

**Course: Student Identification Process**  
**Lesson: Universal Screening**

## Transcript

This lesson describes the need for systematic and early identification of students needing Tier 2 supports. Establishing the use of a universal screening tool is one method teams can develop. Universal screening can provide early identification of students with internalizing types of behaviors as well as externalizing behaviors.

Two other methods, the use of nominations and existing school data, are described in accompanying lessons.

These are three handouts that will be referenced during this lesson. If you have not downloaded them from the lesson website, please pause the video while you access these documents

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Develop and implement a system to administer regular, periodic screening for social, emotional, and/or behavioral risk.

A clearly defined, methodical identification process is a necessary component to your Tier 2 system. This process will allow for early identification of students who are at-risk academically and behaviorally, thereby decreasing the likelihood of academic failure and poor outcomes and minimizing the impact of risk. By providing preventative support early, the need for more intensive support is reduced.

Within a tiered framework of support one important goal is to “catch” students before academic and/or behavioral challenges become severe. Universal screening provides an opportunity for all children to be considered for risk factors against identified criteria. It shifts focus from a traditional “wait to fail” service delivery model toward proactively seeking out children who may be at risk of academic failure and/or behavioral difficulties that would potentially benefit from specific instruction or intervention. This proactive approach minimizes impact of risk and/or may impede further development of more severe problems.

Here are key acronyms and descriptions that will be used in this lesson.

Universal Screening is the systematic assessment of all children within a given class, grade, school building, or school district, on academic and/or social-emotional indicators that the school personnel and community have agreed are important.

Internalizing behaviors are behavior problems that the student directs inwardly toward him or herself and are often based on social deficits and avoidance.

Externalizing behaviors are observable and overt and are often directed toward people and/or objects in the social environment.

Multiple methods can be used to identify students for Tier 2 supports. No single method is likely to identify all students who may need Tier 2 intervention, so it is recommended that schools select and use multiple methods. The identification methods selected should be efficient in terms of cost and time requirements from school personnel.

The Student Support Model illustrates three methods teams can use for early identification of students needing Tier 2 supports. This lesson will provide information for developing a universal screening system. Universal screenings are effective for early identification of students with internalizing and/or externalizing behaviors.

Remember that students should not be identified for additional support if they have not received Tier 1 with fidelity.

Internalizing behaviors are those behaviors that do not warrant a major or minor referral. They are behavior problems that the student directs inwardly toward him or herself and are often based on social deficits and avoidance. Students exhibiting internalizing behaviors are just as at-risk as those students who display acting-out, or externalizing, behaviors.

This is a list of common internalizing behaviors.

In addition to identifying students with internalizing behaviors, universal screeners can also be effective for early identification of students with externalizing behaviors – those behaviors that typically warrant a major or minor referral. Externalizing behaviors are behavior problems that are observable and overt and are often directed toward people and/or objects in the social environment.

This is a list of common externalizing behaviors.

There are a number of potential advantages for developing a systematic identification process that incorporates use of a standardized screening tool. First, responding to a screening questionnaire is generally perceived as a fast, efficient, and respectful process with the capacity to include all children and youth of interest. If an error occurs, most often it is on the side of caution with the tendency to over-identify rather than missing students or letting students fall through the cracks. Use of screening scores informs schools about the needs of their particular student population which can assist with planning and resource mapping by finding groups of students with common needs.

Finally, universal screening is recommended as an evidenced-based practice by a number of different influential groups associated with educational policy and practice, such as the President's Commission on Special Education, 2002; No Child Left Behind Act, 2001; U.S. Public Health Service, 2000; and National Research Council, 2002.

Does your school regularly engage in universal screening of all students for academic skills such as reading, writing, and math? Are students screened for hearing and vision? What about behavior screenings – are they as common in your school as the other types of screenings? If not, are there barriers that have prevented such screenings?

Pause the video, and when you are ready, continue watching.

There are numerous screening instruments available to schools. How can schools feel confident when selecting an instrument? Some criteria to consider include:

1. Is the screening instrument evidence-based?
2. Is it cost effective in terms of price?
3. Is it efficient in terms of resources such as staff training for administration and staff time to administer?
4. Does it identify the behaviors we want - internalizing and/or externalizing?
5. Is it appropriate for the ages and grade levels of our students?

