

THERAPEUTIC AND RESTORATIVE APPROACHES TO DYSREGULATION: IMPLEMENTING A 'PATHWAY TO PROBLEM SOLVING'



**A Process for Addressing Dysregulation in
Educational Settings**

Allynn Grantham, Lesley University

Dana Osowiecki, Center for Psychology and Learning

Natalia Mieczynski, Center for Psychology and Learning

NEERO Annual Conference 2025

The Problem – Why This Matters



Punitive discipline links to higher student trauma and dropout rates (Gregory et al., 2017).



Impact: Disrupts academic progress, damages relationships, and increases disengagement



Need for change: Traditional discipline often fails to address root causes

Schools using restorative frameworks show fewer disciplinary referrals and improved social-emotional skills (Stahl et al., 2023).

Restorative and therapeutic approaches that align with **neurobiology will be more effective**

CORE Coping® Principles:

Connection – Building trust and relationships, Co-regulation

Observation – Identifying triggers & patterns

Respect – Fostering mutual understanding

Engagement – Guiding students toward solutions

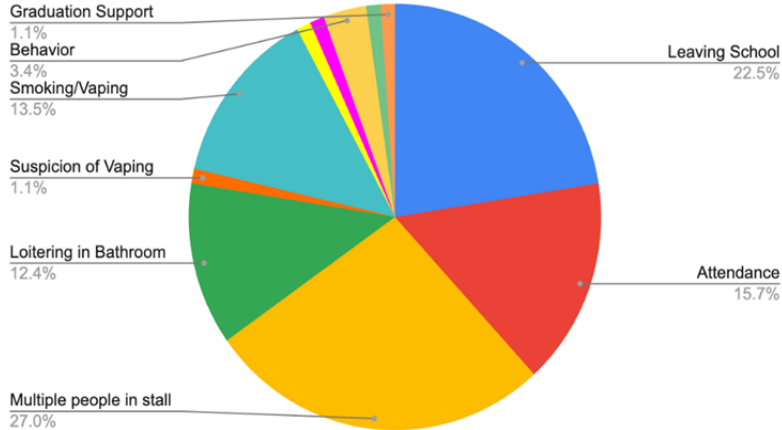
Goal: Improve safety, emotional regulation, decision-making, and learning

What does
CORE stand
for?

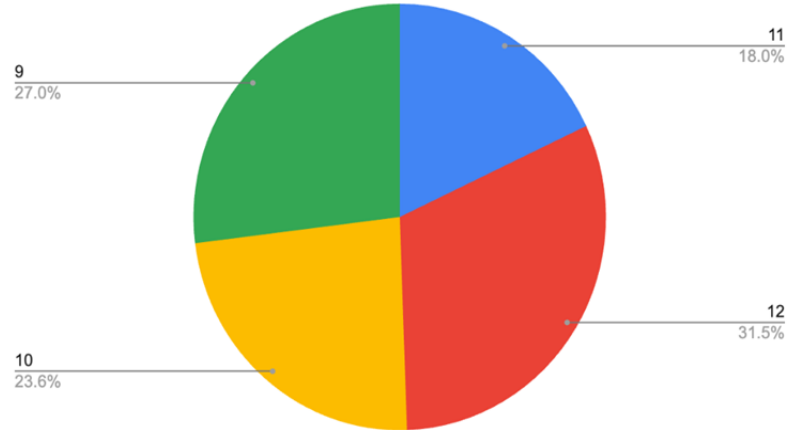
BREATHE PROGRAM

Building Resilience, Education, Accountability, and Trust for Health Empowerment

Count of Reason

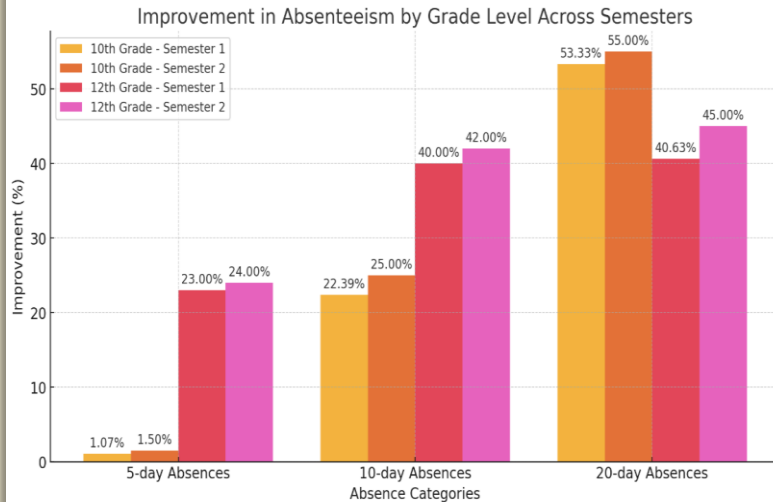


Grade Level

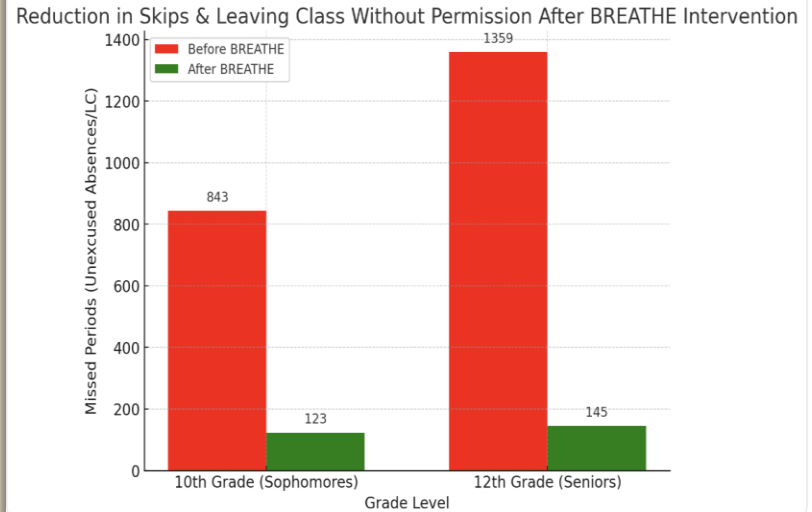


Attendance Data for 10th and 12th Grade

Improvement In Absenteeism By Grade Level Across Se...



