

PBIS Forum 15 Practice Brief: Implementing RENEW in High Schools

Introduction

This paper has been developed with input from the Round Table Discussion, *Implementing RENEW in High Schools*, which took place at the 2015 Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Leadership Forum in Chicago, Illinois. The purpose of this paper is to summarize the topics discussed at the Forum by sharing strategies and tools for RENEW Implementation in the following areas: RENEW's operational definition, the rationale for using RENEW, the procedures for RENEW implementation, a specific implementation example, and links to additional resources.

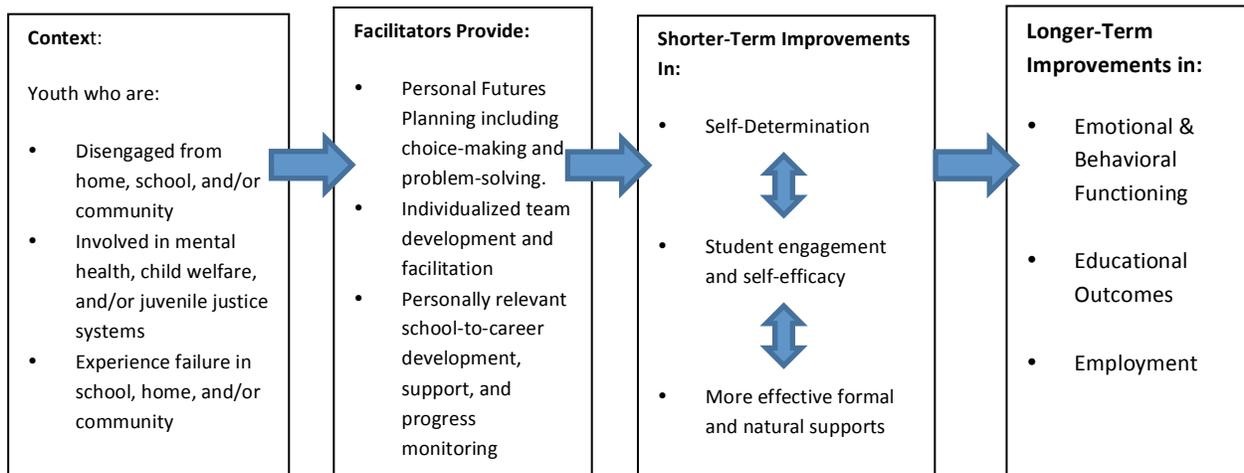
Operational definition

Rehabilitation for Empowerment, Natural Supports, Education, and Work (RENEW) is a structured school-to-career transition planning and individualized wraparound process for youth with emotional and behavioral challenges. RENEW was developed in 1996 in New Hampshire as a part of a 3 year Rehabilitation Services Administration employment project of the Institute on Disability (IOD) at the University of New Hampshire. Beginning in 2002, the IOD began to develop RENEW as the primary tertiary intervention within the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework in high schools. Since then, RENEW has been implemented in hundreds of schools across New Hampshire, and in Pennsylvania, Illinois, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Missouri, showing positive academic and behavioral outcomes for some of our most vulnerable youth (Cheney, Hagner, Malloy, Cormier, & Bernstein, 1998; Hagner, Malloy, Mazzone, & Cormier, 2008; Malloy, Drake, Abate, & Cormier, 2010; Malloy, Sundar, Hagner, Pierias, & Viet, 2010; Malloy, Suter, & Haber, 2014). Since 2008, RENEW has been provided to hundreds of youth through community mental health centers as a Medicaid billable service provided by clinicians in schools and communities.

The RENEW intervention is provided to youth with emotional and/or behavior challenges by a trained RENEW Facilitator. The RENEW model incorporates personalized planning and learning, student development and engagement, and a cohesive wraparound approach to systems and supports for the youth through a 4 phase intervention process, including 1) student-focused personal futures planning, 2) individualized team development and transition planning, 3) Implementation of strategies to link the youth with natural and paid supports such as vocational rehabilitation and community mental health services, and 4) discharge to less intensive services. The RENEW Theory of Change (figure below) highlights the rationale of how the RENEW model improves the outcomes of youth at risk.

