Believe in every child

An Introduction to school-wide Positive Behaviour Support

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Some common school problems...

For students

- Poor/no communication skills
- Challenging behaviour (self injury, tantrums, aggression, absconding, insert your favourite here)
- Few self-help skills
- Failure to engage
- Failure to acquire skills/low attainment

For educators

- Frustration
- Feeling I'm not doing enough
- Feeling I don't have the right tools
- Feeling resources are used inefficiently

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How long have educators been dealing with these issues?

- A long time.

What prevents effective solutions?

- Failure to base decisions on credible empirical evidence

- Failure to use available resources efficiently

- Pressure to be new and innovative

We can do better!

Some notes on credible evidence

NO ☹

- Theories
- Testimonials
- Recommendations from people you trust
- Websites
- Books
- Training programmes
- Someone saying they have evidence

YES ☺

- Experimental research published in a peer-reviewed journal
- Always ask:
  - What specific changes will this intervention produce?
  - How do you know?
  - Can you show me the data?

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We can all agree…

1. It is better to **prevent problems** than to deal with them once they occur.
   - This requires a preventative (not reactive) approach to intervention

2. When children have intensive needs, we want to make sure they get effective, evidence-based interventions **as quickly as possible**.
   - This requires that we quickly identify those children and have resources readily available to them.

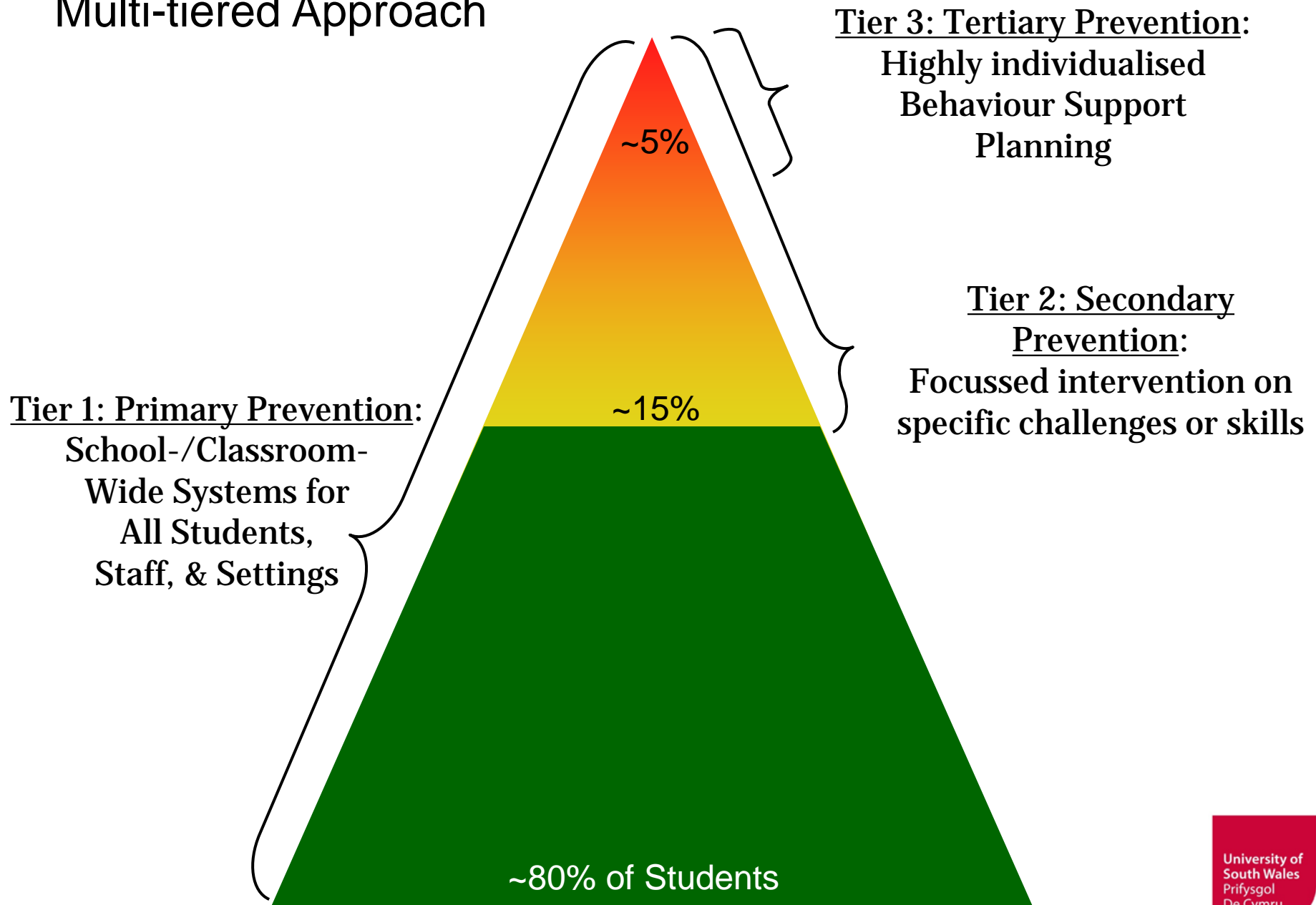- Both require a **SCHOOL CULTURE** that supports these ideals.

