to buffer the community against systematic oppression. There exist caring, hardworking neighbors who look out for one another. Dissonance between lived experience vs. the media portrayal of Black communities.

Asian American Communities

Relationship dynamics among Asian Americans partially attributed to traditional Asian cultural norms and values.

Latino Community

Hispanic people have better disease outcomes than non-Hispanic whites, despite having greater risk factors for poor outcomes. Researchers theorize that the importance of family and strong social networks in Hispanic culture may confer some resilience.

La Familia, La Comadre, El Compadre

#2
My Own Research

Dissertation:
The Influence of Teacher Support and Institutional Support on Academic Self-Efficacy, Academic Outcome Expectations, and Academic Interests: An Exploration Study

I was Curious...

- Sitting on a testing committee, plan for supporting kids to be College & Career Ready?

- Experiential knowledge: We know other factors beside academic are important to consider?

- As a school counselor, educator, how can I give voice to the additional piece in this puzzle?

What I Found in the Literature

In addition to academic factors, powerful social-cognitive forces such as self-efficacy beliefs also shape learning and performance in schools.
Was not being investigated empirically in connection to CCR
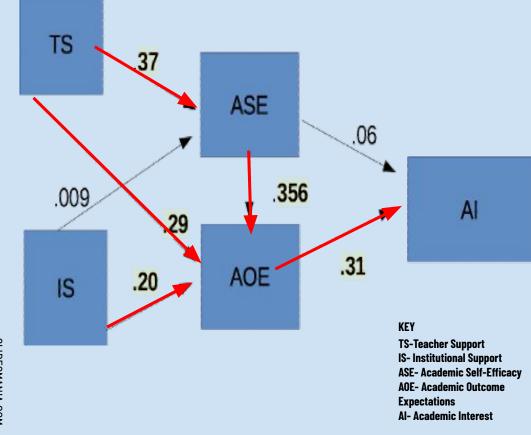
Self-efficacy beliefs of the learner:

- Influences academic readiness
- Influences the ability to persist, be resilient, adapt, and meet varying academic demands
- Influences outcome expectations, interest development, and career identity development

Sample:
Undergraduate, high achieving students, belief in their ability to **complete academic tasks**, **expected academic outcomes** and **academic persistence behaviors** (such as plans to continue in the institution and completing their program of study).

Teach Support & Institutional Support is the context for the learning environment

Path Analysis

KEY
TS-Teacher Support
IS- Institutional Support
ASE- Academic Self-Efficacy
AOE- Academic Outcome Expectations
AI- Academic Interest

TS → ASE / TS → AOE Perception of Teacher Support is instrumental in continuing to strengthen Academic Self-Efficacy beliefs and Academic Outcome Expectations

TS →ASE →AOE →AI Teacher Support through Academic Self-Efficacy beliefs & Academic Outcome Expectations indirectly strengthen Academic Interest.

IS → AOE (IS= **Climate & Engagement;** Perception of Institutional Support is directly influential to Academic Outcome Expectations but also indirectly influential to Academic Interest.

AOE → AI Academic Outcome Expectations beliefs can support Academic Interest in terms of continued motivation, college persistence, and resiliency behaviors to pursue potential interests, actions, and goals.

See Think Wonder

What do you see?

What do you think is going on?

What does it make you wonder?

Elbow Partner- 1 minute

Even though you are not a teacher,

Yet, we all represent the Institution we work for....

#3
Attachment Theory

"A lasting psychological connectedness between humans beings"
John Bowlby, 1964

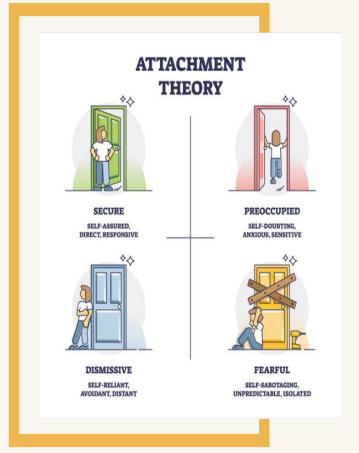**Basic framework for understanding human connection:**
One's relationship with their parents during childhood has an overarching influence on their social, intimate relationships in the future.

