



Reference Guide on Behavior Principles, Strategies, and Interventions

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BEHAVIOR PRINCIPLES

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT FOR BEHAVIOR

Similar to academic interventions, when a student is presenting with social, emotional, or behavior concerns, it is beneficial to the student and staff to address their presenting needs using a multi-tiered system of support. The site may bring the student's concerns to a grade-level PLC, PBIS team, SST team, or an IEP team to develop strategic interventions ranging from environmental and instructional accommodations (universal or Tier 1 supports) to instruction on specific skills that are lacking or need improvement (Targeted/individualized supports or Tier 2/3 supports). The team will make decisions pertaining to the student based on the analysis of data to develop the intervention plan and coordinate targeted interventions. The team will also decide the tier in which the interventions will occur by considering the intensity of required instruction needed.

Universal or Tier 1 Strategies: There are numerous general strategies that can be used to address challenging behaviors and/or social emotional concerns of students within the school setting. Universal strategies become the foundation of support for socially appropriate behaviors for all students and are implemented by teachers or site staff in collaboration with the team. To assist in selecting strategies and monitoring progress refer to the "Universal Behavior Strategies" section and document supports provided.

Universal strategies may continue to be components of intervention plans for students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions and should be considered by the team at all tiers of intervention. Tier 1 strategies create a supportive environment for practice of new behavioral skills.

Strategies Specific to Communicative Function: Even with the best efforts of all, a student may continue to exhibit non-desired behaviors or inappropriate social skills. At this point, it may be helpful to conduct a behavior investigation to identify what the student is trying to communicate with their behavior. All behavior is communication and non-desired behaviors will continue and may intensify if the student does not learn a more appropriate way to meet that need.

BEHAVIOR KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

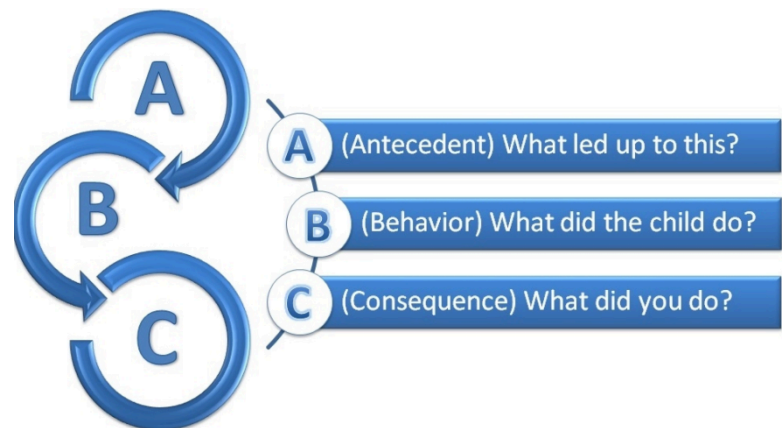
BEHAVIOR AS COMMUNICATION

Behavior is one way that students communicate to satisfy their personal needs. Students repeat an undesirable behavior if it satisfies a need. Therefore, to change behavior, the teacher must determine what need the student is communicating and provide a more acceptable way to meet that need.

ANALYZING BEHAVIOR

A crucial part of determining the reason for an undesirable behavior is observing the context within which the behavior occurs, including all antecedents and consequences. The "ABC's" of behavior analysis are:

- A. **Antecedent**-An event or variable(s) that occurs immediately preceding the behavior, includes: factors in the physical environment, type of instruction, subject or activity, adults and peers present, size of group, noise level, lighting, location, time of day, and factors internal to the student.
- B. **Behavior**-What the student does, says, and does not do.
- C. **Consequence**-What happens after the behavior occurs, includes: actions of the teacher and peers, changes in the environment, and things the student obtains or avoids. Every behavior leads to a response; therefore, behavior is an attempt to attain a response to the situation and to gain a desired consequence.



DETERMINING THE COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTION

The research literature on behavior analysis indicates that there are typically four basic needs, or communicative functions, that an individual is seeking through undesirable behavior:



Escape-Desire to remove themselves from individuals, activities, or settings that are uncomfortable.

