

Randomized controlled trial of the Restorative Practices Intervention

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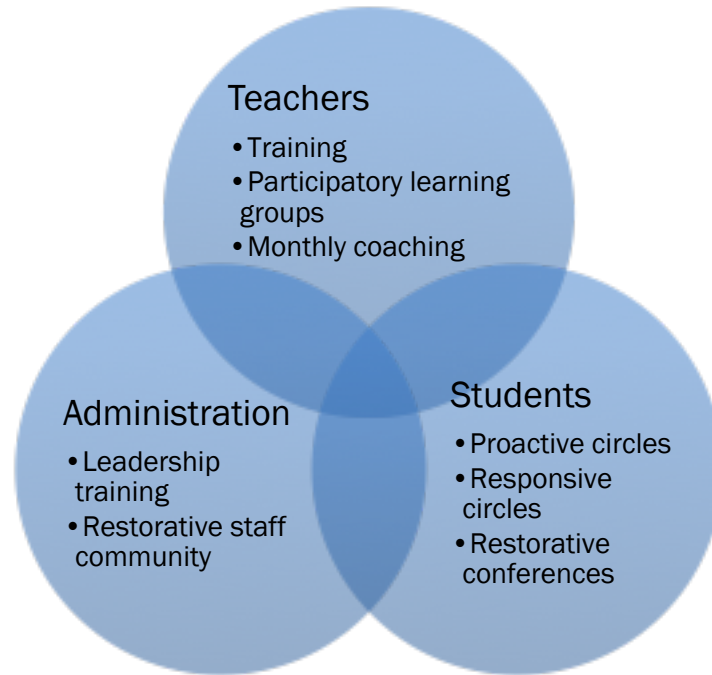
Agenda for today's presentation

- Describe the Restorative Practices Intervention (RPI)
- Report the design and findings from our randomized controlled trial of RPI in Maine
- Share lessons learned and implications for practitioners and researchers

Acknowledgements

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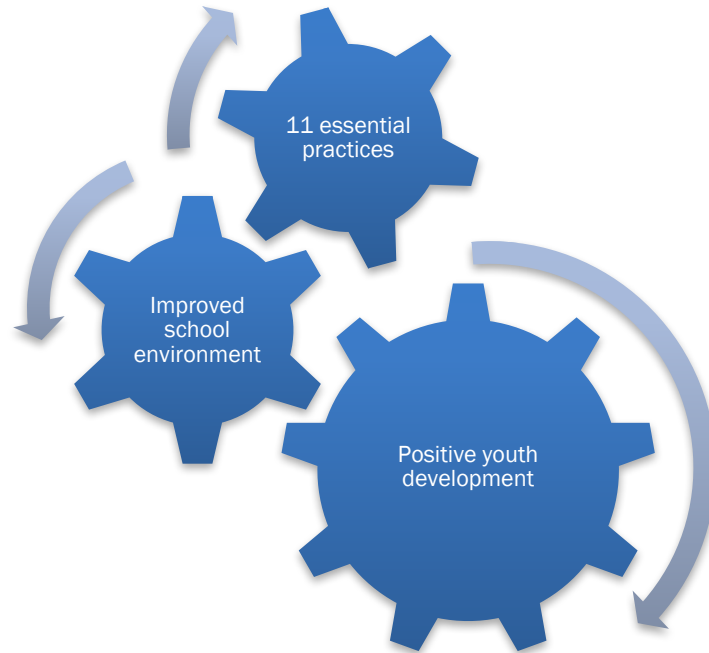
How does the Restorative Practices Intervention (RPI) operate within a school?



Conceptual and theoretical advances of RPI

- Maximizes positive affect through proactive practices (e.g., restorative circles) to build closer bonds among youth
- Minimizes negative affect through responsive practices to specific offenses to help youth take responsibility and reintegrate into community
- Encourages free expression of emotion through training in practices such as affective statements and questions to promote communication
- Alternative to punitive approaches often used by schools (e.g., zero-tolerance disciplinary policy)

Conceptual and theoretical advances of RPI



What are the 11 essential restorative practices?

