PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR FOR STUDENTS WITH ASD

Terri Daly, PhD, BCBA-D

Organizing Thoughts (Build Predictability)

• Understand the neurological differences in ASD that underly “problem” behavior
• Understand how some classroom and individual behavior management packages backfire for students with ASD
• Understand the role of the functions of behavior in determining how to support more desired behavior
• Understand some basic effective practices to improve behavior

To Find A Man Lost In The Woods, You Must Get To Where He Is

WHY?

Lonely is the color of the darkest white on a cold day
Lonely sounds like wind whispering in your ear
Lonely tastes like ice cream with no flavor at all
Lonely smells like a poison fruit that was cooked by the devil
Lonely is like the ugly duckling that no one really likes
Lonely makes me feel who I am deep inside of me

By: Blake Carter Age 11

more…

• Some people accuse me of things that somebody else was not supposed to do (when I was reporting that other kids were doing something wrong on the car ramp, I got in trouble; it made me very angry because I was trying to be helpful). And I hate that no one wants my help. It shows stupidity. Why wouldn’t people want my help? I wanted to help a girl in my class with a project—she said, “give me a hundred dollars…a thousand dollars…a million dollars!” She insulted me. I don’t have a hundred dollars. It made me very frustrated.

“I am trapped between a good life and a bad life. What can I do? The ones who are angry at me…I just make them angrier!”

Michael H.
4th grade
Feeling Like You are Blind and Everyone Else Can See...

"Suppose you are colorblind, and cannot distinguish between red and green. You are in a room with other people, all of whom have normal vision. No one—not even you—knows that you are color-blind. Everyone is handed a list of instructions. They are printed in red against a green background. Everyone except you knows exactly what to do. They cannot understand why you just sit there. The paper looks blank to you and you cannot understand how the others know what to do. Think of how you would feel, especially if the others stared at you, or whispered, or laughed."

David

ASD

Neurology Involved

Associated Strengths in ASD

• Often excellent visual learners

• NT Brain

• Autism Brain

Intense or Unusual Special Interests

Sensory Threshold Differences

Hyper-Sensitive

• Shut out and shut down
• Seek out quiet and alone
• Actions may include crying, running away, tantrum

Hypo-Sensitive

• Seek out and create
• Impulsive and unaware of danger
• May not know own limits
• Actions may include running, tantrum, screaming
Transitions are HARD

- When shown multiple TV screens, it was hard for children with AS to stop looking at one in order to shift attention to newer visual stimuli.

Clery et al, 2013
Landry and Bryson, 2004

Social Interaction

- Socially isolated
- Tense & stressed trying to cope with social demands of others
- Wants friends; lacks strategies for developing lasting friendships
- Difficulty picking up on social cues
- May behave in socially inappropriate way
- Social interactions trigger fight or flee

Normal controls:
- Left medial prefrontal cortex activation when reading a story that requires inferring someone else’s state of mind

ASD subjects:
- A different area (associated with general cognitive abilities) is activated

Rita Carter (1999). Mapping the Mind. pg 143

Direct Eye Contact 
Triggers Threat Response

-Dalton, 2005
Teach to the Difficulties

- Emotional regulation in ASD requires instruction (and patience, and practice)
- Provide work-arounds and accommodations when needed while teaching
- Consider if we NTs should develop some skills if we can’t teach the skill

Let’s Talk about Behavior Problems

Noncompliance

- NOT doing what is requested in an instruction within 10 seconds
- “Most common behavior problem”
  » (McMahon & Forehand, 2003)

Dead Man’s Test

- Any description that could apply to a dead man is not a behavior.

What is behavior?

For our purposes:
- Everything you do or say that can be observed and measured
- Developed from the person’s experiences, either now or in the past
- Behavior is not just misbehavior

Problem behavior …

… is only a *PROBLEM* to OTHERS!
To the person doing it, the behavior is a...

