RI SWPBIS

Understanding and Managing Escalating Behavior

Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities
Rhode Island College

600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Providence RI 02908
401-456-8072
www.ripbis.org
### Universal Implementation Checklist

#### Critical Features Universal PBIS System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. Develop SW System for Responding to Challenging Behavior continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>k) Develop procedures for Crisis Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Written procedures for handling crisis (crisis plan) is readily available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Teach faculty/staff how to respond in crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Teach students to respond in crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Rehearse response to crisis situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jason, please turn in your assignment.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The assignment you didn’t finish during class.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Great, please turn it in now.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>You have a choice: turn it in or do it again.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I guess you’ve made the choice to do it again.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>That’s disrespect…go to the office.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Moves closer…and puts hand on J. shoulder.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PURPOSE

- Enhance our understanding of & ways of responding to escalating behavior sequences.
  - Student <--> Teacher
  - Teacher <--> Teacher
  - Teacher <--> Parent
  - Child <--> Parent
  - Teacher <--> Administrator
  - Etc., etc., etc....
What We Know

- Behavior is **learned** (function).
- Behavior is **predictable** (function).
- Behavior is escalated through **successive interactions** (practice).
- Behavior can be changed through **instructional approach**.
OUTCOMES

- Identification of how to intervene early in an escalation.
- Identification of environmental factors that can be manipulated.
- Identification of replacement behaviors that can be taught (& serve same function as problem).
The MODEL

![Graph showing behavior intensity over time]

- **Time**
- **Behavior Intensity**
  - **High**
  - **Low**
The MODEL

- Calm
- Trigger
- Agitation
- Acceleration
- Peak
- De-escalation
- Recovery
The MODEL

Time

Behavior Intensity

High

Low

Time
The MODEL

Time

Behavior Intensity

High

Low

Time

Behavior Intensity
The MODEL

The diagram shows the intensity of behavior over time. The x-axis represents time, while the y-axis represents behavior intensity. The graph illustrates different patterns of behavior intensity, categorized as High and Low. The curves indicate varying degrees of behavior intensity across different time intervals.
Understanding & Responding to Escalations: The Model

Colvin, 1989
The MODEL

- **Behavior Intensity**
  - **High**
  - **Low**

- **CALM**
  - Level: ***
Calm

- Student is cooperative.
  - Accepts corrective feedback.
  - Follows directives.
  - Sets personal goals.
  - Ignores distractions.
  - Accepts praise.
Calm: Intervention is Focused on Prevention

- Assess problem behavior
  - Triggers
  - Function
    - Academic & behavioral learning history
- Arrange for high rates of successful academic & social engagements.
- Use positive reinforcement.
- Teach social skills.
  - Problem solving
  - Relaxation strategy
  - Self-management
- Communicate positive expectations.
- All adults should have a plan for maintaining self control in which both personal triggers and a plan of action are identified.
The MODEL

![Graph showing behavior intensity over time with a peak at TRIGGER]
Student experiences a series of unresolved conflicts.

- Repeated failures
- Frequent corrections
- Interpersonal conflicts
- Timelines and deadlines
- Low rates of positive reinforcement
Trigger: Intervention is Focused on Prevention & Redirection.

- Consider function of problem behavior in planning/implementing response.
- Remove the student from or modify problem context.
- Increase opportunities for success.
- Reinforce what has been taught.
The MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Behavior Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>AGITATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agitation

- Student exhibits increase in unfocused behavior.
  - Off-task
  - Frequent start/stop on tasks
  - Out of seat
  - Talking with others
  - Social withdrawal
Agitation: Intervention is Focused on Reducing Anxiety.

- Consider function of problem behavior in planning/implementing response.
- Make structural/environmental modifications.
- Provide reasonable options & choices.
- Involve in successful engagements.
- Adults learn to decode their own behavior and utilize cognitive strategies to maintain calm as needed.
The MODEL

![Graph showing behavior intensity over time with a peak in the middle labeled ACCELERATION]
Acceleration

- Student displays behavior that is:
  - Provocative
  - High intensity
  - Threatening
  - Personal
Acceleration: Intervention is Focused on Safety.

- Escalations & self-control are inversely related.
- Escalation is likely to run its course.
- Follow crisis prevention procedures.
- Make structural modifications as needed, i.e. remove student/staff/peers from environment.
- Adults learn to decode their own behavior and utilize cognitive strategies to maintain calm as needed, i.e. deep breathing, counting to ten, imagine student as a vulnerable child.