What does this all look like?
- Children **biologically programmed to form attachments** with others, helps us survive.
- Need to attach to one main attachment figure, to **feel secure, a safe haven, comfort and safety in the face of a fear or threat**.
- Our **internal working model**, a cognitive framework comprising mental representations for understanding the world, self, and others.... Based on primary caregivers relationship.
- This becomes the **prototype for all future social relationships** for interacting with others.
- Repeated behaviors and transactions create attachments of various kinds.
- It is not unique to infant-caregiver relationship, **may be present in other forms of social relationships**

Five Conditions for Creating A Secure Base and a Safe Haven

1. Child Feel Safe
2. Child Feels Seen and Known
3. Child Feels Comforted
4. Child Feels Valued
5. Child feels support for being their best self

ATTACHMENT THEORY

SECURE
SELF-ASSURED, DIRECT, RESPONSIVE

PREOCCUPIED
SELF-DOUBTING, ANXIOUS, SENSITIVE

DISMISSIVE
SELF-RELIANT, AVOIDANT, DISTANT

FEARFUL
SELF-SABOTAGING, UNPREDICTABLE, ISOLATED

Identified 4 major types of attachment styles through her research.

Mary Ainsworth Built on Bowlby's Work.

It's human nature to seek contact and relationships, to seek love, support, and comfort in others.

All it takes is a secure attachment with ***one caring adult*** to make the difference in a child's life.

Insecure attachment to caretaker can form a secure attachment:

- with a grandparent
- With a Teacher
- With a Neighbor
- With a Family friend
- Or other, with a caring, trustworthy adult

A solid understanding of attachment can help adults understand the **powerful impact of relationships** on helping children develop.

SECURE ATTACHMENT

This is what we all strive for.

<u>Caregiver behaviors</u> that promote a secure attachment style in children:

- Warm, nurturing, and attentive
- Caregivers are attuned to their child's needs and wants
- Stay close, but allow freedom to explore the world
- Reliable in their actions
- Focus on who the child is as a person rather than what they achieve
- Encourage a sense of independence in their child

What this translates to is an adult who can tolerate difficulties in a relationship and utilize healthy coping skills to manage these challenges, foster trust, reliability.

Relationships Matter

#4

Understanding Theory of Common Factors:

Proposes that different approaches and evidence-based practices in psychotherapy and counseling share common factors that account for much of the effectiveness of a psychological treatment

Authentic:

Can I tell you the tough stuff and you will still be there for me?

Bond: Trust, & then Attachment

(Attachment- the human connection: I'm not alone)

Quality of the Relationship: Empathic and Caring

Understanding Theory of Common Factors:

1. **Alliance:** The Bond, The Agreement about Goals, The Agreement about Tasks
2. **Empathy:** Be affected by and share the emotional state of another, assess the reason for that person's state, identifies by adopting their perspective, necessary for cooperation, goal sharing, regulations **Will you take the time to understand the problem and the context of the situation?**
3. **Expectations:** Do we explain the disorder? Present rationale for treatment? Engaged in the therapeutic process?
4. **Necessary Cultural Adaptations**

See Think Wonder

What do you see?

What do you think is going on?

What does it make you wonder?

Elbow Partner- 1 minute

When you Know Better, Responsibility to Do Better

What do you "know better" now?

Student At-Risk Behaviors: Current Trends

2019 CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey

CDC Adolescent Behaviors and Expectations Survey (ABES)

4 Priority Areas Identified

1. Sexual Behaviors
2. High Risk Substance Use
3. Experiencing Violence
4. Mental Health and Suicide

Health-related behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults.