Reduction In Skips & Leaving Class Without Permission After BR...



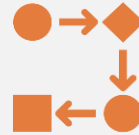
Frontal Lobes



Limbic System



The **CORE** **Coping**[®] Pathway to Problem Solving



Step-by-step
progression from the
Limbic System to the
Frontal Lobes



Safety → Regulation
(Limbic) →
Communication →
Problem-solving
(Frontal Lobes)

1

SAFETY



2

REGULATION



3

**COMMUNICATION/
BEHAVIOR**



4

**PROBLEM SOLVING
EVERYTHING ELSE**



Pathway to Problem Solving



CORE COPING CENTERS
Discover your CORE, Find your way

Student Data – Case Study

- Possible risk of out of district placement due to unsafe behaviors
- Was only staying at school for a half day, often leaving by 10:30am due to dysregulated behaviors. Verbal student in a small group setting with complex medical history

Initial baseline data in Sixth Grade (first two weeks of school)

Safety: 12%, Ownership: 37%, Achievement: 88%, Respect: 75%

Sixth Grade - Average Data from 9/11/23-10/27/23

Safety: 70%, Ownership: 68%, Achievement: 61%, Respect: 66%

Seventh Grade - Average Data from September of 2024

Safety: 90%, Ownership: 75%, Achievement: 74%, Respect: 61%

Seventh Grade - Average Data from January of 2025

Safety: 96%, Ownership: 70%, Achievement: 75%, Respect: 56%

How the Framework Functions at School



- Layers of CORE, consultation, and the spectrum of students we apply this to



- Direct interventions for high-needs students



- Coaching and support for educators



- Co-regulation between students, teachers, and administrators

Early Outcomes & Impact

Positive results from initial data:

- ↓ Disciplinary actions (fewer suspensions/detentions)
- ↑ Prosocial behavior & communication
- ↑ Classroom engagement & student attendance

Qualitative & quantitative evidence:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Referral rates
- Academic performance

Common obstacles to adoption:

- Resistance to shifting from traditional discipline
- Need for professional development & mindset change

Next steps:

- Expanding training & implementation
- Further research to refine and scale the approach

Key takeaway: Schools must move from punitive responses to restorative solutions

- - CORE Pathway provides a structured way to support dysregulated students
- - How educators can integrate this approach in their schools
- - Reach out to presenters for more information
- - Contact info/resources for further exploration (See Handout)

Conclusion, Challenges & Future Directions

CORE COPING Q&A

Invite questions or
discussion



Dr. Dana Osowiecki attended graduate school at the University of Vermont, and completed her clinical neuropsychology internship and postdoctoral studies at Brown University. Her primary focus on increasing access and independence for diverse learners has lead to a specialization in emotional regulation. Dr. Osowiecki has two companies in Rhode Island, The Center for Psychology and Learning, which focuses on evaluations and school consultation, and CORE Coping, a counseling center that focuses on accessibility for individuals typically unable to participate in more traditional therapies.



Natalia Mieczynski, PsyD is a licensed clinical psychologist with 15 years of experience working with children and adolescents. Dr. Mieczynski's practice specializes in providing therapy to adolescents with anxiety, depression and emotional regulation difficulties. Her treatment approach integrates evidence-based interventions such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) with interpersonal processes therapies. Dr. Mieczynski's goal is to form a strong therapeutic relationship as the foundation for making changes, learning skills and moving forward an understanding of the thoughts, feelings and behaviors contributing to the areas of need. She utilizes CORE in order to help teens find success in school.



Allynn Grantham, MEd is an educational leader with over 15 years in behavior programs and extensive experience in student services. Currently pursuing her doctorate at Lesley University, her research on CORE Responsive Leadership. As an assistant principal and former director of student services, she specializes in special education, restorative practices, and instructional leadership. She utilizes CORE in supporting students and avoiding traditional discipline approaches.

Direct References

- Darling-Hammond, S. (2023). *Fostering belonging, transforming schools: The impact of restorative practices*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/169.703>
- Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Mediratta, K. (2017). Eliminating Disparities in School Discipline: A Framework for Intervention. *Review of Research in Education*, 41(1), 253-278. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X17690499>
- Gregory, A., Osher, D., Bear, G. G., Jagers, R. J., & Sprague, J. R. (2021). Good intentions are not enough: Centering equity in school discipline reform. *School Psychology Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966X.2020.1861911>
- Huang, F. L., Gregory, A., & Ward-Seidel, A. R. (2023). The impact of restorative practices on the use of out-of-school suspensions: Results from a cluster randomized controlled trial. *Prevention Science*, 24(5), 962-973. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-023-01507-3>
- Shirley, K. M. (2023). *Connection before correction: Impact of restorative practices on students with disabilities* (Doctoral dissertation, Kennesaw State University). Kennesaw State University Digital Commons. https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1040&context=educleaddoc_etd
- Stahl, G., Schulz, S., Baak, M., & Adams, B. (2023). “You fight your battles and you work out how you’re going to change”: The implementation, embedding, and limits of restorative practices in an Australian rural community school. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(1), 82–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2023.2228215>

For more information

www.core-centers.com

dana@psychandlearn.com