Solution !!

Understanding Behavior

- Behavior is **ADAPTIVE**
  - Behavior is **COMMUNICATIVE**
    - Behavior is **FUNCTIONAL**

Behavior occurs for a reason.

Problem Behaviors

Challenging Behaviors

They *challenge* us to find the best way to teach more acceptable behaviors.

Behavior Problems?

- Key Questions
  - Who has the problem?
  - If the behavior continues, will everyone still be safe?
  - Do I have time to teach an alternative now?
  - What is the least dangerous, least physical thing I can do to help this student do what he needs to do?

Before giving direction

- We need to assess
- And be ready with plan to assist

Why DON’T children follow directions?

- Don’t understand
- Didn’t hear
- Didn’t know how
- Something more interesting/distracted
- More fun not to...
- And so on
Assess the Problem

Able, but Unwilling

Willing & Able

Unwilling & Unable

Willing & Unable

Direction is Given

Followed
Not Followed

Direction is Given

Followed
Not Followed

Direction is Given

Followed
Not Followed

Not Followed

Incorrect Delivery

Given as invitation or question
Does not move through prompt hierarchy
Vocabulary too high
Direction too long, multiple steps
Given in way that is not salient
Given too far from when expected
Stated indirectly or implied action
UCF CARD: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Not Followed
Incorrect Delivery
- Given as invitation or question
- Does not move through prompt hierarchy
- Vocabulary too high
- Direction too long, multiple steps
- Given too far from when expected
- Stated indirectly or implied action

Change adult behavior

Not Followed
Incorrect Delivery
- Given as invitation or question
- Does not move through prompt hierarchy
- Vocabulary too high
- Direction too long, multiple steps
- Given in way that is not salient
- Given too far from when expected
- Stated indirectly or implied action

Hears?
NO
YES

37
38
39
40
41
42
UCF CARD: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

43

Medical Assessment

Not Followed

Hears?

NO

44

Medical Assessment

Not Followed

Hears?

NO

45

Not Followed

Understands?

NO

46

Skill Deficit: Teach the skill, teach the language

47

Not Followed

Self Preservation?

48

Not Followed

Self Preservation?
UCF CARD: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Not Followed

Complies with other directions

Self Preservation?

No Consequence—the child is in self-preservation mode.

Desensitize, TEACH, accommodate, modify

Make task easier, shorter, less aversive, precursor to fun

Not Followed

Complies with other directions

Complies in other conditions

Not Followed

Complies with other directions

Complies with other directions

Self Preservation?

Refusal?

Does nothing

Does something else

Does the opposite

Yes you have found noncompliance
Assess Type(s) of Deficits

- **Skill deficit**: ex: Student cannot I.D. correct response for a social situation; actions are not in the student's behavior repertoire.
- **Performance deficit**: ex: Correct social response can be identified by the student when questioned, but is displayed only during the role play situations.
- **How do we respond to each?**
  - Skill deficits usually respond to direct instruction.
  - Performance deficits usually require a guarantee that the new behavior will capture at least the same amount of benefits as the current behavioral response (& practice, practice, practice to make it default choice).

Behavior Problems?

- **Key Questions**
  - Who has the problem?
  - If the behavior continues, will everyone still be safe?
  - Do I have time to teach an alternative now?
  - What is the least dangerous, least physical thing I can do to help this student do what he needs to do?