School-wide Positive Behaviour Support

- School-wide positive behaviour support (SWPBS) is a strategy for improving social and academic behaviour of ALL students.
    - **School-wide**: Focus on the whole school
        - Not just certain children, classrooms or teachers
    - **Positive**: Focus on building teaching and reinforcement systems aimed at acquiring important skills
        - Instead of focussing on behaviours we don't want or what children can't do
    - **Behaviour**: Focus on specific expectations
        - Which helps us define what we want pupils to be *doing*
    - **Support**: Focus on ensuring all students receive the support they need to be successful

How does SWPBS work?

- SWPBS uses a "multi-tiered" approach to intervention.
- This means that **all students** get some form of intervention for building skills and improving behaviour
  - but it *systematically* identifies students with more intense needs to ensure they get the interventions/supports they require.
- So…SWPBS helps students get **the evidence-based** supports they need
  - whilst also helping schools use their resources more efficiently.

Multi-tiered Approach

Tier 3: Tertiary Prevention:
Highly individualised Behaviour Support Planning

~5%

Tier 2: Secondary Prevention:
Focussed intervention on specific challenges or skills

~15%

Tier 1: Primary Prevention:
School-/Classroom-Wide Systems for All Students, Staff, & Settings

~80% of Students

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Let's think about the flu…

- Prevention first!
  - Flu jab (Tier 1)
- Flu jab didn't work? What next?
  - Bed rest, drink lots of fluids, paracetamol (Tier 2)
- Still unwell?
  - Antiviral medication, intravenous fluids, hospital care (Tier 3)

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Now let's think about the educational equivalent...

- What does "education flu" look like?
  - Poor/no communication skills
  - Challenging behaviour
  - Few self-help skills
  - Failure to engage
  - Failure to acquire skills/low attainment

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Preventing Education Flu: Tier 1 Strategies

- Focus on SYSTEMATIC teaching communication skills across ALL levels of ability
  - Using effective, evidence-based strategies (e.g., discrete trial teaching)
  - Vocal, PECS, Makaton
- Focus on activities that build functional skills
  - Passive engagement doesn't build skills
  - For anything we do in the classroom, we should be asking "What skill is this teaching?"
  - If the skill is "sitting and observing something" or if you can't identify the behaviour that is being taught and **how it is helpful to the child**, choose something else!

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Preventing Education Flu: Tier 1

- Use high rates of reinforcement
  - so that children don't need to engage in problem behaviour to get it.

- Raise expectations
  - No child is too _____ to learn.
  - Does "He's not ready" really mean "I'm not sure I can teach it"?

- Take data <u>daily</u>.
  - This is the only way to know if teaching is effective.
  - Documenting IEP goals is not enough.

Tier 2 Strategies

- Some children still get the education flu, even after the jab.

- Tier 2 strategies typically involve a "stronger dose" of Tier 1.

