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# Foundational Behavior Support Training

Utah State Board of Education Model Training

# Key Concepts

Human behavior all follows the same behavioral principles:

- Behavior is learned, so appropriate behavior should be taught.
- Problem behavior is addressed by **preventing** those behaviors from occurring, and by **reinforcing** the behaviors we want to see instead.
- **Punishment does not teach new behavior.**
- Behavior change efforts must be data-driven to determine effectiveness.

# Behavior is Communication

Problem behavior occurs for one of two reasons:

- There is a mismatch between student's needs and their environment
- Over time, problem behavior was more heavily reinforced than the appropriate alternative behavior

When a student is escalated, their ability to communicate and plan is reduced. **Emotional distress is communicated through behavior.**

Change the lens - distress or defiance?

# Four Functions of Behavior

- **Escape**
  - Anxiety provoking situation
  - Social interaction
  - Pain/discomfort
  - Work/task/activity
- **Attention**
  - Peer or adult
  - Positive or negative
- **Tangible**
  - Food
  - Toy
  - Technology
- **Sensory**
  - Seeking
  - Avoiding
  - Modulation

# Can't vs. won't

- “Won’t” implies pre-meditation, intent, and deliberate behavior
  - The child has all the tools, but refuses to use them
  - Very few kids fall into this category
- “Can’t” acknowledges that the child may not have the skills, training, or knowledge to perform a skill
  - The child has the tools, but can’t/doesn’t know how to use them
  - Can on one day, can’t on the next

# Classroom Management Self-Assessment

Steps to Support and Respond to Students' Behavioral, Social, and Emotional (BSE) Needs	Self-Assessment Implementation			Priority for Action Planning		
	Fully	Partially	Not At All	Low	Medium	High
<b>Proactively Teach BSE Skills</b>						
1. I provide explicit instruction on BSE skills, with examples and non-examples of each skill (e.g., demonstrating self-awareness and self-advocacy by asking to take a break) (Chapter 4).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I monitor the use of BSE skills using proximity as a reminder for behavioral expectations (Chapter 4).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I use attention signals and/or scripts to support all students in following instructions (Chapter 4).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I invite caregiver and family partnership through purposeful and regular communication (Chapter 4).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I provide specific praise to support BSE skill growth, utilizing a ratio of five or more specific praise statements for every one specific corrective statement (e.g., $\geq 5:1$ ratio) (Chapter 4).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I use positive response strategies to help all students recognize when they have successfully used BSE skills (Chapter 4).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I use strategies that minimize reinforcement of problem behaviors and instead reinforce expected behaviors, making engaging in the problem behavior less appealing (Chapter 4).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Crisis Cycle

- Model of how an individual responds to acute distress
- Each phase is distinct and predictable
- Responses from staff will change based on the phase
- Staff training is critical
  - Identify each phase
  - Match response(s)



# Crisis Cycle: Baseline

- Comfortable and content
- Ready to learn
- Engage in a positive manner
- Successfully adapt to changing circumstances
- Basic needs have been met
- Regulated

This phase may present differently for different students. **It is important to know what each student's baseline looks like so that changes can be recognized.** When staff offer support early, the crisis cycle can be interrupted quickly and the likelihood of further escalation is decreased.

# Adult Responses - Baseline

- Continue with classroom management plan
- Maintain engaging and positive interactions with the student
- Maintain classroom routines
- REINFORCE POSITIVE BEHAVIORS
- Engage in teaching
  - Classroom rules/expectations
  - Coping skills
  - Social skills
  - Self-regulation
- Ensure that basic needs are met

# Prevention Strategies

- Support problem-solving and self-advocacy
  - Break down activities into manageable chunks
  - Utilize checklists or visual aids
- Create predictable routines and expectations
  - Focus on consistent responses
  - Develop predetermined consequences
- Provide choice when possible
  - Menu of options
  - Fail-safe choices

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# More Prevention Strategies

- Reinforce positive choices and effort
  - 5-1: attend to what you want to see
- Visual supports
- Delay and distract
- Schedule movement opportunities
- Calm-down spaces
- Incorporate sensory supports

# Supportive Classrooms

Emotional safety is critical to student success:

- Shared understanding that the environment is conducive to interpersonal risk-taking
- Individuals feel secure in expressing themselves or making mistakes without fear of punishment or humiliation.