Behavior Management Choices

- **Prevention** (Antecedent Control, Predictability)
- **Promotion** (Positive Reinforcement, Clear Expectations, Modeling, Teach Communication)
- **Extinction** (Absence of Reinforcement)
- **Motivation** (Reinforcement Systems, Response Cost)
- **Correction**
- **Punishment**
  - All of the above should be exhausted before considering punishment

Children with ASD do not respond as well to traditional approaches

- Conscious Discipline
- “Make a Good Choice”
- Canter’s Assertive Discipline
- Time Out/Suspension
- Ask 3 Before Me
- Find a Buddy
- Dojo
- Dependent and Interdependent Group Contingencies
The 4 Cs of Prevention

• Catch ’em being good
  – Specific praise appropriate behavior
  – Lots of attention for behavior you want to increase

• Clarity
  – Don’t ask a question when you want follow through
  – K.I.S.S. (keep it simple, silly!)
  – Verb first, state the expectation

Prevention Techniques
(Antecedent Control Measures)

• Use your 4 C’s
• Environmental Arrangement
  – Modify task, furniture, toys
  – Visual Supports
    • First-Then Card, Timers, picture cues, schedules, signals, etc.
• Redirection
  – Surface Management Techniques (diffuse/redirect)
  – Differential Reinforcement of alternative behavior
  – Increase the Fun Factor
• Promote engagement

Setting the Stage for Success

• Catch GOOD
• Recruit models
• Make sure you have their attention
• Praise others who are following the direction
• Use Grandma’s rule

Grandma’s rule

You have to eat your vegetables before you get dessert!

Giving Directions so Children will Listen

• KISS! Use Vocabulary that they understand!
• Say what they should do, not what they should stop!
• Use the prompt hierarchy!
• FOLLOW THROUGH!
• Be close! Make sure you have their attention!
• One at a time!
• PRAISE ATTEMPTS TO FOLLOW
• Verb First – Do not ask questions!
Strategies to avoid

- Overpromting  
  – NAG NAG NAG!
- NO, STOP, DON’T
- Making it a game
- Implying a choice  
  – Can you, Do you, How about, Will you
- Adding an “option tag”  
  – ….okay? ….all right?
- Too far in the future
- Threats

Strategies for FOLLOWING THROUGH

- Use prompts effectively  
  – Know your prompt pyramid  
    - Step up or step down, but do not get stuck on a step
    - Allow time
- Fade assistance systematically  
  – Don’t build dependence
  – High demand → High support
  – Low demand → Low support

The Least to Most Intrusive Prompt Pyramid

- Natural Environment
- Visual  
  – Movement, spatial, pictorial
- Indirect Verbal == Model
- Direct Verbal
- Direct Verbal + Model/Gesture
- Partial Physical
- Full Physical

Children with autism thrive on predictable environments with strong visual supports

Simple steps can eliminate tantrums, disengagement and sensory overload

Structured Classrooms

- Independent Work systems
- Predictable Routines
- Visual supports
- Direct Instruction
- Motivation Systems

Visual Supports Help

First

Then
Teach the student to use a stress thermometer as a check-in tool to monitor stress levels as they rise and preemptively anticipate and diffuse a meltdown.

- Use a script.
- Use a task analysis.
- Use a visual.
- Use surface management techniques.
- Reward appropriate diffusion.

From [Picture SET](Dunn Buron K., Curtis, M. 2004)

**The Incredible 5 Point Scale**

- Used to teach self-awareness.
- Tool to signal strategies to cope.
- Needs to be taught to the student.

Kari Dunn Buron

**Five Point Scale**

Adapted from a presentation by Brenda Smith Myles, Regional Autism Institute, KY, June 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Looks Like</th>
<th>Feels Like</th>
<th>I Can Try To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yelling</td>
<td>My head will probably explode</td>
<td>Go to my safe place, call the boss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making fun of me</td>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>Go see my boss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking lots of questions</td>
<td>Bad mood, grumpy</td>
<td>Stay away from this guy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking a little</td>
<td>Okay</td>
<td>I'm alright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet</td>
<td>I'm doing a really good job</td>
<td>Enjoy being happy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presentation by Brenda Smith Myles, Regional Autism Institute, KY, June 2005.
Other Effective Front-End Instruction

- Video Modeling
- Role Play/Rehearsal
- Visual Supports (Power Cards)
- Video Detective