#1 Sexual Behavior

- HIV, STDs, Unintended teen pregnancy
- White students more likely to use effective contraceptives than Black or Hispanic students

#2 High-Risk Substance Use

 Defined: Any use by adolescents of select illicit drugs prescription opioid misuse, or recent prescription opioid misuse, as well as injection of illegal drugs.

- White/Hispanic students less likely to use illicit drugs (trend in last 10 years), Trend among Black students unchanged.
- Males students more likely to use injection drugs
- 1 in 7 students report ever misusing prescription opioid (Click **Here** for More Info from CDC)

#3 Experiencing Violence

2019

More Black and Brown students missed school because of safety concerns than white students

2x More

Females students more than 2x likely to be electronically bullied

3x More

Female students 3x more likely to be forced to have sex, 3x more likely to experiece sexual dating violence

1 in 5

Students report being bullied during past year(both electronically and at school).

8.7%

HS students that did not go to school because of safety concerns (37% increase in last decade)

All this points to .... indicators of disruption in the school setting that impact **school connectedness,** an important **protective factor** for substance use, sexual behavior, and mental health that can also impact academic success.

#4 Mental Health and Suicide

Poor mental health is associated with a host of health risks, both during adolescence and into adulthood

- **Significant concern:** negative mental health and safety issues continue to increase.
  - ↑ % of students felt <u>sad or hopeless</u> for at least 2-weeks to the degree that they could not engage in their usual activities.
  - ↑ % of students who <u>seriously considered suicide or made a suicide plan</u>

These trends show... adolescents are critically in need of adult support in addressing safety and mental health issues.

Mental Health Statistics

1 in 3

1 in 3 female report persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness.

About 37%

1 in 5

1 in 5 seriously considered suicide (more white and black from 2009-19).

About 19%

1 in 6

1 in 6 youth report making suicide plans, 44% increase since 2009.

About 16%

9%

HS students attempted suicide.

More females, more black attempted suicide than white

More females seriously considered, were injured in a suicide attempt.

3%

About 3% of high school students were injured in a suicide attempt.

Racism is a Public Health Problem!!

1 in 3

33% of HS students felt they had been treated badly or unfairly at school because of their race or ethnicity

Ethnic Group Most Impacted

Asian, Black, & Multiracial students reported highest levels of experiencing racism.
Asian students (64%) and **Black/Multiple races (both 55%).**

Racism and Mental Health

Students who report racism, also more likely to experience poor mental health and less likely to feel connected to people at school

Ways to Address?

See Article: Culture & Student Mental Health

LGBTQI+

Our Most Vulnerable Student Group.

Stark disparities were found in all key health risk behaviors between sexual minority students and their peers.

Most risk behaviors and experiences were found to be higher in sexual minority youth than among heterosexual youth especially regarding:

1. Sexual Behaviors
2. **High Risk Substance Use
3. **Experiencing Violence
4. **Mental Health and Suicide
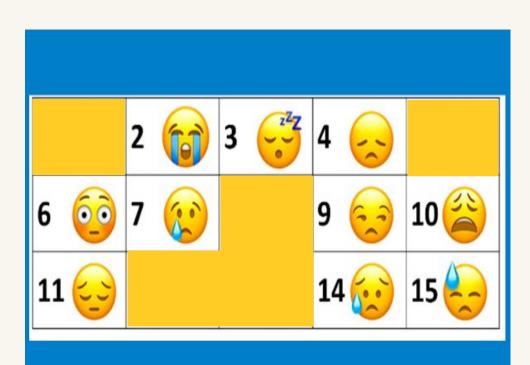
Mental Health Since Covid-19

HS students reported they experienced poor mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic (37%)
Challenges youth encountered during the pandemic:

- **55% reported they experienced emotional abuse** by a parent or other adult in the home, including swearing at, insulting, or putting down the student.
- **11% experienced physical abuse** by a parent or other adult in the home, including hitting, beating, kicking, or physically hurting the student.
- **29% reported a parent** or other adult in their home **lost a job.**
- **Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and female youth reported greater levels of poor mental health;** emotional abuse by a parent or caregiver; and having attempted suicide than their counterparts.

