Maximizing Successful ESY Remote Learning for Students with Significant Needs

NJPSA Webinar presented on June 16, 2020

Michael C. Selbst, Ph.D., BCBA-D
Licensed Psychologist (NJ #3779, PA #9320)
Certified School Psychologist
Board Certified Behavior Analyst – Doctoral
Executive Director

Behavior Therapy Associates
Somerset, New Jersey
(732) 873-1212
mselfbst@BehaviorTherapyAssociates.com
www.BehaviorTherapyAssociates.com
Agenda

- Unpredictable Times
- Fostering Success with Remote Learning
- Managing Challenging Behavior
- Promoting Healthy Socialization
- Bonus...Self-Care slides
- Q & A
Unpredictable Times for Educators

- “When can we go back to school safely?”
- “This remote teaching is really challenging.”
- “It is difficult to get parents and students to participate.”
- “It’s disheartening to observe the students’ behaviors without being able to stop it.”
- “How can I continue to juggle all of my professional and personal responsibilities and remain calm?”
- “Really, this is going to continue through ESY?”
Unpredictable Times for Children (not much different)

- “I don’t even understand Coronavirus.”
- “I’m worried that my friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers, or I will get sick.”
- “We are all so bored. Where can we go safely?”
- “I don’t know when I can go back to school, sports, music lessons, scouting, the mall, ...”
- “How can I learn without my teacher in my room?”
- “When will I see my friends again?”
- “How can I juggle all of this and remain calm?”
Challenges for Parents

Many parents have never served the role of “instructor” or “instructional assistant” and they may have “Dirty SOCKs”, lacking the following:

- **Skills**
- **Objectivity**
- **Confidence**
- **Knowledge**
Challenges for Parents

Parents may find the time and support needed are significantly greater than they can manage.
Quick Tip Reminders to Discuss with & Assist Parents

- Set up a routine with expectations
  - Night before: “We have school tomorrow.” Get backpack ready the night before.
  - Morning of: “We have school today.” Bring backpack to the table where computer is situated.
  - Morning of school:
    - Get changed from pajamas to school clothes
    - Eat breakfast
    - First _____ Then _____, withholding reinforcing activities until school has finished. Reward activities following brief work lessons should be brief and easily stopped to have successful transitions
- Use of a visual schedule with photos, text, and clock
What to Target during ESY

- Emphasis placed on maintenance of mastered educational skills
- Collaborate with parents to identify what would be most helpful to target during ESY
- Social Emotional Learning related to social distancing, mask wearing, return to school, socialization (discussed later)
- Daily Living Skills that parents can assist with (cooking, cleaning, laundry, toothbrushing)
- Play skills (functional, imaginative, interactive)
Rules, Routines and Reinforcement
Visuals Prompts to Help Students with Routines
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

Copyright © 2020
Behavior Therapy Associates
Planning

- Strategies
  - Encourage parents to have a nightly “planning conference”
    - Review the daily assignment log and long-term calendar
    - Create a nightly calendar that includes work time frames, chores, meals and relaxation
  - Encourage parents and students to set up the workspace for success
  - Maintain open & honest communication with parents
  - Praise parents’ efforts and make very explicit what assistance you need as an educator
Planning

- Systematic Reinforcement System
- Use Socratic Questioning to encourage the child to internalize what he/she needs to do instead of continually reminding the child what he/she needs to do.
  - For example:
    - “What is the rule about touching the computer/iPad?”
    - “What should you do if you’re having trouble?”
    - “Remember, what happens after you complete your school work?”
Help parents to remember:

- 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 (Adhere to a contract and set it up so child needs to earn preferred items.)
- Don’t say, “I don’t care what all your friends are doing.” (Do validate child’s feelings, showing an understanding of how this must be frustrating, embarrassing, etc.)
Help Student
Sit calmly, Attend better, & Complete work

- Pairing/Rapport is critical for success: fun & engaging
- Gain child’s attention and eye contact before delivering information
- Give energy breaks and opportunities for focused movement
- Prepare for transitions and practice routines
- Include short, fast-paced tasks (e.g., chunking homework)
- Be calm (soothing music, quiet study space, earplugs)
- Develop physical cues to refocus
Help Your Child
Sit calmly, Attend better, & Complete work

- Systematic praise (frequent positive feedback) from staff and parents
  - At least 3 positive for every 1 negative (e.g., “I like how you are sitting and working.” “Good job following directions.”)
- Home-school communication and carry-over strategies (e.g., updates from teachers regarding progress on assignments; tips for increasing productivity on remote learning assignments)
What Contributes to Challenging Behavior?

- Poor Self-Regulation
- Developmental / Educational Delays
- Significant Stress, Discomfort, Uncertainty, Loss, Trauma, Changes, etc. contributing to Mental Health Issues (e.g., Depression, Anxiety, PTSD)
-Disconnected, Disaffected, Unmotivated
- School Failure/Frustration
- Characteristics of the Adults & Environment
“It is easier to prevent a behavior from occurring than to deal with it after it has happened. ”
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
CHECK IN

5
4
3
2
1
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
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

*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 math workbook.”
- “My class starts in 5 minutes and my computer isn’t working.”
- “I want to watch my favorite show and my brother/sister wants to watch something else.”
Reducing Excessive Screen Time

- Practice good sleep hygiene
  - No screen time at least 1 hour before bed
- Exploring activities that create distance from screens
- Primarily use screen time for work, education, or contact with friends and family
- Setting limits for recreational screen time
  - Create opportunities for children to earn the screen time rather than taking away screens as a result of negative behavior
- Role play transitions from screens to other activities
Mask Wearing