THEN TAKE IT INTO CONTEXT

Video Detective

- Watch Videos
  - Interpret persons feelings without sound
  - Predict how someone will feel
- Create and Videotape Self/Others
  - What’s My Emotion
  - Find a Conversation Flaw

T.V. shows

Use T.V. shows to show interpersonal relationships and conflicts

Superflex

- Developed by Michelle Garcia-Winner

“The Unthinkables”
**Environmental Supports**

- **Home Base**
  - A place where students can go when they feel anxious.
  - Plan day’s events
  - Escape the stress of the classroom
  - Prevent a “meltdown”
  - Regain control after a tantrum

- **Safe Person**
  - The person (or people) that can be depended upon when the going gets rough.
  - Consider using a visual to prompt who & where to go to.

**Environmental Supports**

- **Hot Pass**
  - Permission for the student to leave class when they feel overwhelmed or anxious.
  - Include information concerning where to go and who to see.
  - Limit number to be used per week
  - Reward student for not needing to use them (while also refraining from melting down for a week)

**Social Story**

- Brief descriptive stories that specify accurate information about a social situation.
- How to write it
  - Descriptives
  - Perspectives
  - Directives

Carol Gray

**School Implications**

- Protect from bullying
  - Teach coping, self-defense, avoidance skills
- Provide social judgment training
  - “Dignity of failure”, Specific Social Skills
  - “Hidden Curriculum”
- Develop peer webs
  - Use cooperative learning opportunities
- Alert them to rudeness, and teach them it is not acceptable
  - Role play interaction, use story frames, social stories
  - Social Autopsies, SOCCS, etc

People with AS are as likely to be on the offending end of the situation as they are to be on the victimized end—however, most people will only hear about the offenses…
Behavior Management Choices

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The 4 Cs of Prevention

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  - K.I.S.S. (keep it simple, silly!)

The 4 Cs of Prevention (cont’d.)

- Choices
  - Offer choices, especially when enforcing a limit
  - Choose your battles!
- Communication
  - Teach skills that help the child communicate
    - Feelings, needs, etc.

Prevention Techniques (Antecedent Control Measures)

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  - Modify task, furniture, toys
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- Promote engagement

Environments: What Works

- Eliminate temptations
- Eliminate potentials for hiding/stimming
- Increase text/visual supports
- Increase predictability
  - Use your schedules
  - Use Physical Structure/Structured Teaching

How do teachers promote engagement?

- Use preferred materials and activities
- Provide preferred materials within choice times
- Teach play and leisure skills (hobbies)
- Contact children frequently when they are doing what you want them to be doing
- Increase novelty and sensory avenues in materials/toy displays
- Have a back-up plan (interest boxes)
- Provide reinforcement for engagement
The Impossible Dream

• You can’t prevent every problem behavior

Understanding Behavior

• Desired and Undesired behaviors occur because they have been reinforced
• The same behavior can occur for multiple reasons or to serve multiple purposes
• Your perspective on the behavior will impact your intervention or resolution
• Must go beyond the idea of eliminating or reducing challenging behaviors

Strategies to Avoid with Autism

• “Talking it out”
• Perspective taking – counseling (How would you like it….how do you think he feels…?)
• Threats, Questions (Do you want to go to time out? and Coercion (If you don’t…I’m going to)

The 5 Cs of Responding

1. Consistency
   Between people, Between situations
2. Contingencies
   Identifying the ABCs of the behavior
   What is the function of the behavior
3. Consequences
   Natural, Proportionate, and related to the behavior
4. Calm
   Neutral Tone, Respite and Adult Time Out
5. Catch Them Being Good

What is Functional Assessment?

• A way of looking at problems from a functional standpoint
• Does not focus on underlying feelings or psychopathology
• Requires gathering data (A-B-C’s) and coming up with ideas about the function of the problem behavior
• Can be done by many different people

Functions of Behavior Simplified:

ESCAPE: Getting out of a demand, activity, situation.
MAKE DEMAND: Trying to get something desired.
GET ATTENTION: Trying to secure attention from adults or peers.
SELF STIMULATION: Just for the fun of it (would go on if everyone left the room).

