The School Pre-Referral Intervention Team: A Checklist for Getting Started…

Your new pre-referral intervention team can take steps early in the school year that will greatly increase its chances of success. By carefully setting up your team process and meeting procedures, informing teachers about the services that your team offers, and inventorying your school's intervention-related resources, your pre-referral team will be far better prepared to take on challenging teacher referrals. The checklist below offers a framework for quickly establishing your team as an effective teacher support.

1. **Establish a clear team process and meeting procedures.** Within the first two weeks of the school year, your team should:

    - ❑ select a regular meeting time that is most convenient for team members and referring teachers. Be sure to allow enough time in these sessions to meet on a child and, afterwards, to debrief as a group about the team's performance.
    - ❑ find a suitable meeting place. At minimum, the site selected for your team meetings should offer privacy (to safeguard the confidentiality of information being shared about the referred student) and sufficient space to comfortably seat the referring teacher and other members of the intervention team.
    - ❑ establish a system for responding promptly to teacher referrals. Teachers should have convenient access to the referral forms. Your intervention team should also coordinate with the team in your building that handles Special Education referrals to work out a method for deciding which initial teacher referrals may be more appropriate for the intervention team and which should instead be routed to the Special Education team.
    - ❑ work out procedures for communicating efficiently among all team members. Typically, the intervention team communication plan includes (1) procedures for all team members to review teacher referrals and related information prior to the initial meeting on the student, and (2) a uniform system for team members to use in communicating with the rest of the team (e.g., via staff mailboxes, email, telephone tree, general discussion time reserved at the end of weekly meetings).

2. **Publicize your team and its services to your faculty, other staff, and parents**. Some tried-and-true methods for getting the word out to the school community about your intervention team include these ideas:

    - ❑ Schedule time at a faculty meeting early in the school year to present an overview of your intervention team to staff. During the presentation, members from your team can introduce themselves and describe the structured problem-solving process that your team uses to help teachers with struggling learners to come up with effective intervention ideas. The presenters might also hand out intervention-team referral forms and invite teachers to refer students.
    - ❑ Periodically present brief 'updates' about your intervention team at faculty meetings throughout the school year. One use of these updates would be to have teachers who have used your

team and found its services to be helpful to share their success stories with their teaching colleagues.

- ❑ Write up a short description of your intervention team and place it in all teacher mailboxes. The description could include the names of staff who serve on the team, description of services or supports that you team offers, and procedures for referring a student to the intervention team.
- ❑ Present a workshop on your intervention team to your school's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) group. Parents would appreciate knowing how the pre-referral intervention team differs from other school teams and how this team can help struggling learners to be more successful. Or your school may want to spread the word by mailing each parent a brochure describing the intervention team and its role in promoting school success.
- ❑ Schedule occasional professional-development 'clinics' during the school year (e.g., after school or during a Superintendents' Conference Day), at which intervention-team members offer trainings to teachers on effective strategies to use for common referral concerns. These clinics can be a great way to expand the skill base of all teachers in the building while publicizing your intervention team as a consultation resource for teachers.

3. **Create an inventory of resources in your building that can be used by your intervention team.** Problem-solving teams can use all the help they can get when assisting teachers with student interventions. Here are some ideas to increase the intervention resources available to your team:

   - ❑ Make a list of locations around the school that can be used as space for interventions (e.g., places with adult supervision where cross-age peer tutoring can take place).
   - ❑ Write down the names of volunteers in your building who are willing to help with implementing and/or monitoring school-based interventions.
   - ❑ Create a directory of staff willing to serve on your intervention team whose training or professional experience gives them expertise in key intervention topics (e.g., reading instruction, behavior management). Invite these staff to attend those team meetings in which the student's referral concern matches these staff members' area of expertise.

4. **Try out the intervention team roles and meeting procedures at least two or three times in actual meetings before accepting your first staff referral**. It is a good idea for your team to practice its meeting skills before accepting referrals from all staff members. One 'safe' way for your new team to practice its problem-solving skills is to have team members refer a couple of students *from their own classrooms* to the intervention team. The referring team member, of course, will assume the role of the referring teacher in these practice meetings. In all other respects, however, these practice meetings follow the intervention problem-solving model and include these steps:

   - ❑ The referring intervention-team member completes a written teacher referral.
   - ❑ A case liaison is assigned to collect both classroom information and academic and behavioral-baseline data on the student prior to the initial team meeting.
   - ❑ A formal intervention team meeting is scheduled, with at least 90 minutes reserved for discussion of the case.
   - ❑ Team roles (i.e., facilitator, recorder, case liaison, time-keeper) are assigned prior to the meeting.
   - ❑ Formal intervention and monitoring plans are developed at the initial meeting.
   - ❑ A follow-up meeting is scheduled to review the student's progress during the intervention.

- ❑ Ample time is reserved at the conclusion of each ‘practice’ meeting for the team to debrief, with each member sharing his or her perceptions about what the team did well during the meeting and what areas of team-process may need improvement.