Preventing & Managing Challenging Behavior: Evidence-Based Interventions in Schools

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The time is NOW

- What do I hope to learn today?
- Why do I care about that?
- What’s my “job” (My “ready position”) for success?
- Notice what shows up
- Be Present: Focus on what’s important even when you notice the other “stuff” showing up
Agenda

- The Challenge: students present with significant emotional and behavioral difficulties
- Understanding the Behavior
- Critical Components for Success
- PBSIS & SEL
- Social Problem Solving
- Values Identification: Who/What Do They Care About?
- Psychological Flexibility & Sorting Toward & Away Moves
- Staff Characteristics
Challenging behavior impacts students and their relationships, educators and their ability to effectively teach, and the overall school environment.
Self-Regulation Video: Part 1
Self-Regulation Video: Part 2
Self-Regulation Video: Part 3
The kids who need the most love, will ask for it in the most unloving of ways.
“What is “Johnny” Missing? (or Common Deficits among Children with Challenging Behaviors)

- Self-Control / Impulse Control
- Regulation of Emotions
- Appropriate Interpersonal Relationships
- Weaknesses in Empathy & Perspective Taking
- Appropriate Problem-Solving Skills
- Social Skills
Challenging Behavior
Challenges in the Classroom

- Classroom disruptive behavior is occurring more frequently
  - Occurring More Frequently
  - Greater Intensity
- Significantly impacts the learning environment
  - The student
  - The group
  - The teacher
Significant Issues

- Noncompliance, defiance, argumentative
- Calling out, falling asleep, out of seat
- ADHD symptoms, especially hyperactivity and impulsivity
- Physical and verbal aggression toward others
- Threats to harm others
- Threats to harm self; cutting
- Destruction of property
- School Avoidance / Refusal
- Depression, Anxiety, PTSD
What Contributes to such Challenging Behavior?

- Poor Self-Regulation
- Significant Stress, Discomfort, Loss, Trauma, Changes, etc. contributing to Mental Health Issues (e.g., Depression, Anxiety, PTSD)
-Disconnected, Disaffected, Unmotivated
- School Failure/Frustration
- Characteristics of Staff & Environment
Poor Self-Regulation

- The ability to manage and tolerate stress
- Individuals who are regulated:
  - Demonstrate greater self-control
  - Participate more fully in academic and social situations
  - Follow directions
  - Make positive choices toward who and what is important to them
  - Accept feedback and are willing to make changes
When Self-Regulation is Poor

- There are weakness in managing and tolerating stress, contributing to:
  - Impulsivity
  - Aggression
  - Noncompliance
  - Arguing
  - Withdrawn
Feelings of discomfort, especially stress, anxiety & frustration, are commonly associated with various:

- negative physical conditions: headaches, tension/pain, fatigue & heart disease (Mayo Clinic, 2013)
- psychological conditions: anger, depression, anxiety, concentration issues and irritability (American Psychological Association, 2013)
- problematic behaviors: substance abuse and overeating
Triple Response System in Depression and Anxiety

- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Actions
Interconnections

Thoughts

Feelings

Actions

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MY ANXITIES HAVE ANXITIES.
Video: Things Students with Anxiety Wish Their Teachers Understood
worrying won't stop
the bad stuff from happening
it just stops you
from enjoying the good.
Depression, Self-Harm, and Suicide

- Main theories/Focus of Treatment
  - Behavioral Activation
    - Low rates of behavior decrease opportunities for positive, reinforcing experiences in the environment
  - Automatic Negative Thoughts
    - Thoughts come to mind automatically that are negative about the self, world, and others
Depression, Self-Harm, and Suicide

- How it Manifests
  - Chronic Negative Emotional State
  - Decreased Motivation
  - Increased likelihood of becoming emotionally overwhelmed
  - Feelings of being trapped and wanting help or an escape
    - Self-harm
    - Self-injury

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Depression, Self-Harm, and Suicide

Symptoms

- Frequent crying
- Fatigue and lethargy
- Short temper
- Low frustration tolerance
- Negative self-statements: especially global statements (e.g., “I can never do anything right.”; “Nobody thinks I’m smart.”; “I’m always making mistakes.”)
Depression, Self-Harm, and Suicide

- Symptoms
  - Hygiene: hair and teeth not brushed; foul smell; wearing same or dirty clothes
  - Nervousness: shaking / trembling; increased fidgeting
  - Change in appetite or weight
  - Thoughts or actions suggesting a desire to harm oneself or preoccupation with death

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School Avoidance & Dropout

Main Theories/Focus of Treatment

- Behavior
  - Low rates of reinforcement related to school performance
  - Typically rooted in a history of school failure and disciplinary issues

- Cognitive
  - Perceived disconnection from school community
  - Belief that school is not helpful/practical (in comparison to ongoing stressors, SES)

- Physical
  - Issues related to physical health and other essentials (clean clothes, food)
School Avoidance & Dropout

- Early literacy development is also vital to later academic success.
- Children with poor reading skills are more likely to repeat a grade, setting the stage for a pattern of failure in school.
- The fundamentals for being a good reader (i.e., cognitive and language skills) are learned before children reach school age (National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, 2009).


