SEL and the Mental Health Needs of Children
In and Out of the Classroom
Drs. Nicholas Covino, Shella Dennery and Nadja Reilly

Director
Boston Children's Hospital
Neighborhood Partnerships

From Program to Policy to Practice: A School-based Blueprint

Associate Director
Freedman Center, WJC

Anxiety and Depression in the Classroom:
A Teacher's Guide to Fostering Self-Regulation in Young Students

Children's Social-Emotional Health

4 children in a class of **20** has a diagnosable mental illness

2 more have problems serious enough to interfere with home or school

32% of children in military families are at HIGH RISK.....Deployed **5X**

Untreated anxiety and depression = #1 cause of High School Dropout

ETOH/Drug Use

Suicide   **3rd** leading cause of death for 10-14 years
           2nd leading cause of death for 15-24 years

Age	%
12/13	3
14/15	13
17	26

WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

80% of children who need care will NOT receive it

Children's Mental Health Matters!

Inadequate # Professionals

             70% of Parents unable to find care

             School Psychologists 1:500 - 700

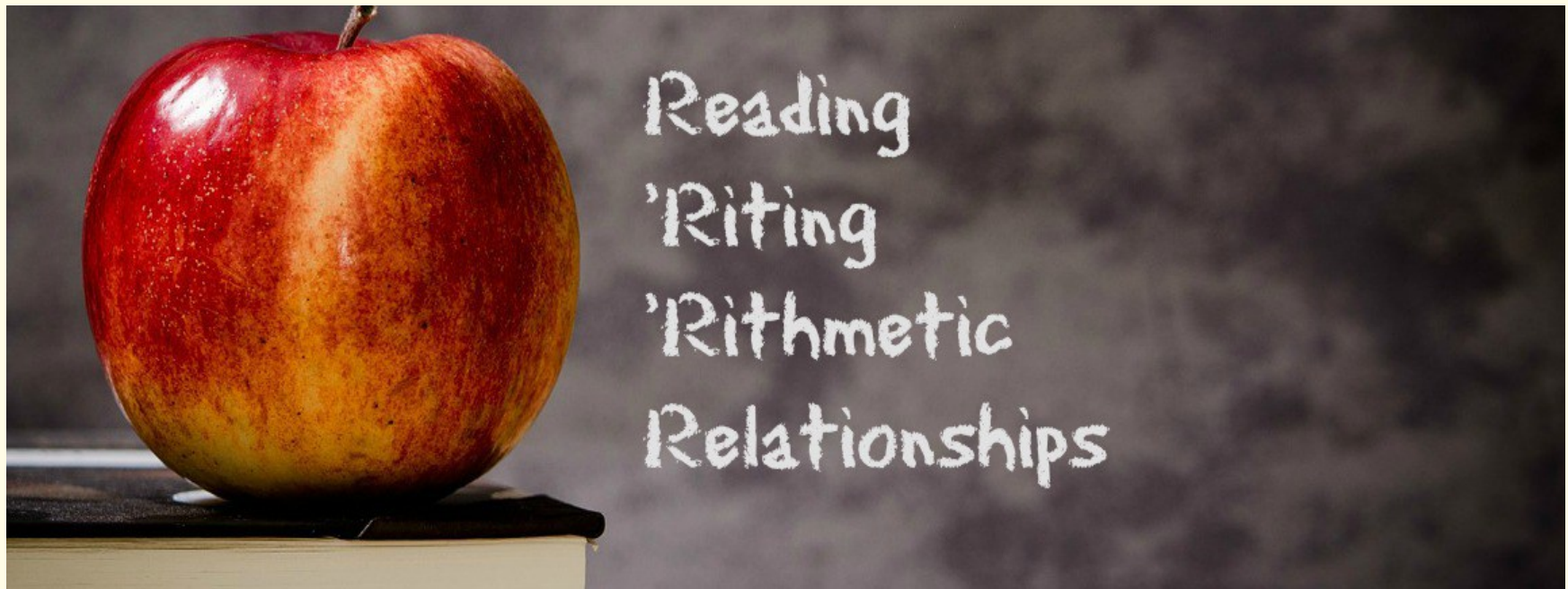Transportation

             Travel and Treatment take Time

Stigma

             Keeps families from seeking care

Language/Culture

             90% Mental Health Providers = White

WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

Schools are ideally positioned to educate and to enhance Social-Emotional Health for Children

WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

Position Paper

Behavioral Health and Social-Emotional Intelligence (SEL)

Introduction

The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S) has engaged in a series of discussions with representatives from the School Committee Association and the Elementary and Secondary School Principals Associations around the growing concern related to the behavioral health and social-emotional intelligence of our students. This engagement has been prompted by requests from many of our members to balance the current focus on accountability and compliance with a renewed effort to support the behavioral health of our students. This is challenging work and our success will depend upon our ability to collaborate with many important partners.

WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE

Social Emotional Learning

Who am I?

How do I govern myself?

Empathy and respect for others?

What are good choices?

How do I work with a team?

WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

A review of school climate research (Thapa et al., 2013)

Meriden school climate survey (Gage et al., 2015)

Impact of enhancing students' SEL (Durlak et al., 2011)

Self-Management
Managing emotions and behaviors to acheive one's goals

Self-Awareness
Recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and challenges

Social Awareness
Showing understanding and empathy for others

Social & Emotional Learning

Responsible Decision-Making
Making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior

Relationship Skills
Forming positive relationships, working in teams, dealing effectively with conflict

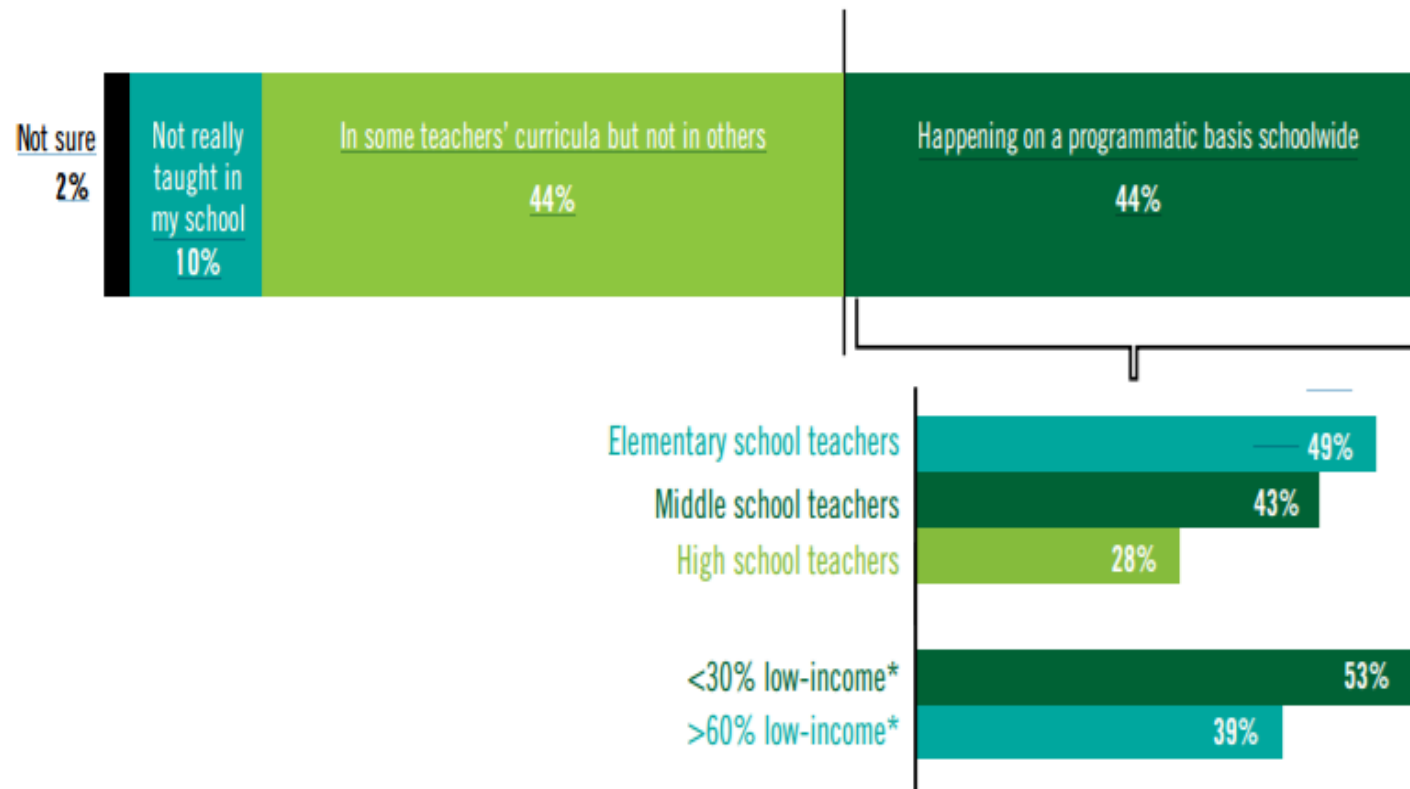Achievement Tests 11-17 percentile points; Motivation; Mental Health