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RENEW Theory of Change



Rationale for RENEW

Over two million young people in the United States have an emotional/behavioral disability (EBD). Nationwide, youth with EBD are half as likely as their peers to graduate from high school and more than three times as likely to be arrested while still in school (Kessler, Berglund, Demler, 2005). Close to three-quarters of those who drop out will be arrested within five years, and after leaving school, they will be twice as likely as other youth with disabilities to be living in a correctional facility, halfway house, drug treatment center or on the street. Furthermore, reports also show that youth with EBD have high rates of academic failure, high dropout rates, higher criminal justice involvement, and lower rates of employment (Bullis & Cheney, 1999; Wagner, Kutash, Duchnowski, Epstein, & Sumi, 2005). Youth with EBD also have consistently high rates of mental health utilization, are more likely to be poor, and are incarcerated at significantly higher rates than the general population (Wagner, Marder, Blackorby, Cameto, Newman, Levine, & Davies-Mercier, 2003; Wagner, et al., 2005). The myriad challenges that youth with EBD face are nearly insurmountable without a comprehensive support system.

Impact of RENEW

RENEW has a strong research base with over ten published works citing its positive impact through school and community settings for youth with emotional challenges or disabilities; through these publications, RENEW has been identified as an appropriate wraparound adaptation for high school age youth (Eber, Malloy, Rose, & Flamini, 2013), an effective tertiary intervention within a PBIS framework (Malloy, et al., 2010; Malloy, Drake, Abate, & Cormier, 2010; Malloy, & Hawkins, 2010; Bohanon, Eber, Flannery, Malloy, & Fenning, 2007; Scott, Eber, Malloy, & Cormier, 2004), and an effective transition planning process for youth with emotional and/or behavior challenges and disabilities (Cheney, Hagner, Malloy, Cormier, Bernstein, 1998; Cheney, Malloy, Hagner, 1998).

Specifically, RENEW has substantially increased the high school completion, employment, and post-secondary education participation rates among youth with emotional/behavioral challenges and disabilities.

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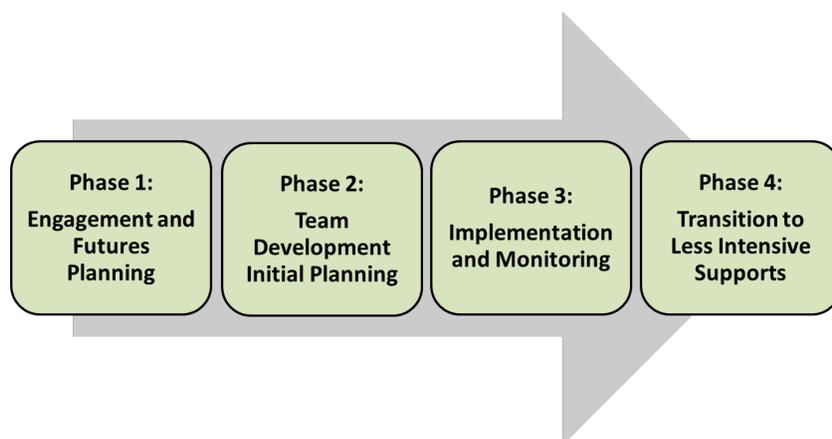
RENEW participants, on average, demonstrate rates of high school completion and re-engagement of over 75%, over 50% gain employment, over 40% participate in post-secondary education or training programs, and one study found significant improvements in youth functioning in school and in the community as measured by the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (Bullis & Cheney, 1999; Cheney et al., 1998; Cheney, Malloy & Hagner; Malloy, et al., 2010; Malloy, 2013). For more information on RENEW publications, follow this [Link to RENEW Publications](#).

