



Technical Brief on Validation Process for Facility-Wide Tiered Fidelity Inventory (v0.2)

Compared to typical schools, implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) remains in its early stages with juvenile justice and alternative education settings, whether residential or day programs. As interest and support grows for implementation within juvenile justice and alternative education settings, the creation of additional support tools similar to those developed for typical schools will be helpful for action planning, fidelity assessment, and outcome evaluation. The first instrument for juvenile justice settings developed by the Center on PBIS was the Facility-Wide Tiered Fidelity Inventory (FW-TFI, version 0.1; Jolivette et al., 2017). The FW-TFI was adapted from the School-Wide PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory (SWPBIS TFI), with adjustments for unique features of juvenile justice and alternative education settings. The basic format, organization, and subscales of the FW-TFI mirrored the SWPBIS TFI; changes were made (in some items) in terminology, stem descriptions, and scoring criteria.

In this document, we describe steps taken to obtain feedback to inform the development of the FW-TFI v0.2, and results of a subsequent content validity survey. It is important to consider several points regarding this process. First, there are relatively few individuals with expertise and experience in juvenile justice secure care, in-depth knowledge of and experience with PBIS implementation, and knowledge of and experience with PBIS fidelity assessment. As this group expands, we will have a larger pool of experts to inform content development of fidelity measures for alternative settings. Second, this group (individuals with expertise and experience with PBIS in secure care) is even smaller for Tier 2 and Tier 3. Implementing Tier 3 systems, in particular, has remained an elusive goal in secure care for several reasons, including the challenge of sustaining Tier 1 PBIS long enough to reach the point where Tier 3 should be considered. Also, secure care is characteristically required by law and policy to provide individualized programming. The juxtaposition of Tier 3 interventions with an overall philosophy of individualized programming is a concept that has not yet been well clarified. As PBIS in secure care becomes more well established, and as facilities are successful in sustaining PBIS over time, we anticipate that the PBIS framework will provide a more systematic approach than currently exists for differentiating individualized services for those youth with the greatest needs, and for designing services to meet needs of youth who continue to exhibit challenging behaviors, despite Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports.



Development Process for the FW-TFI (v0.2)

In 2017, the FW-TFI, v0.1 was made available on the PBIS Center website. During the 2017 – 2018 academic year, feedback from the field was requested on the FW-TFI, v0.1. As part of that feedback process, the FW-TFI, v0.1, including the FW-TFI Walkthrough Tool, was presented to PBIS teams and coaches from juvenile justice and residential mental health programs in three states (Texas, California, and West Virginia) to solicit input on stem descriptions of FW-TFI features, data sources, and scoring criteria, as well as overall content, terminology, and clarity. In total, representatives from 11 facilities in those three states provided feedback on at least the Tier 1 portion of the FW-TFI. All representatives completed the Tier 1 portion of the FW-TFI; representatives from two facilities completed the Tier 2 portion, and one representative completed the entire FW-TFI. The types of facilities represented in these field-testing activities were:

- 2 short-term juvenile detention facilities
- 2 long-term juvenile detention facilities
- 3 combined short- and long-term facilities
- 4 therapeutic mental health residential facilities
- The number of youth served in the 7 juvenile detention facilities were 25 to 50 youth (3 facilities), 50 to 100 youth (1 facility), and 100 to 140 youth (2 facilities)
- Ages served across all facilities were 12 to 20 years
- 5 facilities served both male and female populations; 3 programs were for males only; and three programs did not respond to this question

These review activities resulted in over 250 comments and recommendations pertaining to wording of items and criteria to reduce confusion, more closely reflect terminology used in the facility, or increase applicability for residential settings. Based this feedback and recommendations, we developed the next iteration of the FW-TFI (v0.2) that incorporated the most frequently-occurring suggestions, addressed the most common areas of confusion, and addressed the most common recommendations for improving the applicability of the FW-TFI for secure care settings.

Content Validity Survey

Next, we conducted a formal assessment of the FW-TFI v0.2 content validity. We invited 10 experts to complete a formal survey to assess validity and appropriateness of FW-TFI items and scoring criteria. Experts were chosen because of their knowledge of and experience with PBIS in alternative settings, including knowledge of assessing fidelity of PBIS. The experts represented state, regional, and county departments of education or juvenile justice, university researchers, and consultants who provide support for PBIS in alternative settings.

We assessed content validity with an adapted version of a content validity survey used by McIntosh and colleagues (2017) to assess content validity of the SWPBIS TFI. An email was sent to experts with a link to the online content validity survey. The survey presented three questions for each FW-TFI item, plus allowed



for respondents to enter comments about each item. The three questions were: (a) does the item represent an important aspect of PBIS fidelity? (b) does the item assess an important component of the subscale to which it belongs? and (c) are the scoring criteria valid for assessing the item? Respondents were asked to respond on a 4 – point scale indicating their level of agreement (strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree) with each question. In addition, we asked for responses on three general comments related to each of the sections for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3: (a) Do the items assess important aspects of fidelity of implementation for that tier? (b) one or more items should be added to that tier; and (c) one or more items should be removed from that section.

Of the 10 invitations sent, we received 4 responses for Tier 1, and 3 responses for Tier 2 and Tier 3. All respondents had master's- or doctoral-level degrees and multiple years of experience in juvenile justice settings. The following is a summary of responses:

- Tier 1 – For all items, all (4) respondents indicated strongly agree or agree in response to the first question (items assess important aspects of fidelity) and second question (items assess an important aspect of the subscale) for each item. In response to the third question (validity of scoring criteria), one respondent disagreed with scoring criteria for one item (item 1.3); all other responses indicated strongly agree or agree.
- Tier 2 – For 12 out of 13 items, all (3) respondents indicated strongly agree or agree in response to the first question for each item. For item 2.10 (level of use), one respondent disagreed. All respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the second question for all items. For the third question, one person disagreed with scoring criteria on two items (2.5, 2.10).
- Tier 3 – For 16 out of 17 items, all respondents strongly agreed or agreed for all three questions for each item. One respondent disagreed with all three questions for item 3.16 (level of use).

All respondents strongly agreed or agreed to the six broad questions regarding the overall instrument, assessing the following:

- The process for completing the measure is valid and useful;
- The response choices are valid and useful;
- The response choices are worded clearly for facility personnel;
- The process for scoring items is valid and useful;
- This measure assesses important aspects of PBIS fidelity of implementation; and
- Each section (i.e., Tier) is an efficient way to measure PBIS fidelity of implementation.

Respondents provided an average of 4 comments per item for Tier 1. Comments included suggestions for clarifying terminology, improving consistency across items, adding items to the glossary, and changes to item stems and/or scoring criteria.



Summary

Although there were a small number of responses to the content validity survey, those who responded provided thorough and helpful feedback. We discussed every comment, and acted in some way on approximately 75% of comments, particularly for Tiers 1 and 2. We made some edits to Tier 3 items, but we also believe that Tier 3 requires additional conceptual discussions, as discussed previously, for the most accurate assessment.

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