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Increasing Coping Tool Strategies Among Elementary Age Students

Jermaine M. Carter

A Capstone Project for Human Development and Family Science

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Introduction

Many children in elementary schools have yet to develop effective skills to manage their behavior. Children who learn how to effectively navigate their mental health or strengthen their self management skills, decrease their subjective distress, and improve their social skills with peers are more likely to excel in their academics. Elementary schools should remain aware of the lack of coping skills development. This mindfulness will support students who are in need of these skill sets to decrease the number of maladaptive behavior in schools, while increasing in the knowledge of appropriate coping skills alongside their school wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports curriculum. I have developed a two-day lesson which provides numerous techniques to support possible school climate hardship with positive cognitive behavioral development for First through Fifth grade students in the Key Empowering Youth (KEY) program at Del Rey Woods Elementary School in Seaside, California.

Needs Statement

Various public elementary school children have not yet learned the socially appropriate coping skill techniques necessary when faced with a difficult school environment. Coping skills are part of behavior management and intervention strategies that improve stressful situations for an individual and minimize opportunities for escalation (Morin, 2020). Without these skills, a child is at risk for poor academics, peer relationships and mental health such as anxiety, depression and irregular emotions (Friedman & Pincus, 2004). Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) supports the enhancement of healthy consequences to negative behaviors, negative school environment and bullying between students and challenges with academics (Childs, et al., 2015).

With these positive and socially appropriate school wide PBIS lessons, children have learned to balance their mental health and wellbeing alongside academic areas that bring them hardship (Dahlberg et al., 2018). There are many possibilities for negative factors to impact a child's daily life during school hours, which in turn may increase struggle with their academics. A general factor that contributes to academic hardship is the overall condition of a classroom or school climate. In accordance to research, an impoverished school environment plays a valuable factor in children's developing mental and learning processes (Narucki, 2008). The overall school climate impacts a students' ability to manage their behaviors appropriately students will need to learn and independently implement them skills when they are faced with these types of negative or unhealthy academic hardships during the school day.

In addition, heavily impacted classrooms can have a negative impact on both student achievement and behavioral management. The overcrowding of classrooms leads to an imbalance of teaching, attention, and individualized support from the teacher to their students. Students must gain learning independence early on to succeed in a crowded classroom. Overcrowded classrooms also create a lesser chance for group activity interactions with other peers (Rodriguez, 2017). Positive peer collaboration and interactions is vital to establish positive classroom cultures that help students feel safe and successful. While the overcrowding of classrooms and less support individually may sound mediocre school wide, the students experiencing these conditions first hand may feel under duress and unsure how to communicate and find solutions. This is especially true since these conditions are out of their control.

Lastly, after receiving a negative consequence, such as a suspension from school, transitioning back to the classroom can become difficult for students. This will more likely increase academic hardship, hence the needed support of PBIS in school climates, which include

copied skills techniques. For example, Nolteemeyer and Ward (2015) found that suspending children was not only unsuccessful in exhibiting positive change but students also suffered in their academics upon returning to school. This suggests that the need to include PBIS coping skills techniques as part of school wide curriculum is important to help prevent negative consequences, hence not requiring as many suspensions. Upon the extreme case that a suspension is necessary, the students will gain the ability to implement correct techniques to independently transition back to school, ensuring the students' success in future positive behavior.

Bullying is a continuous concern that occurs more often than not and obstructs the schools capacity to defend the socio-emotional status of a student (Psanos, 2013). This adds to the academic hardship students may face in the school climate. Bullying can lead to feeling unsafe at school, feeling disconnected, truancy and academic issues (Chapman & hall, 2016). Those who bully others may also be facing hardship that is often overlooked. Most bullies see themselves as not fit for school which increases the chances of them feeling incapable of being academically engaged (Chapman & hall, 2016). This brings them to make others feel similarly and gain some sort of confidence or power by taking matters into their own actions bullying those around them. Using a PBIS which includes coping skills can further assist in the creation of positive effective actions in a school environment to reduce school violence, sexual harassment and any additional types of bullying (Psanos, 2013). Reducing the amount of bullying can subdue part of academic hardship in the school environment. Victims who are often subject to bullying can be affected by chronic absenteeism, decreased scores regarding academics, loneliness, increase in anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts (Kopasz & Smokowski, 2005). Overall school climate can be improved when the students have the

necessary tools to manage their behaviors and emotions stemming from academic hardships, as well as sound and supportive school wide systems in place which focus on positive and socially appropriate responses.