In 2012, RENEW was named as one of the nation's top 100 interventions in the Social Impact 100 (S&I 100), a new funding platform developed by the Social Impact Exchange. Modeled after the stock market's S&P 500, the S&I 100 is the first-ever, online, broad index of U.S. nonprofits with proof of results, aggregating top-performing, evidence-based nonprofits so that funders can have confidence that they are contributing to organizations that consistently deliver impact. RENEW is just one of just two New Hampshire-based nonprofit programs to make the list, which includes high-profile national organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, City Year, and Teach for America. The complete list is at www.SI100.org.

Improving the evidence-base

To move the RENEW model from an evidence-informed intervention to an evidence-based practice, RENEW staff at the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability are collaborating as part of a large randomized control trial with the University of Vermont across New Hampshire, Vermont, Maryland, and Illinois to determine whether or not the RENEW intervention is statistically effective when compared to a control group. This project will take place from 2015 through 2019.

Procedures: the four phases of RENEW



During RENEW Phase 1, the facilitator engages a youth in the RENEW process and teaches him/her how to use RENEW to meet personalized goals. After the youth is engaged, the facilitator conducts a Person Centered Planning process called Futures Planning. Here the facilitator uses a large flip-chart to capture various structured conversations about the youth's interests, strengths, preferences, dreams, challenges, and goals. After the youth identifies several goals, the facilitator helps the youth prioritize a goal to begin working on and then guides the youth into Phase 2. The first RENEW phase takes roughly four hours and is usually

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broken up into 45-60 minute segments (Malloy, Drake, Cloutier, & Couture, 2015). For more information on Futures Planning, follow this [Link to Futures Planning Overview](#).

Phase 2 typically occurs over two separate meetings: the preparation meeting between the youth and the facilitator and then the RENEW team meeting itself. During Phase 2, the facilitator and youth brainstorm next steps around a selected goal and then who within the youth's network can help with these steps. The facilitator then mentors the youth around how to engage these people to be a part of a team that will support the youth in reaching that goal. Finally, the youth is supported to conduct his/her own team meeting in which all identified supporters are present. This team process is not unlike family-driven wraparound in the traditional sense according to the National Wraparound Initiative. The youth selects the strategies and supports to pursue, and then a plan is developed for implementation leading to Phase 3 (Malloy, Drake, Cloutier, & Couture, 2015).

In Phase 3, the youth and their team will implement the plan that was developed in Phase 2. During this time, the team may have regular meetings with the youth and facilitator to track progress. If some parts of the plan are not working, the facilitator, youth and team problem-solve and make appropriate adjustments in order to improve the success of the plan.

Once a goal is met, the youth and facilitator go back to Phase 1 and review the futures plan and then prioritize a new goal to work on. Then the youth and facilitator repeat Phases 2 and 3 until the youth's goals are met. The amount of time and the frequency of the meetings during this phase fluctuate depending on the youth's goal and his/her needs. Some goals will only require one meeting while others will need weekly meetings for months at a time. Once the youth and facilitator experience success meeting the goals, then the youth may move onto Phase 4 where s/he transitions out of RENEW (Malloy, Drake, Cloutier, & Couture, 2015). For more information on RENEW, follow this [Link to RENEW Overview Video](#).

RENEW facilitators

A RENEW facilitator can be anyone who currently works with or has time to support a youth with an emotional or behavioral challenge. Some of the most effective RENEW facilitators have been paraprofessionals, school social workers, high school principals, regular and special education teachers, and community mental health providers. RENEW Facilitators can be identified in various ways. Often, the most effective way to recruit facilitators is to showcase the intervention to mental health or school staff and then look for people who are willing to dedicate an hour on a weekly basis to work with a youth. Another common way of selecting a facilitator is to screen staff and determine who is already having success in working with youth with emotional challenges. Many organizations also manage the recruiting process pragmatically by determining who amongst the staff can dedicate time to facilitate the model on a weekly basis. Facilitator selection is crucial to the success of the intervention.

