

PREVENTING THE ESCALATION OF PROBLEM BEHAVIORS IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

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ESI Regulation on School Personnel Training

- District policies shall include school personnel training consistent with nationally recognized training programs on the use of ESI.
- Training shall address **prevention techniques, de-escalation techniques, and positive behavioral intervention strategies;**
- Training shall be designed to meet the needs of personnel as appropriate to their duties and potential need to use an ESI; and
- Schools and programs shall maintain documentation on training provided and those who attended. (K.A.R. 91-42-2(2))

This presentation is based on the work of:

- **Dr. Geoff Colvin**, Behavior Associates
- **Dr. George Sugai**, University of Connecticut
- **Dr. Kathleen Lane**, University of Kansas

OUTCOMES

- ✓ Understand why it is important to be able to effectively manage disruptive and noncompliant behaviors
- ✓ Understand problem behaviors occur within the acting-out cycle
- ✓ Identify the **seven** phases of escalating behavior and ways to intervene during each phase of the cycle and the importance of intervening early in an escalation
- ✓ Identify proactive, preventative strategies that may decrease the occurrence of escalating behavior
- ✓ Identification of replacement behaviors that can be taught (& serve same function as problem)

Definition of Behavior Escalation

The cycle or stages in which conflict and/or undesirable behavior worsens and becomes more intense, serious, and possibly dangerous.

When acting out behavior occurs, we often only look at end incident.

We should look earlier and focus on these critical components:

1. Prerequisite Academic Skills
2. Signs of Agitation
3. Escalating Behavior Chain
4. Presence of Successive Interactions

Behavior is Functional-- Not **GOOD** or **BAD**

- Functional = it pays off for the student in some way... so they do it again
- We may see the behavior as being "good" or "bad", but the student does it because it is effective, it pays off for them

We know **far more about effective prevention strategies** than we do about how to address challenging behavior once it occurs.

"Unfortunately, most of the practical techniques used by teachers to respond to acting-out children are only of limited effectiveness and some, such as reprimands, arguing, and escalated hostile interactions, can actually strengthen the behaviors they are intended to suppress or terminate." Hill Walker, 1995

Behavior is Affected By:

1. What comes before it (antecedent or trigger)
2. What comes after it (consequence)



The ABCs

<u>Antecedent (Triggers)</u>	<u>Behavior</u>	<u>Consequences</u>
<p>Occurs immediately prior to the child engaging in the behavior. These are the circumstances that lead to the behavior.</p> <p>Common examples include time of day, people, specific settings, the physical surrounding, or particular activities, verbal demands, difficult tasks, lack of engagement, lack of attention, lack of structure or unpredictability, teasing</p>	<p>Measurable and operationally defined target and replacement behavior.</p>	<p>An event that is presented contingent upon the occurrence of problem behavior</p> <p>Common consequences include: Adult or peer attention, the removal of a difficult task, or the presentation of something the person wants.</p> <p>The use of consequences such as time out, detention, and in-school suspension may actually be increasing the likelihood of problem behavior for child's who engage in problem behavior to escape class or obtain attention from teachers and peers.</p>

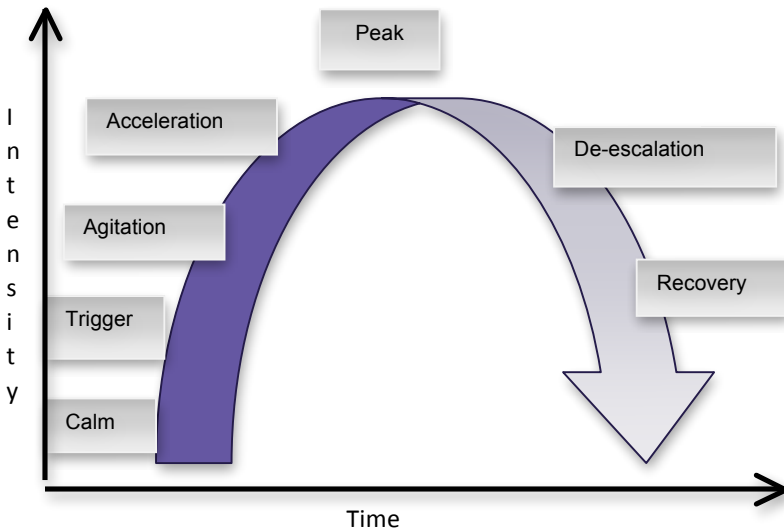
You try!

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence

Fundamental Assumptions

- ▶ Behavior is learned (function).
- ▶ Behavior is lawful (function).
- ▶ Behavior is escalated through successive interactions (practice).
- ▶ Behavior can be changed through instructional approach.

A Seven-Phase Model for Describing Acting-Out Behavior



Two Essential Components for Managing Severe Acting-Out Behavior

- 1. Understand the Model**
 - Specific Behaviors for Each Phase
 - Know exactly where the student is in the cycle (placement in Model).
- 2. Develop strategies for each phase**
 - Implement strategies based on student placement and needs

A Tendency to Respond Personally to Problem Behavior

- Teachers may take student behaviors personally and react in a way that makes the student behavior worse.
- Teachers may abandon logical or best-practices responses (that they may use when calm) because they take behaviors personally.
 - Why? 1) Cultural/value based 2) teacher's authority is in question 3) students know how to push buttons
- Address student problem behaviors in effective ways and not escalate behaviors.