Given classroom challenges, bullying among peers and mental health are issues of concern when analyzing the overall success of students in public schools, this two-day interactive lesson plan on the importance of learning coping skill strategies from a PBIS curriculum, then learning how to use the skills in the appropriate situations for the school environment, specifically for First through Fifth grade students at Del Rey Woods Elementary School in Seaside, California who are students enrolled with the KEY program.

Theory

In the process of developing, children are constantly learning behaviors by observing others as well as from their environments. Bandura, as he described in his Social Learning Theory, believed that individuals learn behaviors through the actions of other individuals and mimicked what they had observed. Social Learning Theory describes modeling as including attention, retention, motor reproduction and reinforcement processes. The attention process is explained as the essential requirement of an individual's attention to behavior and consequences in order to form a mental process of the behavior. The retentional process, as described in Bandura's theory, is how thoroughly a behavior is remembered by an individual. For example, students will repeat information that has been displayed and reviewed during this project. The next stage of the motor reproduction process is the ability to complete the model behavior that has been exhibited. Motor reproduction process will be showcased in this project by having students role play the PBIS coping skill techniques lessons they have learned. Lastly,

reinforcement is the determination to demonstrate the behavior and will depend on the positive attention that is shown towards the behavior of the individual. Thus, for example, the students will be rewarded new pencils and erasers for their participation in this project.

Another important factor in Social Learning Theory is observational learning, which can be done by examining other individuals' behaviors. Observational learning comes from three types of models: a live model, a verbal instruction model and a symbolic model. A live model involves an individual actually demonstrating the behavior. In this project, I will demonstrate the appropriate coping skill technique as a tool for a suitable situation. A verbal instruction model contains the revealing of characteristics and interpretation of a behavior. With this project, I am going to provide clear instructions on how to use coping skills techniques as tools, when to use coping skills techniques and what appropriate behavior is expected in the school climate. Lastly, the symbolic model, which includes the demonstrations of behaviors that are learned through non-fictional or fictional characters from movies, books and online media. Specifically, in this project, there is no symbolic model because the children already know me. In summation, my project will reflect Bandura's Theory of Social Learning by teaching students to improve their coping skills techniques and use them as a set of tools for healthy classroom strategies.

Consideration of Diversity

This project will be conducted at Del Rey Woods Elementary School in Seaside, California with students from First through Fifth grade from the KEY program. Overall school statistics obtained from the School Accountability Report Cards (SARC) indicated that, for the 2018-19 enrollment, there were 413 students and are comprised of Blacks or African American (1.7%), Asian (0.7%), Filipino (1%), Hispanic or Latino (85%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific

Islander (1.5%), White (6.5%), and two or more races (3.6%). Furthermore, 69% of the students are classified as being socioeconomically disadvantaged, 70% being English Learners, 10% being students with disabilities and 12% being homeless. This project participants in particular are reflective of the larger population of socioeconomically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. The content of the project will be given in English. Therefore, students will have to be English proficient to participate. Due to the fact that more than half of the school are English learners, the content of my project could be adjusted by having extra copies of paperwork printed in the preferred language and translated in the appropriate language if needed.

Learning Outcomes

I have plans to present a 2-day lesson which provides numerous techniques to help with Positive Social and Learning Behavioral Development for First through Fifth grade students in the KEY program at Del Rey Woods Elementary School in Seaside, CA.