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Disaffected Learner

- Disaffected defined as:
  - “discontented and resentful especially against authority” (Merriam Webster)
  - “describes young people who are no longer satisfied with society's values” (Cambridge International Dictionary of English)
  - “discontented through having lost one’s feelings of loyalty or commitment” (Compact Oxford English Dictionary)
Home Factors

- Inadequate food, shelter, clothing
- Limited involvement by parents
- Unrealistic expectations
- Unavailable parents: working long hours, parents inconsistently in the home
- Family discord
- Abusive home
- Limited resources (materials, lighting, desk)
- Parents with learning and/or mental health problems
- Parents with negative perception of school or not valuing education

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Motivation Poor and Limited Connection with Values (what/who the student cares about)

- May be bored / under-stimulated
- Anticipated and real frustration
- Unable to make a connection between the work and future career goals
- Uninterested in the material
- Poor match between student’s individual strengths / needs and teacher style
Perceive School as a Place of Control and Coercion

- For most students, school is a place where there is a great deal of *adult control* (rule setting, consequences, limited opportunity for disagreement & problem-solving)
- Dozens of *demands* placed daily (socially, academically, behaviorally, emotionally)
- Physical structure (building and classroom doors locked, adults watching students, authority figures following through with discipline)
“Discipline and good behavior are the keys to family harmony, so my husband and I do everything our children tell us to.”
How Do Students *Perceive* Staff? Authority Figures vs. Helping Figures

- Are there planned opportunities to discuss feelings (frustration, concerns, fears)?
- What are the consequences of asking for help?
- To whom may one go for help?
- Are classrooms, main office, administrative offices inviting and comforting?
Safety / Risk

- Do students feel safe and secure?
- Bullying, teasing, social isolation
  - greatest risk (hallways, before and after school, lunch and recess)
  - least structured
  - least supervised
  - least experienced staff present
Consequences: Rewards & Punishment

- Punishment for negative behaviors > Reinforcement for desired behaviors.
- Students with negative behaviors more likely to receive punishment.
- High quality teachers are more successful at intrinsically motivating students by connecting with students’ passions and relative strengths.
“It is easier to prevent a behavior from occurring than to deal with it after it has happened.”
Why is classroom management so challenging?

- Students may be unsure of rules and expectations
- Distractibility (self, others, environment)
- Difficulties in understanding/using language
- Complex family issues (SES, parenting, etc.)
- Varied levels of motivation to perform in school
- Skill deficits (leisure, independence, social skills, waiting, accepting ‘no’)
The Emotional & Behavioral Disorders (EBD) Program Indicators include 6 elements of effective programming


- Environmental management
- Behavior management
- Affective education
- Individuation and personalization
- Academic
- Career/life skills/transitions
Group Activity

- Discuss & List the obstacles to successfully implementing strategies and programs in your school/district to address mental health issues, challenging behavior, and improve school culture and climate?

___________________________________

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Most Common Errors in Treatment

- Expecting a quick fix
- No Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- Replacement behaviors omitted
- Failure to use antecedent interventions
- Consequence interventions focus on punishment
- Reinforcement not relevant
- Unaware of one’s own social behavior
- Failure to differentiate instruction
Principles of behavior change

Antecedents and consequence interventions are designed to change the rate at which a behavior occurs

Antecedents
What happens before a behavior

Behaviors
Appropriate or inappropriate behavior

Consequences
What happens after a behavior

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You can’t address all the problems at once!
Function of behavior

- **To get something you want**
  - Adult attention
  - Peer attention
  - Tangible object, event or activity
  - Automatic positive reinforcement (sensory)

- **To avoid/escape something you don’t want**
  - A task that is too long
  - A task that is too difficult
  - A social situation
  - Automatic negative reinforcement (sensory)
What is a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)?

- Specifies a challenging behavior
- Manipulates the antecedents and/or consequences of the behavior
- Teaches more acceptable replacement behaviors that serve the same function as the inappropriate behavior
- Implements changes in curriculum and instructional strategies
- Modifies the physical environment
- Collects data to evaluate effectiveness
Considerations for BIP

- Spells out how teachers, staff, peers and parents will change (not just how student will change)
- Plan should be directly linked to the FBA information
- Plan should be consistent with behavioral principles
- Plan should fit with values, resources and skills of those who put it together
Gradually Decrease Control

- Child needs to gradually feel and become empowered (shaping behavior)
- There needs to be a gradual shifting in the perception of control from the adult to the child
- Child needs to understand that he/she makes choices and has control over his/her actions
- Boundaries and limits need to remain, with child understanding the connection between his/her actions and consequences
What can you do?

- **Initial / Early stage(s) of Challenging Behavior:**
  - *Implement components of BIP*
  - *Determine what the primary goal is (compliance, safety, “I’m not going to let this student “win”) and how much you are going to dig your heels in. You know the child is likely to dig in their heels, resulting in a power struggle.*
  - *Be aware of your own behavior and how you can potentially escalate the situation.*
What can you do?

- Initial / Early stage(s) of Challenging Behavior:
  - Provide visual, verbal, textual, gestural cues to use mastered strategies
  - Minimize verbal interaction
  - Redirect, avoiding physical contact if possible
  - Introduce calming place and activities ("safe haven" in room)
  - Encourage use of functional communication (break card, sign, words)
What can you do?

