

# The Problem with Attendance:

Using Continuous Improvement to Tackle Root Causes of Chronic Absenteeism

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# Warm-Up

With a neighbor:

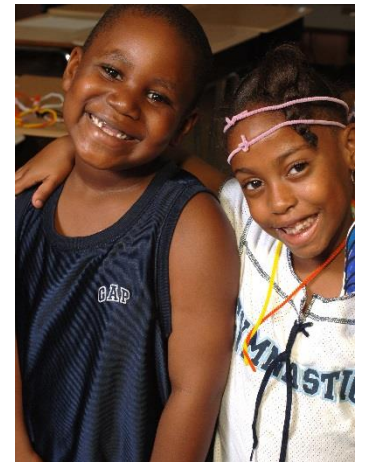
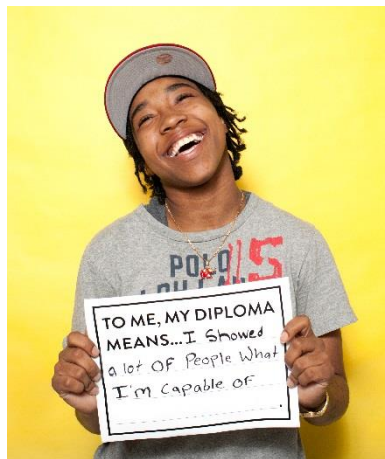
- Brainstorm 2-3 interventions for chronic absenteeism and write on post-its.
- Stick post-its on the wall.

# Mission



Good Shepherd Services goes where children, youth, and families face the greatest challenges and builds on their strengths to help them gain skills for success. We **provide** quality, effective services that deepen connections between family members, within schools, and among neighbors. We work closely with community leaders to **advocate**, both locally and nationally, on behalf of our participants to make New York City a better place to live and work.

Good Shepherd Services **leads** in the development of innovative programs that make a difference in the lives of children, youth and families today.



# Good Shepherd Services programs promote well-being, learning, growth, and change



## Family Support, Counseling & Foster Care



**6,559**

participants served  
through 11 programs

## Educational Support



**8,928**

participants served  
through 31 programs

## Afterschool & Community Programs



**14,322**

participants served  
through 38 programs

## Supportive Housing



**143**

participants served  
through 2 programs

## Youth Justice Services



**628**

participants served  
through 10 programs

# Core Structures of our GSS School Model

We start with an understanding that the academic gap IS the social-emotional gap and that change is slow. In order to have impact with our students it is necessary to be patient and build trust.