1. Affective statements

2. Restorative questions

3. Small impromptu conferences

4. Proactive circles

5. Responsive circles

6. Restorative conferences

7. Fair process

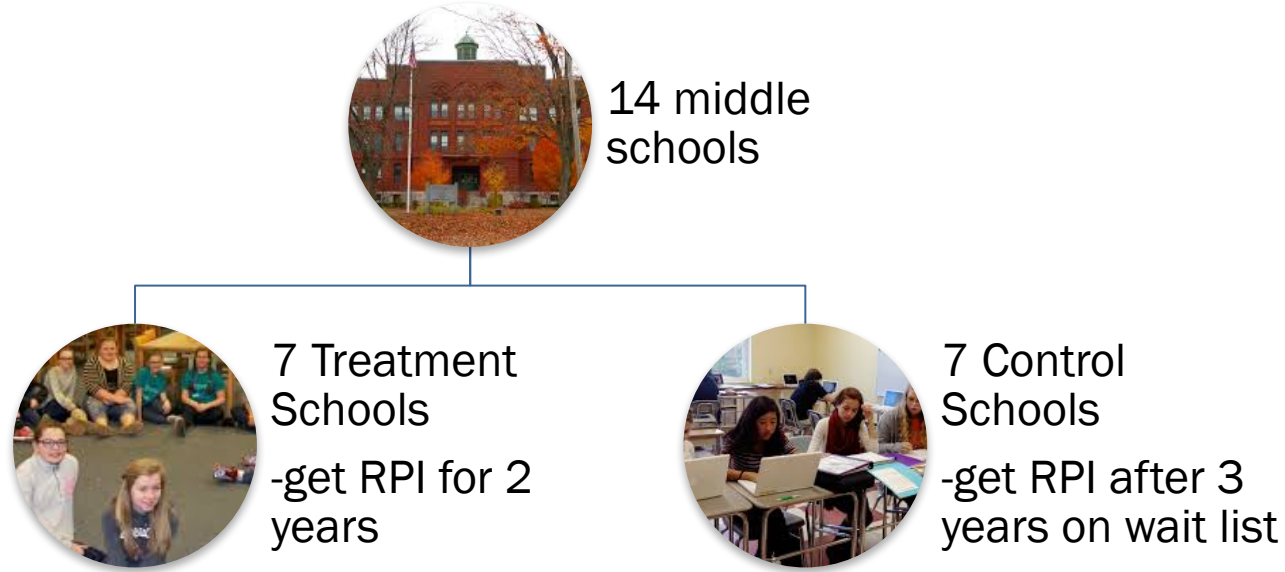
8. Reintegrative management of shame

9. Restorative staff community

