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Advances in Behavioral Intervention Planning: Resources for School- Based Consultants

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Teacher Behavioral Intervention Planner: Prior Events, “Triggers”, or Qualities of the Child That Can Contribute to Behavior Problems



Directions for Using This Guide: Read through the items below and note those prior events, “triggers”, or qualities within the student that appear to contribute to his or her behavior problems. Use these items as starting points for further investigating the events or situations that can trigger the student’s behavior problems(s) or for selecting appropriate modifications to the student’s behavior management plan.

The student is likely to have difficulty at those times when...

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

- ① *classmates and/or other students are around and available to give the student attention.*
- ② *the teacher and/or other adults are in the vicinity and available to give the student attention.*
- ③ *He or she is in the presence of another student (e.g., a close friend) who gets the student involved in verbal or physical horseplay.*
- ④ *Specific students deliberately bully, ‘set up, or tease the student (chronic harassment).*
- ⑤ *He or she encounters random or occasional teasing from a peer or group of peers (random or occasional harassment).*
- ⑥ *He or she has a negative encounter with a particular student.*
- ⑦ *Other students goad the student to confront or fight a peer or dare the student to commit a specific act.*






The student is likely to have difficulty at those times when...

SCHOOL SETTING

- ① *The instructional environment is not optimal for learning (e.g., uncomfortable or inadequate furniture, poor lighting, high noise level, room too hot or too cold, etc.).*
- ② *The lecture or instructional presentation is disorganized or moves at too slow or too fast a pace.*
- ③ *He or she transitions between different instructional settings (e.g., moving from classroom to art class).*
- ④ *Class is being run by a substitute or a teacher other than the student’s primary instructor.*








The student is likely to have difficulty at those times when...

TASK-RELATED

-  He or she encounters difficulty with / reacts negatively to an academic or other assigned task.
-  He or she requires assistance during independent work and gets off-task while waiting for help.
-  Transitioning between different tasks in the same setting (e.g., classroom).
-  His or her regular school routine is interrupted or altered without sufficient advance notice.
-  He or she is given a negative consequence by an adult for misbehavior.

The student is likely to have difficulty at those times when...

MEDICAL/HOME/CHILD

-  He or she does not receive (or is suspected of having not received) prescribed medication (e.g., Ritalin).
-  Inattention from suspected or diagnosed Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) interfere with learning or demonstration of learned material.
-  Hyperactivity/Impulsivity from suspected or diagnosed ADHD interfere with the student's self-management of behaviors.
-  Symptoms from a pre-existing medical condition flare up (e.g., the student becomes irritable because of joint pain from rheumatoid arthritis).
-  He or she has behavior problems that stem—at least in part—from a suspected or diagnosed sensory loss (e.g., poor eyesight, hearing impairment).
-  He or she reacts emotionally in school to specific events (e.g., arguments with parents) that have taken place outside of school.
-  He or she lacks sufficient sleep, is hungry, or has other physical needs that have not been adequately met.

Teacher Behavioral Intervention Planner: Consequences That Support Student Behavior



Directions for Using This Guide: Read through the items below for possible explanations of why the student that you are concerned about is showing one or more behavior problems. Note any items that appear to explain the student's behavior. Use these explanations as starting points for further investigating the cause of the behavior(s) or for selecting interventions to reduce the problem behavior(s) and increase more appropriate behaviors.

The student's behavior(s) resulted primarily because he or she...

SKILL / MOTIVATION DEFICIT



Lacks sufficient verbal communication or negotiation skills to request the desired goal, outcome, or object in a more appropriate way. (Communication deficit)



Lacks knowledge of how to behave appropriately in a novel setting (e.g., restaurant) or lacks a key skill (e.g., training in conflict resolution strategies) needed to avoid the problem situation. (Social or other skill deficit)



Is misreading or overlooking important social cues --e.g., intruding on other students who wish to be left alone. (Social skill deficit)



Is more likely to receive a 'pay-off' (e.g., teacher attention) through misbehavior than by displaying appropriate behaviors. (Lack of student motivation)

As a consequence of the behavior, the student hopes to or is likely to...

SOCIAL ATTENTION / CONFLICT



Receive social attention from classmates and/or other students.



Receive social attention from the teacher and/or other adults in the school.



Attain notoriety throughout the school and/or in the neighborhood or larger community.



Establish social dominance and control over one or more other students.



Save face and preserve reputation in the eyes of classmates and/or other students.



Get one or more peers to stop physical or verbal harassment of the student and/or friends.

As a consequence of the behavior, the student hopes to or is likely to...

ESCAPE



Escape the presence of a person that the student finds unpleasant.



Escape the presence of a task or assignment that the student finds unpleasant.



Escape the presence of a setting (e.g., classroom, school building) that the student finds unpleasant.