- For example
    - More time allocated to building particular skills (including contriving opportunities to teach the skill across the day)
    - Reinforcement systems to target particular skills (e.g., a token system) or to decrease particular behaviours (e.g., reinforcing a specific alternative behaviour)
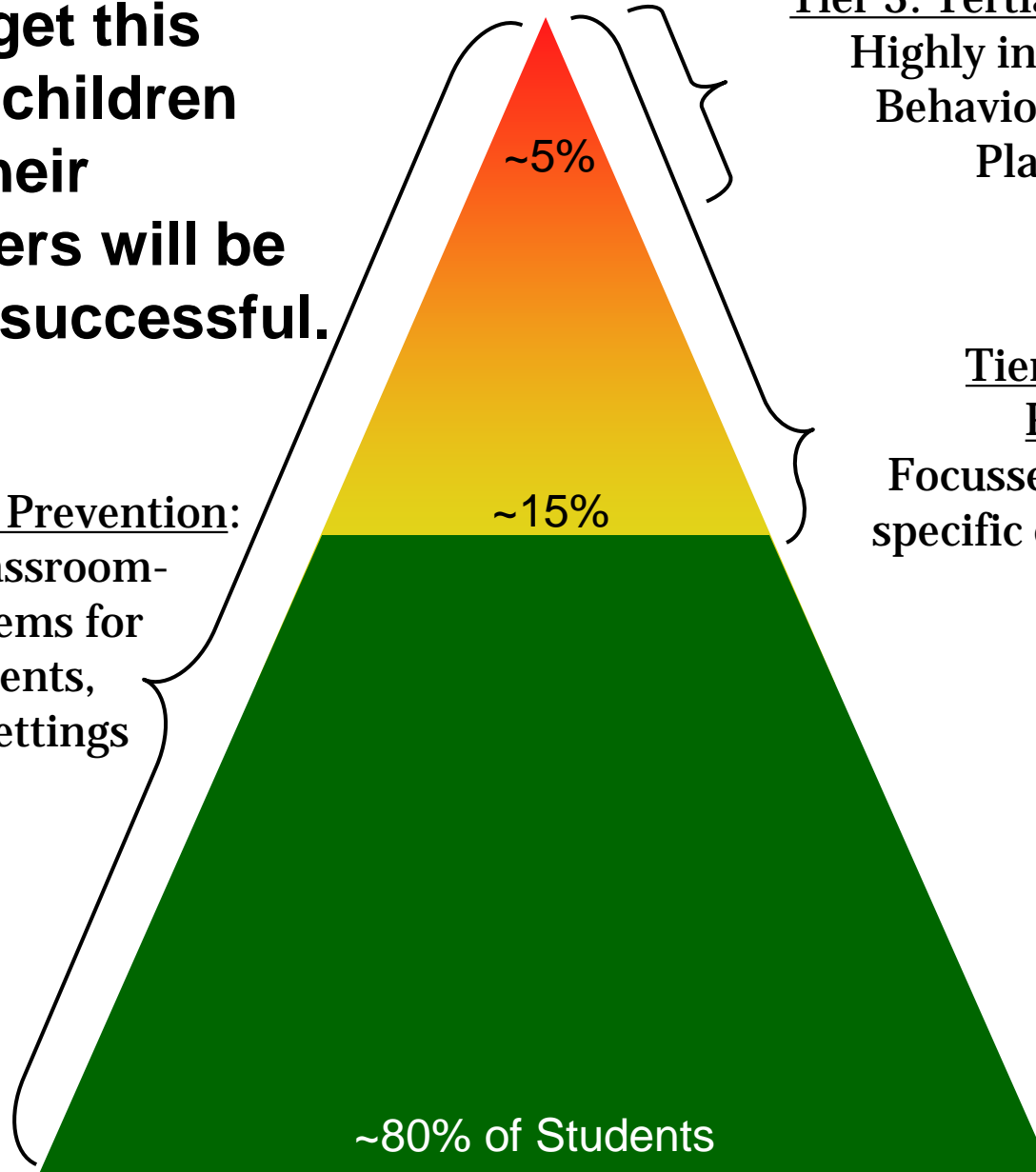
Tier 3 Strategies

- Recall that if SWPBS is done right, there should only be about 5% of children who need the most intensive level of support.

- These supports are highly individualised and aimed at addressing specific skills deficits or challenging behaviours.
  - Interventions often require specialist training and intensive 1-to1 support for intervention delivery

- Often involve a functional behaviour assessment, which should be conducted under the guidance of a qualified behaviour analyst

- Focus is still on **skill building**
  - Simply identifying triggers for problem behaviour and removing them does nothing to build skills or resiliency

SWPBS in Mainstream Schools

- The structure is the same, but the strategies in Tiers 1 and 2 are slightly different.

- If you want more information on SWPBS in mainstream schools, contact me ☺

If we get this right, children and their teachers will be more successful.

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~5%

Tier 2: Secondary Prevention: Focussed intervention on specific challenges or skills

~15%

Tier 1: Primary Prevention: School-/Classroom-Wide Systems for All Students, Staff, & Settings

~80% of Students

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Evidence

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Interested in learning more?

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Positive approaches to behaviours that challenge

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