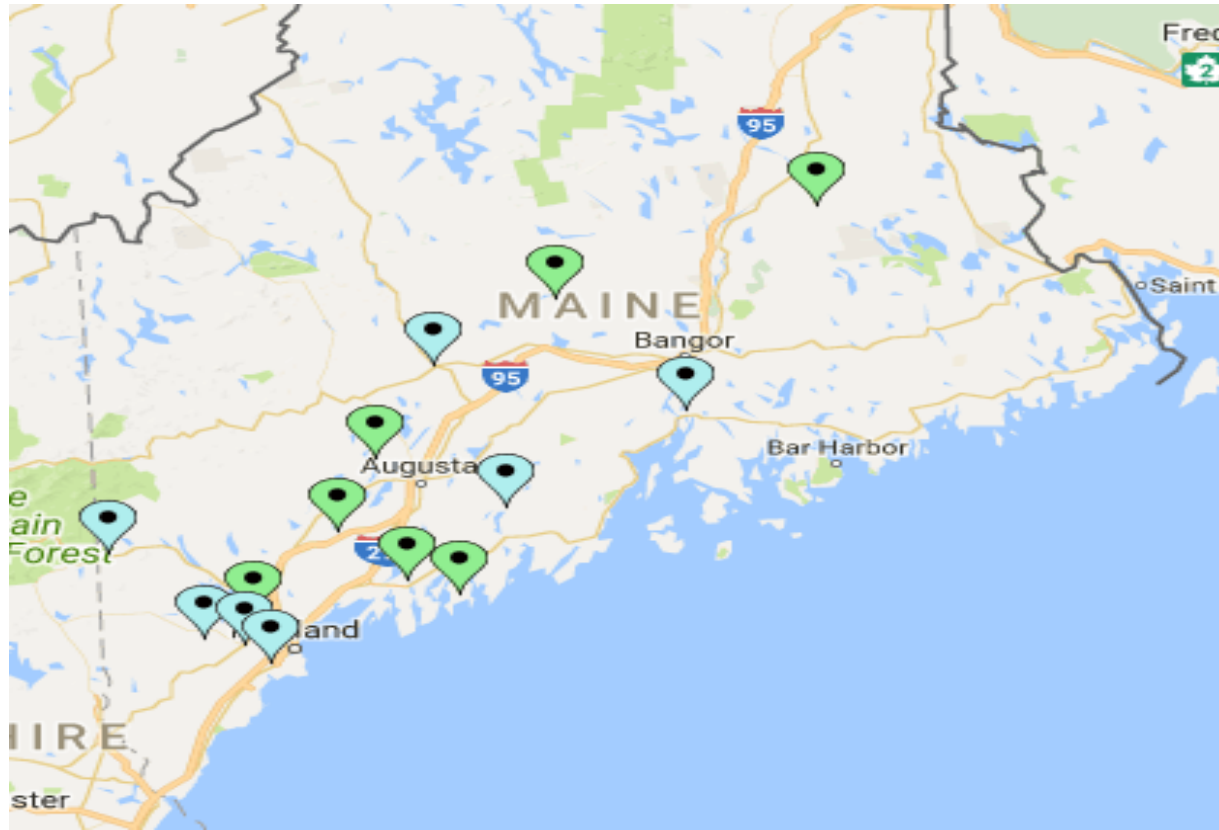
10. Restorative approach with families

11. Fundamental hypothesis

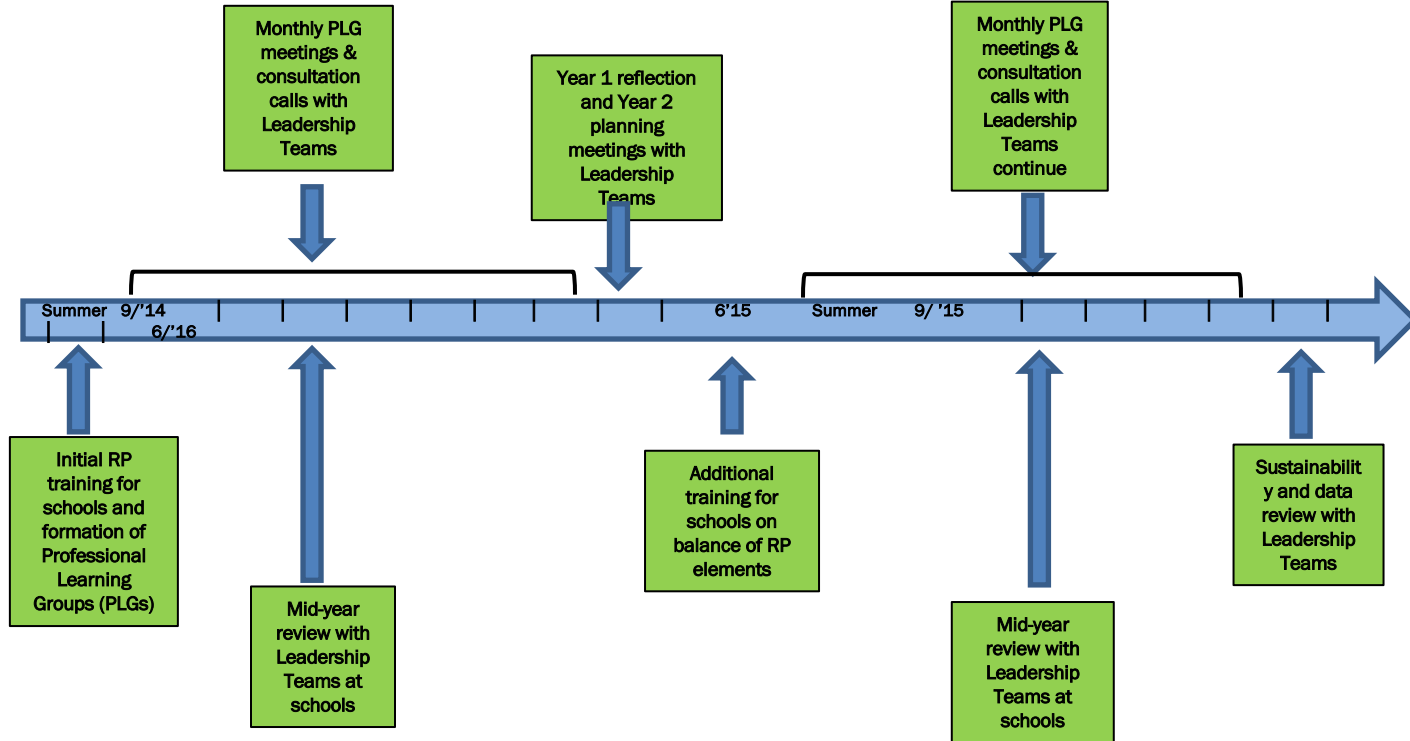
Randomized controlled study design



14 schools in Maine are being studied



Planned Timeline for Intervention



Actual timeline varied by school