Self-Criticism; Absenteeism; Substance Abuse; Suspension

WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

FIGURE 11 Fewer than half of teachers report that social and emotional skills are taught in their schools on a programmatic basis.

To what extent is teaching students social and emotional skills happening in your school?

| Not sure 2% | Not really taught in my school 10% | In some teachers' curricula but not in others 44% | Happening on a programmatic basis schoolwide 44% |

Elementary school teachers — 49%
Middle school teachers — 43%
High school teachers — 28%

<30% low-income* — 53%
>60% low-income* — 39%

*Income measured by free and reduced-price lunch.

The Missing Piece
Bridgeland, Bruce & Hariharan, 2013
National Sample of 605 pre K-12 teachers
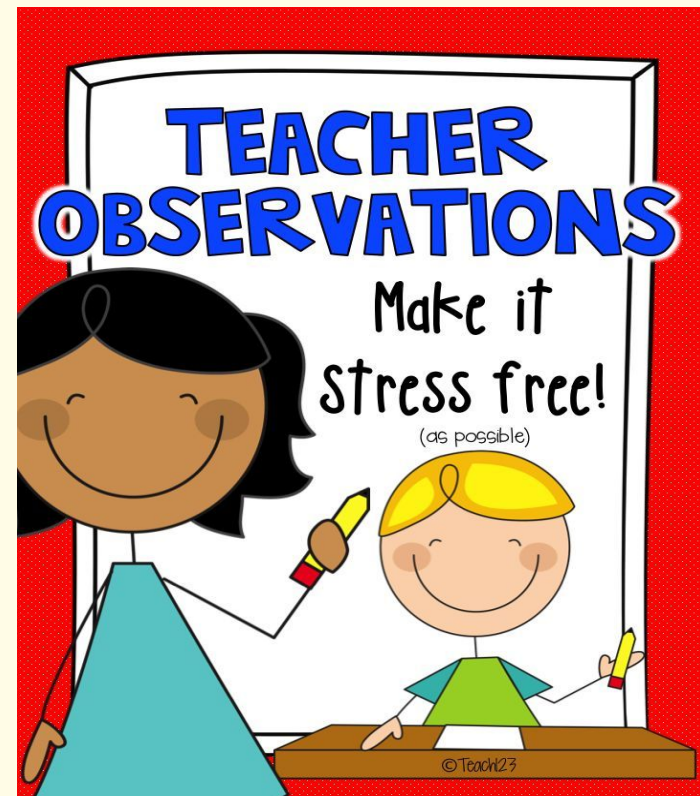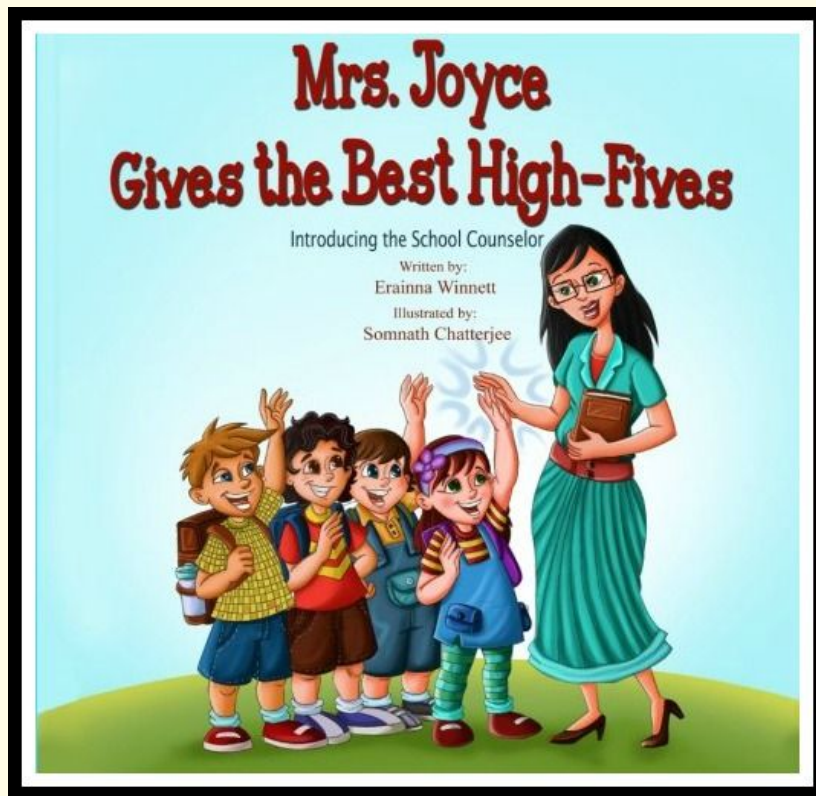
WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