- **Escalation:**
  - *Continue to implement components of BIP*
  - Verbally ignore
  - Ensure safe environment (people first and then items and building structure)
  - Behavior specific praise of approximations of getting calm
  - Use Behavior Momentum
  - Continue to encourage use of functional communication
What can you do?

**Last Stage:**

- *Continue to implement components of BIP*
- Continue to limit verbal interaction
- Continue to provide praise for approximations of getting calm
- Continue to use behavior momentum
- Allow time for de-escalation
- Prompt for movement to de-escalation area and/or removal of other students
- *Maintain adherence to ethical, legal, and safety guidelines at all times*
What, When, Where, How to Teach?

- **What to teach?** Functionally Equivalent Replacement Behaviors (FERBs)
- **When to teach?** When the child is CALM and NOT when the child is engaging in the inappropriate behavior, especially if stressed or escalated
- **Where to teach?** In a safe environment and then teach to mastery and practice generalization
- **How to teach?** Systematic Plan (discuss, demonstrate/model, practice/role play)
Coaching Skills

Coaching: Cue, Coach and Review

- **Cue** (prompt or prepare) child prior to the situation what to expect, what social skills to use, reward if applicable
- **Coach** throughout with behavior specific praise & gestures/visuals cues rather than verbal redirection
- **Review** at the end via child’s self-appraisal and adult feedback
Critical Classroom Interventions / Supports

- Physical Design meets students’ needs
- Routines are developed, clear, taught, and predictable
- Rules/Expectations are positively stated and clearly written, with student input
- Independence is fostered with prompts minimized where possible
- Frequent opportunities to engage students and have them respond
- Behavior specific praise used
- Reminders provided and directions repeated
- Progress is monitored
- Opportunities for self-appraisal

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Rules, Routines and Reinforcement
Classroom Rule Establishment

- Establish rules at the beginning of the school year or at the beginning of a new course for students
- Collaborate with students to develop the list of rules
- Post the rules within the classroom for students to see and for the teacher to refer to throughout the year
- Rules should reflect common classroom, home and community expectations (e.g., compliance, being prepared, raising hand and waiting to be called on, being on time, in-class behavior, transition behaviors)
Once rules are established...

- Teach the rules using a multi-step approach
  - Discuss
  - Demonstrate
  - Do/Rehearse
  - Reinforce or reteach
Rules

Key Features of Classroom Rules:
- No more than five or six
- Worded simply and easy to understand
- Worded positively to promote appropriate behavior
- Specific and observable
- Measurable and quantifiable
- Posted large enough to be seen throughout classroom
- Developmentally appropriate (pictures/words)
Types of Rules

- Compliance rule:
  - Ex. Following teacher directions
- Preparatory rule:
  - Ex. Have necessary materials each day
- Talking rule:
  - Ex. Raise hand and be acknowledged before speaking
- In-class behavior rule:
  - Ex. Hands and feet to self
- On-time rule:
  - Ex. In seat before bell rings
- Transition rule:
  - Walk in halls during class changes

Purple (2004); Jenson, Rhode, & Reavis (1995); Jenson, Andrew, & Reavis (1998)
Sample Rules

1. Listen and follow directions.
2. Raise your hand before speaking or leaving your seat.
3. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
4. Respect other students and your teachers.
RAISE YOUR HAND

TO ASK A QUESTION

meme generator.net
Implementing Rules

- Teaching the rules at the onset of the academic year
- Discussing rules
  - Not when a violation occurs
- Not responding to rules
  - Seek assistance
  - Modifying teacher behavior
  - Changing positive consequences
- There is a difference between knowing a rule and following a rule.
Rules: Consequences

“What if...?” chart:
- Positive consequences for following rules
- Aversive consequences for breaking rules
Routines/Schedules

- Structure allows predictability
  - Agenda defined by activity
- Expectations for the activity are defined
  - Working on this, not that
- Per period
- Per day
- Long Term Projects
- Use visuals
Establishing Routines

Examples...
- Entering / leaving the classroom
- Transitioning to independent work
- Participating in class discussions
- Organization of materials
- Gaining the teacher’s attention, waiting for help
- Handing in classwork / homework
- Going to the bathroom/nurse/locker
- Behaving for a substitute
Visually Prompts to Help Students with Routines
Daily Scorecard

- Used to monitor student’s progress throughout the day
- Emphasis on “catch being good” to reinforce desired behaviors
- Behaviors should be positively stated
### DAILY SCORECARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeted Skill</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Sat with my friends on the carpet or floor)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Showed self-control with my body (kept hands, legs and body to myself; used toys / objects nicely)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Lined up with my friends with my arms at my side</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm going to try my best!&quot; # happy faces needed to earn reward:</td>
<td># Happy Faces Earned</td>
<td># Happy Faces Earned</td>
<td># Happy Faces Earned</td>
<td># Happy Faces Earned</td>
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<td># Happy Faces Earned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Individual Student Scorecard

- Each student could have a chart hanging on the side of their desk.
- Chart represents 2-3 target behaviors (raised my hand to speak, stayed in my chair, completed my work).
- Students fill in happy/sad face for each behavior following each activity or simply a morning and afternoon rating. The teacher determines the rating and tells each student.
- Over the course of the year, students can begin to rate themselves.
- Specific # of happy faces = reward
  - Each student could earn a reward
  - Each table of students could earn reward
  - Entire class could earn reward
Reinforcement

- Catch Being Good

- Behavior Specific Praise (praise the behavior: “I really like how you used your feeling words and stayed calm when you were upset.”)
- "Catch being good": recognize, post it, share with others, review during special time
- Reward activities (first...then...)
- Tangible rewards (objects and/or activities) as part of a social skills contract for achieving a predetermined target criterion
- Avoid the zap trap ("you did a great job but you should have done that 20 minutes ago")
Reinforcement (motivate!)