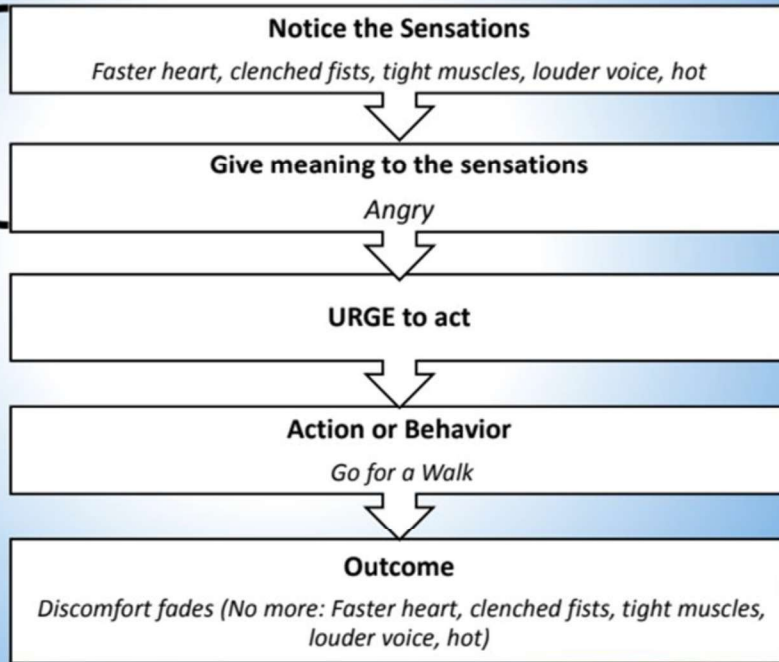
Students learn best when they are in an environment in which they feel safe, supported, challenged, and accepted.



# Interoception & Anger



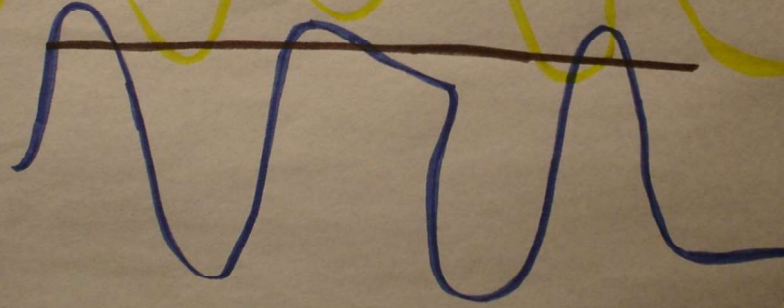
Absolutely essential to **INDEPENDENT SELF-regulation!**



# Teaching Self-Regulation

- Social Stories
- Break Cards
- Stress Thermometer
- Alert Program/How Does Your Engine Run?
- Zones of Regulation
- Incredible 5-Point Scale
- Priming

Where is my Engine??



**H** **L**

**HOW FAST IS YOUR ENGINE RUNNING?**

**DOWN-SHIFT**

**MOUTH**  
Cold  
Sharp  
Firm  
Bumpy  
Chewy

**MOVE**  
Stato-ahs / seat  
Cautious  
Marching  
Dumping  
Clear overage  
Clearing the air  
heard

**LOOK**  
Bright colors  
Bright lights  
Fast  
High-contrast

**TOUCH**  
Light touch  
Unpredictable / unexpected  
Novel  
Cold  
Dynamic

**LISTEN**  
Loud  
Unpredictable  
Harsh  
Short  
High-pitched

**TUNE-UP**

**MOUTH**  
Warm  
Smooth  
Sweet  
Chewy

**MOVE**  
Predictable  
Slow  
Linear

**LOOK**  
Muted colors  
Low-lighting  
Predictable  
Low contrast

**TOUCH**  
Deep touch / pressure  
Predictable / expected  
Familiar  
Warm  
Static

**LISTEN**  
Quiet  
Predictable  
Familiar  
Long duration

# Crisis Cycle: Catalyst

- Something has occurred to generate distress and/or anxiety
- Not always predictable or obvious
- Antecedent may change from day to day

For example, a smell coming from the cafeteria may increase a student's anxiety.