As a consequence of the behavior, the student hopes to or is likely to...

PRIVILEGES



Get access to preferred activities (e.g., computer time).



Be allowed to spend time in a preferred setting.



Be given food treats (e.g., candy) or allowed to play with preferred toys or games.



Be allowed other privileges (e.g., chosen to run errands for the teacher; given additional free time).

Typical Classroom Consequences for Misbehavior: A Menu



Here is a sampling of strategies that teachers often use as consequences for low- to medium-level behavioral infractions:

Apology: Apologies are one way that humans repair the social fabric after a conflict. The student may be asked to apologize to the offended party (e.g., teacher, student, principal) in writing or in person. It is important, though, that the offending student accept blame for the incident and demonstrate authentic regret in offering the apology, or neither party will be satisfied with the outcome.

Behavioral contract: The student and teacher hammer out a written agreement that outlines: specific positive behaviors that the student is to engage in (or specific negative behaviors that he or she is to avoid), the privileges or rewards that the student will earn for complying with the behavioral contract, and the terms by which the student is to earn the rewards (e.g., staying in his or her seat during independent reading period for three consecutive days).

Loss of privileges: The child is informed in advance that he or she can access a series of privileges (e.g., access to games to play, the opportunity to have 5 minutes of free time) if his or her behavior remains appropriate. The instructor instructs the student about what kind and intensity of problem behavior may result in the loss of privileges, and for how long. After this introductory phase, the instructor withdraws privileges as agreed upon whenever the student misbehaves.

Office referral: The instructor writes up a referral documenting the student's misbehavior and sends both the referral and student to the principal's office for intervention.

Over-correction: The student is required repetitively to practice a skill that will 'replace' or improve upon an inappropriate or problem behavior. For example, a student who wanders the halls without permission when taking an unsupervised bathroom break may have to stay after school one afternoon and take multiple 'practice' trips to the school bathroom. In this example, the instructor might accompany the student to monitor how promptly the student walked to, and returned from, the bathroom and to give the student feedback about how much this target behavior has improved.

Parent contact: The teacher calls, sends a note home to, or e-mails the student's parent(s) regarding the behavioral problems. The parent may be asked for advice on how the teacher can better reach and teach the child at school. The teacher may offer suggestions for appropriate parent involvement (e.g., "You may want to talk with your child about this incident, which we view as serious.").

Private approach to student: The instructor quietly approaches the student, points out the problem behavior and how it is interfering with classwork or interrupting instruction. The instructor reminds the student of the academic task in which he or she should be engaged. The student is given an opportunity to explain his or her actions. The student is politely offered the choice to improve behavior or accept a negative consequence. Privately approaching a student can help him or her to save face and reduce the likelihood that the student will become defensive or defiant.

Promise: The instructor approaches the misbehaving student and informs him or her that the student has behaved inappropriately. The teacher asks the student to state an appropriate alternative behavior

that he or she should have followed. The teacher then requests that the student promise the instructor (verbally or in writing) that he or she will not engage in this misbehavior again.

Redirection: The teacher interrupts problem behavior by calling on the student to answer a question, assigning him or her a task to carry out, or otherwise refocusing the child's attention.

Reflective Essay: The student is required to write and submit to the teacher a brief composition after displaying behaviors. At minimum, the composition would state: (1) what problem behavior the student displayed, (2) how the student could have acted in an alternative, more acceptable manner, and (3) a promise from the student to show appropriate behaviors in similar situations in the future.

NOTE: Some teachers use a pre-printed structured questionnaire containing these 3 items for the student to complete.

Reprimand: In the typical reprimand, the instructor approaches the student, states that the student is misbehaving, and instructs the student to stop the misbehavior immediately. Reprimands should be used sparingly, as students may become defiant if confronted by an angry teacher in a public manner. When used, reprimands should be kept short, to avoid arguments with the student.

Response Cost: Usually, response cost programs first award a student a certain number of tokens with no conditions attached. Throughout the monitoring period, the student has a token withdrawn whenever he or she displays a behavior that is inappropriate. (These behaviors would usually have been agreed upon in advance.) The student is permitted to 'cash in' any points that he or she still retains at the end of the monitoring period or may be allowed to 'bank' the points toward a future reward or privilege.

Restitution: The student engages in an activity that actually or symbolically restores the environment, setting, or social situation that his or her misbehavior had damaged. For example, a student who marks up a wall with graffiti may be required to work afterschool under supervision of custodial staff to wash the wall and removing the offending markings.

Rewarding alternative (positive) behaviors: The instructor calls on the student or provides other positive attention or incentives only during those times that the student is showing appropriate social and academic behaviors. The same positive attention or consequences are withheld during times when the student misbehaves or does not engage in academics.