High-Stakes
Tests

Technology
and
Media

Academic
Standards

Bullying

Substance
Abuse

Teams

Parents

Innovation
Du Jour
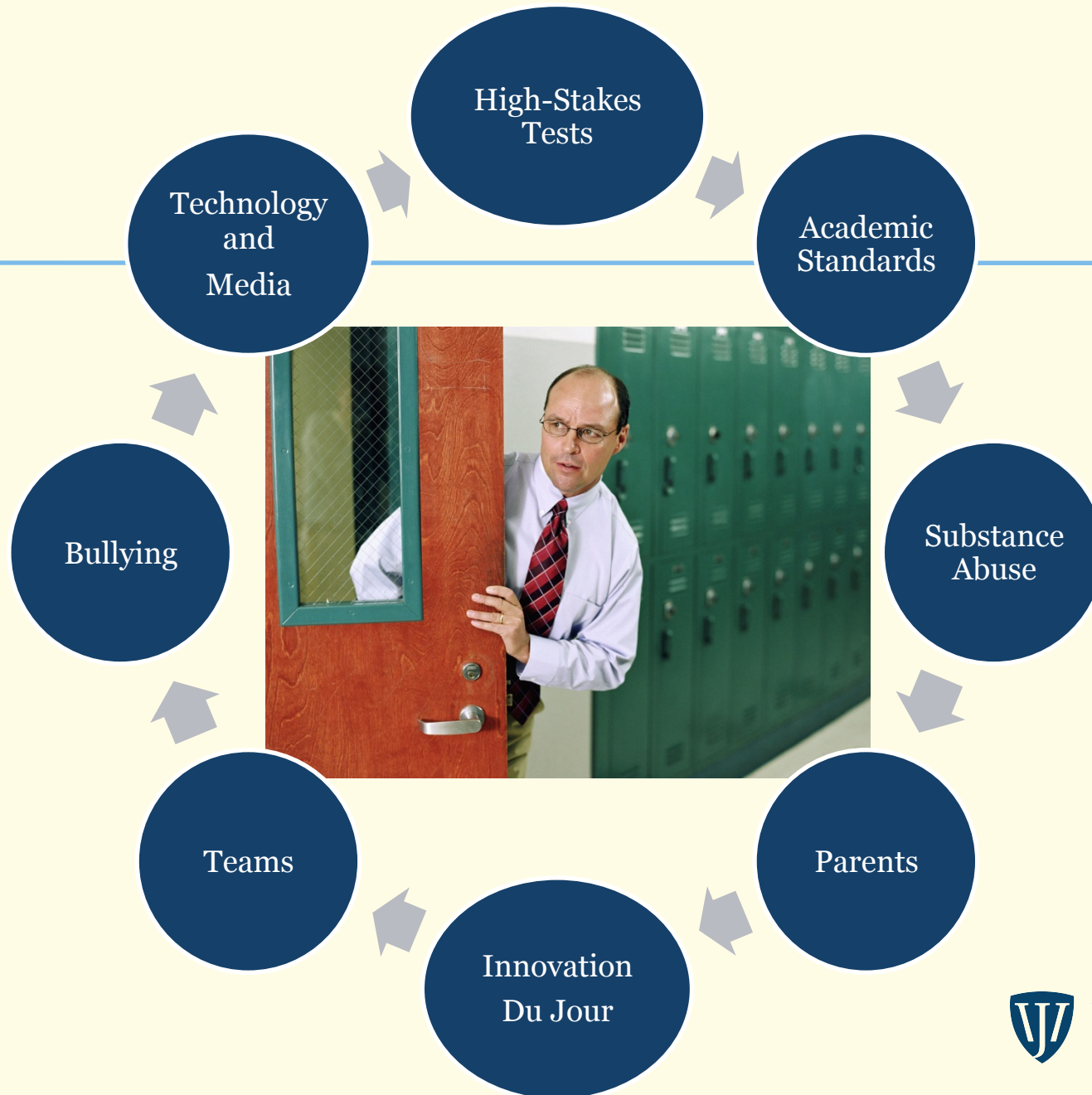
WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE

