Support Systems for Intense Behaviors: Conducting a school-wide needs assessment

Webinar Transcript

Moderator: Dr. Newcomer is a Research Scientist and the University of Missouri where she conducts research that focuses on the prevention of challenging behavior and that emphasizes that identification and the development of the appropriate social environments to promote pro social behavior. In addition, she has worked in various capacities on numerous research and service delivery projects including the Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports, the National Center on Intensive Interventions and has played a key role in providing technical assistance and training for the development of local and state behavior initiatives to train and support schools in behavior assessment procedures and positive behavior support at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels across the United States, Australia and Canada. I will now turn it over to Dr. Newcomer.

Presenter: Thank you Laura um, let's see, do I now have control of the screen here? Oh, here it is. Um, what we're going to do today is talk about some support systems for intense behaviors and how to conduct a school-wide needs assessment.

[Slide 2 – Today's Goals]: So, we have two purposes in today's webinar. The first is to identify key features or multi-tiered systems of behavior support. And the second purpose is to take a look at how to structure a self-assessment and gap analysis to identify action items for schools to complete as they work to build capacity to provide supports for students with challenging behaviors.

[Slide 3 – The Challenge]: The big challenge here is that research has provided us with many examples of interventions that are really effective. Yet, they can't be; they can be enormously difficult to transport those interventions into the school environment because we don't have the control settings that those interventions were developed in. So, what we find is that we have a lot of interventions that have large effect sizes in clinical settings are less effective in school settings. So we want to look at how do we create environments and adapt our interventions so we can be more successful. So, that's one of the reasons why we need to do some needs assessments.
We also want to look at how we build capacity to support the implementation of researched based interventions. We know that implementation requires organizational structures that facilitate effective teaming, data driven decisions processes and evaluation and to do that, schools sometimes have to change the way that they're doing things um, from our more traditional ways. And we look at what are the discrepancies between what exists now and the key features that support those more intensive interventions.

[Slide 4]: So to meet that challenge, a lot of districts and schools are now turning to prevention based strategies along a continuum that was first developed as um, in the public health services um, a multi-system of supports. Such an approach promotes the importance of the concept in delivering school based interventions that the intensity of the intervention much matches the intensity and the severity of the problem behavior. Therefore, we look at tiers that expand across the continuum of intensity levels.

[Slide 5 – Prevention as an Outcome]: So when we look at the U.S. public health service model, it describes three levels of prevention outcomes. Those are primary prevention, secondary prevention and tertiary prevention. This approach considers intervention as an outcome rather than simply a means to an end. The primary prevention effort seeks to prevent harm whereas secondary prevention efforts seek to reverse harm. The tertiary efforts target the most academically or behaviorally challenged children and youth in an attempt to reduce harm. This prevention model has been recast in terms of types of interventions that differ in terms of their nature, comprehensiveness and intensity of the intervention as well as the degree of responsiveness of individuals to a given type of intervention.

So, this model of intervention is composed of three levels of intervention intensity. Universal which is often referred to as tier one, selected which is often referred to as tier two and targeted intensive often referred to as tier three. For the purposes of today, I'm going to be using tier one, tier two and tier three as the terms to refer to the different levels of intervention intensity.

[Slide 6 – Guiding Principles of Multi-Tier Systems]: If we look at guiding principles of multi-tiered systems they're really pretty well defined. We want to provide all students with universal interventions, we want to screen students to determine needed services and we want to deliver a continuum of services matched to the level of support indicated by the screening and assessment process.

So, a multi-tiered system provides an ideal means for schools to develop, implement and monitor a comprehensive system that addresses the needs of all students in the school. In addition, a multi-tiered system model has the potential to positively impact the operation, administration and overall climate of the school. By emphasizing the use of universal interventions, multi-tiered systems makes the most efficient use of school resources and provide a supportive context of the application of necessary tier two and tier three interventions for students with more intense needs.

Finally, multi-tiered systems provide a built in screening and assessment process. That is by carefully monitoring student's responses to the universal interventions. It becomes possible to identify those students who are at greater risk and in need of more intensive supports which in turn helps to increase the match between student's needs and the intensity of the support.