Youth and Family Development and Trauma-Informed Approach



Primary Person



Shared Leadership



Small, Safe Environment



Targeted Population





## Core Program Services



Counseling



Group Work



Community Building



Family engagement



Future Focus



# Multiple Pathways Models

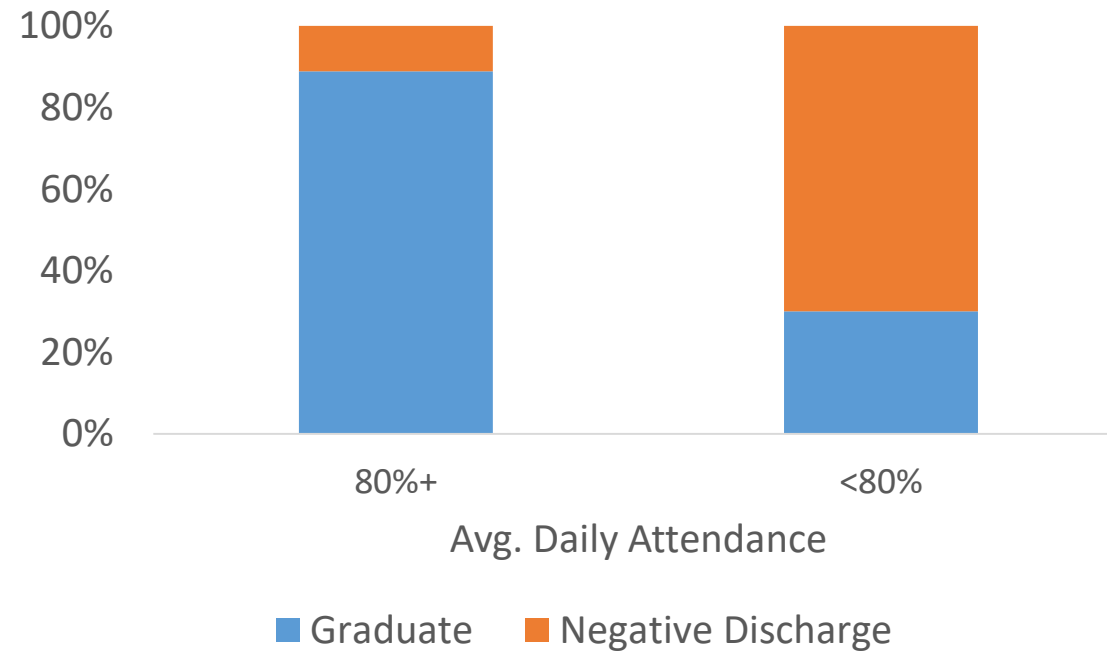
## Transfer High Schools

- Small, academically rigorous, full-time high schools designed to re-engage students who are behind in high school or have dropped out.
- Students are between the ages of 15 to 21 and have completed at least one year of high school.

## Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCS)

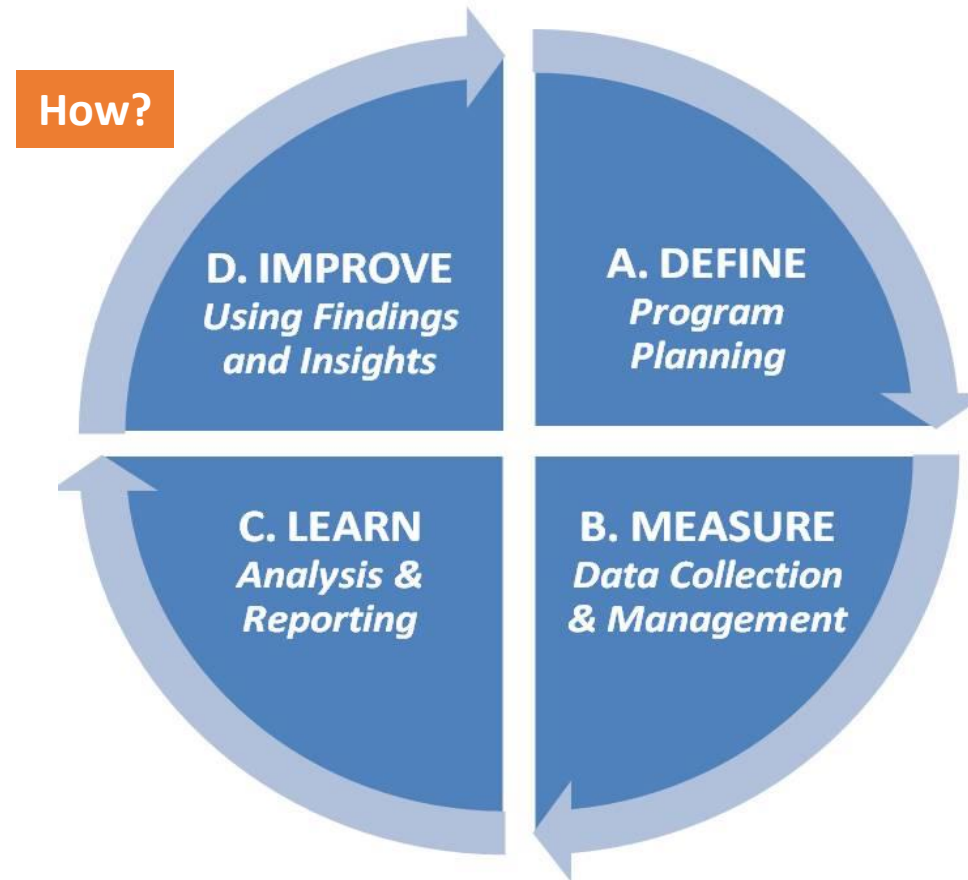
- Evening academic programs designed to meet the needs of students who might be considering dropping out because they are behind or because they have adult responsibilities that make attending school in the daytime difficult.
- Students between the ages of 17.5 and 21, who are in their fifth year of high school and have earned at least 17 credits.
- Students attend part time and in the evening.

