Background

What do we mean by SEL interventions?

- **Broad view of SEL interventions** that support young people to learn about and develop skills to effectively manage their emotions and their interactions with others, with a wide array of intrapersonal and interpersonal emphases
- All states have integrated SEL into preschool academic standards, and 4 states have done through for all of preK-12
- Trend is towards “universal” SEL interventions

Universal interventions:

- Are designed to be used classroom- or school-wide
- Do not target students who are in particular need of SEL support
- Have been demonstrated in prior reviews to have potential positive effects on social, emotional, and academic outcomes in a range of school contexts

Why focus on students with disabilities in SEL?

- The majority of students receiving special education services participate in the general education classroom for most of the week
- Students with disabilities may be at particular risk in the SEL domain
- Different perspectives in special education approach to SEL, compared to universal interventions
- Neither general education nor special education teachers feel prepared to support the social and emotional needs of students with disabilities

Methods

**Literature Search Process**

- Started with two landmark compilations of SEL interventions:  
  - RAND Corporation’s *Social and Emotional Learning Interventions Under the Every Student Succeeds Act: Evidence Review*
  - 2015 CASEL Guide: *Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs—Middle and High School Edition*
- Added articles from database searches

**Inclusion Criteria for SEL Intervention Studies in Systematic Review**

- Involved students in middle or high school (grades 6-12) in the United States
- Took place in the school during normal hours of operation
- Designed for and implemented with the broad population of students in general education classes
- Written in English
Results

3.462 Abstracts and titles screened → Duplicates and those not meeting criteria excluded through multiple rounds of coding → 88 Articles Coded for Analysis

(See last page for full PRISMA diagram)

Participant Characteristics

Are SWD mentioned in sample description?

- Samples include SWD: 14 (16%)
- Samples exclude SWD: 9 (10%)
- Samples do not specify whether SWD included: 65 (74%)

- Majority of studies did not mention SWD
- Among those that did, generally little detail
- 9 specifically excluded SWD

Intervention Characteristics

Logistics:
- About half of studies led by someone other than classroom teacher
- Not consistently clear when during the day the intervention took place

Differentiation:
- One study described training facilitators to differentiate instruction (did not explicitly include SWD)
- Five studies described differentiation in implementation through additional small-group support or cultural/linguistic adaptations, (none explicitly included SWD)

Skills needed:
- Widely varying skills needed to benefit or participate

Findings in 3 Studies that Analyze Effects for SWD

All focused on violence prevention through Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention

- Sullivan et al., 2015\(^{19}\): 6\(^{th}\) graders > no main effect of intervention for SWD or peers; disability moderates effect on some outcomes, but these are not consistent by measure or by time point
- Sullivan et al., 2017\(^{20}\): added the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in a study of grades 6-8 > disability again moderates some (but, different) outcomes; SWD had lower rates of social skills at pre-test
- Espelage, Rose, & Polanin, 2015\(^{21}\): focused on SWD as separate sample from within larger clinical trial > main effects of Second Step for SWD in reducing bullying perpetration but not fighting or peer victimization; decrease in fighting was evident for the whole sample in the overall clinical trial
Discussion

- Students with disabilities receive minimal attention in reports of middle- and high-school SEL interventions.
  - We often do not know whether they were included, or whether results differed.
- Of the 14 studies explicitly including students with disabilities, it is not typically clear whether the rate of participation mirrors the rate of students with disabilities in the school. Some percentages are substantially lower than the national average.
- The three studies that specifically examine outcomes for students with disabilities suggest complex dynamics, with varying results from a single intervention, but consistently different results for students with disabilities compared to their peers.
- Little evidence suggests consideration of students with disabilities in training of facilitators or in curriculum design.

Potential Future Directions

Questions for Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Include reporting about students with disabilities as a subgroup in studies of universal SEL interventions</th>
<th>Have you tried to collect these data in intervention studies?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A further step would be to move beyond this single identifier to consider students with different characteristics</td>
<td>What challenges arise?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider approaches to universal design and/or differentiation both in curriculum design and facilitator training</td>
<td>Have you seen helpful examples of this? What might move this effort forward?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek continued integration of special education perspectives on supporting social and emotional learning in the approaches of universal SEL interventions</td>
<td>How might these perspectives differ? What might bring them together?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