By the end of the project, participants will be able to:

1. Indicate three positive behaviors reflecting the coping skills tools that were modeled and implemented through role play for example provided of academic hardships.
2. Demonstrate one of three positive behaviors reflecting the coping skills tools that were modeled from previous exercise.
3. Provide one example of when to use one of the three positive behaviors reflecting the coping skills tools.

Method

Day 1

First, I will introduce myself to small groups of students in a classroom setting and give the students general background information on the reason for my visit and of what the next two days of lessons will consist of. Then, I will ask them what their personal experiences and strategies are when they are faced with difficulties in school such as asking for help, difficulties with peers such as bullies and their personal emotional issues. Once the class shares their strategies and experiences when faced with difficult challenges, I will share my experience and strategies with difficult situations while projecting a visual on the classroom smartboard of coping skills tools for them to learn. See Appendix A. Next, I will present a three minute video titled, *Choosing a Tool to Stay Calm at School Video Social Story* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNwon3Drnn8>), showing clear examples of negative behaviors and positive appropriate responses with strategies to use rather than engaging in negative behavior when faced with a difficult challenge in school.

After watching the video, we will discuss some of the coping skills tools that were shown in the video to use when in a difficult or stressful situation. Next, I will have the students spend five to ten minutes role playing as a group, how and when to use coping tools and problem solve successfully in the school climate. At the conclusion of my time with the students, I will review by group discussions the experiences and strategies we shared as a class, the shopping skills tools that were discussed in the video and the coping skills tools that were demonstrated in the role playing segment. Lastly, I will prepare the students for a coping skills toolbox strategy quiz on what was learned on day one that they will take at the end of day two.

Day 2

On the second day, I will set up a table in front of the class that will have a choice of new pencils and erasers from them to choose from for their participation the previous day. Then I will give a five minute review on the information of strategies on how and when to use the coping skills tools if a difficult situation arises of which they learned and discussed on the previous day and give the opportunity for them to ask questions before beginning day two activities. Then, I will spend five to ten minutes providing different scenarios and questions that students can answer by raising their hand and responding when being called on. I will provide another incentive to encourage participation for the next activity, such as a prize box containing small trinkets to choose from. Next, I will spend ten minutes showing a Google Slides presentation of several academic challenges examples with images that students can select by raising their hand to be called on to answer while selecting a coping skills tool to implement with a difficult challenge at school. See Appendix B.

Then, the group will divide into partners and I will pass out a dotted line table cut out worksheet of the *12 Tools* they learned on day one of the visual that was projected onto the smartboard. I will provide scissors and key rings for them to create their own “Toolbox To Go” by cutting and hole punching to assemble their key rings together and keep with them. See Appendix C. This activity will be a thirty minute window for them to work. As the students work on their coping skills tools activity, I will walk around and ask students to demonstrate a coping skills tool of their choice and offer assistance for assembling their “Toolbox To Go”.

To conclude the lesson for both days, I will ask them to return to their original seats and pass out a ten question coping skill strategy, multiple choice quiz for each student to answer that will take roughly five minutes to complete. This quiz will give result information for collecting data on the knowledge each student retained. See Appendix D. Once completed, I will provide

the students with a colored pen for review and correction of the quiz as a class. Correcting the quiz and providing feedback to the students will take ten minutes maximum. This will present an opportunity to clarify the lessons of day one and day two if any of the students had a misunderstanding of coping skills tools. After this, I will dismiss them back to their assigned classrooms.

Results

Not completed Due to Covid-19

Discussion

Not completed due to Covid-19

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Appendix

Appendix A



The 12 Tools
Tools for Learning • Tools for Life

	Breathing Tool <i>I calm myself and check-in.</i>	
	Quiet/Safe Place Tool <i>I remember my quiet/safe place.</i>	
	Listening Tool <i>I listen with my ears, eyes, and heart.</i>	
	Empathy Tool <i>I care for others. I care for myself.</i>	
	Personal Space Tool <i>I have a right to my space and so do you.</i>	
	Using Our Words Tool <i>I use the "right" words in the "right" way.</i>	
	Garbage Can Tool <i>I let the little things go.</i>	
	Taking Time Tool <i>I take time-in and time-away.</i>	
	Please & Thank You Tool <i>I treat others with kindness and appreciation.</i>	
	Apology & Forgiveness Tool <i>I admit my mistakes and work to forgive yours.</i>	
	Patience Tool <i>I am strong enough to wait.</i>	
	Courage Tool <i>I have the courage to do the "right" thing.</i>	