[Slide 7 – Conceptualizing the Framework]: Um, you've probably seen this framework conceptualized by a triangle of a pyramid where the primary prevention or tier one level is what's in place to identify or to support students with high quality instruction that meets the needs of most students in the school whether it's academic or behavioral instruction. Secondary prevention or tier two supports are evidence based interventions of moderate intensity that address the learning or behavior challenges of most at risk students. And the tier three, tertiary prevention is form; is individualize interventions of increased intensity for those students who show minimal response at the secondary level.

[Slide 8 – Positive Behavior Support]: Positive behavior supports is a science that has emerged as a branch of behavior analysis and involves changing situations and events that people with problem behaviors experience. In order to reduce the likelihood that the problem behaviors will occur and increase the social, person and professional qualities of the people's lives. PBS as it's referred to as an approach that blends values about the rights of people with and without disabilities with a practical science about how learning and behavior change occur. PBS is a set of research based strategies used to increase quality of life and decrease problem behavior by teaching new skills and making changes in a person's environment.

Positive behavior support combines valued outcomes, behavioral science, validated procedures and system change with an overriding goal to enhance quality of life for students and others within social settings such as school. Important characteristics of PBS include person center planning, collaborative teaming, functional behavior assessments, hypothesis development, multi-component planning, evaluation and system change.

[Slide 9 – Context Matters]: So, we know that context matters. In order to provide students with effective interventions um, based on positive behavior support we know that um, those interventions are linked to those environments or school climates that are effective, efficient, relevant, durable, salable and logical for all students. So we have to look at not just the level that intense interventions are going to be implemented but, the entire school framework in which those interventions are implemented. So that's why we're looking at the whole continuum of the multiple tiers not just talking about more intensive levels today.

[Slide 10 – School-wide PBIS]: School wide PBIS is a framework based on research of positive behavior supports that addresses that host environment. It can be conceptualized as a framework under which systems identify predictable problems, select logical strategies to improve outcomes, facilitate consistent implementation and use data to evaluate their success. It's helpful to conceive of it as a sequence or continuum of processes and practices ranging from the most general universal strategies such as having rules and routines and ecological arrangements in place to the most intensive interventions such as function based interventions.

[Slide 11 – Multiple Systems Perspective]: Not only does PBS take um, a look at systems across tiers, it takes a systems perspective. It's taking into consideration all the systems and environments. So, you can look at what systems are in place school-wide, within the classroom, in non-classroom areas such as the cafeteria, that hallway, bathrooms, sporting events or on the campus, with individual students and then with family systems.

[Slide 12 – Critical School-wide PBIS Elements]: Some of the critical elements of school-wide PBS include measurable academic and social behavior outcomes. It's grounded in data-based decision making. They employ evidence-based interventions and it establishes operational procedures, processes and administrative systems designed to increase accuracy and durability of practice implementation.

And, it's those operational procedures, processes and administrative systems that are the foundation of a host environment that can sustain a continuum of supports for students. The focus of the needs assessment therefore is to determine the current state of these procedures, practices and systems within a school to help develop an action plan on what needs to go in place to strengthen the delivery options.

[Slide 13 – Why Conduct a Needs Assessment]: So, why conduct a needs assessment? A needs assessment is a systematic process for determining and addressing that are currently in place and the conditions that need to be in place for efficient and effective implementation. The discrepancy between the current conditions and the requisite conditions is what's used to guide the action plan. Essentially, you want to compare actual performance with potential performance. At its core, there are two questions. Where are we and where do we want to be? If a school does not make the best use of current resources it may be difficult to provide intensive interventions in an efficient and effective manner.

Gap analysis identifies the gaps between the optimized allocation and integration of the resources and the current allocation levels. This reveals areas that can be improved. Gap analysis involves determining, documenting and improving the variance between the organizational capacities and the implementation environments and the current capability. The Gap analysis naturally flows from benchmarking and other types of assessments.

Once key features of benchmarks are understood, it's possible to compare an expectation with the current level of performance. This comparison becomes that gap analysis and such an analysis can be performed at each operation level of the school so, in other words across all tiers of implementation.

[Slide 14 – Needs Assessment]: So typically when we do a needs assessment we first look at the desired status, identify what our current status is and deficiencies or gaps between the current and desired status and form what the needs are that need to become action steps so that the gap can be closed.