# Attendance Problem

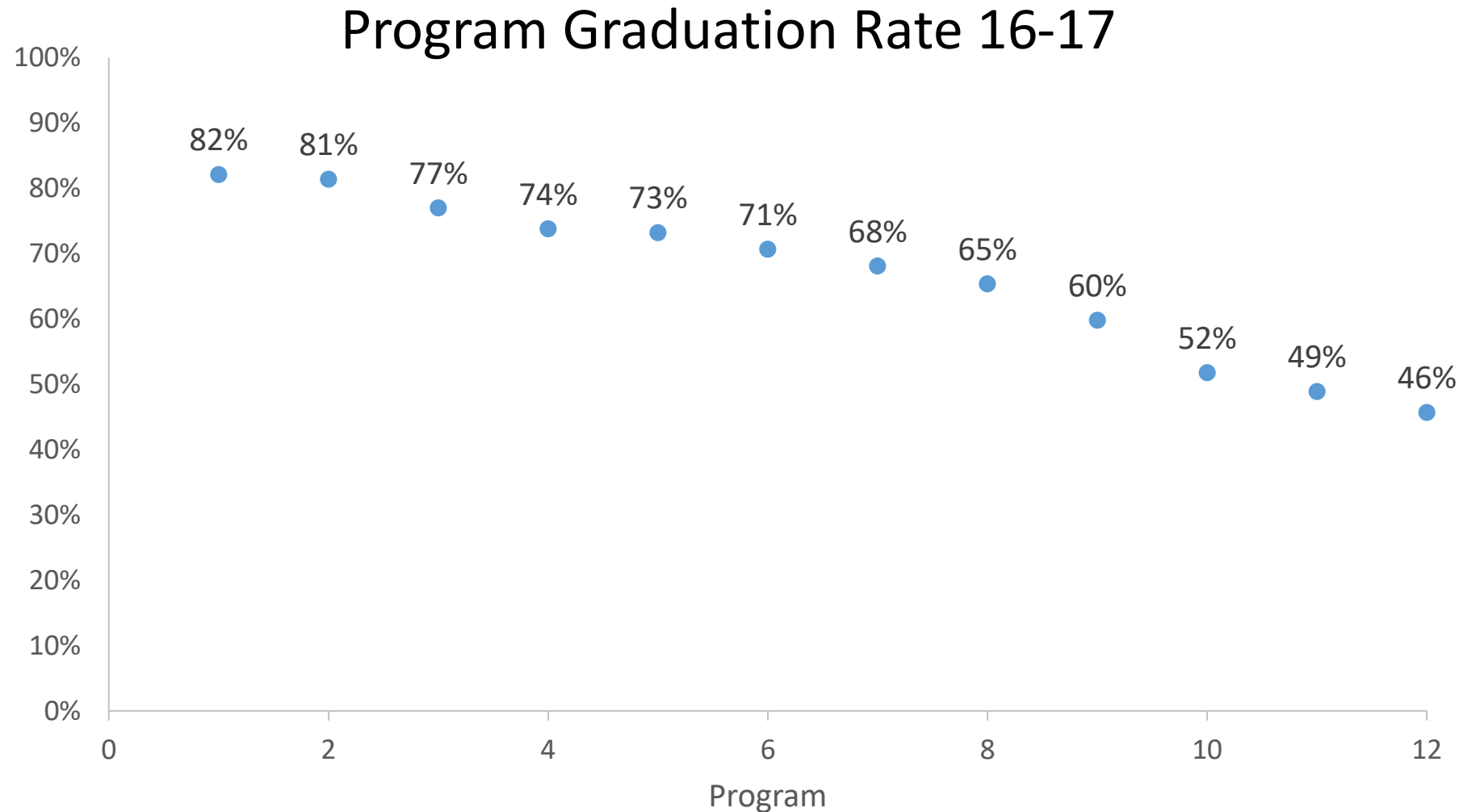




# Improvement Problem



# Example of Variability



## Different Types of Measurement for Different Goals

ASPECT	IMPROVEMENT	ACCOUNTABILITY	RESEARCH
<b>Why?</b>	Develop and evaluate changes in practice	Identify exemplary or problematic performers (teachers, schools, districts)	Develop and test theories about the relationships between conceptual variables
<b>What?</b>	Outcomes and processes that are the object of change	End of the line outcomes	Latent variables
<b>How often?</b>	Frequently as practice occurs	Usually collected once a year (after the fact)	Typically once or twice per study (after the fact)