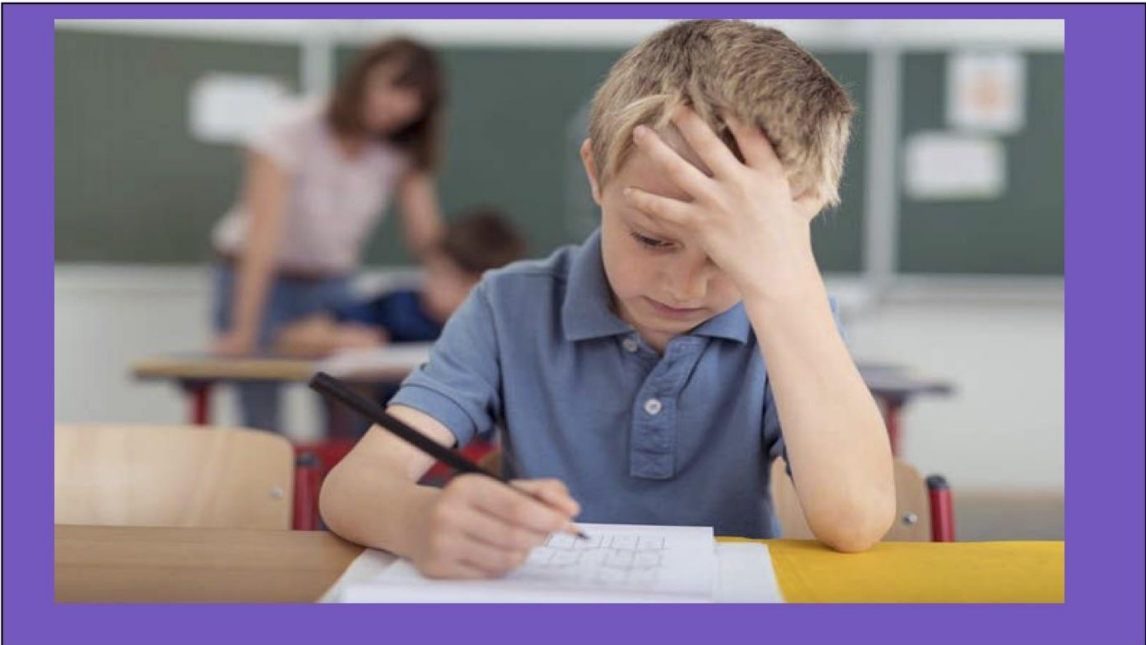
Appendix B

Academic Challenges

Which Tools to Use!

















Appendix C

 Breathing Tool	 Safe Place Tool	 Listening Tool	 Empathy Tool	 Personal Space Tool	 Use Your Words Tool
 Garbage Can Tool	 Please/Thank you Tool	 Forgiveness Tool	 Patience Tool	 Courage Tool	 Taking Your Time Tool





Appendix D

Coping Tool Strategy Quiz

1. What coping tool strategy can be use when you are feeling nervous in the classroom?
 - A. Screaming tool
 - B. Fighting tool
 - C. Sleeping tool
 - D. Breathing tool

2. What coping tool strategy can be used when you see a peer who is sad?
 - A. Forgiveness tool
 - B. Safe place tool
 - C. Empathy tool
 - D. Bullying tool

3. A friend is upset and wants to be left alone. What tool should other peers use to respect their friend?
 - A. Personal space tool
 - B. Courage tool
 - C. Use your words tool
 - D. Garbage tool

4. True or False: You can use the safe place tool by asking a teacher, counselor or an adult who works at the school for a break. You can even talk to them when you are feeling down.

