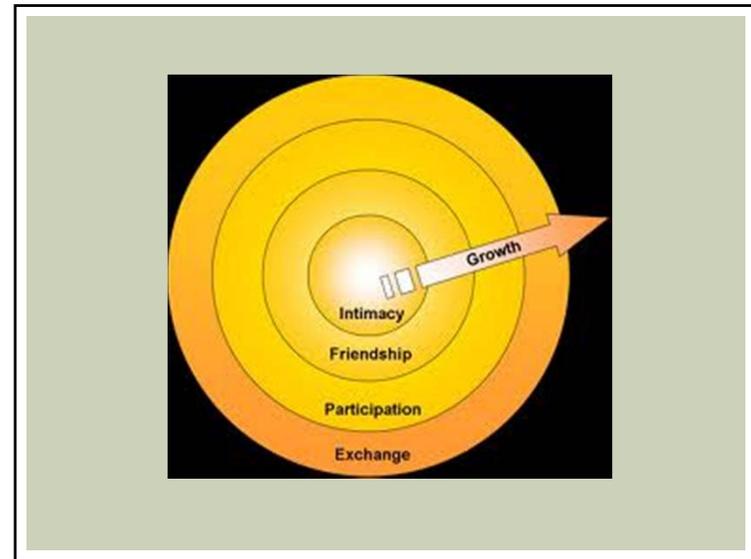


PEER SUPPORTS IN EDUCATIONAL & COMMUNITY SETTINGS

UMSL

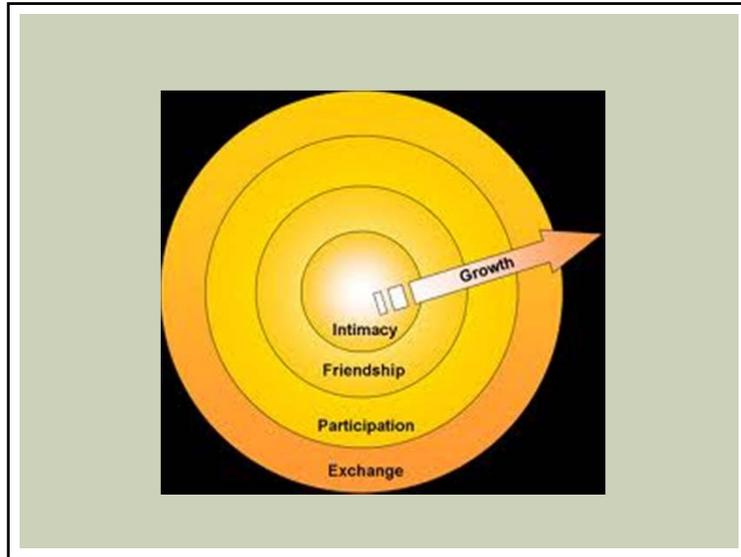
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POLL #1

- Which circle do you feel is the most important in terms of your own social relationships and quality of life?
 - A) Intimacy
 - B) Friendship
 - C) Participation
 - D) Exchange

WHAT SORTS OF RELATIONSHIPS DO INDIVIDUALS THAT YOU SERVE CURRENTLY HAVE?



WHAT IS FRIENDSHIP?

- Variations – age, setting, situation, intensity
- Engagement in social interactions that can be
 - Reciprocal
 - Helping
 - Proximal
- An agreed upon definition:
 - A bond between two individuals that can be characterized by mutual preference for one another, a positive affective style, an ability to engage in social interactions, and an ability to last over time (not fleeting). ((Falvey & Rosenberg, 1995; Grenot-Scheyer, et al., 1989; Hartup, 1975; Howes, 1983; Hurley-Geffner, 1995).



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

- Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979)
 - Study of relationships with individuals' contexts within communities and the larger society.
 - Influenced by Vygotsky & Lewin – Developmental Psychologists
 - The use of natural settings for research & application
 - Informed much of what has been considered “best practice” in terms of Transition planning, which includes recreation & leisure.

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER.....

- What opportunities do the individuals you serve have to develop valued relationships with their typical peers?
- What supports would help individuals with disabilities benefit most from these opportunities?
- Are the supports we provide leading towards the circle of intimacy?