[Slide 15 – Needs Assessment]: When developing a needs assessment for behavior supports what we're looking for what strategic system features facilitate intensive behavior supports. What strategic system features are currently in place and what's the gap between the two. Once the gap has been identified, those action steps that need to be taken to close that gap are identified.

[Slide 16 – Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis]: So, we have two components here that we're going to look at through this process today. One is a self-assessment questionnaire and one is a gap analysis interview that you would follow up on with on the self-assessment.

[Slide 17 – Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis]: There are two sample documents in this document as Laura explained earlier and they are available for people who are on the webinar today. The self-assessment sample represents benchmarks or key features of organizational structures and practices across the tiers. We look across the tiers because as I mentioned earlier the intervention platforms at tier one and tier two are foundation pieces for the structure and practices used for more intensive intervention. In essence, they create that host environment that can support and sustain more intensive interventions.

[Slide 18 – Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis]: We are also going to look at how to conduct the gap analysis to identify the missing features. So, when conducting a gap analysis, it's good to ask more probing questions and look for evidence of the existence of those key features. The gap analysis can be facilitated by a school psychologist; whoops, excuse me. A school psychologist, a technical assistance provider, and a behavior specialist um, preferably somebody who has some sort of knowledge and experience with multiple tiered systems and intensive behavior supports.

[Slide 19 – Self Assessment]: The self assessment is best completed by a school team. Um, teams can consist of an administrator, the counselor, a special educator, the Title One teacher, a reading specialist or other personnel who might be associated with the school discipline data and intervention team. It's always best to have a team complete the assessment. Administrators may report the procedures and um, make sure that benchmarks exist and are documented. However, when you include other staff in the self-assessment process a lot of time it can reveal gaps between written policy and actual practice.

So, if the assessment is completed by a limited number of staff it's always good to follow up with other implementers when doing gap analyses. What I want to do now is just kind of walk through some of those benchmarks or key features of each tier and some of the questions that you would ask in a gap analysis to start to identify what um, where is the gap between what's currently in place and what we need in place to really have a good continuum of supports.

[Slide 20 – Tier 1 Self Assessment Strategic Features]: So if we look at some the strategic features in tier one, one of the things that we would look at and see does the school have a school-wide approach to reinforce appropriate social behavior? Teacher reinforced appropriate social behaviors. And there are several models out there like the School-Wide Behavior support, BEST, Character Education um, but what we're looking for if first of all do they have something in place.

Some clarifying questions then to help further identify is this in place, how well is it in place um, is there any inconsistencies in implementation. You would then start asking was the entire staff trained in how to implement the particular program that they're using. Do you believe the staff is consistent in implementing the program? Um, have there been reductions in problem behaviors and an increase in appropriate behaviors since you've started implementing the program? And, are there any implementation majors; measures that indicate implementation fidelity?

So, what we're looking for here is first of all, is the practice in place? But, if they're answering that there are inconsistencies in implementation and not everybody has been trained in it that um, that measures are not indicating that there has been any reduction in problem behavior or any impact on social climate in the school then it might be that they want to put in an action plan that they need to get further um, technical assistance or coaching on how to put some of these things in place.

Behavior expectations and routines are defined and explicitly taught for all settings. Some clarifying questions might be asking about how the expectations and routines are taught to students. What evidence is there that the students know what the expectations and routines are? Are there specific settings that have a higher incidence in more intense problem behaviors? And following up with that; if for instance there were particular areas that have higher incidents or more problem behaviors then that's a gap and one of the ways that you might address that gap is to have training and active supervision and teach and reinforce what the behavior expectations are for that particular area.

Another benchmark or critical feature is students are reinforced for following rules and there are clear written procedures that lay out the process for handling both major and minor discipline incidents including crisis situations.

[Slide 21]: Following that, you want to know if staff are informed and consistent about which behaviors are staff and classroom managed and which behaviors are handled by office administrators. So, through those questions there is a wealth of things that you would want to start getting a little bit more information on.

Have the staff received annual trainings on how to manage the different types of behaviors? Have the staff received professional development on preventive classroom management on how to respond to different types of behavior? Um, and some of the action statements that might come out of that are that um, there might need to be some staff development on behavior management in classrooms or in specific settings. Or, staff may need some sort of training on prevention strategies.