True

False

5. True or False: The Garbage Can tool can be used as an outlet for letting go things such as anger and sadness.

True

False

6. When I feel myself having a hard time with academic work, it is best to use what coping tool strategy?
- A. Sleeping tool
 - B. Eating tool

C. Use your words tool

D. Spitting coping tool

7. Which tool should you use when wanting to make friends with a peer?
- A. Forgiveness tool
 - B. Garbage can tool
 - C. Courage tool
 - D. Please/Thank you tool

8. True or false: A student should use the garbage can tool when waiting to be called upon in class.
True
False

9. True or false: A student should use the personal space tool when sitting quietly in the desk while the teacher is explaining the math assignment.
True
False

10. True or false: A student must yell at that teacher when the student wants to go to lunch early.
True
False

Appendix E

Increasing Coping Tools Strategies Among Elementary Age Students

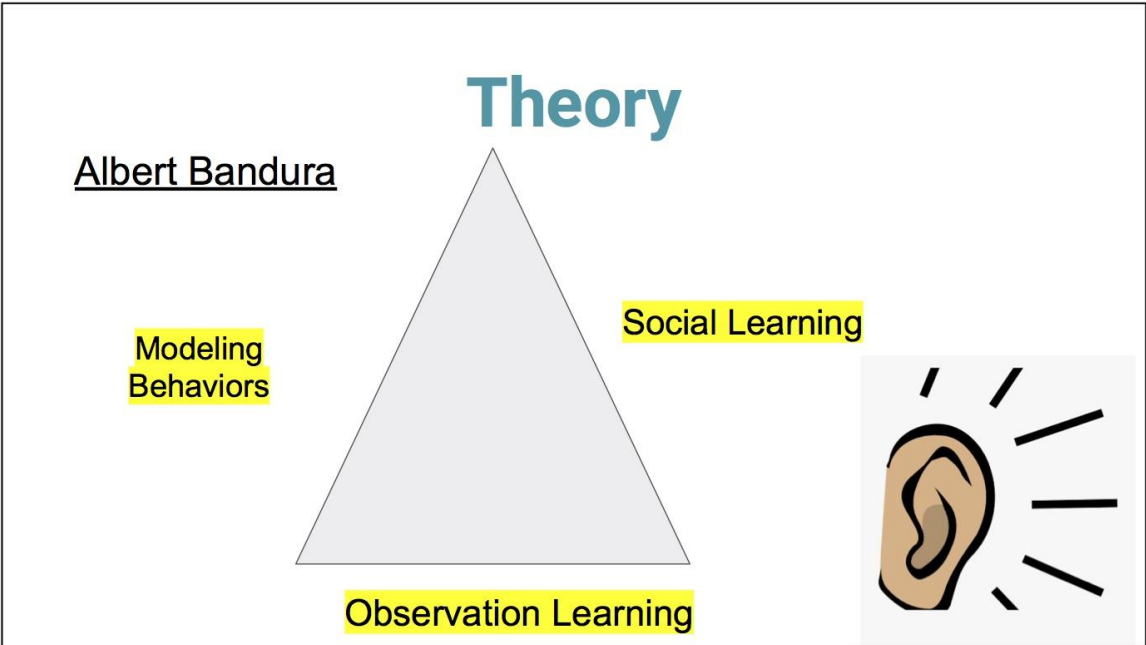
Jermaine Carter



Needs

- ❖ Behavior Intervention Strategies; Coping Skills Techniques
- ❖ Improve Stressful Situations
- ❖ Positive Peer Interaction



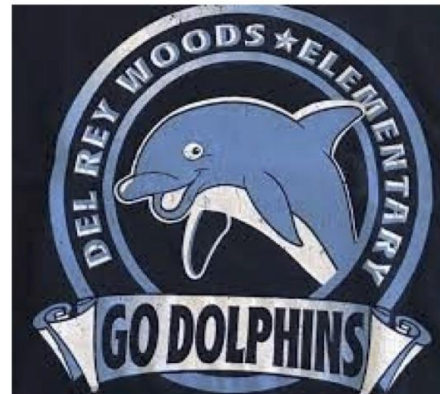


What Will I do?