Attention-Desire for attention or support from other people. The desire for attention may be from a particular individual or group of individuals or the specific individual may not be important.

Tangible-Desire for a particular item or activity.

Sensory-Desire to get or get away from a particular sensory experience (e.g., auditory, tactile, visual, olfactory, movement, or pressure).

Identifying the communicative function of the undesirable behavior is the most important aspect of planning successful behavioral interventions. By accurately identifying what need the student is communicating the team can determine a more acceptable way for the student to get that need satisfied. Use the following targeted and individualized strategy forms to develop a plan to meet the student's needs as a team.

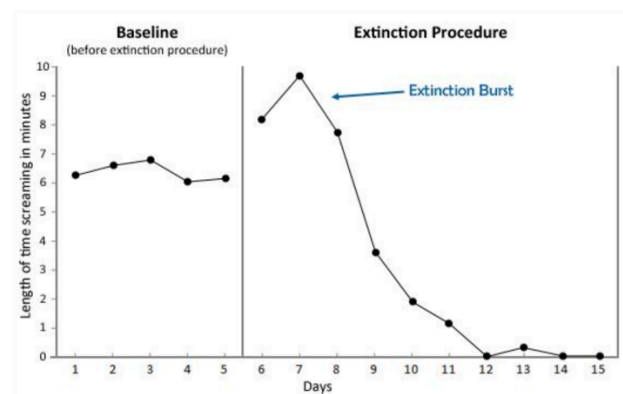
REPLACEMENT BEHAVIORS

Replacement behaviors are behaviors that meet the same need as the behavior of concern, but in a more socially acceptable way. When selecting a replacement behavior, it is important for the skill to be appropriate to the communication and cognitive level of the student, and ideally to exist already within the student's repertoire of behaviors. The focus of intervention is to shape and increase the use of the replacement behavior.

Sometimes, a student may know the appropriate behavior yet may engage in a negative behavior because he/she gets more frequent and intense reinforcement for the undesirable behavior. The teacher can increase the pay-off for the positive behavior and decrease the pay-off for the negative behavior. Some students may not know or be able to perform the appropriate behavior and will need to be systematically taught the new skill. This can be achieved through group instruction to the class, individual instruction to the student, modeling, role play, practice, and/or reinforcement.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANS

Once the communicative function has been accurately identified, a replacement behavior has been selected, and a plan has been developed to address the environment, a common behavior pattern typically emerges. Initially there may appear to be a decrease in the frequency of the negative behavior, followed by a sharp increase. Over time, there appears a sustained slow reduction in the frequency of the negative behavior and an increase in the frequency of the positive behavior. It may take several weeks of implementation for this cycle to be observed; therefore, teachers and staff must have patience.



When behavioral intervention plans prove ineffective, there are generally two reasons: either the plan was not implemented completely or consistently OR the communicative function was not accurately identified. In the latter case, the team may need to reach out for additional support to Behavior Support Services to better identify the need being expressed by the behavior.