Surveyed 416 staff and 2,834 students at these 14 schools

Student Characteristics

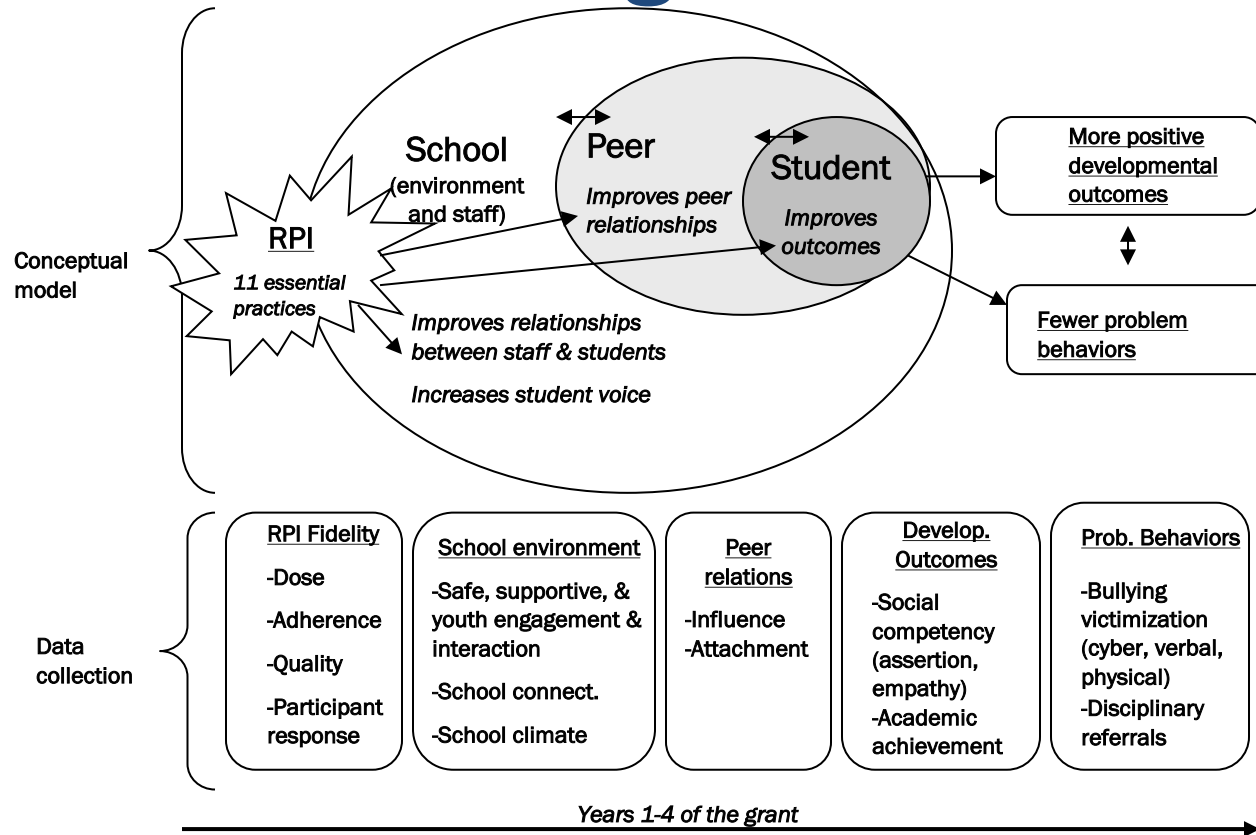
	Control N=1,832	Treatment N=1,002
Age [M(SD)]	11.52 (0.70)	11.47 (0.62)
Grade 6	48%	49%
Grade 7	52%	51%
Female	50%	48%
Hispanic	3%	4%
Non-white	18%*	20%*

