

Spring 4-10-2024

## Every Moment Counts (EMC): Understanding School Stakeholder Perceptions of Positive Mental Health Promotion in the Elementary School Setting. A Preliminary Report.

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### Recommended Citation

Malooly, M., Blackwell, A., & Thomas, L. (2024, April 10). Every Moment Counts (EMC): Understanding School Stakeholder Perceptions of Positive Mental Health Promotion in the Elementary School Setting. A Preliminary Report.. Poster presented at the Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. Retrieved from <https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesspring2024/70>

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## Every Moment Counts (EMC):

# Understanding School Stakeholder Perceptions of Positive Mental Health Promotion in the Elementary School Setting A Preliminary Report

Madeline A. Malooly, Angela Labrie Blackwell, PhD, OTR, and Lauren Thomas, OTD, MS, OTR

## BACKGROUND

The concept of mental health promotion is described as any policy or program that recognizes mental health as a multi-dimensional concept and provides interventions to facilitate positive mental health on a community scale (Enns et al., 2016). For children, the prevalence of psychological disorders associated with mental illness is the leading cause of disability for this population (Bitsko et al., 2022). It was estimated that between 25 and 50% of adult mental illnesses could be prevented through early intervention and preventative measures in childhood (Kim-Cohen et al., 2003).

To address mental health promotion in schools, Dr. Susan Bazyk founded and created EMC, which is a “multi-pronged mental health promotion initiative to help all children to be mentally healthy in order to succeed in school, at home, and in the community” (Bazyk, 2023). School administrators, teachers, counselors, and related service providers, including occupational therapists, have a unique role in promoting positive mental health for children in schools (Bazyk, 2023). Although there are a few examples of EMC initiatives successfully being used throughout the U.S., the next step is to further diffuse these initiatives to other schools and continue to build upon the evidence of its effectiveness.

## PROBLEM

**There is a lack of access to positive mental health programs for elementary school children, which directly inhibits their ability to engage in their roles and occupations successfully.**

## RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the perceptions of school stakeholders on Refreshing Recess after implementation at a specific elementary school?

## METHODS

This study utilized a phenomenological qualitative design, analyzing responses from a one-time online survey. This study took place in several distinct phases that are represented in the chart below.

### Immersion

- Assisted students and staff with daily routines
- Established rapport with school stakeholders

### Recruitment

- Teachers
- Parents
- Students

### Refreshing Recess Implementation

- Each session took place 1 day a week for the duration of recess. Teachers and students received a newsletter and lesson prior to each session.
- Week 1: Kickoff
- Week 2: Friendship Promotion
- Week 3: Teamwork
- Week 4: Get Fit and Get Along
- Week 5: Including Everyone
- Week 6: Fun for Everyone

### Data Collection

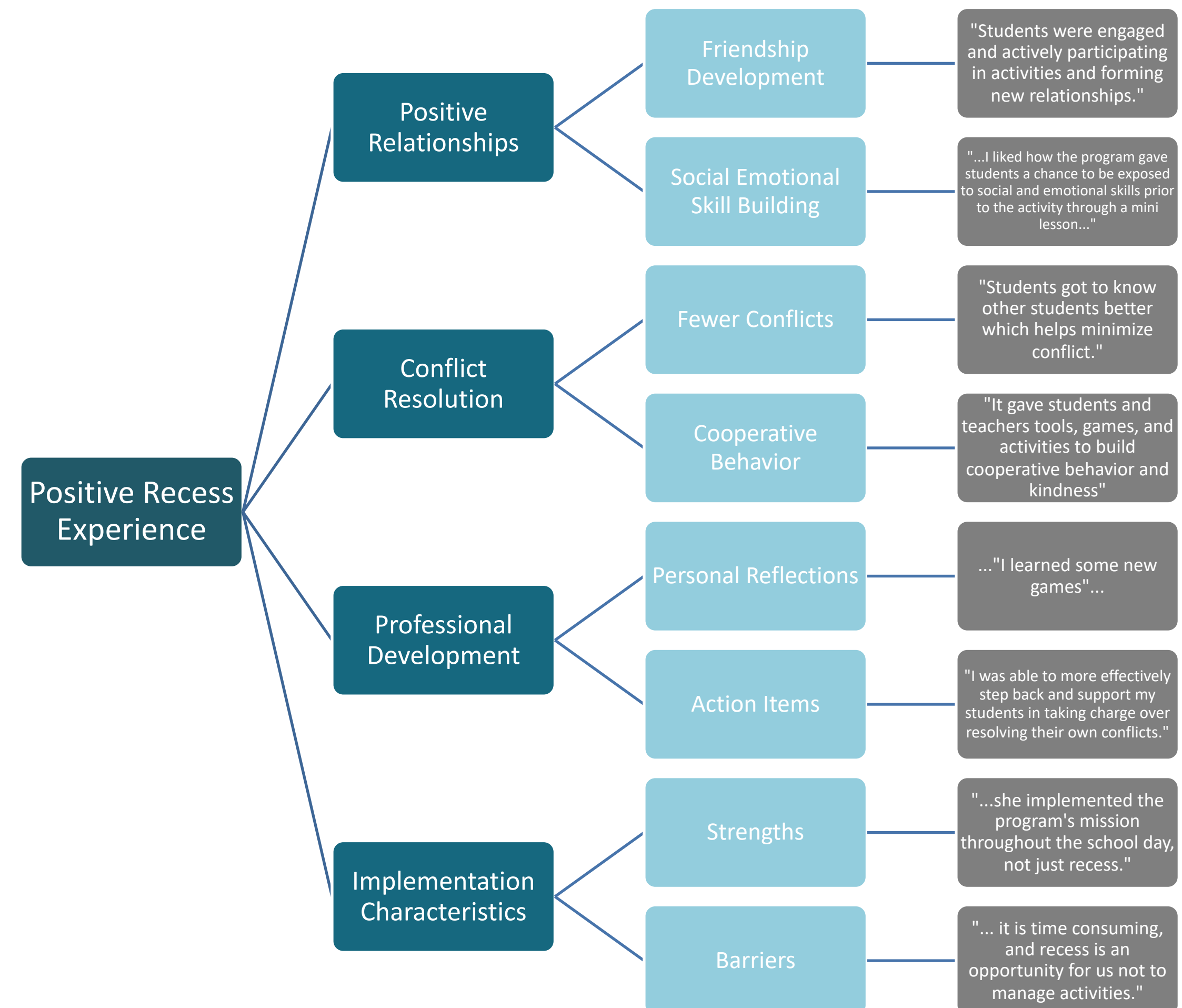
- Online survey via Survey Monkey

### Data Analysis

- Winnow data
- Hand-Coding
- Theme Description
- Summarize

This project involved human subjects; it has been reviewed and approved by the IRB.

## PRELIMINARY RESULTS



## PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

### Importance of this Work

- Supports the use of Refreshing Recess in schools to promote positive mental health practices.
- Strengthens previous EMC themes that everyone can be a mental health promotor (Bazyk, 2020).

**Limitations** include a small sample size and time constraints that may limit the generalizability of the results.

**Recommendations for future research** include conducting this program with a larger sample, adding the perspectives of students and parents, and examining the benefits of mental health promotion outside of the classroom setting.

### References