Why Reinforcement?
- Increases the likelihood that a behavior will be performed
- Used to reduce high rate of problem behavior so that teaching and interventions can be effective
- Creates a positive association with the task/environment
- Creates a positive association with the person
- Increases the likelihood of habit formation

It may be necessary to rotate or change reinforcers frequently (incorporate preference assessments)

Don’t assume you know what will reinforce a student—everyone has different preferences

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Types of Reinforcers

- **Material Reinforcers:**
  - Tangible items such as toys, favorite pencils, candy

- **Privileges or Activity Reinforcers:**
  - Time together with peer, time on the computer, access to preferred activities, breaks

- **Social Reinforcers:**
  - Your approval! A smile, a wink, kind touch, and praise

- **Token Reinforcers:** Items given to the student that can be exchanged for more valuable reinforcers
  - Tickets, Stickers
Rewards Must Be Attainable
“Caught Being Good”
Positive Note Home

Your child, ____________________________________________, has received this note home as a result of positive behavior today at _________________________________ School. Your child’s behavior exemplifies the type of behavior that we aspire to in our school. Congratulations!

Your child exhibited strong behavior:
- following directions helping the teacher
- helping another student great homework
- outstanding participation excellent test or quiz
Sample School Reinforcers

- Pick a class game
- Eat lunch with a teacher
- Help in the office
- Assist with morning announcements
- Earn extra recess
- Get a homework pass
- Have extra time in the gym
- Etc...
Classroom Dojo

Hannah
+1 for Hard work!
Logical Consequences

- Tied to the behavior
- Helps to teach the behavioral expectations
- Teaches students to take responsibility for their actions
- Example: “Since you did not complete your work during class, you will need to work during recess.”
- Example: “You knocked over all of the materials, so now you will need to clean them up.”
Sample Hierarchy of Consequences

1. General reminder to class
2. Individual reminder
3. See the teacher
4. Time out / reflection sheet
5. Detention
6. Parent contact
"You know, Mom, for a minute there—when you said, 'For the last time, no!'—I almost thought you meant it."
Supports in the classroom, hallways and throughout the school

- Greetings
  - How do we greet students off the bus, entering the building, in the classroom?
  - Who greets them? staff and peers
  - Do the students feel safe, cared for, and comfortable when they arrive (if not, they may communicate this through their behavior)
Greeting Students

- One simple antecedent intervention, with two effects:
  - Increases in task engagement
    - Amount of time on-task
  - Decreases in task engagement latency
    - i.e., Getting Started

Tips for Transitions

- Specific
  - NOT: In a few minutes
  - In two minutes
- Be careful of transition warnings to transition warnings
  - NOT: Timer goes off for cleaning up then announcing that we’ll be cleaning up soon
  - Timers goes off and cleaning up starts
- Count Down Timers
- Use Technology for timer
  - Computer Monitor
  - Smart Board
UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.

—The Lorax
New Jersey Positive Behavior Support in Schools (PBSIS) is a data driven, tiered system of positive behavior support to address behavior, social, and emotional challenges.
Interventions

- Universal supports - Tier 1 (counselors available; universal screening of students; school culture, climate and character education; direct SEL instruction; embedded SEL)

- At-risk individuals - Tier 2 (targeted intervention; increased focus on SEL...turn on the “faucet” of supports even greater)

- Intensive intervention - Tier 3 (know community resources to support/supplement)
NJ PBSIS

- Participation in the NJ PBSIS initiative is designed to result in 5 key outcomes*:
  - Improvements in overall building climate
  - Reduction in office discipline referrals and suspensions for students school-wide
  - Reduction in the number of students who receive repeated office discipline referrals
  - Reduction in the number of students referred for special education services
  - Increase in the number of students with disabilities and challenging behaviors who are successful in general education settings

http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggscenetr/projects/PBSIS.html
Systematic Plan

• Need a systematic plan that includes:
  ◦ Direct Instruction of Social Emotional Learning
  ◦ Embedded Social Emotional Learning approaches throughout the day
  ◦ Positive Culture and Climate
Positive, Character-Building School Climate + Explicit Instruction in SEL Skills = Positive Results for Children
Importance of Social & Emotional Learning (SEL)

- A recent study reported in the *American Journal of Public Health* followed 750 youngsters in 4 diverse U.S. communities from 1991, when they were in kindergarten, until they were 25 years old.
  - They found “statistically significant associations between measured social-emotional skills in kindergarten and key young adult outcomes across multiple domains of education, employment, criminal activity, substance use, and mental health.”


Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Core Competencies (casel.org)
“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Maya Angelou
1928 - 2014
How to Regulate

- Notice Thoughts and Feelings
  - Is it an Up Feeling or a Down Feeling?
  - **Up:** happy, excited
  - **Down:** sad, worried, anxious, scared, frustrated, angry

- Stay focused on who/what is important
  - Solving a problem
  - Staying safe and calm
  - Remaining friends
  - Staying out of trouble
How to Regulate

- Regulation Can Be Taught
- Appropriate expression of emotions
  - “I feel...when...”
- Notice what has worked and what hasn’t
  - Does it move you toward who/what is important?
  - Does it work only short-term to help you “feel” better but actually lead to more problems?
- Be Flexible instead of Rigid
How to Regulate

- What does it feel like when stressed (automatic responses)?
  - Breathing faster
  - Heart rate faster
  - Blood pressure increases
  - Sweating
  - Louder voice
  - Angry facial expression
  - Tense muscles
  - May feel hot and turn red
How to Regulate

- Identify Replacement Behaviors
  - These need to replace the “automatic pilot” behaviors you’ve been displaying for weeks, months, or years
  - Practice, Practice, Practice until fluency (like muscle memory)
  - Regulation Can Be Taught
How to Regulate

- Identify Replacement Behaviors
  - 4 Square Breathing
How to Regulate

- **Identify Replacement Behaviors**
  - **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

  - Gently roll head from side to side, with awareness of the tightening muscles. Release.
  - Gently tense chest muscles and abdomen, without holding the breath. Release.
  - Tense left leg down through feet and toes. Release.
  - Tense left hip and buttock. Release.
  - Tense face muscles including forehead, cheeks, mouth, upper neck. Release.
  - Tense right arm, from shoulder to fingers without making a fist or lifting arm off of floor. Tense left arm. Release.
  - Tense right leg down through feet and toes. Release.

While no longer tensing any muscles, allow attention to drift back up through legs, abdomen, chest, arms, and back to the face.
How to Regulate

- Identify Replacement Behaviors
  - Calm Area / Safe Haven
How to Regulate

- Identify Replacement Behaviors
  - Video Modeling (Meta-analyses by Bellini & Akullian, 2007; Wang & Spillane, 2009)
Situations in a Hat Role Play: trigger situations listed on cards and placed in a hat for children to choose one at a time. Discuss the situation, state the problem, state the feeling ("I feel ___"), discuss possible solutions, choose a solution and put the solution in place; act out the situation from start to finish and provide behavior specific feedback

- "I’m getting ready for school and I can’t find my library book."
- "I want to go to soccer practice and I can’t find my soccer ball."
- "I really want to buy a snack and I forgot my money."
How to Regulate

- Identify Replacement Behaviors
  - Feelings Identification
  - Feelings Check-In throughout the day (thermometer)
  - Identify & practice what to do when various feelings & thoughts show up throughout the day
- Functional Communication Training
  - Learning to Wait
  - Accepting “No”
  - Asking for help
  - Seeking attention appropriately
  - Asking for missing / needed items
How to Regulate

- Identify Replacement Behaviors
  - “I can feel ______ AND I can stay calm and safe.”
  - “I notice I’m thinking ______ AND I can keep my body calm and safe.”
  - “My feelings are angry/stressed/frustrated AND I’m going to be flexible by using my words, keeping my hands to myself, and asking for help.”
  - When language/cognitive skills are lower, use more visuals
Getting Calm

I can:

* put up STOP sign with my hand
* count to 10 and take 10 deep breaths
* ask for a break
* use feeling words
  - “I feel sad when...”
  - “I get hot when...”

Feelings Thermometer
From 1-10
Sample Social Narrative:
Playing Games

One thing that I like to do is play games! I like playing all kinds of games.

Sometimes when I play games, I win the game. Winning is fun and makes me feel proud!

Sometimes I play a game and lose. Sometimes only one person can be the winner, and that's OK!

I can be a good sport and be happy for the other person. When I’m not the winner, there are many things I can say:

- “Maybe I’ll win next time!”
- “That was a great game!”
- “Congratulations!”

When I say these things and show good sportsmanship, it makes me feel good and proud for the other person.

People will want to play games with me again, and that’s fun!
Social Autopsies (Myles & Adreon, 2001)

- Designed to get students to objectively analyze their social mistakes/difficulties
- Questions to ask while problem-solving
  - What happened?
  - What was the social error?
  - Who was hurt by the social error?
  - What should be done to correct the error?
  - What could be done next time?
LEARNING MY FEELINGS LOG

CHILD: ___________    DATE: ___________

ADULT HELPING TO COMPLETE FORM: ________________________________

WHAT HAPPENED?
__Somebody teased me    __Another child
__Somebody took something of mine    __Teacher
__Somebody told me to do something    __Parent
__Somebody was doing something I didn’t like    __Another adult
__Somebody started fighting with me    __Sister/brother
__Other: ____________________    __Other: ________________

WHERE WERE YOU?
__Classroom    __Lunchroom    __Playground    __Street
__Hallway    __Bathroom    __House    __Other: ________________

HOW DID YOU FEEL?
__ Happy    __ Sad    __ Scared    __ Embarrassed    __ Mad

HOW STRONG WERE YOUR FEELINGS? (circle best choice)

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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WHAT DID YOU DO? (check all that apply)
__ Hit back    __ Told adult
__ Screamed    __ Walked away
__ Ran away    __ Talked it out calmly
__ Cried    __ Told another child
__ Threw something    __ Ignored
__ Broke something    __ Other: ________________