UNIVERSAL BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES

- ❑ Encourage participation in the school community: class job, helper role, sports, clubs, extracurricular activities, etc.
- ❑ Establish non-verbal signals (i.e., gestures/visuals) between teacher and student to communicate needs
- ❑ Establish regular teacher-parent communication (e.g., email, phone, shared log, face-to-face conferences); remember working as a collaborative team is most beneficial and report progress as well as needs/issues.
- ❑ Demonstrate how to be a leader and provide leadership responsibilities.
- ❑ Give student opportunities to show off good work or strengths.
- ❑ Have a peer model appropriate behavior.
- ❑ Help parent/caregiver set up a home reward/management system.
- ❑ Teach how to get attention the right way and limit attention for inappropriate attempts.
- ❑ Immediately recognize positive behaviors.
- ❑ Implement reinforcement systems in the classroom and home to build accountability across environments.
- ❑ Match learning tasks with learning style and strengths.
- ❑ Model positive thinking and attribution statements (provide verbal thought bubbles for student from his/her perspective-“I can do this”).
- ❑ Model, teach, and reinforce anger management strategies (e.g., deep breaths, providing self with pressure, taking a mental break, etc.)
- ❑ Move seat to optimal learning location.
- ❑ Offer choices of ways to perform work (e.g., sitting/standing, pencil/crayon, etc.)
- ❑ Organize playground activities (e.g., structured play activities) to reduce playground issues associated with poor social skills
- ❑ Structure and teach transitions (e.g., establish predictable routines, provide transitions warnings, etc.) to reduce inappropriate behavior during these times.
- ❑ Pair student with older or younger students for structured activities, with emphasis on social skills.
- ❑ Post, model, and practice, expected behaviors (use PBIS Matrices and lessons for support).
- ❑ Praise others for appropriate behavior using specific language of what you want to see more of.
- ❑ Provide assignments that match instructional level.
- ❑ Provide break for relaxation or movement.
- ❑ Remind student to use their words (not body) to communicate and create contrived communication opportunities.
- ❑ Model and role-play social interactions throughout the day.
- ❑ Schedule time as a way of accessing preferred staff (i.e., admin, counselor, office staff, etc.).
- ❑ Survey or interview to determine interests and set contingencies using simple language like “first ____, then ____.”
- ❑ Teach effective learning behavior (e.g., eyes on teacher, working to completion, ask for help, on task behaviors, etc.)
- ❑ Provide a high rate of verbal praise to redirections/reprimands (ideal is 4 positives to each negative).
- ❑ Keep unstructured time to a minimum.
- ❑ Teach how to identify feelings.
- ❑ Teach how to set short term daily goals and model checking in with one’s progress.
- ❑ Teach relaxation techniques.
- ❑ Teach self-monitoring and self-management skills
- ❑ Teach self-talk or inner coaching strategies.
- ❑ Teach the link between behavior and outcome/consequence
- ❑ Teach the link between effort and outcome
- ❑ Use “wait time” after providing a choice to avoid a power struggle
- ❑ Use creative formats to engage student learning
- ❑ Use music to help class focus during independent work activities.
- ❑ Work cooperatively to create group expectations and build social skills.
- ❑ Organize the classroom to support efficient gathering of materials/tools and room for transitions.
- ❑ Use active supervision to ensure high rates of teacher attention.
- ❑ Discipline and redirect behavior from a calm and caring place using brief and targeting language.
- ❑ Establish a relationship/build rapport with the student to build trust and meet attention needs.
- ❑ Utilize site-support team (e.g., principal, teachers, psychologist, counselor, resource specialist, etc.)

TARGETED STRATEGIES BY COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTION

Even after a student has received high quality Tier 1 interventions and some targeted Tier 2 interventions, behaviors may persist if the communicative function of the behavior has not been accurately identified. It may be helpful at this point to conduct a brief functional behavior investigation.

All behavior is a form of communication; we use behavior to meet our needs. Behaviors continue and even intensify in inappropriate ways if the student isn't taught new skills to meet their needs in more appropriate ways. To maximize staff efforts and increase the likelihood of success the first step towards individualizing or targeting behavior interventions is making an informed guess regarding the communicative function of the student's behavior.

Document chosen strategies either informally or through the SST/IEP process. To determine if interventions are successful: take baseline data, note start date and implement with fidelity for two weeks, during this time take data and review progress with the team, then determine effectiveness and ongoing plan.

ESCAPE

Changes to Assignment

- ☐ Adapt length of lesson
- ☐ Allow choice of activities within subject
- ☐ Break assignment into segments
- ☐ Provide more challenging work
- ☐ Change the level of task/number of demands
- ☐ Simplify task, reduce difficulty, shorten length
- ☐ Check student's work frequently for understanding
- ☐ Draw connections between the work and the student's life (e.g., life goals, interests, college requirements, job responsibilities)
- ☐ Alternate assignments between easy/more difficult tasks
- ☐ Provide different modes of completing work (oral, written, pictures, graphs)
- ☐ Provide student a list of all work that must be completed in the hour/period/day and let him/her choose the order (and reinforcement)
- ☐ Use high interest lessons at ability level
- ☐ Allow student to type of tape responses
- ☐ Provide multiple choice assignments/assessments.

