Inter-Professional Collaboration: Supporting better participation and inclusion for students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBDA) in post-primary schools.

Valerie Maher, Regional Development Officer, NBSS
Shona O’Donnell, Occupational Therapist, NBSS
Elaine Luby, Behaviour for Learning Teacher, NBSS
Carolyn Lanigan O’Keeffe, Senior Occupational Therapist, NBSS

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The National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) was established by the Department of Education and Skills in 2006 in response to the recommendations in *School Matters: The Report of the Task Force on Student Behaviour in Second Level Schools.*

*Martin 2006*
NBSS Mission Statement

Promoting and Supporting Behaviour for Learning

- Schools can make a difference in young people’s lives.
- A school-wide approach, founded on respectful relationships, is essential in promoting and supporting positive behaviours throughout the school community.
- Behaviour is intrinsically linked to teaching and learning.
- Inclusion is a core educational value.
- Good practice in schools is acknowledged and disseminated
Promoting and Supporting Behaviour for Learning

• The NBSS promotes and supports positive behaviour for learning through the provision of a systematic continuum of support to school communities, grounded in evidence-based practice.
NBSS Model of Support

Level 1
Whole School Support

Level 2
Targeted Intervention

Level 3
Intensive Individualised Intervention
NBSS Model of Support draws extensively from:

- **School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (PBIS)**  
  (Sugai & Horner 2002)

- **Response to Intervention (RtI)**  
  (Fuchs & Fuchs 2006)

- **Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tier Model of Prevention**  
  (Lane, Kalberg & Menzies 2009)
Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tier Model of Prevention

(Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009)

Goal: Reduce Harm
Specialized Individual Systems for Students with High-Risk

≈ 5%
Tertiary Prevention (Tier 3)

Goal: Reverse Harm
Specialized Group Systems for Students At-Risk

≈ 15%
Secondary Prevention (Tier 2)

Goal: Prevent Harm
School/Classroom-Wide Systems for All Students, Staff, & Settings

≈ 80%
Primary Prevention (Tier 1)

Academic

Behavioral

Social

PBIS Framework
Positive Action,
Social Skills
Improvement System, & Others
OT Service Development within NBSS

- In September 2008, The Discipline of Occupational Therapy, Trinity College, Dublin was invited to participate in a Level 3 pilot project with the NBSS to support better participation by identified students in learning and school life.
- OTs became core team members in 2010.
Person-Environment-Occupation Model of Practice (Law et al 1996)
OT Perspective

- Belongingness
- Participation
- Skill Level
OT Perspective

Belonging

- Belongingness is essential to life
- All students, including those with disabilities and learning difficulties have a right to be included in family, community, and society

Participation

- Social participation is an *innate drive* in humans
- All students have something to contribute within the school context
- It is *our responsibility* to make expectations that each student should contribute in their unique way to the school community

Skill Level:

- Participation in post primary schools is very challenging for students who typically may not have mastered the same basic interpersonal and self-management skills as their peer group. Developmentally students may function with skill level of a much younger child
- Task analysis: Just right challenge. *Challenge and success must go hand-in-hand*
What does OT bring to the NBSS table?

- Health science background - multiple factors affecting occupational performance.
- Focus on client centred practice.
- Focus on evidence based practice.
- P.E.O Model:
  - Understanding of the impact of environmental factors
  - Focus on occupation (school).
What does the NBSS bring to the OT table?!

- NBSS is a student centred service
- Focus is on evidence based practice
- Work in schools is teacher led within the State curriculum
- OT interventions have support of NBSS MDT
- Unique position to work with a significant number of students nationwide
- Facilities are provided by schools (classroom/timetable)
Collaborative Consultation

OT-Teacher collaboration as best practice.

“A collaborative model of consultation involves two or more professionals with diverse expertise, teaming together to generate creative solutions to mutually defined problems” (Idol, Nevin & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1994).
Recent literature: investigating models of collaborating (Bazyk & Case-Smith, 2010; Davis Rourk, 1996; Kiss & Brachtesende, 2007; Friend & Cook, 2000; Collins & Crabb, 2010)
Overview of NBSS/OT Interventions

- **Level 3**: ‘Brick by Brick’
- **Level 2**: Alert Program
- **Level 1**: Environmental Audit
Level 2 Intervention: The Alert Programme

• Core programme of the NBSS.
• All schools with BFL teachers to receive programme training.
• Students selected by BFL in consultation with school staff.
Introduction to the Alert Programme

• Occupational therapy programme created by Mary Sue Williams and Sherry Shellenberger to be used in schools or in a private practice setting.

• Evidence based:
  1. Neuroscience
  2. International research
  3. Research in the Irish context

• It is based on the theory of sensory integration and its relation to different arousal states.

• Primary focus is to help students learn to monitor, maintain and change their level of arousal/alertness so that it is appropriate to a situation or task.
The Alert Program
“How does your engine run?”