Staff Characteristics

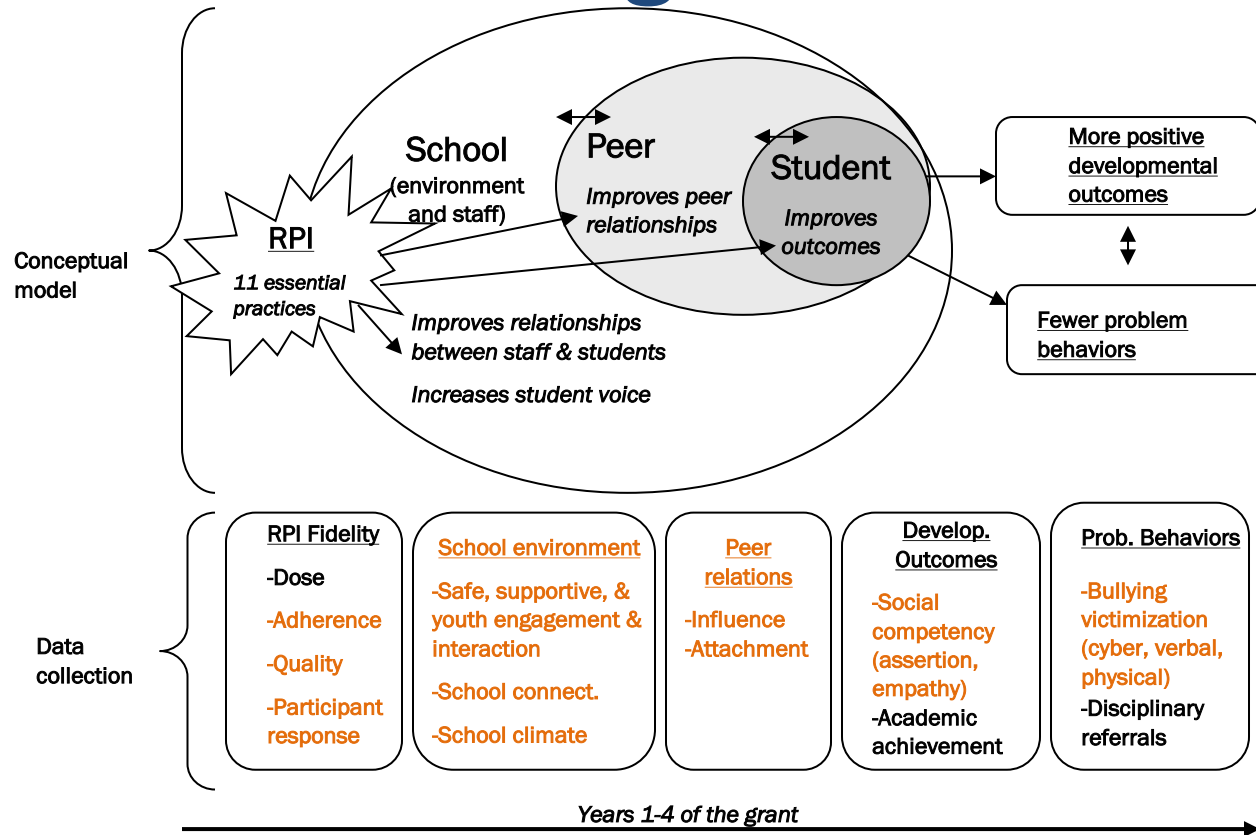
	Control N=210	Treatment N=206
Classroom teacher	69%	70%
Administrative	3%	5%
MH professional	5%	7%
Ed tech	17%	15%
Student/teacher support staff	3%	2%
Non-teaching staff (e.g., nurse, librarian)	3%	2%

*significantly different at $p < .05$

Assessed implementation and outcomes following RPI model



Assessed implementation and outcomes following RPI model



■ Data presented today

Examined outcomes before and for two years after RPI was implemented

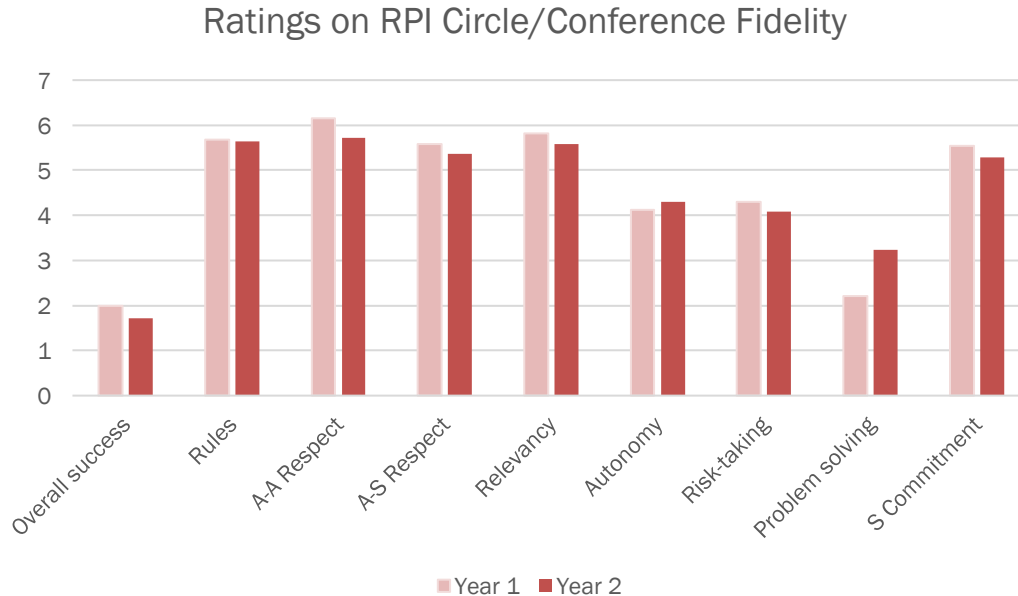
Analyses aimed at answering 4 questions:

1. How well was RPI implemented at schools?
 - Data Sources:
 - Surveys of staff and students
 - Fidelity observation data
2. Did RPI implementation influence the school environment?
 - Data Sources:
 - Observations using the Youth Program Quality Assessment

Examined outcomes before and for two years after RPI was implemented

3. Did RPI effect staff perceptions of school climate?
 - Data Source: Staff survey
 - Student input
 - Positive peer interactions
 - Teacher support
 - Safety problems
 - Classroom control
4. Did RPI effect student outcomes?
 - Data Source: Student survey
 - school climate
 - school connectedness
 - peer relationships
 - social skills (assertion, empathy)
 - bullying victimization (physical, verbal, cyber)

1. How well was RPI implemented by treatment schools?



- Fidelity varied by practice, but was generally high
- Did not change from Y1 to Y2
- However, most circles failed to reach a successful resolution

Inter-rater reliability for observations ICC=.71.

1. How well was RPI implemented by treatment schools?

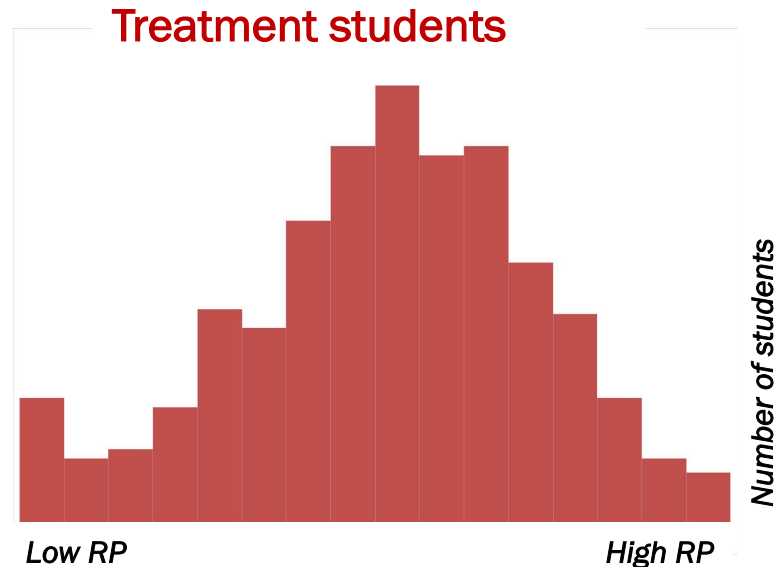
- Teachers self-report showed significant improvement (Y1-Y2)* in their:
 - Use of affective statement, discussion of restorative practice, informal use of restorative questions, and encouraging people beyond shame response (Past 60 day)
 - How well they were using two specific practices: restorative questions and small impromptu conferences
- However, only about 1/3 of teachers reported using restorative practices more frequently over time
 - 29% for proactive circles
 - 32% for responsive circles

**Estimated probability of change from Y1 to Y2 $P \leq 0.01$*

1. How well was RPI implemented by treatment schools?

- Wide variability in student experiences of restorative practices within treatment schools (i.e., some receiving RPI, some not)