<b>Testing your theory</b>	Sequential tests	No theory to test	One large test
<b>Sample size</b>	"Just enough" data, small sequential samples	Obtain 100% of available, relevant data	"Just in case" data
<b>Social Conditions of Use?</b>	Data shared in a low-stakes, safe environment conducive to change.	Publically available. Formal collection process to assure appearances of neutrality and objectivity.	Meets scientific standards that are held in the field.

# Continuous Improvement

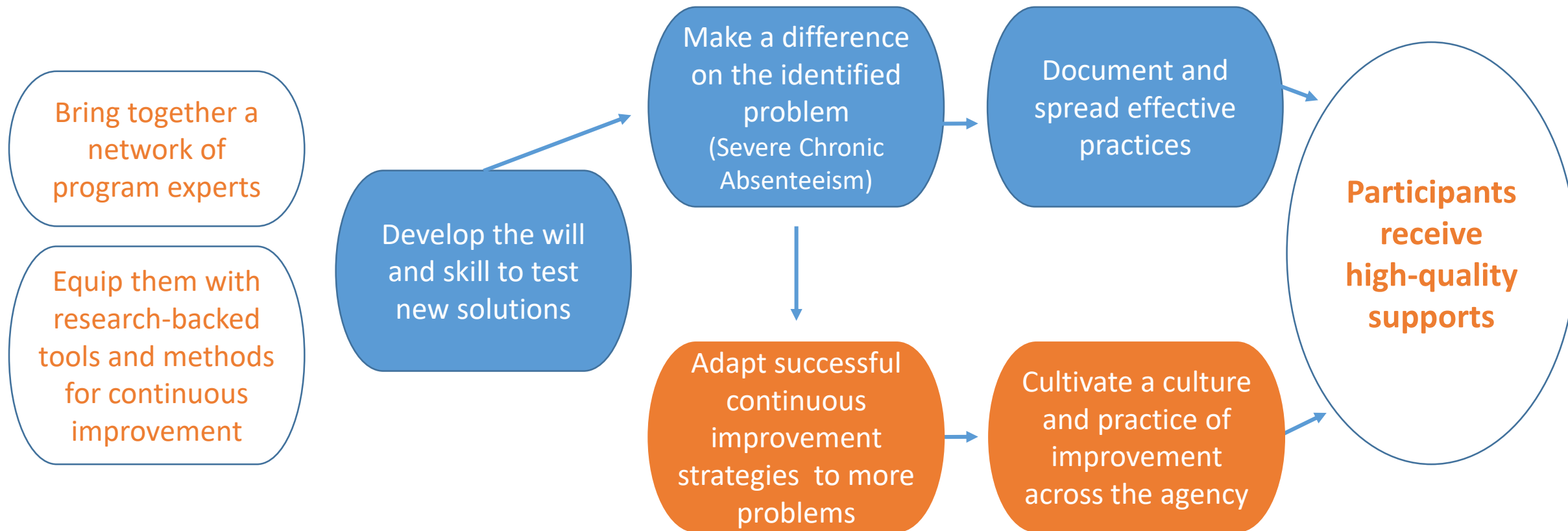
“A focused learning journey”