"We focus on our own subject matter."

WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

" Feelings are not my job!"

"Relationships are unfamiliar"

"I'll make it worse."

WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE

Kotter's Change Management Model

1. Create a Sense of Urgency
2. Form a Guiding Coalition
3. Create a Vision
4. Communicate the Vision
5. Empower others to Act on the Vision
6. Create Quick Wins
7. Build on the Change
8. Institutionalize the Change
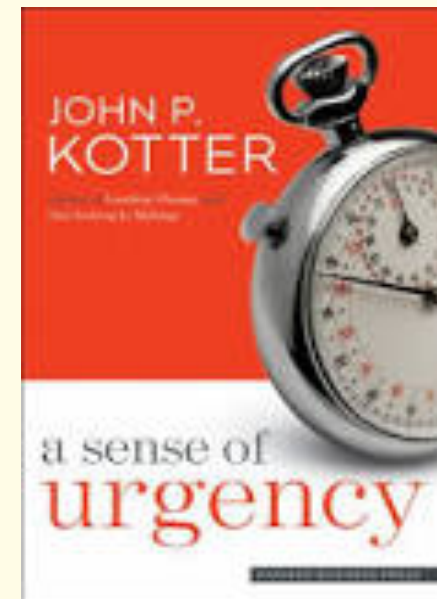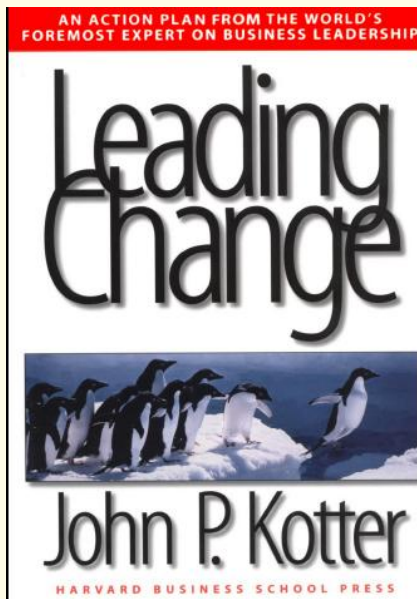
WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

"Teach the Children so it will not be so necessary to teach the adults." A. Lincoln

CONCLUSION

The Missing Piece
Bridgeland, Bruce & Hariharan, 2013
National Sample of 605 pre K-12 teachers

The lack of urgency around implementing social and emotional learning (SEL) in schools threatens the future success of America's children. SEL is a proven strategy that is endorsed by teachers across the country. Yet too few schools and far fewer school systems are adopting explicit evidence-based SEL strategies or integrating evidence-based SEL approaches — both of which are needed.