Rules review: The teacher approaches the misbehaving student and (a) has him or her read off the posted class rules, (b) asks the student which of those rules his or her current behavior is violating, and (c) has the student state what positive behavior he or she will engage in instead.

Timeout/Detention/Inschool suspension: The student is removed from the classroom because of a behavioral infraction. In timeout, the student's exclusion from the classroom may be very short (3-5 minutes). With in-school suspension, the student may be removed from instruction for longer periods (e.g., half a day). Detention may require that the student spend time in a non-rewarding setting but that consequence may be deferred until after school to prevent loss of learning.



Becoming a ‘Power School’: Ten Ways to Reduce Violence

‘Power schools’ are schools that achieve excellence by first recognizing that the goals of reducing student violence and increasing academic performance actually complement one another. Initiatives intended to support either improved behavior or student learning usually advance both. In particular, power schools:

1. *Set a primary focus on student academic excellence.* Because classroom teachers are under a great deal of pressure to raise student learning standards, they may resist ambitious new programs that require them to commit valuable time to help in reducing school violence. Power schools are able to demonstrate to staff, however, that quality anti-violence programming can actually *increase* available teaching time by:
 - reducing the number of behavioral disruptions,
 - giving teachers consistent, enforceable standards to impose when students do misbehave, and
 - giving administrators the tools to identify students with high behavioral needs and to commit additional resources to address those needs.
2. *Provide help at an early stage to students with academic problems.* There is a strong relationship between academic failure and student misbehavior. Unsuccessful students often find schools to be unwelcoming places. Indeed, a 1998 report by the U.S. Justice Department states that students who struggle academically and fail to build an emotional attachment to schools and teachers are at significantly greater risk than typical peers for gang membership and other delinquent behaviors.

Schools that single out struggling students for extra academic support before their problems become severe have an increased chance of improving these students’ skills and keeping them invested in school.
3. *Create a common school- or district-wide definition of ‘violence’.* Before a school or district can effectively mobilize to combat student violence, stakeholders must agree on a shared definition of ‘violence.’ Power schools find that a definition of violence is most useful if it is sufficiently broad to cover verbal and physical acts that, intentionally or unintentionally, cause harm, hurt, or embarrassment to another.

4. *Assess the current level of school-related violence in their building or district.* Rates of violence vary dramatically across districts and even between individual schools within a single school district. Therefore, while school violence has become a hot topic in the national media, it is best viewed as a *local* problem. Schools will not be able to plan anti-violence measures until they understand the magnitude of the problem in their own buildings. Power schools survey staff, parents, and students about issues of school violence and personal safety. They may also track other important—if less direct—indicators of student behaviors and satisfaction with school, including:
 - attendance and tardiness rates,
 - number and types of office disciplinary referrals, and
 - in-school /out-of-school suspension rates.

5. *Cultivate knowledge of innovative programs and services to address school violence.* Companies and non-profit organizations are marketing a great many programs and products to school that are purported to combat violence. With so many choices in the marketplace, educators may find it a real challenge to differentiate quality products from those that are not effective. Power schools:
 - consult reputable ‘clearing house’ organizations or research journals to determine what programs or products have the greatest impact in reducing violence, and
 - visit anti-violence programs being run in other schools or districts, to find out what impact a specific program is having on school violence and what roadblocks or problems were encountered as the program was being put into place.

6. *Match new programs to demonstrated local needs, and monitor the effectiveness of these programs over time.* Power schools do not bring in new programs simply because they are trendy but instead carefully match anti-violence programs to their existing needs. A school, for example, that wishes to reduce bullying in schools would not select a conflict mediation program to accomplish this goal, as conflict mediation has not been shown to be effective against chronic bullying. Since every anti-violence program exacts a cost (in staff time, materials, training, and / or other areas), effective schools monitor these programs over time to make sure that the programs are actually *delivering* expected improvements in the school’s behavioral climate.

7. *Hold students and staff to a common set of behavioral standards.* Behavioral expectations for students and staff should be reduced to a small set of easily remembered rules. Power schools phrase these rules in positive terms (e.g., “Students and staff speak respectfully to one another, using appropriate language.” rather than “Do not speak in a loud voice or use profanity when speaking to others”). Rules are posted widely throughout the school and on busses, are reviewed at school staff meetings, and are shared with parents.