Think about being a thermostat and not a thermometer
The MODEL

![Graph showing behavior intensity over time with a peak at a specific point.](image)
Peak

- Student is out of control & displays most severe challenging behavior.
  - Physical aggression
  - Property destruction
  - Self-injury
  - Escape/social withdrawal
  - Changes in physiological functions
Peak: Intervention is Focused on Safety

- Procedures like acceleration phase, except focus is on crisis intervention.
- Make structural/environmental modifications.
- Follow crisis intervention procedures.
- Adults learn to decode their own behavior and utilize cognitive strategies to maintain calm as needed.
The MODEL

![Diagram showing behavior intensity over time with a peak labeled DE-ESCALATION.](image-url)
De-escalation

- Student displays confusion and may employ defensive mechanisms as severe behavior decreases.
  - Social withdrawal
  - Denial
  - Blaming others
  - Minimization of problem
De-escalation: Intervention is Focused on Removing Excess Attention

Best strategy for avoiding re-escalation is to allow both the adult and the student time to take space from each other

- Adults should NOT try to re-engage the student at this time, i.e. don’t nag, avoid blaming, don’t force an apology and don’t attempt to process the incident
- Emphasize starting anew.
The MODEL
Recovery

- Student returns to a non-agitated state, may still be defensive yet subdued and may display a desire to move beyond the incident.
  - Attempts to correct problem, i.e. apologizes, attempts to make restitution, rationalizing
  - May show an eagerness for busy or independent work.
  - Unwillingness to participate in group activities.
  - Social withdrawal & sleep.
Recovery: Intervention is Focused on Returning to Baseline Behavior

- Follow through with consequences for challenging behavior.
- Positively reinforce any displays of appropriate behavior.
- Re-establish routine activities at which student will likely be successful.
- Reflect on the incident, debrief to facilitate transition back to program...not further negative consequences.
- Debrief follows consequences for problem behavior with the goal of increasing more appropriate behaviors.
- Review and monitor behaviors, evaluate strategies and modify plan as needed for subsequent incidents.
Recovery

• Problem solving example:
  • What did I do?
  • Why did I do it?
  • What could I have done instead?
  • What do I have to do next?
  • Can I do it?
Understanding & Responding to Escalations

Colvin, 1989
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jason, please turn in your assignment.</th>
<th>What assignment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The assignment you didn’t finish during class.</strong></td>
<td>I finished it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great, please turn it in now.</td>
<td>I don’t have it with me now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have a choice: turn it in or do it again.</td>
<td>You never believe me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I guess you’ve made the choice to do it again.</td>
<td>Make me!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s disrespect...go to the office.</td>
<td>F____you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves closer...&amp; puts</td>
<td>Pulls away, glares, &amp;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three Key Strategies for Breaking the Escalation Cycle

- Intervene *early* in an escalation.
- Manipulate *environmental factors* to decrease the likelihood of escalation.
- Teach *replacement* behaviors that serve a similar function to the challenging behavior.
“Students in crisis seldom see connections among what they feel, how they behave and how others respond. Their responses to stress tend to be behaviors fueled by feelings, perpetuating conflict and crisis.”

“Not only are most students unable to recognize feelings, they are also not able to talk about them.”

“But unless a student is able to do these two things, it is difficult, if not impossible, for the student to make a lasting change from behavior driven by feelings to behavior regulated by rational processes.”

A FINAL THOUGHT

- Geoff Colvin (1989):
  - It is always important to remember that “if you inadvertently assist the student to escalate, do not be concerned; you will get another chance to do it right the next time around.”
Team Activity
Understanding and Managing Escalating Behavior

- 15 Minutes
- Review features and steps of the “Escalating Behavior” and “Conflict” cycles
- Discuss the extent to which escalating behavior is or could be an issue in your school
- Review existing systems for responding to escalating behavior
- Develop an action plan to define a system to address adult responses to escalating behavior in your school
RI SWPBIS

The Statewide Leadership Team would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions to this presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anthony Antosh</th>
<th>Deb Arenberg</th>
<th>Elizabeth A’Vant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynn DeMerchant</td>
<td>Jonathan Dyson</td>
<td>John Eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Eagle</td>
<td>Tara Grabowski</td>
<td>Nicole Hitchener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob Horner</td>
<td>Eric Mann</td>
<td>Howard Muscott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavonne Nkomo</td>
<td>Frank Pace</td>
<td>Linda Ranney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Reinhardt</td>
<td></td>
<td>George Sugai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities
Rhode Island College
References

- OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
  - Rob Horner, Ph.D. and George Sugai, Ph.D, Ed.D.
  - SW-PBS School Leadership Team Training Reference Manual, Selected references - Section H
  - www.pbis.org
- Google: Geoffrey Colvin, Managing Escalating Behavior