The *Social, Emotional & Behavioral Screening Instruments* document provides a summary of nine research-based screening instruments. This summary includes a description of each instrument, method and estimated time for administration, cost, and vendor information. No endorsements are to be assumed, either implicitly or explicitly, of the instruments in the summary.

Review the *Social, Emotional & Behavioral Screening Instruments* document. What will be your system for gathering additional information and selecting an instrument? Who will make the final decision? Consider these questions presented earlier to assist in your decision-making process:

1. Is the screening instrument evidence-based?
2. Is it cost effective in terms of price?
3. Is it efficient in terms of resources such as staff training for administration and staff time to administer?
4. Does it identify the behaviors we want - internalizing and/or externalizing?
5. Is it appropriate for the ages and grade levels of our students?

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Decisions will need to be made about the schedule for administering your screenings. Some schools, when first starting, may “pilot” a screening instrument with one or two selected classrooms or grades while other schools initially screen all students. You will also need to decide how often screenings will be administered. Most schools screen 2-3 times per year, which is comparable to academic screenings.

In general, behavior screenings do not require parental consent. IDEA 2004 permits “screening” procedures such as determining phonemic awareness proficiency and other progress monitoring activities necessary to inform instructional programming, without parental permission. The Federal Register/Vol. 71, No. 156/Monday, August 14, 2006/Rules and Regulations states that parent consent is not required before administering a test or other evaluation to all children, before reviewing existing data, or when screening for instructional purposes.

Your team will need to consult with your building and district administration for specific guidelines about parent consent. If consent will not be required, it is best practice to at least or at minimum notify parents about all screenings – academic, health, and behavioral.

You will need to plan how you will inform parents about your universal screening. Best practices to keep in mind include:

- Have the instrument available for parents to review
- Notify parents about all academic, health, and behavior screenings
- Share results of screenings with parents
- Inform parents of any follow-up interventions that will be provided

This is the sample parent notification letter included in the *Sample Parent Notification Letter for Universal Screening* handout.

Review the *Sample Parent Notification Letter for Universal Screening* handout and consider the following questions.

How does your school inform parents about academic and health screenings? Will that same notification process work for universal behavioral screenings? Will this sample letter be helpful to you? How might you modify it to meet your needs?

Pause the video, and when you are ready, continue watching.

There are numerous considerations when planning for universal screening. The document *Universal Screening Considerations* provides a framework for teams to use during the planning process. Minimum features and questions to consider are included, along with a place for your team to document your notes and tasks to complete. Refer to the *Universal Screening Considerations* handout as its sections are discussed.

In the Documented Purpose and Policy section, your team will consider policy and procedural questions such as:

- Who will approve the use of universal screening?
- Does the screening align with district and building priorities and existing systems for other types of screenings??
- How will parents be notified, will consent be required, and how will results be shared?
- Who will have the responsibility of overseeing the screening process?

The Clearly Defined Procedures section outlines considerations for the logistics of administering a universal screening, instrument selection, and staff training.

The Availability of Supports section provides questions for teams to consider regarding materials, time, and personnel; team responsibility for responding to students identified as at-risk; and identifying supports available for students, families, and staff.

Review the *Universal Screening Considerations* handout. How will your team ensure that these features and questions are included in your planning process?

Pause the video, and when you are ready, continue watching.

During this lesson, you learned about the need to have multiple methods for student identification that include internalizing and externalizing behaviors. You also learned considerations for developing a universal screening system.

Next steps include completing the *Universal Screening Considerations* document to guide the development of your system.

Update your Tier 2 action plan. Develop action steps and a timeline for completion of your universal screening system. Include any professional development you will provide to your staff.

This is the final *Student Identification Process* lesson; you have now completed Course 3. When you have updated your Tier 2 action plan for your student identification process, submit your action plan to your consultant.

Additional information about the student identification process can be found in Chapter 3 of the *Missouri SW-PBS Tier 2 Team Workbook* which can be found at [www.pbissmissouri.org](http://www.pbissmissouri.org).

When you are ready, continue with the next course, *Selecting Function-Based Interventions, Monitoring Student Progress, and Interpreting Data to Make Decisions* which will provide information to develop systems for gathering data to determine the function of behavior and analyzing and interpreting student intervention data.

Here are the references for this lesson. If more references are needed, you can refer to the Reference section in the *Missouri SW-PBS Tier 2 Team Workbook* available on the Missouri SW-PBS website.

This lesson was made possible with funds from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Special Education; the National Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and the University of Missouri Center for Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support.