Think about the problem behaviors you encounter. Can you identify the function of these behaviors?
Possible Functions (Expanded)

To Get Something
- Engagement / Initiate
- Sense of Control
- Desirable Items / Activity
- Sensory Input / Regulation
- To Get Help

To Avoid Something
- Difficult tasks
- Social interaction
- Environmental stimuli

What do I do after I think I know the function?
- There is no cookbook answer, but these are some general guidelines
  - Manipulate the environment to prevent that function from being achieved or needed
  - Change your own behavior to make that function unnecessary
  - Teach alternative forms for function

When the behavior serves a function of getting Attention:
- Ignore bad behavior (that is not dangerous) and give lots of praise for good behavior
  - Quietly and unemotionally redirect dangerous behavior and arrange for prevention while attending to other behavior.

Putting it “On Extinction” (works best when dealing w/ Attention/Make Demand Functions)
- Planned ignoring
- No facial, verbal feedback
- The behavior never happened
- Increases behavior at first
- Then results in rapid drop off
- Still need to teach alternative behavior

If Function is to Avoid/Escape
- Must continue to have child participate in activity THIS TIME
  - Follow through with demand, praise completion or attempt
- Examine demand and adapt in the future to prevent the problem behavior

If Function is to Avoid/Escape
- Then, make adjustments/accommodations:
  - Fewer materials in front of the child
  - Smaller/Larger work space
  - Adjust the stimulation level
  - Let child stand instead of sit
  - Make task easier, shorter
  - Remove offending stimulus
  - Use First-Then card, Timer
  - Build up Tolerance of the non-preferred activity
- Teach Alternative way to request “out”
If Function is to get Sensory Input (Self-Stimulation)

- Increase visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory input
- Identify age-appropriate and socially appropriate outlets for student to obtain sensory input
- Create requirements that promote social and communication goals to obtain preferred sensory input
- Shape the behavior into something more acceptable

If the Function is Sensory Input/Self-Stimulation

- Teach play and leisure skills
  - Target skills that mimic that sensory experience - can you think of examples for these “problem” self-stims?
    - Rocking
    - Playing with spit
    - Banging on table
  - Increase other fun options

When the behavior serves the function of Making a Demand

- Teach alternative way of communicating that demand
- Do not allow child access to the items after exhibiting inappropriate behavior
- Indicate how/when the child can get the specific items
- Allow access to the items for exhibiting desirable behavior (or approximation)
- Redirect (choices) if not possible to honor demand

Logical Consequences

- Removal of materials used inappropriately
- Loss of privileges, access to preferred item (response cost)
- Restricted access
- Loss of adult/teacher/parent praise/attention

(WARNING!) about using “Time Outs”

- Time out means time out FROM REINFORCEMENT
- Many kids with ASD “stim out” in time out
- Self stimulation is reinforcing for many kids with ASD
- Therefore, time out is not time out for these kids
- Therefore, TIME OUT RARELY WORKS FOR THESE KIDS
- If the behavior doesn’t decrease, it isn’t working!

Effective Back-end Visually Supported Instruction Strategies

- Social Stories
- Social Autopsies
- SOCCSS
- Comic Strip Conversations
Social Autopsy

- **Is**
  - supportive, structured, constructive
  - problem solving
  - opportunity for student to participate
  - conducted immediately after adult
  - conducted immediately after social error
  - held as one-on-one

- **Is Not**
  - a punishment
  - negative
  - controlled/conducted exclusively by the adult
  - a "one-time" cure

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SOCCSS

- Situation
- Options
- Consequences
- Choices
- Strategies
- Simulation

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Comic Strip Conversations

- Report the past
- Describe the present
- Plan the future
- Systematically identify what people say and do
- Emphasize what people might be thinking

---

Steps in a Comic Strip Conversation

- Start with small talk
- Identify location
- Gather information
- Identify sequence
- Share perspective
- Summarize conversation
- Identify new solutions
Remember...