HOW DID YOU HANDLE YOURSELF?
__ Very poorly    __ Not so well    __ Okay    __ Good    __ Great

WHAT WILL YOU DO NEXT TIME? (Role Play this with child now)

My plan is to: ________________

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Consequence Interventions: Planned Ignoring

- No attention is provided upon the occurrence of the target behavior
- Must be consistent
- Beware the extinction burst! (behavior sometimes worsen when we try to get rid of a behavior)
Corrective Feedback

- Delivered in a calm manner
- Acknowledge positive aspect related to function
- Specify correct form of behavior
- Identify positive outcome
- Example: “I know you were excited and upset about what happened outside. Please take a deep breath and tell me calmly what happened so that I can understand and best help you.”
Sit and Watch (time out variation)

- Explain entire procedure to child/class/family
- When target behavior occurs, calmly label it
- Direct child to location away from the group
- Direct child to sit and watch how the others engage in the replacement behavior
- After two minutes, approach the child and use the Teaching Interaction
Teaching Interaction

- Follows a script of questions
- Designed to teach personal responsibility
- Designed to teach cause and effect relationship
- Makes use of behavioral rehearsal
- “Why are you in Sit and Watch?”
- “What should you have done instead?”
- “Show me how you do that.”
Response Cost

- Loss of a specified reinforcement contingent upon the occurrence of the target behavior.
- Examples: traffic tickets, financial penalty for late mortgage payment, loss of being line leader
Positive Practice

- Upon the occurrence of the target behavior the child has to perform the correct behavior to excess (e.g., ten times).
- Based on concept of loss of time and expenditure of effort as unpleasant. Has added component of strengthening the desired skill.
- Example: child who runs in the hallway would be required to go back and walk down the hallway ten times.
Do’s and Don’ts

- Don’t say, “We’ll see” (very vague and conveys that there is no commitment)
- Don’t Take away everything child enjoys or owns as a consequence to negative behavior just because you are frustrated (Do adhere to contract and set it up so child needs to earn preferred items.)
- Do validate child’s feelings, showing an understanding of how this must be frustrating, embarrassing, etc.
If you’ve told a child a thousand times and she/he still doesn’t understand, then it is not the CHILD who is having trouble learning!

Anonymous
Quick Tips

- Provide daily success for the students
- Encourage and reinforce positive self-statements
- Be active rather than passive: find out how to address the student’s needs and promote strengths
- View educating the student with a disability as an opportunity to become a more effective teacher rather than a “problem I have to cope with”
Incorporating Social Problem-Solving when Teaching Social Skills
Incorporating Social Problem-Solving when teaching Social Skills Training

- Teaching a Problem-Solving Model
- **Goal is to teach children to become independent problem-solvers**
- Rather than *focusing* on teaching a specific behavioral skill, the focus is on teaching a social problem solving model that the learner would be able to use as a “toolbox.”
- The *Social Problem-Solving* approach offers the promise of helping the child to become a better problem solver, thereby promoting greater independence.
Independence:
“Give a person a fish and they eat for a day but teach them to fish and they eat for a lifetime”
Research on SEL Programs that incorporate Social Problem-Solving

- Results from 3 large-scale meta-analyses* regarding the efficacy of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs on elementary and middle school students found (among other positive results) that:
  - SEL programs improved students’ social-emotional skills, attitudes about self and others’ connection to school, positive social behavior, and academic performance;
  - SEL programs reduced students’ conduct problems and emotional distress;
  - SEL programs are among the most successful youth-development programs offered to school-age youth.

POWER-Solving®: Social Problem-Solving Curriculum
Michael C. Selbst, Ph.D., BCBA-D
Steven B. Gordon, Ph.D., ABPP (2012)
POWERSolving™
stepping stones to solving
life’s everyday social problems

P - Put your problem into words.
I was... and then...

O - Observe and measure your feelings.

W - Work out your goal. What is it?
How much do you want to reach it?

E - Explore possible solutions.
How might you reach your goal?
Choose the best solution.

R - Review your plan. Did it work?
Reward yourself! Great job!

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POWER-Solving®: Stepping Stones to Solving Life’s Everyday Social Problems

What is it?

A social problem-solving curriculum designed to teach children and adolescents to become independent problem-solvers via a hands-on, user-friendly, positive-practice, interactive approach.
Application of POWER-Solving® Social Problem-Solving Curriculum

- Implemented formally at HI-STEP® Summer Social Skills Program – 3 locations

- Piloted at several school district programs and now used in numerous school districts and private schools (across 30 states and 8 countries)

- POWER-Solving Steps incorporated into professional practice
Children and Adolescents are taught how to problem-solve first using their “toolbox” (i.e., the five steps of POWER-Solving®).

Subsequently, they can apply this “toolbox” to various challenging social situations, which allows them to develop and enhance their social-emotional skills.

The goal is for children and adolescents to learn valuable POWER-Solving® skills that they can apply to an infinite number of social situations throughout their lives.
What if Stress is a Fact of Life?

- All humans will experience stress
- Attempts to eliminate stress are doomed to fail
- The more you try to get rid of stress the more you “got” it (like Chinese finger trap)
- Solutions to \textit{eliminate} stress now become the \textit{problem}
What is ACT?