These Risks Extend Beyond Health!

- Impact academic achievement
- Impacts future occupational and financial opportunities into adulthood.

Elbow Partner- 1 minute

Take a moment to reflect & identify a feelings you might be having in response these current trends?

It's Time to Leverage our Relationships

When young people experience developmental relationships with parents, educators, youth program staff, and other adults their outcomes are better, their risk behaviours are lower, they are more likely to be on a path to thrive in life.

Healthy Youth Network

Pupil Personnel Worker & Social Worker Lens

- Advocating
- Consulting
- Liaison
- Referral

In Order to →

- Support
- Encourage
- Empower

Students and Families Need Our Support More than Ever!

Humble Suggestion #1

Leverage Relationships with Colleagues

Be visible within your building

1. Join in on a current program with staff within your building
2. Create partnerships within your building-forge relationships with colleagues across disciplines
3. Create a new program/initiative, assemble a team

Use Collaborative & Team building Language "How can we.... "

Humble Suggestion #2:

Leverage Relationships with Students
Find ways to Be that Adult who….

Not Automatic Pilot Mode
Not Check the Box Mode

Express Care
SHOW ME THAT I MATTER TO YOU.

Be dependable: Be someone I can trust
Listen: Really pay attention when we're together
Believe in me: Make me feel known and valued
Be warm: Show me you enjoy being with me
Encourage: Praise me for my efforts and achievements

PROVIDE SUPPORT

Help me complete tasks
and achieve goals.

NAVIGATE: GUIDE ME THROUGH HARD SITUATIONS AND SYSTEMS
EMPOWER: BUILD MY CONFIDENCE TO TAKE CHARGE OF MY LIFE
ADVOCATE: STAND UP FOR ME WHEN I NEED IT
SET BOUNDARIES: PUT IN PLACE LIMITS THAT KEEP ME ON TRACK

Challenge Growth

PUSH ME TO KEEP GETTING BETTER

Expect my best: Expect me to
live up to my potential
Stretch: Push me to go further
Hold me accountable: Insist I take
responsibility for my actions
Reflect on failures: Help me learn from
mistakes and setbacks

Humble Suggestion #3:

Strengthening Teacher and Institutional Support Through Leadership and Advocacy

With Students

- Help connect students to the breath of learning experiences available to them
- Connect students with supports to increase persistence/resilience (earning diploma) or other educational goal
- Improve conditions which affect student's perception of their experience

Implications From Dissertation Research

With Staff

- Find ways to educate staff about the critical role they plays in strengthening relationships to improve sense of belonging and connections, to promote student engagement.

With the Institution

- Begin to interrupt policy, procedures, and practices, and systems which negatively impact students.
- Provide social justice advocacy for marginalized student groups.
- Actively engage within the school community in order to improve the institution climate for students, student engagement with their institution.

Humble Suggestion #4:

Keeping Conversation about Equity & Social Justice Front & Center in all your work, Always.

Actively work to Continue Building your own Self-Awareness

For Self-Reflection:
- ❖ Connect the reasons you became a PPW/SW to who you are as a person.
- ❖ Identify your life experiences that brought you to this very moment.
- ❖ Connect your experiences into your beliefs, your values and your personality
- ❖ Commit to growing your culturally responsive muscle: Sample Self-Reflection Questions to Consider

Questions for Consideration:
1. Through my interactions with students and families, would they perceive me as a safe haven (necessary for relationships to thrive)?
2. Are my beliefs, feelings, and actions aligned to build relationships?
3. How will I check my implicit biases that impact my work?
4. How will I hold myself accountable to continue growing?

Some Encouragement As We Close

★ So you start one person at a time. Change one person, you can change a village.
  -Robin Quivers

★ Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.'
  -Harriet Tubman

★ Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.
  -Nelson Mandela

★ Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.
  -Barack Obama

★ Never be afraid to get in good trouble, necessary trouble.
  -John Lewis

THANK YOU