POLL #2

- Do you feel that the supports you currently provide to the individuals you serve help them to build their circle of intimacy?
 - A) Definitely
 - B) Sometimes
 - C) Not really
 - D) Not at all

CLASSROOM STUDY (MEYER ET AL., 1998)

Meyer et al. (1998)	Social Relationship Frames
Social Relationship Frame	Definition
Ghosts and Guests	The person with a disability is acknowledged as being present, but continues to be viewed as an outsider.
The Inclusion Kid/ Different Friend	Differential treatment towards the person with a disability in a positive or negative nature.
I'll Help	The person without a disability takes the role of helping the person with a disability in a variety of ways.
Just Another Kid/ Student	People with disabilities are regarded as being "no big deal" and expectations and consequences are equal to that of typical peers.
Regular Friends	This category differentiates between "best friends" and regular friends, which are a larger part of the peer social network.
Best Friends/ Friends Forever	A "best friend" that is unique and special. This category is one that is rarely seen as a characteristic of friendships between people with disabilities and their typical peers.

HOW DO WE PROVIDE SUPPORT NOW? (SNELL & JANNEY, 2006)

Natural	Structured
Classroom buddy systems	PAL (Partners at Lunch)
Informal peer interactions	"Yes I Can" program
Existing school clubs	Best Buddies
Extracurricular activities	MAPS
Modeling	Circle of Friends
Role-playing	PATH
Peer Tutors	Peer Planning

WHO PROVIDES SUPPORT?

- What are the advantages of relying on adult-delivered and/or paid supports?
- What are some of the potential drawbacks?
- Do your answers differ depending on...
 - Grade level?
 - School setting?
 - Community setting?
 - Employment setting?
 - Individual characteristics?



ADULT DIRECTED SUPPORT IN EDUCATION

(U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 2010)

- More than 356,000 paraprofessionals nationally
- ~7,604 in Missouri
- One-to-one support in inclusive settings (on- and off-campus)
- Increasingly requested by teachers and/or parents

PAID ADULTS: THE USUAL SUPPORTS

- Paid adults may inadvertently...
 - Set students/co-workers/etc. apart
 - Limit social interactions with their peers
 - Decrease contact between students general education teachers or other group leaders (boss, supervisor, etc.)
 - Hinder student learning and achievement or worker productivity
 - Encourage unnecessary dependence on these types of paid supports - limits self-determination & independence



POLL #3

- Do you feel that paid and/or adult supports may sometimes hinder the development of meaningful natural relationships?
 - A) Yes
 - B) Maybe
 - C) No
 - D) Not sure

WHAT IS PEER SUPPORTS?

- How might this differ from peer mentoring/tutoring?
- What are peer support arrangements?
- How would peer supports help with development of meaningful relationships?
- Definition - Arrangements, strategies, and activities that involve groups of students with varying abilities working together to provide ongoing social and academic support to one another with facilitation from an adult (Carter, Cushing & Kennedy, 2009)



WHY PEER SUPPORTS?

- Increased academic outcomes for ALL students involved (Cushing, Carter, Kennedy, et al., 2012:)
- Increased engagement in academic and social activities for ALL students involved (Cushing, Carter, Kennedy, et al., 2012)
- Increased meaningful relationships for ALL students involved (Register, 2009; Cushing, Carter, Kennedy, et al., 2012; Register & Singer, in press)
- Increased connections to caring adults to support learning & growth for ALL students involved (Register, 2009; Register & Singer, in press)

HOW COULD THIS TRANSLATE TO..

- Employment
- Community
- Extra-curricular activities
- Faith based groups
- Neighborhood groups
- ?

WHAT ARRANGEMENTS CAN WE SET UP?

- Proximity
- Education & Awareness
- Mutually beneficial curriculum/trainings
- Structured networks – study groups, teams, etc.
- Assigning roles to recognize all members
- Individual focused supports – mode of communication is clear, social skills instruction, self-management skills instruction, self-awareness & advocacy skills instruction, etc.
- Wait! – allow for mistakes, natural consequences, understanding of good & bad consequences, and successes! *The Readiness Factor - grit*



POLL #4

- Is there opportunity to set up more peer supports arrangements for the individuals you serve?
 - A) Yes
 - B) Maybe
 - C) No
 - D) Unsure.. I need to think more about it

WHAT IS THE CHANGING ADULT ROLE?