Two Day Interactive Lesson Plan;

- ❖ On the importance of learning Coping Tools from Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) curriculum

- ❖ How & when to use coping tools appropriately for school environment specifically for First through Fifth grade students in Knowledge Empowering Youth (KEY) program who have diagnosis of Emotional Disturbance located at Del Rey Woods Elementary School in Seaside California



Learning Outcomes

- ❖ Indicate one of the Coping Tools that were discussed throughout the lesson plans
- ❖ Demonstrate **(How)** one of the Coping Tools that were discussed throughout the lesson plans
- ❖ Give one example of **When** to use a Coping Tools strategy



Method: Day 1

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Discussion of difficult challenges experiences in school setting
- ❖ Visual Display of “12 Coping Tools” Strategies
- ❖ Choosing a Tool to Stay Calm at School video
- ❖ Role play
- ❖ Conclusion



TOOLBOX
BY DOVEYTALE LEARNING

The 12 Tools
Tools for Learning • Tools for Life

- Breathing Tool**
I calm myself and check-in. (Icon: a small box)
- Quiet/Safe Place Tool**
I remember my quiet/safe place. (Icon: headphones)
- Listening Tool**
I listen with my ears, eyes, and heart. (Icon: a hand pointing)
- Empathy Tool**
I care for others. I care for myself. (Icon: a pencil)
- Personal Space Tool**
I have a right to my space and so do you. (Icon: a ball of string)
- Using Our Words Tool**
I use the "right" words in the "right" way. (Icon: a pencil)
- Garbage Can Tool**
I let the little things go. (Icon: a trash can)
- Taking Time Tool**
I take time-in and time-away. (Icon: a watch)
- Please & Thank You Tool**
I treat others with kindness and appreciation. (Icon: a key)
- Apology & Forgiveness Tool**
I admit my mistakes and work to forgive yours. (Icon: a bottle)
- Patience Tool**
I am strong enough to wait. (Icon: a car)
- Courage Tool**
I have the courage to do the "right" thing. (Icon: a rope)



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Method: Day 2

- ❖ Reward
- ❖ Review of previous lesson from Day 1
- ❖ Slide presentation of Academic Challenges
- ❖ Group Activity "Tool Box To Go"
- ❖ Coping Tool Strategy Quiz
- ❖ Dismissal



Academic Challenges
Which Tools to Use!









Coping Skills Strategy Quiz

Coping Tool Strategy Quiz

1. What coping tool strategy can be use when you are feeling nervous in the classroom?
 - A. Screaming tool
 - B. Fighting tool
 - C. Sleeping tool
 - D. Breathing tool
2. What coping tool strategy can be used when you see a peer who is sad?
 - A. Forgiveness tool
 - B. Safe place tool
 - C. Empathy tool
 - D. Bullying tool
3. A friend is upset and wants to be left alone. What tool should other peers use to respect their friend?
 - A. Personal space tool
 - B. Courage tool
 - C. Use your words tool
 - D. Garbage tool
4. True or False: You can use the safe place tool by asking a teacher, counselor or an adult who works at the school for a break. You can even talk to them when you are feeling down.

True
False



5. True or False: The Garbage Can tool can be used as an outlet for letting go things such as anger and sadness.

True
False

6. When I feel myself having a hard time with academic work, it is best to use what coping tool strategy?
A. Sleeping tool
B. Eating tool



C. Use your words tool
D. Spitting coping tool

7. Which tool should you use when wanting to make friends with a peer?
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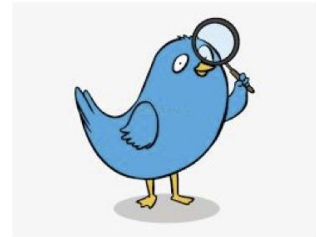
True

False



Results

Due to COVID-19, this method could not be completed.



Discussion

Due to COVID-19, this method could not be completed.



Questions and Comments

Thank You

