

Over the past three years, as the Student Support Social Worker at MS 391, a Middle School located in the South Bronx, I have had the pleasure of working with Turnaround for Children. With Turnaround's support, we have made positive changes in our school environment and reduced the number of disruptive incidents in the school.

MS 391 began working with Turnaround in October 2005. Turnaround helped MS 391 build the capacity to identify and support students who, due to emotional, family and mental health problems, were unable to function in the classroom and had difficulty fitting in socially. A key element in this work is the development of a Student Intervention Team (SIT). At SIT meetings identified students are discussed and team members develop intervention plans that ensure that the student and families receive effective support to address their needs.

Turnaround has also placed graduate level social work interns in the school and helped link the school with community based services. I have found this support, specifically the interns, to be a great asset. Without their services it would be difficult for me to provide services to all of the students referred weekly.

Finally, school social workers typically receive little to no professional development workshops or clinical supervision, and minimal contact with colleagues in their field. However, the monthly professional development sessions lead by Turnaround staff have created the opportunity for me to connect with my peers, discuss my most difficult cases with other clinicians and learn new techniques and strategies.

Overall, having the support of Turnaround in my school has provided important supports that make work with my students and their families easier and more effective. I am now able to create other programs that encourage family involvement as well as preventive services. Their work has also helped my school to become an environment conducive for teaching and learning.