SEL has been underutilized for too long. Our lack of action inhibits students across the country from fully realizing their potential as knowledgeable, responsible, caring, and contributing individuals. The time has passed to debate whether schools should make SEL a central focus. Now we must act to ensure our students and teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in school, work, and life.

WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

Drs. Shella Dennery and Nadja Reilly

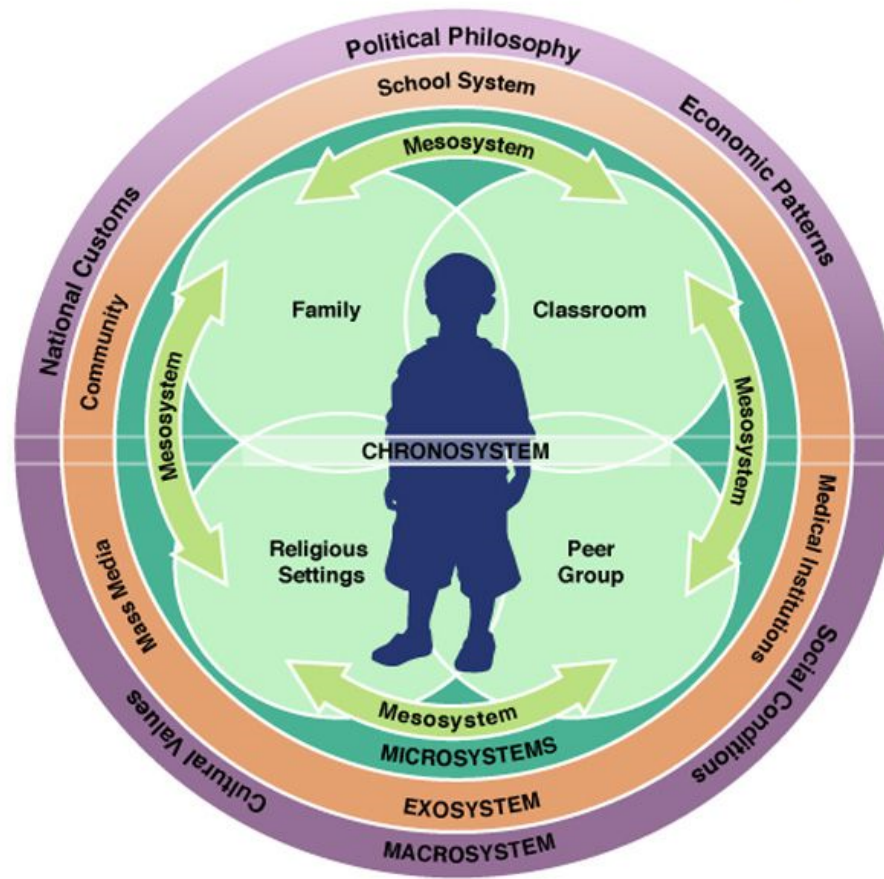"It's not his knee. It appears his feelings are hurt and the team psychologist is rushing out onto the field."