**DEFINITION:** Particular acts of inquiry, or projects, that aim for quality improvement that involve multiple iterative cycles of activity over extended periods of time.

## **3 Core Improvement Questions:**

- What is the specific problem I am trying to solve?
- What change might I introduce and why?
- How will I know whether the change is actually an improvement?

# GSS Improves Fellowship (IF) Theory of Change



# GSS Improves Fellowship Timeline

## Theory Development

- 1 Introduction to Continuous Improvement *[August]*  
Fellowship Overview  
Understand Problem and System

- Student Input
- Coaching

- 2 Review Student Input  
Explore Research & Solutions

- Coaching; Finalize Plans

## Testing and Iterating

- 3 Network Progress Meeting *[November]*  
Plan for Measurement

- Reflection

- 4 Progress share-out; Iteration brainstorm *[December]*  
Reflection  
Planning for share out

## Sharing & Spreading

- Coaching and Documentation

- 5 GSS Share Out *[April 2019]*



# Hear From GSS IF Fellows

## Research and Service High School:

David Gray, Program Director

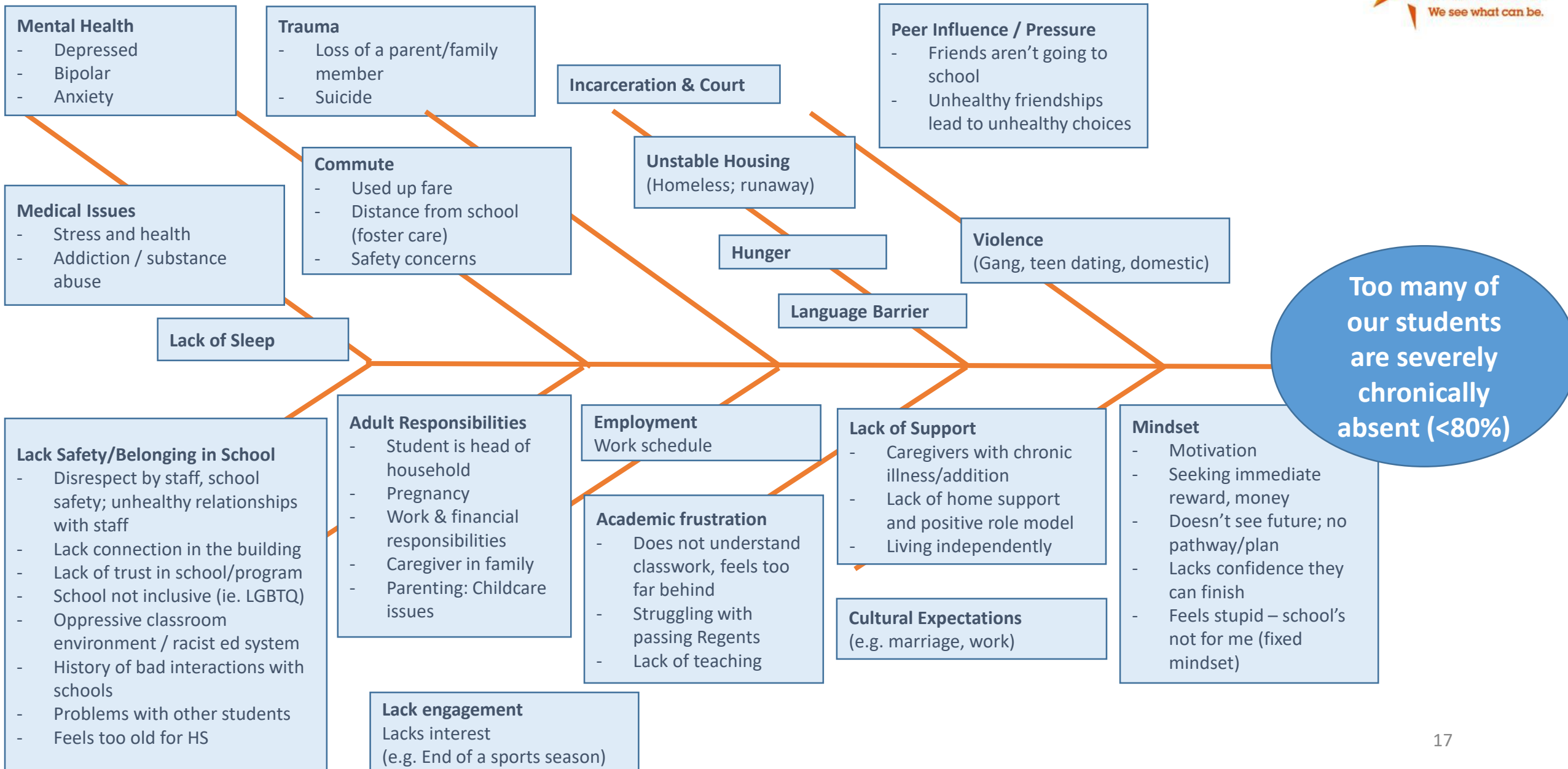
Sequoia Worrell, Advocate Counselor



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# GSS Improves Fellowship Severe Chronic Absenteeism Fishbone



# Our Theory of Change

	If we... [CHANGE IDEA]	...we will address ... [ROOT CAUSE]	...and then students will... [PRIMARY DRIVER]
South Brooklyn	...engage students in an 8-week fashion and technology program, supported by counselor and teacher	...lack of connections in the building and negative peer pressure and unhealthy friendships	...build healthy relationship with adults and peers.
Lincoln	...offer peer groups with ACs who focus on peer support, self-love, and self-care	...social anxiety and strengthen coping strategies for mental health issues	...feel connected and supported by peers.