8. *Provide swift, consistent consequences for student misbehavior.* Power schools recognize positive behaviors by granting students privileges, specific praise, and opportunities to be recognized for their hard work and civility. Negative behaviors also result in prompt, consistent consequences that take into account both the severity of the student infraction and the number of times that the student has had behavioral problems in the past. ‘Consequences’ for negative behaviors are not intended to be punitive but to provide the child with any support that they may need and to teach the student that misbehavior comes at a cost.
9. *Allocate increasingly focused interventions and staff attention on students with more chronic behavioral problems.* Principals commonly observe that a relatively small number of students in their schools account for a disproportionately large number of disciplinary office referrals. Power schools keep track of student behavioral performance and provide increasingly structured, intensive interventions for students whose classroom conduct has not improved with less intensive consequences. (One good idea is for schools to draft a uniform series of ‘graded consequences’ that teachers and administrators can match to student infractions. For example, a single episode of a student’s talking back to a teacher may result in the teacher calling the student’s parent. If the student chronically talks back, though, they may be enrolled in an in-school skill-building group to practice more appropriate ways to respond to adult requests.)
10. *Foster relationships with law enforcement, outside clinicians, and community agencies.* Not all student misbehavior can be addressed solely within the confines of a school. Power schools find their relationships with law enforcement to be useful (e.g., making it easier for a teacher to communicate with a probation officer for students in the PINS program or on probation). For students with psychiatric disorders or other medical issues that can influence behavior, schools work to maintain close contacts with physicians and other clinicians in the community. (Through regular behavioral progress reports from a child’s classroom teacher, for example, a physician may be able to adjust a student’s dosage of psychostimulant medication to improve the child’s ability to attend to classroom instruction.) Also, schools that know the full range of counseling and other therapeutic services offered by community agencies and organizations can make valuable recommendations to parents about what services would best address needs of their child.

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Jim Wright, Presenter

Free Violence Prevention Resources

1. **Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools.** Schools can use this 32-page booklet to get a useful but succinct overview of issues in proactive violence prevention. This resource was jointly developed by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education and can be ordered through the U.S. Department of Education Publications Center (1-877-433-7827) or downloaded from this web address:
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html>
2. **Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide.** This 61-page booklet provides a detailed blue print that schools can follow to create and implement a comprehensive plan to reduce violence. This resource was jointly developed by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education and can be ordered through the U.S. Department of Education Publications Center (1-877-433-7827) or downloaded from this web address:
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/ActionGuide>
3. **The ERIC Review: School Safety: A Collaborative Effort.** The focus of this ERIC Review issue (Vol.8, Issue 1, Spring 2000) is school safety and violence reduction. The 44-page booklet provides accessible ‘thumbnail’ overviews of important topics that relate to understanding school violence, preventing violence in children, and national initiatives to combat violence among children and youth. The booklet also contains contact information about sources and programs discussed. You can order a copy of the booklet through the ERIC publications number, 1-800-538-3742 or go to the ERIC internet site at:
<http://www.accesseric.org>
4. **Conflict Resolution Education: A Guide to Implementing Programs in Schools, Youth-Serving Organizations, and Community and Juvenile Justice Settings.** Schools who want to survey effective conflict resolution programs will find this 105-page booklet to be a very helpful introduction. It provides an overview of relevant conflict-resolution concepts and gives brief reviews of research-based conflict-resolution programs designed for schools. The booklet can be ordered through the U.S. Department of Education Publications Center (1-877-433-7827).
5. **The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective.** The FBI recently released this document, which presents a “four-pronged assessment

approach” to gauging the seriousness of student threats of violence. This resource was jointly developed by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education and can be downloaded from the FBI web site home page:
<http://www.fbi.gov>

6. **Marketing Violent Entertainment to Children.** In 1999, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) was directed by President Clinton to investigate two specific questions about depictions of violence in the media: “Do the industries promote products they themselves acknowledge warrant parental caution in venues where children make up a substantial percentage of the audience? And are these advertisements intended to attract children and teenagers?” The report finds that producers of media (music, movies, electronic games) have indeed marketed products with violent content directly to children. The 116-page report can be found on the FTC web site at: <http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2000/09/youthviol.htm>
7. **Youth Gang Programs & Strategies.** The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) compiled this 86-page guide of what programs seem to work to reduce youth involvement in gangs. The report describes selected *prevention, intervention, and suppression* programs. It also contrasts common stereotypes of youth gangs with findings from research about how these gangs actually function. This resource can be found at:
<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/gang.html#171154>
8. **Classroom Management: A California Resource Guide.** Written by G. Roy Mayer, a recognized expert in behavior management, this 121-page manual has chapters on preventing problem behavior, organizing and managing the classroom, selecting appropriate reinforcers/rewards, reducing aggressive behavior, and much more. The book is written with a minimum of jargon and has many good suggestions that teachers and others can use to run efficient and safe classrooms. The manual can be downloaded as an Adobe Acrobat file from:
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety/>
9. **Intervention Central.** This web site has downloadable handouts for teachers and other educators on school tips for reducing violence and other violence-related topics. You can visit Intervention Central at:
<http://www.interventioncentral.com>