- Communication problems often lead to behavior problems
- Lack of predictability often leads to behavior problems
- A history of using behavior problems effectively to control their environments leads to behavior problems

Understanding the stages of crisis, leading to meltdowns

- Demand to shift gears
- Escalation
- Agitation
- Meltdown
- Recovery

Persist in their inflexibility and poor response even in the face of meaningful consequences

- Low tolerance for frustration
  - The experience of being frustrated can be very intense, disorganizing and sometimes overwhelming

Explosive episodes can have an out-of-the-blue quality.

- May be particularly inflexible about one or more issues
- May be especially inflexible when tired, hungry or ill

If you don't understand the basic characteristics that can cause distress in an individual with autism, you might think they are being “bad” or “manipulative”, or “controlling”.
You might also choose inappropriate techniques to manage these crises, thinking that if you just keep piling on consequences, you will win the battle.

AGITATION
Triggers:
- Not getting what he/she wants
- Not doing what he/she wants to do
- Not being able to regulate to environmental stimuli
- Not being able to regulate to internal stimuli

Escalating agitation...

Vapor lock

In cars, vapor lock is caused by excessive heat that creates a bubble in the gas line. This prevents gas from flowing to the engine and causes the engine to stall. No matter how many times the driver pushes the pedal or turns the ignition, the car won’t start until it cools down.

Escalating agitation...

When our students are frustrated and their agitation is growing, they are in vapor lock.

Frustration causes a breakdown in the capacity to think clearly, causing him/her to become overwhelmed and irrational.

Precursors

- Rumbling Stage
  - Increasing vocal intensity
  - Decreased eye contact/downward gaze
  - “tensing” of muscles (jaw, neck, brow, legs, arms)
  - Quick motor actions (jerky)
  - Mumbling under breath
  - Diatribe on issue of “Fairness” or “Stupidity” of situation
  - May shut down, lash out or threaten.

The Rumbling Stage

- May see behavioral changes not related to the rage attack (i.e. tensing muscles, twisting hair).
How to Create A Crisis

- Raising voice
- Yelling
- Power Assertions ("I'm the boss here")
- Insisting on having the last word
- Rigid body language
- Using sarcasm
- Attacking the student's character

Behaviors that Escalate a Crisis

- Approach quickly and from above
- Hands on—even gently
- Violation of classroom rules by teacher
- Using humiliation or putdowns
- Threats (perceived as inevitable)
- Repeating previously unsuccessful techniques
- Nagging
- Comparing a student with other students

Escalating agitation...

No matter how many times the adults reason, insists, rewards, punishes or whatever, the individual can't start thinking clearly until someone helps him/her cool down.

Rumbling Stage Interventions

- Antiseptic Bouncing
- Proximity Control
- Signal Interference
- Touch Control
- Humor
- Support from Routine

The Rumbling Stage Interventions

- Redirecting
- Home Base
- Acknowledge Difficulties
- Just walk and don’t talk
- Stress Thermometer
- Self-Monitor Check
- Scales of Justice
Low and Slow

Roiling Interventions
Reacting at the crossroads:
Prioritize your demands
Level A demands
Level B demands
Level C demands

Level A Demands
- Non-negotiable
- Safety of self and others
- Health
- Basic life expectations

Level C Demands
- Not important
- May fly in the face of convention, but not really matter
- Not important for that particular student
- Doesn’t impact the a big picture

Level B Demands
- Important but not essential
- Level B demands are the stuff of teaching
- Level B demands are most effective when a student is available for new learning

Level B Demands
- Level B demands can and should be withdrawn or compromised if this is not a good teaching moment.
- If you decide not to follow through with a Level B demand because it is a rough day for this student and you see him growing agitated, that is a wise choice. It will not cause the student to regress or backslide.
Intervention

Reacting at the crossroads:

Empathize. Be the individual’s partner, not their adversary.