- The need to wear a mask and maintain social distance outside the home
- What are the rules for when you return to school?
- Social Cues: much harder to understand and express facial expression while wearing a mask
- With parent and district supervisor consent, ESY lessons could address mask wearing, social distance, and preparing for return to school
Instruction related to Mask Wearing

- Staff could provide students with exposure to seeing staff and peers wearing a mask during ESY remote learning
- Identifying feelings based upon facial expression with/without masks
- Develop Social Narratives (Social Stories) on this topic
Healthy Mind and Body

- Important to keep mind and body healthy
  - Exercise regularly inside and outside safely
  - Parents and children need to take breaks from news watching and screen time
  - Incorporate movement into remote learning lessons
Socializing

- It can be difficult for children to engage in conversation with others through video conferencing
  - Shyness or anxiety
  - Social conversation skills are weak
  - Plan for this by having conversation topics and conversation starters
Social Language: Comments / Questions

**COMMENTS**
- I remember when I...
- Wow! Tell me more please!
- That’s really great!
- I like to do that too!
- That must have been tough!

**QUESTIONS**
- Where did you go?
- Who was there?
- What happened?
- Why did you do that?
- What did you do next?
- How did you feel?
Socializing

- Stay connected while at home through remote learning
  - Baking, cooking healthy meal
  - Playing a game
  - Read together and talk about the story
  - Virtual tours online
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
Generalization of Learned Social Skills

Across settings, behavior, and time
Promoting Generalization - Homework

- Brief assignments provide:
  - Personally meaningful activity
  - Practice and opportunities for feedback/praise
- Children in social skills groups who complete their homework assignments show **twice** the improvement of those that do not
Self-Care

Be MINDFUL (Present moment awareness)

- Aware of your stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue
- Aware that what you’ve been doing has not been workable
- Noticing that this may be getting in the way of being the kind of parent / caregiver or educator you want to be
- Choosing to do something different for self-care and in the best interests of your family, school, etc.
START THE WEEK WITH SELF-CARE

Practicing self-care is important. Try these simple tips to reduce stress and improve your mood and energy.

GO FOR A WALK
Feel the air or the warmth of the sun.

TAKE A BREATH
Take a pause with some deep breaths.

YOGA MOMENT
At your desk or in your living room, do some relaxing moves.

TAKE A WARM BATH
This is also a way to take a digital break from your phone and/or computer.

CALL A FRIEND
Catch up and share the latest. This will boost your happiness and it’s a natural way to destress.

SLEEP
Go to bed early, read, relax, do some bed yoga, sleep soundly, and wake up refreshed!
My Self-Care Plan

- **Physical**

*I choose to exercise on the treadmill.*
*I will do this everyday (frequency) at 6:00 am (time) for 30 minutes (duration) when I am at home (location).*

I choose to ________________________.
*I will do this ________ (frequency) at _______ (time) for _______ (duration) when I am at ______ (location).*
My Self-Care Plan

- **Social**

  I choose to *join my friends for breakfast (virtually right now).*
  
  I will do this *on Saturdays* (frequency) at *9:00 am* (time) for *1 hour* (duration) at *the computer through video* (location).

  I choose to ____________________________.

  I will do this __________ (frequency) at ______(time) for ______(duration) when I am at ______ (location).
My Self-Care Plan

- Emotional

I choose to keep a reflective journal.

I will do this everyday (frequency) at bedtime after I change into my pajamas before I brush my teeth (time) for 5 minutes (duration) when I am in my bedroom (location).

I choose to ____________________________.

I will do this ________ (frequency) at _______(time) for _______(duration) when I am at _______ (location).
My Self-Care Plan

- **Workplace / Professional**

  *I choose to consult with my colleague.*

  *I will do this every Monday (frequency) at 3:30 pm (time) for 15 minutes (duration) when I am at work virtually (location).*

  I choose to ____________________.

  *I will do this ________ (frequency) at ______(time) for ______(duration) when I am at _____ (location).*
Keeping a Thought Diary / Journal

- Noticing and accepting your thoughts/feelings “I’m noticing I’m having the thought that...”, “Thanks mind for telling me.”
- Choosing not to reject reality
Self-Care: Practice to Protect against (or minimize) Compassion Fatigue

- Increase Vitality (becoming stronger, active, and energetic)
- Plan for mindfully eating, exercising, and connecting with others in your life
- Maintain a consistent sleep schedule
- Build routines of self-care to increase your capacity to handle stress
- Plan and commit time for meaningful leisure activities
- Cultivate and maintain positive relationships outside of the relationship where you are providing direct care

Copyright © 2020
Behavior Therapy Associates

43
Self-Care: Practice to Protect against (or minimize) Compassion Fatigue

- Identifying values (who and what you care about)
- Say “Yes” to scheduled time for yourself and say “No” to other events that could get in the way of your own committed time. “The ONE Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results.” Gary Keller (2018)
What might get in the way of sticking to my plan?

- Saying “yes” to other people, other urges, other values
- Thinking “I don’t deserve time for myself” (this puts you right back into the hole and negative feedback loop)
- Feeling guilty (but you didn’t lie, steal, or cheat); committing to self-care may be difficult AND it’s important AND it is not lying, stealing, or cheating
- Thinking “But I’m so tired.” Replace this with “I will stick to my self-care plan even though I feel tired.”
Identify, Set, and Adhere to Boundaries

- When to initiate and respond to phone calls, emails, text messages
- Learn when you need to give yourself a break / timeout (close eyes, deep breath, notice thoughts and feelings, go for a walk)
Replace “But” with “And”

- “I want to help my friend/family member and they’re not ready for help.
- “I want to be more caring / responsible / positive / supportive and it’s difficult.”
- “I want to help educate my child and they may not want to work or listen.”
- “I want to start… / stop… and it’s very difficult to change what I’ve always been doing.”
Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

~Helen Keller
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