RENEW Facilitator training takes place over 18 hours (or three days) with supplemental coaching. The first two days cover RENEW Phases 1 and 2 and are typically held sequentially. The third day usually takes place 30 to 60 days after the first two days and covers RENEW plan implementation strategies for Phase 3.

Between training days 2 and 3, there are typically two coaching sessions to assist facilitators to get started with the model. Following day three, RENEW facilitators should receive monthly coaching to ensure fidelity of implementation.

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RENEW coaching

RENEW Coaching is provided by a Certified RENEW Coach who has garnered enough experience as a facilitator to mentor new facilitators. The RENEW coach can be a person who works on a state level, network/regional level, or a person within the organization who has met all of the benchmarks to becoming a RENEW Coach (see requirements for facilitator/coaching requirements at [RENEW Certification Process](#)). This person supports RENEW facilitators by co-facilitating with them, observing them and providing feedback, conducting fidelity measures and creating professional development plans, and facilitating group coaching sessions with RENEW facilitators. This link offers more support for RENEW coaches/coaching: [RENEW Coaches Community of Practice](#).

RENEW trainers

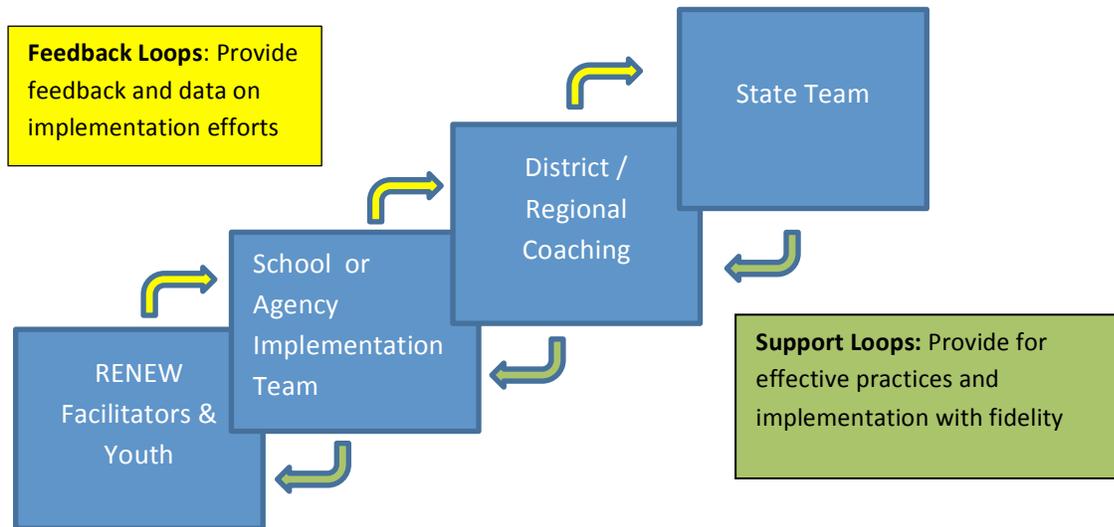
Certified RENEW Trainers are individuals who have gained substantial experience as a facilitator and who have the skills and willingness to train others. A RENEW Trainer can be a person who works on a state level, network/regional level, or internally in an organization who has met all the requirements of becoming a RENEW Trainer (for more information, contact iod.RENEW@unh.edu). Certified RENEW Trainers can conduct RENEW trainings within their specified catchment area as defined through an agreement with the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire.

RENEW implementation system

Effective RENEW Implementation on all levels will determine whether or not youth will experience positive outcomes with the RENEW intervention. By effectively utilizing what is known from Implementation Science Research (Fixsen & Blasé, 2009), RENEW has been implemented at high rates in schools and community provider agencies. For more on RENEW implementation, follow this [Link to RENEW Implementation Team Overview and Manual](#).