Looking at the next one, a data system is used to collect and analyze office referral data and data are used to guide decisions regarding behavior instructions, interventions and prevention efforts. You want to look at what um; does the school have the ability disaggregate the data to identify which students; where students are and what students are getting referred to the office? What type of problem behaviors there are? Um, do they have data cut points? Who's reviewing the data? How frequently is it being reviewed? What are um, supports that are offered to students if they have moved beyond the cut point?

And then you want to ask do data reflect that most students um, about eighty percent or more receive less than one office referral per year? And one of the reasons for asking that is if you have more students getting a lot of office referrals that may be an indicator that some of these universals are not well in place and they need to put more time and attention in getting those universal strategies in place.

[Slide 22 – Tier 2 Self Assessment Strategic Features]: Looking then at tier two strategic features, teams identify the percentage of students receiving tier two and targeted interventions. There's a couple of reasons for asking that. What we want to know is, is there a system in place to track and monitor all the students who have received targeted or tier two interventions? Um, how many tier two interventions are in place? If the; fifteen percent or more of students are getting tier two interventions and more than thirty percent or so students um, are getting office referrals that may be another indicator that the universal strategies aren't firmly in place which could result in an action item that the school may want to spend more time and resources and attention attempting to get their tier one and tier two supports in place.

If the team is not able to report how many students are in targeted interventions? That's an indication that there is a lack of coordination and communication in terms of targeted interventions. One example of this is a middle school that I worked with at one time when we started talking about what targeted interventions did they have in place the team was not sure? And so when they did an audit school wide, they found counselors providing targeted interventions. Um, grade level teams providing some targeted interventions. Um, different organizations coming in and providing targeted interventions and there was no coordination between all of these different efforts on who gets intensity interventions, which interventions are appropriate for students. There was not progress monitoring.

So, that sort of um, lack of communication and coordination would be a big gap and it would need to be addressed in an action plan. Another strategic feature a behavior support team exists to receive request for assistance, develop support plans and monitor intervention results. Some defining questions or clarifying questions for this would be who is on the team? How often do they meet? Is there a standard procedure that this team follows? If there isn't a team in place, some questions might be how do we initiate and track tier two supports for students? Um, if there are existing teams that look at behavior um, supports? Um, is there a way that they could be morphed into a behavior support team that looks at things in a more systematic manner?

Number nine, data are used to identify students who may need tier two and three supports. Some clarifying questions, what data are used to determine which students need additional help? Have data cut point decision rules been established? How often is the data reviewed? Who reviews that data? Um, it's important to look at data review and decision guidelines that are necessary for the early identification for students. So, you're looking to see if those things are in place.

Personnel are designated to coordinated targeted and intensive interventions across all students. Some clarifying questions are how are intervention efforts coordinated and integrated? Um, it's not uncommon for multiple interventions to exist in schools with little coordination in our criteria regarding how the intervention is accessed.

[Slide 23 – Tier 2 Self-Assessment Strategic Features]: Um, and then is there a consistent decision process to match students with appropriate tier two interventions? So, a decision process needs to be in place that matches students with a tier two intervention so that the intervention is a good match for the preventing problem. So, some clarifying questions would be um, how's the decision made? Um and how are students assigned to the different tier two interventions?

Are procedures in place to track all students on targeted and intensive interventions? Some clarifying questions would be is the data reviewed regularly to determine the effectiveness of the intervention? It's important to track this and how effective the interventions are. Um, if a system doesn't exist then that would be a key action step for a school to start putting into place.

And then finally, it's important to look to see if all tier two strategies have critical intervention components. Some of those critical components can be seen on this slide.

[Slide 24 – Tier 2 Intervention Audit and Component Analysis]: And theses aren't critical intervention components only for tier two interventions. These are components that should be in place for any behavior intervention that's implemented. So, what a school would do if they're doing a needs analysis on their tier two interventions would be just to list all of their targeted interventions that exist. For instance, the middle school that I worked with had an untold number of targeted interventions. They took all of their interventions and put them through this inventory.

The first thing they would look at was is there a designated coordinator and personnel to deliver the intervention? Does the intervention have an operational definition of target behavior or skill deficit that it is addressing? So, it's been operationally defined and observable in a measurable way. Does the intervention have an operational definition of the replacement skills?