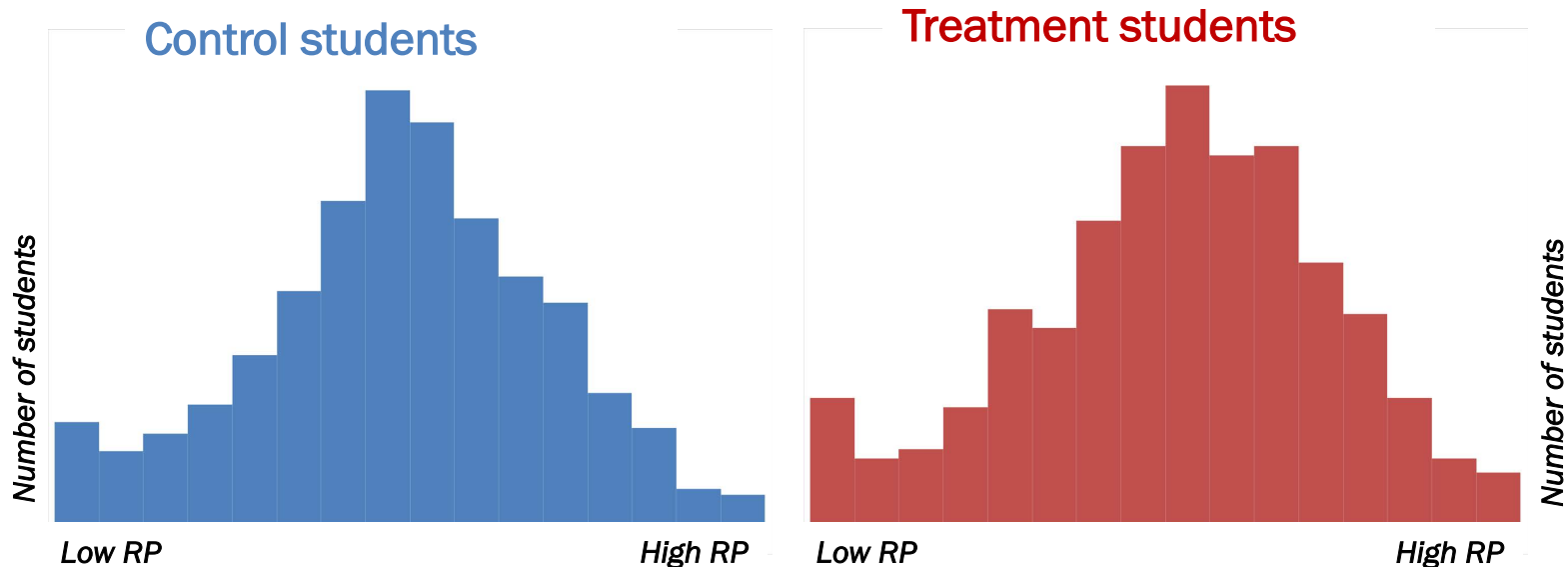
Student self-reported experience of restorative practices (Year 2)



1. How well was RPI implemented by treatment schools?

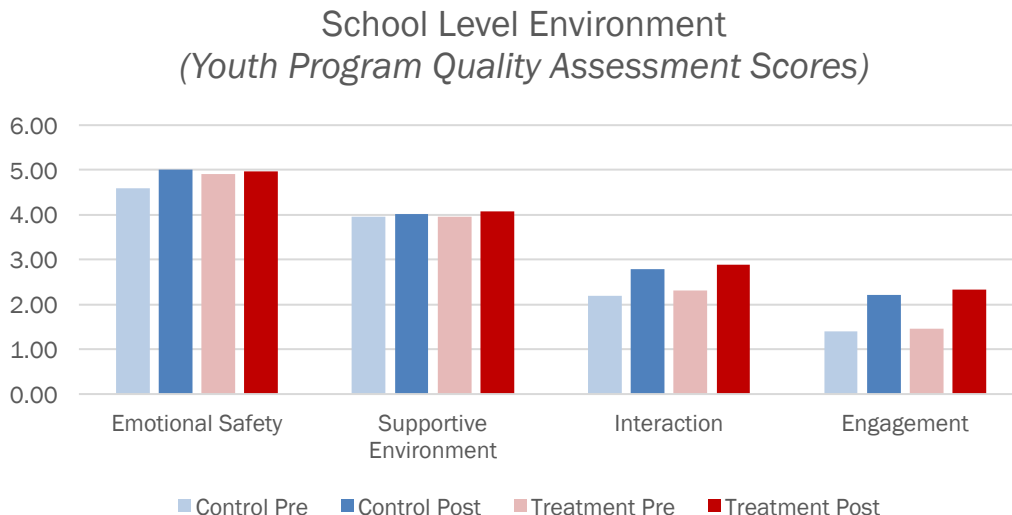
- Student experiences of restorative practices did not significantly differ between treatment and control schools

Student self-reported experience of restorative practices (Year 2)