Based upon the Implementation Science framework, the RENEW implementation model is designed to walk agencies and schools through a process that addresses the components necessary for quality practice implementation: staff selection, pre-service and in-service training, ongoing coaching and consultation, staff performance evaluation, decision support data systems, facilitative administrative supports, and system-level interventions. The RENEW Implementation System includes two-way feedback loops (see figure below) to ensure effective sustainability through communication, support, and resource provision (Fixsen & Blasé, 2009).

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Follow this link to archived presentations on School and System implementation examples of RENEW: [Pennsylvania & Illinois Implementation Examples](#), [Milwaukee Implementation Example](#).

Specific implementation example: Jake

Jake was referred to RENEW in the spring of 2006 as a student high at risk for dropping out of high school. He was known as a youth who had multiple run-ins with the police. He frequently avoided class and was skipping school multiple days a week. Jake's school counselors speculated that he was experiencing depression which manifested in a lack of motivation to do his school work. This resulted in multiple mid-term failures putting him at-risk from being promoted to his sophomore year.

Jake, his school counselor, and the RENEW Facilitator met weekly for a number of months. It was learned through Futures Planning that Jake was disengaged from school for several reasons: his classes' structure did not pertain to his learning style, he felt disconnected from school and his peers, and the instructors did not have the tools to gain Jake's interests. The facilitator used the RENEW planning and team development strategies to develop goals that linked his life's aspirations to his success in school. Some of these goals included collaborating with teachers to do the work in his own way, make up missed work, engage in positive activities that promote the school's culture, and continue to maintain a job in order to get his license and a car. By creating goals, having a productive way to advocate for his needs, and learning how to make compromises with teachers, Jake quickly made up all of his work and passed his classes and became a sophomore.

As a sophomore, Jake's goal on improving his school culture led him down a leadership path. Jake became the first student to join his high school's PBIS Universal Tier 1 Team. He actively provided input from a student's point of view to his principals, Special Education coordinators, guidance directors, teachers and superintendent on how the Leadership Team can work to improve the school climate. The faculty and staff on this team are still most appreciative for his participation. They believe that his assistance was instrumental in developing many important initiatives that have since greatly enhanced the school's climate. One of these initiatives, Jake spearheaded himself. He volunteered numerous hours of his personal time to work with

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consultants from the University of New Hampshire and New England College to begin a student leadership team.

As Jake began his senior year, he self-advocated for additional RENEW assistance because he realized his high school could not provide the support he needed to graduate on time. A new RENEW team was developed to problem solve, and they concluded that because of Jake's financial, educational, and personal needs, he would be more successful taking online courses and finishing his school career independently at the adult program in a neighboring town. With ongoing support and self-motivation, Jake was able to graduate on time.

Since graduation, Jake has taken on many opportunities to present and train other students and professionals at state and national conferences on RENEW, student leadership, and PBIS. These activities are ongoing, and Jake believes that if he can inspire other students to take control of their lives, then he can make positive change to our society. Now as an adult, Jake is happily married, has a Criminal Justice degree, and continues pursuing his dreams. To hear additional RENEW stories from other youth, click on this link:

[RENEW Youth Voices Homepage](#)

Conclusion

Many youth have experienced success using the RENEW model, and any organization that is interested in implementing it as a new practice should have a practical understanding of its many facets. The goal of this paper was to cover broadly the various drivers of successful RENEW implementation. For additional information or questions about RENEW, please contact the following email: iod.RENEW@unh.edu

Additional resources

- [Link to RENEW Website](#)
- [Link to RENEW Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)
- [Link to RENEW Overview Video](#)
- [Link to Futures Planning Overview](#)
- [Link to RENEW Publications and Archived Presentations](#)
- [Link to Information on RENEW Training and Implementation Support](#)
- [Link to RENEW Informational Flyer](#)
- [Link to RENEW Flyer for Youth and Families](#)
- [Link to RENEW Implementation Overview and Manual](#)

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