Um, so we know exactly what behavior the intervention is addressing and exactly what skill the student will develop after being involved in this intervention.

Does the intervention have written materials that describe core features and functions and systems of the strategies? And the intervention has written procedures for implementation? The intervention has written procedures on how to teach the replacement behavior and staff have been trained on responsibilities on how to implement the intervention? The intervention has written data decision rules to match the student with the strategy.

[Slide 25 – Tier 2 Intervention Audit and Component Analysis]: The intervention has written data based guidelines for when to fade and; or intensify the intervention based on the student's progress. The intervention fidelity is assessed on a regular basis. And as important as um, fidelity assessment is we can't assess fidelity to the intervention if all the previous steps are not in place. Um, the intervention has a procedure for progress monitoring. Students are progress monitored at least weekly.

The overall intervention effectiveness is monitored monthly. The intervention includes frequent communication with the family. The intervention is implemented within three days of determination that the student should receive the intervention. Formal procedures exist to notify teachers involve with students about student's participation. The orientation materials provide information for students to get started on the intervention an opportunity to practice the new skills are provided daily.

So, that's a template of what are the needs to conduct a good intervention. So, when schools complete this and do an assessment of their interventions that are currently in place if they have all of these components in place they would have eighteen components. What I recommend with schools is to look at what interventions they're doing the best job at. So, which interventions do they have in place that they have most of the intervention components in place and focus on strengthening those interventions and putting your resources into those interventions instead of being um, spread too thin and trying to implement too many targeted interventions?

[Slide 26 – Tier 3 Self-Assessment Strategic Features]: Then finally looking at the tier three self-assessments of intensive interventions. What are the strategic features? Students are appropriately identified and provided with intensive supports. So some of the questions that I would ask here for clarification is how are the students identified and tracked?

Um, and then um, looking at does a team exist that builds and implements individual behavior support plans? Questions to clarify that would be who in your school is responsible for individual support plans? Um, then team members have sufficient formal training in functional assessments and evidence-based interventions? Some clarify questions for that would include are resources, are expertise available to support teams? Does the district provide professional development in functional assessment and evidence-based interventions? Um, if that is not in place an action item might be that some technical assistance or professional development that the team needs to have.

[Slide 27 – Tier 3 Self-Assessment Strategic Features]: The school or district has written procedure on how to conduct a functional assessment um, that you want to check on. If they don't have written procedures then um, a need would still be on how to get um, evidenced based practices on how to conduct functional assessments and how to develop a plan based on a functional assessment. Data are used to monitor fidelity of implementation of individual supports. So, questions to ask there are who's responsible for collecting and analyzing the data? Are there guidelines or decision rules based on the data to guide intervention revisions? How is the data share with relatives and stakeholders?

Data are um, and then coaching or some other form of support is available to teachers to assist them in implementing intensive interventions as designed. So, how are teacher trained on the intervention component? How do teachers request support on an intervention if it's something that they're having some problems with?

[Slide 28 – Gap Analysis]: So, the gap analysis is really conducted to asking those clarifying questions um, that discern how the current practices differ from full implementation of those strategic features. The questions are designed to identify deficiencies in training, resource allocation that might have to occur. Um, to assist in planning to um, to identify accurate implementation feature related to the strategic feature. And then the team determines based on the way that they've answered these things what needs to be in place to close the gap? Those needs are then prioritized and translated into action statements.

[Slide 29 – NCII Self-Assessment Gap Analysis]: So if you're looking at the sample form that we provided. You would have the gap analysis that list what your strategic features are. Some of your clarifying questions and use that to start formulating what you're needs are and what your action steps are going to be.

[Slide 30 – Example: Data Systems Across Tiers]: So let's kind of just walk through an example of this following a systems feature across the tiers. At the tier one level, the strategic feature is an efficient data system in place that can be analyzed to identify students. To identify who is receiving office referrals or are involved in behavior incidents, where the behaviors are occurring and what types of behaviors are occurring.

Data are analyzed to guide instructional and supervisory decisions. Let's say that the team says yes, we have such a system. Some of the clarifying questions would be who reviews the data? How frequently is it reviewed? What are the cut points that indicate a student is not responding to the current level of support and may need more targeted or tier two interventions?