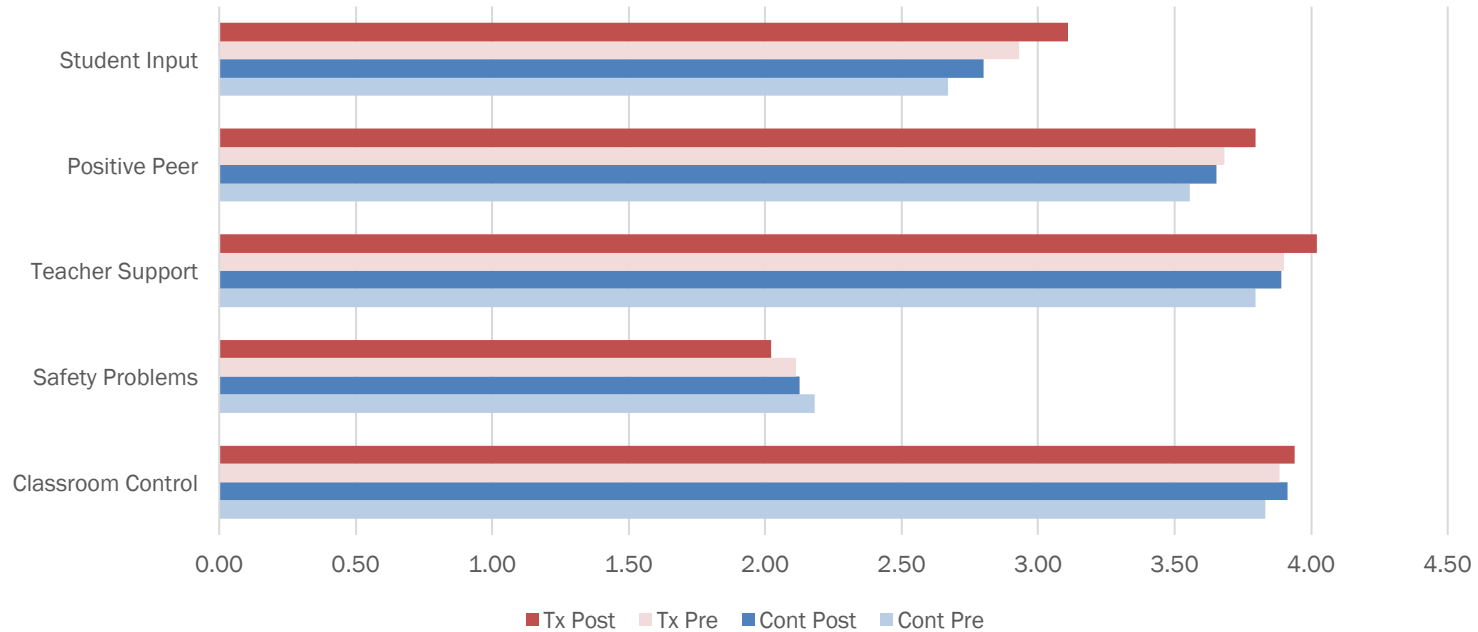
2. Did RPI implementation influence the school environment?

- No significant impact on whole school environment
 - No differences between treatment and control schools
 - No change in whole school environment over time



3. Did RPI effect staff perceptions of school climate?

Staff Perceptions of School Climate



No significant differences.

3. Did RPI effect staff perceptions of school climate?



- Within treatment schools, SEM mediation* found that Restorative Staff Community mediated the influence of implementation on school climate
- Teachers that reported doing more restorative practices had significantly more positive perceptions of two domains of school climate: (1) clarity/consistency ($p=.006$); (2) teacher support ($p=.046$)

*Using delta method standard errors (aka the Sobel test) and accounting for clustering

4. Did RPI effect student outcomes?

- Intent to treat analyses found no significant differences between students in control and treatment schools on:
 - perceptions of school climate
 - school connectedness
 - peer relationships
 - social skills (assertion, empathy)
 - bullying victimization (physical, verbal, cyber)
- Wide variability in student experiences of restorative practices within schools (i.e., some receiving RP, some not)
- Better outcomes observed among students that experienced more RP

4. Did RPI effect student outcomes?

- Better outcomes for students that experienced more *RP*

		Amt ↑ per SD	SE
School climate	Clarity/consistency**	0.33	0.04
	Teacher support**	0.42	0.03
	Positive peer relations**	0.23	0.01
	Student input**	0.38	0.02
School connectedness**		0.39	0.03
Peer attachment**		0.29	0.05
Social skills	Assertiveness**	0.36	0.06
	Empathy**	0.24	0.03

Bullying	OR	CI (L,U)	Amt ↑ per SD
Physical	0.87	(0.74, 1.01)	-0.15
Verbal	0.86	(0.62, 1.20)	-0.15
Cyber**	0.77	(0.66, 0.91)	-0.26

**significant at $p < .01$

Lessons Learned

- Restorative practices, if used consistently, hold promise for improving both positive development and reducing problem behaviors
- Unsure whether the Restorative Practice Intervention, as designed and supported, can impact the whole school
- *Consistent* whole-school implementation did not happen in two years due in part to:
 - Unclear guidelines on implementation targets
 - Limited implementation tools
 - Limited implementation support (based on established implementation theory)
- Using restorative practices among staff (not just students) is critical to improving overall school climate

Implications

- Practitioners (School administration, staff, coaches)
 - Schools need more intentional implementation
 - Consultation model could be more intensive and include more specific guidance on implementation (targets, tools, etc.)
 - Leadership needs to encourage adoption and hold teachers accountable (e.g., make training of leadership required)
- Researchers
 - Unclear what all the barriers were to diffusion and need to understand more on how to maximize uptake
 - Need more creative ways of capturing dose, given nature of interactional intervention
 - May learn more from ongoing studies (e.g., Pittsburgh)

For More Information

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