- Classroom/environment versus one-to-one support
- Modeling for students/peers/individuals in environment (interactions and active participation)
- Adapting course curricula, assignments and projects related to the environment (with guidance from teachers)
- Facilitate peers to ensure ALL students/individuals are fully participating
- Fading presence & support



DOES IT WORK?

- **Social Interactions** (Cushing, Carter, Kennedy, et al., 2012)
 - Student w/disability – Increases from 4% to 16%
 - All students – Increases from 8% to 26%
- **Engagement in activity/curriculum** (Cushing, Carter, Kennedy, et al., 2012)
 - Increase of 27% for students with disabilities
 - Increase for students without disabilities 2-6%
 - “at-risk” students having the largest increase



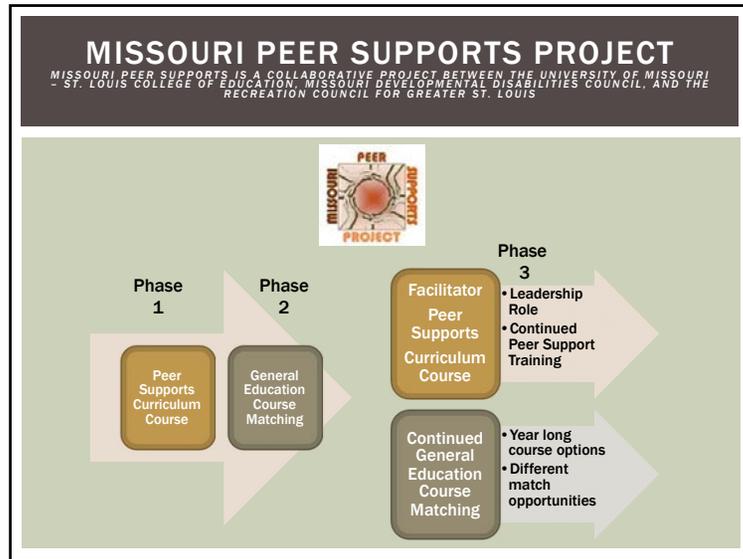
DOES IT WORK?

- **Grades** (Cushing, Carter, Kennedy, et al., 2012)
 - Increase for all students of 4.2%
 - NOTE – Students at-risk increased 13.9%
- **Meaningful Relationships – sustainable** (Register, 2009; Register & Singer, in press)
 - Follow up study Reciprocal friendships, benefits differ
 - Structured supports can be a starting point
 - Natural supports that highlight benefits for all students tend to have the long-term effect



POLL #5

- Do you think the concept/idea of peer supports could be applied to other settings (other than education)?
 - A) Yes
 - B) Maybe
 - C) No
 - D) Not sure



- ## MISSOURI PEER SUPPORTS PROJECT CURRICULUM (PHASE 1)
- Person first language & person centered planning
 - Relevant education & civil rights law
 - Self-determination & advocacy
 - Interdependence
 - Adaptations & Modifications
 - Assistive technology & communication
 - Social skills
 - Circles of support
 - Inclusive education
 - Employment exploration & skill development
 - Guest presenters & potential field trips

- ## KIRKSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL PHASE 1
- *School Team* = 6 including work experience coordinator, speech and language specialist, general education teacher in english, special education coordinator, guidance counselor, and special education teacher in social studies
 - Identified 3 courses (multiple sections)
 - Careers & Technology - 129 students enrolled, 17 with IEP or 504, 22 at-risk
 - Civics - 209 students enrolled, 26 with IEP or 504, 25 at-risk
 - Health - 90 students enrolled, 17 with IEP or 504, 11 at-risk
 - Each course will be accessible to all students with and without disabilities to enroll in freshman & sophomore year.
 - Project curriculum disbursed amongst the 3 courses and supplement existing material. Training provided for all teachers.
 - *Goal* - all sections of the 3 courses start implementation in the fall with the goal of *all* students at the school experiencing the curriculum during their high school experience

- ## KIRKSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL PHASE 2
- *School Team* = 6 including work experience coordinator, speech and language specialist, general education teacher in english, special education coordinator, guidance counselor, and special education teacher in social studies
 - Identified 3 courses (multiple sections) - ongoing
 - Careers & Technology -Civics -Health continue with curriculum
 - 178 students volunteered - 76 students matched in general education classes
 - Continued support - via monthly 0 period meetings with school team