Strategies for Responding to the Seven Phase of the Acting-Out Cycle

Set the Stage to Prevent Off-Task Behaviors (Classroom climate, physical room arrangement, routines & procedures, managing paperwork)

1. Cooperation and on-task behavior taught as classroom expectations- establish norms by deliberately teaching cooperation and on task.
2. Students have the skills- ensuring students have mastery of skills required for task (performance vs. motivation deficits)
3. Transitions are carefully planned- movement can cause off task and distractions and set the stage for problem behaviors if not carefully planned and supervised. Develop behavior expectations and routines
4. Clear instructions given- poorly given instructions can cause off task behaviors. Less than 20% of teacher directives were preceded with info that would enable the student to respond correctly. Check for understanding.
5. Time is allocated adequately for task completion- exit task for those who finish early and provision for those who don't.
6. Procedures for asking for help are established-range of ability will cause some to run into difficulties.

Teaching Social Skills for Managing Triggers Phase

- Social skills are learned behaviors that can be taught- with the same approach and components as academic skills.
- Behavior management problems are social skills problems.
- Social skills are prerequisites for academic and school success.
- Social skill instruction alone may be ineffective with high risk or high needs students. Have a plan for non-responders.

Pre-Correction (Colvin, Sugai, & Patching, 1993)

- Anticipating problem behavior and intervening before the problem occurs.
- Pre-correction statements should be provided prior to the problem or potential problem
- routine--in particularly problematic behavior or prior to unstructured activities.
- This will help facilitate the development of self-regulation skills.

Students Upper Elementary/Secondary

"With older students, researchers have noted that the best results are obtained through vigilantly reminding students about the rules and procedures and monitoring their compliance with them" (Cotton, 1990, p.8).

Steps of Pre-correction

1. Identify the context and predictable behavior problem- could require conducting a functional assessment (FBA)
2. Specify expected behaviors- if we only reduce the problem behavior we may end up with another problem behavior in it's place
3. Modify the context or stimulus (instructions, explanations, tasks, scheduling, seating, reminders, curriculum)
4. Practice the appropriate behavior
5. Strong reinforcement for displaying expected behavior- major objective is to teach and establish specific expected behaviors in the setting that previously set the occasion for the problem behavior.
6. Prompt expected behaviors (feedback, reminders, gestures, choices)
7. Monitor the plan

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

"Children below 4th grade require a great deal of instruction and practice in classroom rules and procedures.... Effective management in the early grades, is more instructional than a disciplinary enterprise." (Cotton, 1990, p.8)

Defusing Off-Task Behavior

1. Assess the situation: determine "can't do" or "won't do" (*Is it an emergency situation? If so, follow crisis procedures. If not, follow off-task defusing steps*)
2. Maintain the flow of instruction
3. Recognize on-task students, making no response to off-task students.
4. Redirect (focus on task, brief language/gestures, prompt student of procedures for asking for help)
5. Praise compliance

More Strategies for Agitation--What to do before a behavior escalates

- Achieve eye contact.
- Use the student's name.
- Use a non-verbal signal.
- Proximity/praise.
- Give choices.
- Relaxation techniques
- Get them to think – give them time to decide.
- Engage in movement activities.
- Distance – use proximity.
- Give more "start" requests instead of "stop" requests.
- Use the "broken record" technique.

Some Techniques that BACKFIRE

- Holding a grudge
- Raising your voice- yelling
- Nagging/Preaching
- Using sarcasm
- Making assumptions
- Bringing up unrelated events
- Insisting you are right
- Insisting on having the last word
- Attacking the student's character – don't belittle children!

Debrief and Problem Solve after student has been calm for 20 minutes --should only take 3-5 minutes

- Conduct this activity following consequences- *separate from consequences*

Use a problem solving format:

- What did you do? (name the behavior)
- Why did you do it? (capture student's need)
- What else could you have done that would a) meet your need and b) be acceptable

Four Key Strategies To Prevent Behavioral Escalation

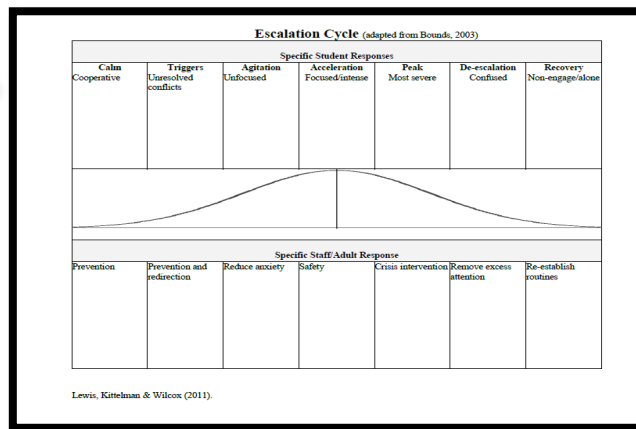
1. Teach and reinforce expected behavior skills.
2. Identify how to intervene early in the escalation sequence.
3. Identify environmental factors that can be manipulated.
4. Identify replacement behaviors that can be taught.

Track results-- Is the plan working? (use data to monitor fidelity and progress monitor)

- Develop tracking system to evaluate progress:
 - Office referrals
 - Incident reports
 - Teacher data system
 - Observations

Group Activity: Instructions

1. Think of a student you work with whose behavior escalates. Next, complete the top part (student responses).
2. Use information about the student and what you have learned to complete the bottom part (teacher's responses)
3. Share with others.



Resources

1. Addressing Disruptive and Noncompliant Behaviors: Understanding the Acting-Out Cycle with Dr. Kathleen Lane: <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/bi1/>
2. Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders: www.mslbd.org
3. Association for Positive Behavior Support www.apbs.org
4. Dr. Geoff Colvin's Behavior Associates: <http://www.behaviorassociates.org/>
5. KSDE TASN www.ksdetasn.org
6. Dr. Geoff Colvin's Recorded Webinar, "Key Elements of De-escalation": <https://desktopconnect.ku.edu/p4v3wtsajdi/>