Engine Analogy

“How your body is like a car engine, sometimes it runs on high, sometimes it runs on low, and sometimes it runs on just right.”
The goal is for the student to ultimately take responsibility for their own self-regulation
Sensory Integration and Learning

Figure 5. Pyramid of Learning. (Williams & Shellenberger, 1-4)
Recent Literature

The relationship between sensory processing difficulties and behaviour in children aged 5-9 who are at risk of developing conduct disorder (Fox, C., Snow, P. C. & Holland, K., 2014)

• Significant correlation were found between sensory processing difficulties and severity of behavioural problems
• Sensory processing difficulties made a significant unique contribution to behavioural problems, and contributed more to behavioural problems than did other variables (e.g. language difficulties and socio economic status)
• Findings suggest that sensory processing should be considered in the assessment of and management of children with behaviour problems SEBDA March 2014
Teaching Stages

Stage 1: Identifying engine speeds

Students learn how to define and label how their “engine is running”.
Teaching stages

Stage 2: Experimenting with methods to change engine speeds

Students learn how to change their engine levels, using sensorimotor strategies and identify their sensorimotor preferences.
Teaching Stages

Stage 3: Regulating engine speeds.

Students master how to change their engine levels for a variety of settings, so they can do what they want to do (learn, work, play) in the arousal state appropriate to that task.
Piloting the Alert Program in the Irish Context

Phase One: 2011-2012

• 4 schools, 4 teachers, 84 students and 2 OTS
• OTs and teachers worked collaboratively in adapting the programme.
• Conclusion: AP content and approach was relevant to student cohort and in the school setting.
• Recommendations: Following further adaptations the programme could be delivered as a teacher led, OT supported intervention for use with small groups of Level 2 students.

Phase Two: 2012-2013

• 17 schools, 32 teachers, 118 Level 2 students and 2 OTS
  – Two day pre-programme training and resource box provided
  – OT support at every 2nd session and constant email/phone support
Teaching Manuals
Resource Box
Evidence of National Project Effectiveness

1) Teacher Training Evaluation Form
2) Teacher Alert Program Questionnaire
3) Fidelity Measure
4) Student Questionnaire
Structure and Implementation of the AP in the Classroom Context

• High teacher satisfaction rate with achievement of session objectives for all eight sessions.
• Easy to run, had a clear structure and was user friendly.
• Timing of the sessions important factor for success.

“The content was so well prepared and there was very little preparation involved beforehand”

“It’s clear and concise what’s to be done in each session”

“Very User Friendly for teachers”
Classroom Management Strategies

- Responses from both measures demonstrate that the teachers developed an increased awareness of Level 2 students’ needs and the relationship between group dynamics, the environment, and the effectiveness of the session.
- 96% reported that the AP added to their strategies for managing behaviour in the classroom.
- 96% reported they will run the AP with students in the future.

“I think the Alert Programme was very educational for the teachers as well as the students. It really opened my eyes in explaining why students are so fidgety and hyper in the school and gave us some good ideas for counter-acting it”

“It’s been a very positive addition to my repertoire of intervention”
Relevance and Value of the AP

- 88% reported the AP helped students understand why they behave in a positive or challenging manner.

- 92% reported the AP taught students strategies to regulate their own behaviour.

“Pupils understood if their bodies were running too high or too low then they would find it difficult to concentrate, focus or participate fully in the classroom.”

“It gave them an awareness of their own behaviour not only in relation to others but how they themselves behave and how they CAN behave if they put in to practice some measures to control their behaviour.”

“They understood which strategies would suit them best if they became too high or too low. If you asked any of the students which strategies they would use to get just right they could tell you.”
Student’s Perception of the Helpfulness of the AP (N=82)

- Extremely Helpful: 32.93%
- Very Helpful: 25.61%
- Helpful: 17.07%
- A Little Helpful: 18.29%
- Not Helpful at All: 6.10%
Students’ Intention to Use a ‘Take Five’ Strategy (N=82)

- Yes: 84%
- No: 12%
- Maybe: 3%
- Did not answer: 1%
Training and Resources

Training
• 96% said the training provided was sufficient to enable them to effectively deliver the programme.
  - Good grounding in the underlying theory.
  - Opportunity to actively engage in the learning activities of each AP session as extremely useful.

Resources
• Comprehensive, containing everything required to run the programme.

OT Support
• Both the support visits from the occupational therapists to every second session, and the support received via email and telephone were extremely beneficial.
Conclusion

• Collaborative relationship delivered an educational programme appropriate for use with Level 2 students with the Irish post primary school context.

• Approximately 70 schools are now delivering the programme nationwide
Overview of NBSS OT Interventions

Level 3
Brick by Brick

Level 2
Alert Program

Level 1
Environmental Audit
Brick by Brick Project
Origins of the project

• Collaborative work for two years
• Need for project which provided opportunities for success in a supportive group environment
• A student-centred approach
• Need for a project to allow students to use and develop specific transferable skills
• Mix of educational and OT skills
• Planning for inclusion
Aims:

• Membership skills
• Social skills
• Educational skills
• Fine motor skills
Well-being in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention

Promoting the mental health and well being of our young people is a shared responsibility.

Building resilience in young people includes providing opportunities for success.

The mental and emotional health of young people is supported when they feel valued, respected and safe.
How is it making a difference?

• Realising and recognising the value of group membership contributes to real change for the students
• The focus on participation not product allows students to develop skills without feeling overwhelmed
• The ripple effect of such a programme reframes thinking and such collaboration has a wider impact
References & Bibliography