“...Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a unique empirically based psychological intervention that uses acceptance and mindfulness strategies, together with commitment and behavior change strategies, to increase psychological flexibility. Psychological flexibility means contacting the present moment fully as a conscious human being, and based on what the situation affords, changing or persisting in behavior in the service of chosen values”

(Steven Hayes, https://contextualscience.org/act)
ACT Founders

- Developed by Steven Hayes and his colleagues Kelly Wilson and Kirk Strosahl

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Acceptance and Commitment Therapy / Training (ACT)

- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy / Training (ACT) is a psychological treatment or coaching / consultative approach that relies heavily on helping people identify values and live a life according to their values.

- A major goal in ACT is to help people live a fulfilling life, one that includes both pleasant and unpleasant feelings.
Identify Old Solutions

• What have you tried?
• How has it worked?
• What has it cost you?
• The person recognizes their solutions are HOPELESS!
• Before you can try something new, you have to stop what doesn’t work
Question: What behaviors are important to change?

Answer: It depends on the person, the timing, environment, and what they need (or think they need). It also depends on what they determine is meaningful to them.

More on this in a moment...
“Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.”

-Mahatma Gandhi
Who or What do you Value?

- Values are a reflection of who or what is important in our life and who or what we really care about.
- It is important to help our students identify, connect with, and continually move toward this.
Identify Values
VALUES WORKSHEET
(adapted from Kelly Wilson’s Valued Living Questionnaire)

Deep down inside, what is important to you?
What do you want your life to stand for?
What sort of qualities do you want to cultivate as a person?
How do you want to be in your relationships with others?

Values are our heart’s deepest desires for the way we want to interact with and relate to the world, other people, and ourselves.

They are leading principles that can guide us and motivate us as we move through life.

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Video: Jar of Life
What is important/meaningful to me?
Who is important/meaningful to me?
What do I value in life?
What do I care about now?
“Stinking Thinking”
Small Group Activity

- Choose one of the items in the heart
- List the “Stinking Thinking” (thoughts and feelings) that shows up when we consider what/who we care about.

  - “I can’t do this.”
  - “It’s not fair.”
  - “They’re so mean to me.”
  - “I might not do a good job.”
What does Acceptance mean?

- Fully experiencing all thoughts and feelings when they come up
- Noticing all thoughts and feelings when they come up
- Awareness of all thoughts and feelings when they come up
- Not trying to get rid of, reduce or eliminate unpleasant thoughts and feelings
But “Acceptance” is difficult!!

When beginning to work with someone, it may be better to avoid the word “acceptance”, instead saying something like (Russ Harris, 2007, www.actmindfully.com.au):

- “You don’t have to like it, want it, or approve of it – simply ... allow it to be there (simply because it already is).”
- “Give it permission to be where it already is.”
- “Let go of struggling with it.”
- “Stop fighting with it.”
- “Make peace with it.”
- “Make room for it”
- “Let it be”
- “Stop wasting your energy on pushing it away.”
Acceptance:
What am I willing to experience to move in the direction toward that which I value?
Unwanted Party Guest
Metaphors to help with noticing

Thoughts are like:

- Clouds floating, or birds flying, across the sky.
- Waves arising from the sea, then falling back in. You can watch the waves from the shore, without being swept away.
- Leaves and sticks floating down a stream. You don’t have to dive in. You can watch from a bridge.
- A passing parade. You can watch the floats pass by. You don’t have to climb on board.
Metaphors to help with noticing

Thoughts are like:
- Trains coming and going while you stand watching from the platform.
- A waterfall. You’re standing behind it, not under it.
- Wild horses running across the plains. You can admire them but no need to chase them.
- Children running across a playground. You can stay still and watch, while they run wherever they want to.
The Chatter of those negative thoughts/feelings that show up

- **Hand “Puppet”** Small Group Activity
- Describe a student who presents with anxiety or depression
- Think of the “chatter” (like a Twitter feed) that likely fills their head
- Say the “chatter” aloud using your hand as a puppet, giving space between the words and your mind, noticing the words for what they are... **words**
Pause and Choose

- Noticing and sorting allows you to Pause (create space)
- You are now in a position to choose your behavior (away or toward) in the service of what is in your heart (i.e., values)

  Consider someone or something you care about.
  - What toward and away behaviors have you been engaging in (behaviors to move toward who/what you care about and behaviors to move away from unwanted thoughts and feelings)?
  - What about your students? Can you help them sort?
Psychologically Flexing

- Getting better and better at noticing
Psychological Flexibility (PF)

- Pausing, sorting, willing to experience discomfort and choosing a course of action in the present moment, which moves you in the direction of your chosen values is PF.
- This is all happening in real time!
- Talking about doing behaviors is simply talking!
“In between stimulus and response there is a space, in that space lies our power to choose our response, in our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

Viktor Frankl

Author of Man’s Search for Meaning (1945)
ACT Matrix

- Let’s Practice putting it all together
ACT Matrix

- Developed by Kevin Polk, Mark Webster, and Jerold Hambright.
- According to Polk and Schoendorfff (2014), “The matrix is an interactive diagram for increasing psychological flexibility in almost context at any time. It is a diagram of the process of ACT...People interact with the diagram and experience having thoughts, feelings, and urges that they would rather not have while choosing to take action toward who or what is important” (p. 1).
What is important/meaningful to me?
Who is important/meaningful to me?
What do I value in life?
What do I notice shows up (thoughts/feelings/images)?
What has been getting in the way of me moving toward who/what is important to me?
What behaviors/actions can I do to move toward what/who is important/meaningful to me while being willing to carry with me the “stuff” that I don’t want to be along my journey?
What have I been doing to move away from the stuff that show up and get in the way?
Is what I’m doing working?
Is it getting me closer toward what’s important to me?
What do I notice shows up (thoughts/feelings/images)?
What has been getting in the way of me moving toward who/what is important to me?