A Systemic Approach

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Child Development

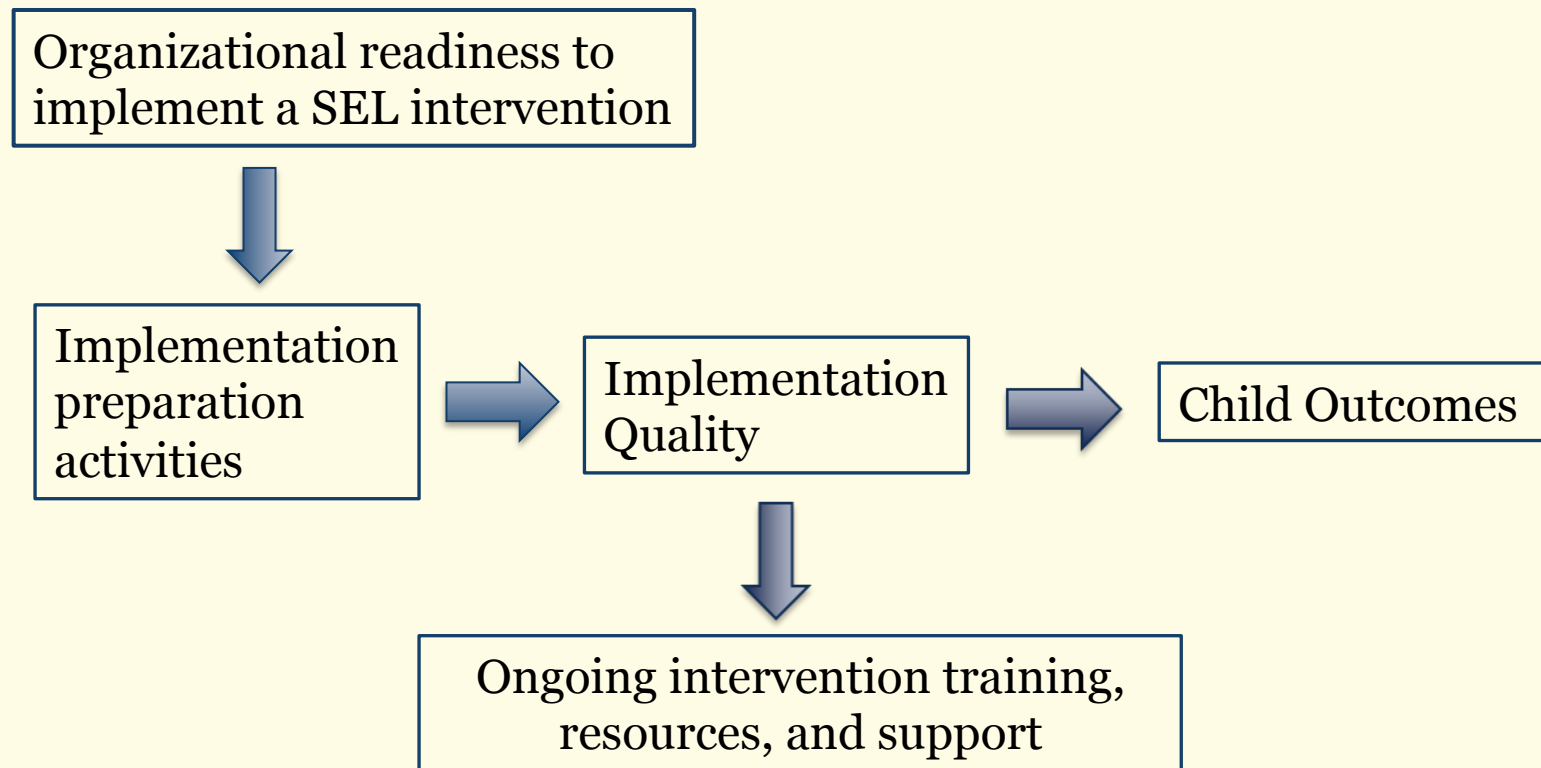# Systemic Approach: Cultivating Motivation to Change

- Obtaining leaders' initial commitment to the intervention

- Creating a steering committee of key stakeholders (leaders, direct service providers, families)

- Developing a shared vision of the importance of SEL for children

- Developing organizational readiness

WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

Building Organizational Readiness

Organizational readiness to implement a SEL intervention

Implementation preparation activities

Implementation Quality

Child Outcomes

Ongoing intervention training, resources, and support

Source: Handbook of Social Emotional Learning, 2015

WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

What is readiness?