And then depending on the response to that question, we would determine the needs and actions that are required to close the gap. So, some of the things that the school might decide to do is they need to review office discipline referrals and suspension rates as a reflection of overall school climate. They might want to use office discipline referrals to identify students or teachers that may be in need of additional support. They may need to establish data decision rules and arrange for professional development in data analysis and decision making.

[Slide 31 – Example: Data Systems Across Tiers]: Looking at the tier two level, the strategic feature is data are used to identify students who may need tier two and three supports. So, the desired status is that the data are used to identify students who need more target or intensive support. Clarifying questions are to identify where some gaps or deficiencies may be are what data are used to determine which students need additional help? Have specific cut points or decision rules been established? How often is the data reviewed and who reviews the data?

Closing the gap, based on answers to those questions could be they need to establish a schedule and decision rules to identify students who are not responsive to tier one. And then looking at tier three, the strategic feature is data are used to monitor the progress of a student um, a student on individual support plans. So, clarifying questions could be who's responsible for collecting and analyzing the data? Are there guidelines and decision rules based on the data to guide intervention revisions? How is the data shared with relevant the stakeholders and are data graphically displayed?

Based on the responses, action steps are created to close the gap which could be; perhaps they need technical assistance and professional development on data and progress monitoring or database individualization. So, that gives you an example of how to compare what we know are the essential features or benchmarks of multi-tiered systems for behavior support with current status in your school and how to take the gap in between the benchmark and the current status clarify the difference between the two and then put some action steps in place so that you can sure up implementation across the tiers to ultimately enhance the ability to support students with intensive interventions.

Looking at those question items that were presented earlier on, particularly at the tier one level based on responses to items one through six, does the school have the foundation of primary prevention of those tier one strategies in place?

[Slide 33 – Based on responses to items 1 through 6, does the School have the foundation of primary prevention in place?]: If a school has yes, and they really were pretty solid on having all of those um, elements clearly in place it's good to go on and just follow up with the tier two questions and then the tier three questions. If no, those things are not clearly in place at that time, it's good to contact the state or regional PBIS coordinator to request information on training or technical assistance on how to implement school wide systems of positive behavior support in your school or to strengthen um, some of the systems that are in place at that tier one or universal level.

[Slide 34 – Common Gaps in Tier 2 Systems]: Some of the common gaps that we see in tier two systems is that um, data based decision rules to identify students who need tier two support have not been clearly identified. So, it's having consistent cut points in our data analysis and it's having a problem solving process on how to match students once they; once those cut have been identified. Match the student to the appropriate intervention.

Another common gap is that tier two interventions often lack the critical components of effective intervention strategies. So, assessing those um, key components of any intervention with the tier two interventions that are in place can be a good step in strengthening what's already in place with tier two interventions. There's an absence of adequate progress monitoring on a lot of tier two interventions and there's frequently an absence fidelity measures on implementation of tier two systems.

So it's really good to look at those particular items when you're doing a gap analysis or a needs assessment.

[Slide 35 – Final Thoughts]: So, some final thoughts is um, efficient systems at the tier one and tier two levels can certainly enhance the schools' ability to effectively provide intensive behavioral support for the most challenging students. It's having those systems in place, the tier one and tier two that create the host environment that can um, sustain implementation of intensive supports. We build our tier three systems on adequate tier one and tier two systems and the devil is in the details.

The more we can pay attention to getting our systems clearly in place and having very good working structures the easier it is to implement, to progress monitor and to adapt interventions as we need because, we've already got those working structures in place. So um, at this time, we've got time to answer any questions.

Moderator: So, at this time if any of our participants have any questions for Dr. Newcomer, please go ahead and type your questions into the chat box and we will read those questions for Dr. Newcomer. So again, phones are still muted. The best way to ask your questions right now is to type them into the chat box. We will take just a couple of minutes to see if we get any questions.

I will um, add some announcements right now as we're waiting for questions. Just as a reminder, you'll see the box at the right side of the screen that says NCII files. You can click on either one of those files and click download file below to view the files that Dr. Newcomer was referring to both the gap analysis and the needs assessment.

Alright, it looks like we have a question for Dr. Newcomer and the question is; how long does it typically take complete a thorough needs assessment?