Me Noticing a Difference
Psychological Flexibility

Mental Experiencing
(what’s inside, what I think and feel)

Five-Senses Experiencing
(what I can see, touch, hear, smell or taste)

ACT Matrix

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Struggle Switch

- **When in the On Position**: Whenever an unpleasant thought, feeling, image, memory or sensation occurs in your mind you struggle to get rid of whatever is causing you discomfort. The struggle becomes the problem.

- **When in the Off Position**: Whenever an unpleasant thought, feeling, image, memory or sensation occurs in your mind you notice the discomfort. You contact the experience and you move your life in a **valued direction**.
Keep the Struggle Switch in the OFF Position

Notice/Be Mindful/Be Fully Aware of the Discomfort and Keep Moving Toward What You Value
Replace “But” with “And”

- “I want to run and I’m tired and it’s raining.”
- “I want to complete my homework and it is very challenging.”
- “I want to meet someone new and I don’t know whether they will like me.”
- “I want to live independently and it’s tough.”
- “I want to help my students and I’m feeling tired, overwhelmed, confused, etc.”
Keep moving forward
Can you help me, Mrs. Martin? This wasn’t covered in any of my education courses.
Staff characteristics

*Have staff available and skilled to deal with social, emotional, and behavior health issues

Characteristics

- Non-judgmental
- Need to have good counseling skills
- Empathic and validating feelings ("It looks like you are frustrated. Let’s see if we can work together to make things easier for you.")
- Establish positive relationships with students
- Self-awareness: "Check your ego at the door."
- Respect students (even when they disrespect you)
Staff characteristics

- Ensure that the student meets with early educational success
- Focus on individual students’ learning needs
- Provide behavior specific praise
- Identify and promote strengths
- Frequent check-ins with the students emotionally
“Confrontation-Time” Rules

- Everyone sit down
- Use soft “inside” voice
- Take turns speaking (speaker power)
- Listen to each person
- Try to understand one another’s perspective (“It sounds like you are feeling / saying...”)
- Write out feelings if screaming occurs
- Find a good time to discuss feelings
- Use “I feel” statements rather than blaming “You” statements
- Problem-solve together possible solutions, then evaluate each based on whether it is safe, fair, how each person would feel, and whether it would work
What can you do?

The 4 P’s:

- Point Out
- Prompt
- Practice
- Praise

School-home collaboration

- Arrange opportunities to collaborate
- Praise parent’s ability to provide you with information
- “Catch Being Good” communications with parents
- Committees may be formed with parent liaison on each committee
Next Steps...

- What is the One Thing you can do after leaving this workshop that will make a meaningful difference in your school/district?

_____________________________________
_____________________________________
_____________________________________

- When will you do this?

_____________________________________

- Schedule this now.
Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

~Helen Keller
Related Resources


Related Resources


Related Resources

Newcomer, L. (2009). Universal positive behavior supports for the classroom. OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. pbis.org/pbis_newsletter_V414


http://contextualpsychology.org/ official website of the Association for Contextual Behavioral Science, a worldwide online learning and research community, and resource for ACT, RFT, & Contextual Behavioral Science.
Many of the Strategies in this Power Point are from the following book:

*The Behavior Problems Resource Kit: Forms and Procedures for Identification, Measurement, and Intervention* by Dr. Michael J. Asher, Dr. Steven B. Gordon, Dr. Michael C. Selbst, and Dr. Mark Cooperberg

http://www.researchpress.com/product/item/5560/
to order: 800-519-2707

- All grade levels. This user-friendly resource provides over 50 reproducible forms and numerous intervention procedures founded in evidence-based research and standards. These forms and procedures have been developed and successfully applied in clinical work with children and adolescents having a wide range of diagnoses, including AD/HD, autism spectrum disorders, mood disorders, oppositional defiant disorders, and anxiety disorders.
POWER-Solving®: Stepping Stones to Solving Life’s Everyday Social Problems is a social problem-solving curriculum designed to teach children and adolescents to become independent problem-solvers via a hands-on, user-friendly, positive-practice, interactive approach. They are taught how to problem-solve first using their “toolbox” (i.e., the five steps of POWER-Solving®). Subsequently, they can apply this “toolbox” to various challenging social situations, which allows them to develop and enhance their social-emotional skills. The goal is for children and adolescents to learn valuable POWER-Solving® skills that they can apply to an infinite number of social situations throughout their lives.

For more information regarding the POWER-Solving® Curriculum, please contact Dr. Selbst or Dr. Gordon at power-solving@comcast.net or call 732-873-1212. or visit www.POWER-Solving.com