- An organization's general capacity to take on a new intervention and implement it with high quality

Organizational

Individual

WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE

School Readiness Characteristics

- History
- Climate
  - Work related stress and burnout
  - Internal resources and training
  - Social support
  - Beliefs about the needs of the population
- Leader relationships and commitment
- Inter-organizational relationships
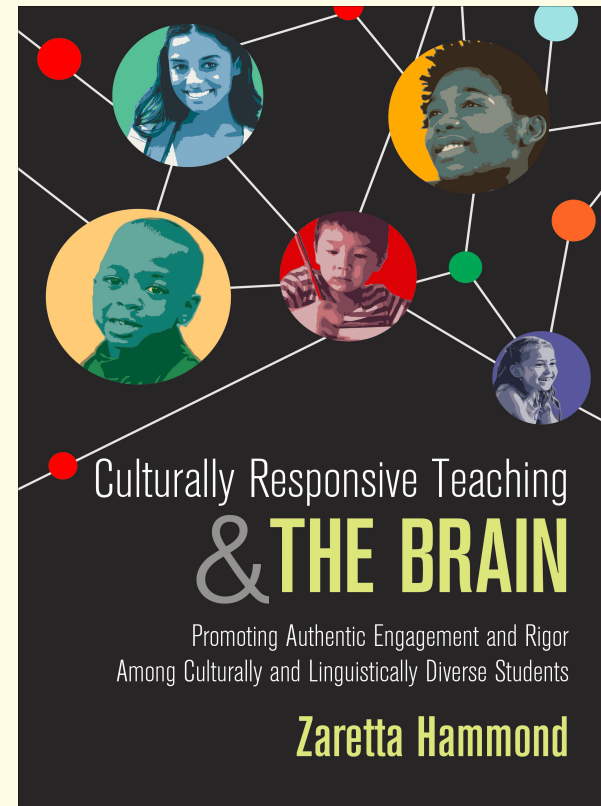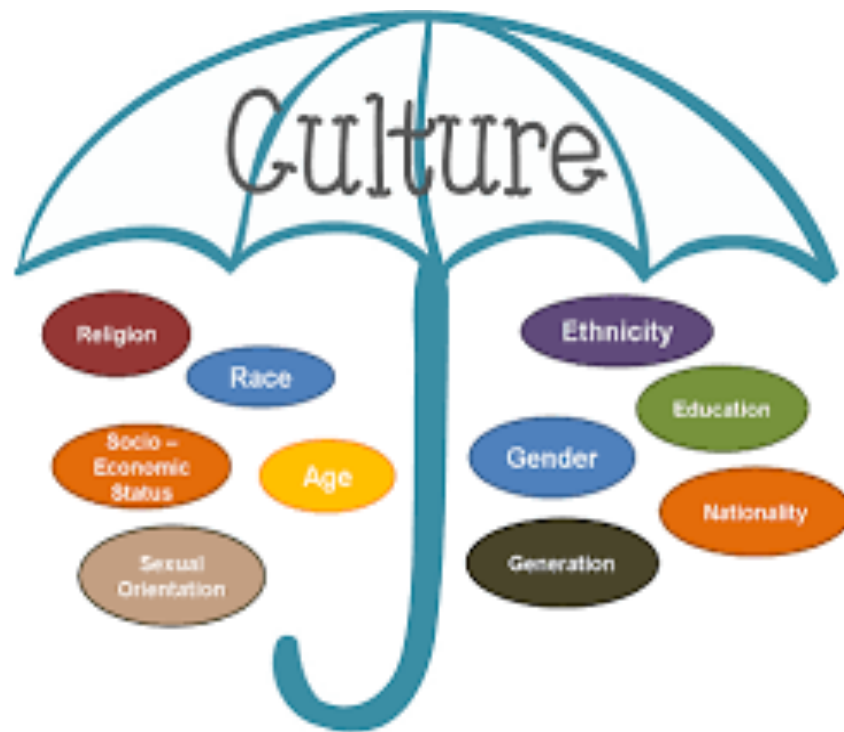- SEL across the system

WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE

Openness to Change

- Requires self-assessment
  - What is one's own social emotional competence?
  - What skills may be needed to increase attentive observing and listening?
  - What is needed to promote self-efficacy and well - being?

WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE

Importance of Integrating Family and Culture

Questions ?