# Adult Responses - Catalyst

- Respond in a supportive manner
- Acknowledge the stressor and remove/minimize it when possible (remove demand, provide additional support)

Supportive responses help **build trust**, provide students with a **sense of control**, and **teach students to advocate** for themselves, all of which teach students to take responsibility for their own behavior.

Examples of supportive responses?

# Crisis Cycle: Escalation Begins

- Behavior begins to change
- Student begins to show signs of distress
  - internalizing behavior (e.g., withdrawing/shutting down)
  - externalizing behavior (e.g., arguing, attention-seeking, or conflict-seeking behavior)

Behavior change may be obvious, but is often very subtle. For example, a typically chatty student might begin to speak with lower volume. Some students may begin to show “stimming” behaviors, such as rocking, pacing, or finger movements.

# Adult Responses - Escalation Begins

- Support the student through problem solving
- Validate the student's experience
- Strategies:
  - Fail Safe Choice
  - Redirection to pre-taught coping or self-regulation strategies
  - Redirection to an already mastered skill
  - Phrase expectations positively

Examples?

# Crisis Cycle: Escalation Intensifies

- Behaviors and/or emotional responses escalate in frequency and intensity
- Behaviors may be directed towards others or self
- Might look intense, and may be highly disruptive: yelling, throwing objects, threatening, or property destruction
- May shut down or attempt to escape the situation
- May not respond to questions and may not follow directions
- As emotions escalate, “thinking brain” shuts down
  - Reduced language processing
  - Increased sensory sensitivity

# Adult Responses - Escalation Intensifies

- Ensure adults remain calm
- Model the behavior/level of intensity
  - Maintain neutral demeanor
  - Regular voice volume
  - Relaxed posture
- Avoid taking behaviors personally
- Get assistance as needed
- Set limits
  - Set and hold expectations (if/then, when/then)
  - Avoid negotiation or argument

# Adult Responses - Escalation Intensifies, continued

- Support the basic needs of the student
  - Communication is compromised
  - Ensure expectations are appropriate for developmental/skill level
  - Remove the audience, if possible
  - Maintain respect for the student

\*\*emergency safety interventions are NOT needed at this phase!

# Escalation Continuum

(adapted from Nonviolent Crisis Intervention)

Response	Student behavior	Adult Response
Questioning	Information Seeking Challenging	Provide a rational response Downplay the challenge; stick to the topic; set limits
Refusal	Non-compliance, slight loss of rationality	Set limits Redirect
Release	Verbal and emotional outburst	Allow venting Remove the audience
Intimidation	Verbal and/or nonverbal threats	Take threats seriously Seek assistance
Tension Reduction	Decrease in physical and emotional energy	Re-establish trust and rapport

# Limit Setting (1)

Interrupt and redirect

- Redirect to coping strategy or positive behavior
- Point to or comment on something in the environment (clock, clothing, etc.)
- “Jackie, you look frustrated. Let’s take a breath. I’m here to help.”



# Limit Setting (2)

## If/then, When/then

- Identify desired behavior and consequence
- “Isaac, **when** you sit down, **then** I can help you.”
- “Charlie, **if** you finish this problem, **then** you can give yourself a tally.”

## Fail Safe Choice

- Provide at least 2 options that are acceptable
- “Jose, would you like to sit here with me or at your desk?”

# Crisis Cycle: Crisis Peak

- Behaviors and/or emotional responses reach their peak
- Student has far less control over their behavior than in other phases (amygdala is activated)
- Injury to the student or others is more likely
- Safety is the highest priority
- Behavior may appear irrational
- Behaviors might include:
  - physical aggression
  - eloping (leaving a space without permission)
  - property destruction

# Adult Responses - Crisis Peak

- Remain calm and consistent
- Interact with student only when needed
  - Avoid unnecessary comments to students AND others
- Remove sensory stimulation
- Ensure enough staff are present to maintain safety and that everyone knows their role
- When possible, maintain physical distance
- Maintain relaxed posture
- Ensure responses are reasonable and proportionate

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# Crisis Cycle: De-escalation

- Student begins to calm down and regain control
- May be a slow process
- Student may express remorse or may be silent

While the student's body may appear more calm, they are likely still experiencing strong emotions.