*I know you are mad. You are really mad that it is time to go! It is hard to stop playing with that toy. I understand.*

Interventions

Reacting at the crossroads:

Give time and space.

Interventions

Reacting at the crossroads:

Offer visual instead of auditory information.

Interventions

Reacting at the crossroads:

Provide support in a calm, non-threatening manner.

Interventions

Reacting at the crossroads:

Offer to do the activity with the individual.

Interventions

Reacting at the crossroads:

Try humor or surprise as a way of helping them to switch gears.
Interventions

Reacting at the crossroads:

For our more able students, try framing the problem and getting them to help with a solution

*UH-OH... WE HAVE A PROBLEM. I WANT YOU TO GET READY TO GO HOME AND YOU WANT TO FINISH THIS PAGE. WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THIS THAT MAKES BOTH YOU HAPPY AND ME HAPPY?*

Individuals who are developmentally compromised in the areas of flexibility and frustration management usually:

- Lack the capacity to manage emotions associated with frustration well enough to think clearly in the midst of crisis
- Lack the ability to shift their thoughts from their agenda to your agenda even when faced with very meaningful consequences

Rage Stage

- At this point the students acts emotionally, impulsively and sometimes explosively. These behaviors may include screaming, biting, hitting, destroying property and self injury.
- Internal rage may also occur.

MELTDOWN

- Irrational
- Incoherent
- Destructive
- Abusive
- Out of control
- =
- A DEBILITATED STATE

MELTDOWN

What the individual does and says during the meltdown is "MENTAL DEBRIS"

MELTDOWN

An escalating and deteriorating inflexible-explosive individual is not a pretty sight.

*Not for you
Not for others around you
And certainly not for the distressed individual*
Respond to crisis
• Isolate the individual for safety
• Use protective strategies
• Wait, quietly, for the storm to blow over
• Assist the individual with calming/coping strategies

Coping During the Rage Stage
• Emphasis should be placed on safety.
• Get the student to a safe place, if possible.
• Keep in mind that rage attacks are not purposeful.
• Once it begins, it must run its course.
  – May not be able to disengage from emotion once it has started.
  – Provide support to regain control and preserve dignity.

Beyond the crossroads, reacting to crisis:
Isolate the individual. If he/she doesn’t want to come with you into a safe spot, then move others away.

Interventions
Beyond the crossroads, reacting to crisis:
Once the individual has begun to calm down, you might offer sensory activities if you know that this is helpful in reorganizing the individual.

Interventions
Beyond the crossroads, reacting to crisis:
Once he or she has begun to calm down, you might offer something to drink or something to eat if, and only if, you know that this will help to calm and focus them.
Interventions

Beyond the crossroads, reacting to crisis:

You might offer to help the individual with calming strategies that he/she has practiced during non-crisis times.

Recovery Stage

• Child may be sorry and may have limited memory of the rage itself.
• May be physically exhausted and need to sleep.
• Student may not be ready to learn and if pushed too fast may rage again.
• Process incident after all emotion is subdued

Interventions

Recovery (the long-term response):

Setting up regular and highly motivating rewards for the behavior you want to see.

Matching Teacher Behaviors

Understands that stress signs must be recognized
More of a facilitator than a dictator
Calm reactions
Avoids “lecturing” on failings or deficits
Provides non-threatening feedback
Gives students choices
Provides processing time

It takes a village (sometimes a small country)

• Parents and Educators must team
• Proactive Planning
• Ongoing communication
• Empathy and Acceptance
• Inclusion and Community Ownership

THANK YOU!

Please help us meet our DOE requirements by providing feedback on this session by completing this survey.

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