Research & Service	...map students' paths to graduation, and have caring adult check in regularly on progress	...academic fatigue and fixed mindset	...be hopeful and motivated to persevere

...leading to attendance of 80% or greater

# Takeaways

## *Reflections on fellowship:*

- Pick a good problem. And understand it from a young person's perspective.
- Make space and time for improvement.
- Be explicit and intentional about building skills.
- Take a leap and get started.
- Celebrate and learn from failure.
- Focus data conversations on practices, not just programs.
- Testing small changes doesn't mean small impact.



## *Reflections on chronic absenteeism:*

- **Attendance is not the problem. Young people are not the problem.**
- Helping students build connections to multiple people and fostering belonging are key strategies.

# Questions?



# Brainwrite Exercise



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# Stay Connected

- Presentation materials will be posted online at <http://www.readyby21.org/nmagenda>
- Tweet about your session! #rb21
- Find resources and tools at the new [forumfyi.org](http://forumfyi.org)!
- E-mail Ali ([aliholstein@gmail.com](mailto:aliholstein@gmail.com)) or Rachel ([Rachel\\_Forsyth@goodshepherds.org](mailto:Rachel_Forsyth@goodshepherds.org))

## Learn More About Continuous Improvement

- Good Shepherd Services Improves Fellowship Google Site: <https://sites.google.com/view/gss-improves-fellowship/home>
- [Learning to Improve](#): How America's Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better by Bryk, Gomez, et al.
- [The Improvement Guide](#): A Practical Approach to Enhancing Organizational Performance by Langley et al.
- Free [EdX Courses in Continuous Improvement](#), led by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching



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