# Adult Responses - De-escalation

- Give student the space and support they need
- Avoid making demands
- Avoid discussing the incident
- Avoid asking the student to take actions to repair harm
- Be aware of basic needs
- Prepare to reconnect and rebuild trust
- Be aware of own emotional and physical state

**\*\*It's OK to tap out!**

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# Principles of Safe De-escalation

1. Understand a student's baseline behavior
2. Honor student's need for safety, dignity, and respect
3. Manage your own emotions and reactions
4. Less is often more
5. Emergency safety interventions are a last resort

# Evidence-based De-escalation Strategies

- Stay calm (model, don't match)
- Active listening and show empathy
  - Avoid judgement
  - Use validating language
  - Allow venting
- Use non-verbal communication
  - Position to side and at an angle
  - Slow and deliberate movements
- Respect personal space
- Allow silence and time
- Use calm, clear, respectful communication

# Crisis Cycle: Exhaustion

- Student is physically, mentally, and emotionally drained
- May need time and/or rest before they return to baseline state
- May sleep or rest quietly
- May need to use the restroom
- May ask for food or water
- May ask for sensory supports or preferred item
- May request preferred adults, such as parents or preferred staff members

# Adult Responses - Exhaustion

- Be understanding of student's need for rest
- Provide for basic needs
  - Neutral food items
  - Water
  - Restroom
  - Sensory supports
- Provide choices
- Return some control to student
- Check in with staff

Examples?

# Crisis Cycle: Recovery

- Student has finished de-escalating and is at reduced risk of re-escalating
- Ready to process the situation and repair
- May express remorse, embarrassment, or other emotions, but this should not be the expectation

Students may not behave in an expected manner. They may not understand the effects of their actions or how to express their feelings. These skills can be taught, and **students should not be punished for not responding as expected.**

# Adult Responses - Recovery

- Rebuild rapport and trust
- Support the student to re-enter daily routine
- Determine when/how student will repair harm
- Avoid shame/guilt
- Problem solve future expectations and responses
- Maintain confidentiality

Options for repairing harm?

# Supporting Student Recovery

- Reintegrate
  - Engage in current activity
  - Allow them to express needs
  - Ensure positive praise
  - If the student does not seem ready, allow them to engage in an assignment/activity on their own
- Focus on the present - provide space and time before debrief, providing consequences, or asking them to repair harm
- Hold the student accountable
- Restore the environment
  - Apologize
  - Clean up
  - Fix broken items

# Resources

- [USBE Trauma Sensitive Schools Courses](#)
- [USBE Special Education Rules](#)
- [Why Do We Lose Control of Our Emotions?](#)
- [Wired for Danger: The Effects of Childhood Trauma on the Brain](#)
- [Strategies for De-Escalating Student Behavior in the Classroom](#)
- [7 Ways of Creating Psychological Safety for Students](#)
- [Stress, Trauma, and the Brain: Insights for Educators - The Neurosequential Video](#)
- [Prevention and De-escalation of Intense Behavior Responses: What Adults Can Do](#)
- [Developing Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms to Support Students and Educators](#)

# Resources

- [Behavior Support Program website](#)
- [Classroom Management Self-Assessment](#)
- [Creating a Positive Climate](#)
- [Emotional Safety](#)
- [Engaging Students to Help Improve School Climate](#)
- [Evidence-based Interventions for Student Behavior Support](#)
- [Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions \(LRBI\) Manual](#)
- [4 De-Escalation Strategies for Challenging Students \(+ examples\)](#)
- [Recovery](#) and [Recovery \(2\)](#)
- [Preventing and Responding to Student Escalation: Combining De-Escalation Strategies and Function-Based Support](#)

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# Thank you!

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