Presenter: Oh, that's a really good question. Um, and it; it depends on how deep you are into the implementation process. I know um, if you've been working consistently with school wide positive behavior supports and you're working with some of your state coordinators they typically have needs assessments built into the system that are being done as an ongoing progress monitoring and action planning process.

If you've never done a needs assessment, it's going to take a good bit of time to really sit down and go through a thorough analysis of what's in place and have analyzed all the steps that are going to have to go in place to actually get this to where you want to be. So, a good way to approach that is to put together a team that can set some time aside and really plan on this.

Some ways that I've seen teams do this is that they'll um, maybe use some of their time in the summer and just spend a couple of weeks working on a needs assessment because, they have to pull information from so many different areas to um, to find out what's already in place. If they don't already have some sort of school wide system in place that's been doing this kind of progress monitoring all along.

If you were going to take it from just with what we were doing today without any um, progress monitoring having already happened I would say it would probably take a team maybe thirty hours. To sit and really contribute the kind of time they need to sort through those things.

Moderator: Thank you Dr. Newcomer, we have another question. Um, do you find it's preferable for the person conducting the assessment to be a part of the staff or an external person?

Presenter: That's another good question. Um, I think it's helpful to be an external person because when you're an internal person, there's always a level of bias and um, a tendency to say oh yeah, we do that. But, an external person tends to push a little bit more for evidence. Show me how you do that? Show me how you do that and what's the evidence that you do that? And I think that will result in being more accurate if you have an outside person conducting it.

Um, one of the things that I think we need to do more research in is the accuracy of self-assessment. Because what we find is um, for instance in one particular project that I'm working on right now teacher's self-assessed where they were in implementation on function based interventions and we conducted an external assessment and there was a huge discrepancy between what the team thought was in place and what we as external um, evaluators saw was in place.

So, I think that it is beneficial to have someone external come in and do the interview.

Moderator: Thank you. Our next question is, is there a good place to find research based interventions to add to our list? Um, I will add that the National Center on our website has tool charts under the resources that have um, tool charts for both interventions, progress monitoring and for screening tools. So, you can definitely visit the website to check out those tools charts. Dr. Newcomer, do you have anything to add to that question? Is there a good place to find research based interventions to add to our list?

Presenter: Yeah, I know that Dr. Chris Riley-Tillman at the University of Missouri has a Center on Evidence Based Interventions and on his website he has a manual of evidence based interventions. And I don't have the URL for that but I can provide it. Can it be posted at some time?

Moderator: We can include that in the Q and A so, that's a good question and we will post links to those resources. Alright and we have one more question. Please clarify what you mean by benchmarks.

Presenter: Ah, good question. Benchmarks are just another word for um, the key feature. So, when I say you hit the benchmark that means you've hit a key feature. You have a key feature in place that needs to be in place. Um, and it's a term; again if you're working with a school wide positive behavior supports and you've been working with some sort of state um, implementation effort on that. They have the benchmarks of quality which list strategic features that need to be in place at each tier level to maximize implementation. So, benchmarks are just strategic features that maximize implementation at each tier.

Moderator: Thank you very much Dr. Newcomer. It looks like we may get one more question or so. I will begin to um, just close out with some announcements and if any other questions pop up, we can get those now. If we don't get to the questions now like mentioned before, they will be posted after the webinar and a Q and A document on the website.

So, thank you very much Dr. Newcomer for leading today's webinar. We strongly encourage you to take our survey about your experience from today's webinar. After we close the webinar, your browser will be re-routed to our survey page or you can copy and paste the link that is in the upper right hand corner of your screen where it says survey link. By taking the survey, you will be helping the NCII to improve future webinars and document the work, quality, relevance and usefulness of the tools that we will be providing. Thank you in advance for your feedback.

As a reminder, this webinar will be achieved and it will be posted along with the PowerPoint on our website with a Q and A document. So I see that Rebecca has shared one of the links to the University of Missouri resource and we will also post the others on the website as well under Q and A document. So, please join us next month on March twenty-eighth for our next webinar. Using Academic Progress Monitoring for Individualized Instructional Planning presented by Dr. Rebecca Zumeta. So thank you everyone for attending and this concludes our webinar. Have a great afternoon.