Changes to Configuration/Proximity

- ☐ Allow student to move seat away from non-preferred peer
- ☐ Allow students to select groups to work in
- ☐ Allow student to work alone, if appropriate
- ☐ Allow student to work in another teacher's room, library, etc.
- ☐ Change proximity to other people
- ☐ Reduce the number of people in group
- ☐ Pair with strong peer for support
- ☐ Move student closer to teacher support

Changes to Schedule

- ☐ Change class schedule

- ☐ Provide a timer to set for short periods to structure work
- ☐ Provide self-monitoring checklist
- ☐ Provide schedule of activities
- ☐ Provide reminders of time allotments
- ☐ Allow for alternate times to work on assignment, if appropriate

Changes to Emotional Supports

- ☐ Encourage student to write down feelings or difficulties
- ☐ Maintain a safe classroom where it is okay to make mistakes and ask for help
- ☐ Offer reinforcement (chosen by student) for completion of non-preferred task (develop criteria for fading reinforcement to praise systematically)
- ☐ Offer support (i.e., re-teachings, ability to ask for help, etc.) if requested
- ☐ Prompt student prior to a stressful situation letting them know that this may be challenging, but they can ask for help
- ☐ Provide a limited number of "escapes" (i.e., breaks/cool downs) per day/week
- ☐ Provide appropriate escape (break or change) if requested appropriately
- ☐ Give feedback for effort
- ☐ Develop work completion contract with access to reward/preferred activities for following contract
- ☐ Provide rewards for finishing all assignments
- ☐ Provide safe way for students to let the teacher know if they feel uncomfortable with an assignment
- ☐ Reinforce other student who are working
- ☐ Teach breathing/relaxation techniques to reduce tension
- ☐ When student requests escape, acknowledge as soon as possible and respond/mediate

ATTENTION

Attention from Students

- Allow older student to lead lessons, discussions
- Give time for student to “check in” with others
- Encourage other students to respond to appropriate attempts for attention
- Pair with a good peer model
- Plan supervised socialization period in schedule
- Provide opportunities to shine by sharing particular talents/interests
- Use classroom buddies to provide appropriate attention
- Use socially competent peers to model and reinforce appropriate behavior

Positive Attention from Adults

- Allow each student opportunities for recognition and leadership
- Provide opportunities to be involved in lesson (i.e., hold or pass out materials, be a leader)
- Provide student opportunity to get attention at the end of a lesson
- Reduce size of groups so student gets more frequent turns
- Assign class jobs on a rotational basis
- Promptly respond to request for leadership or remind of upcoming turn
- Allow student to request time with an adult (e.g., preferred teacher/staff, counselor, admin, etc.)
- Call home on a good day
- Establish communication procedures with family/parents
- Increase the rate of attention/praise (ideal is 4 positives to each redirection/reprimand)

- Frequent gestural praise (i.e., high fives, pats on back, handshakes, fist bumps, etc.)
- Greet the student each day
- Provide a daily check in with student (and follow up throughout the day or end of the day if possible)
- Provide extra time with teacher to connect (10x2-for ten days spend 2 minutes on an activity or talking about something of the student’s choice)
- Provide frequent feedback on positive behavior (be specific, “I like how you chose to draw tallies to help you solve that math problem, that was a smart choice.”)

Corrective Attention from Adults

- Allow forced choices to address anger issues (1. provide two choices & “if you don’t choose I will choose for you”, 2. think time-a timer is helpful, 3a. if student doesn’t make a choice, you choose and follow through 3b. if the student chooses; praise, support their follow through).
- Correct calmly, immediately and respectfully
- Interact in a welcoming manner
- Provide opportunity to check in with counselor/principal
- Include principal, counselor, preferred adults in sharing success
- “Walk away” from student rather than engage in power struggle (this does not mean giving in or not following through with demands)
- Give “wait time” after making a request
- Provide opportunity to take a break, and then set time to check-in with student

TANGIBLE

Obtaining Objects

- Teach and acknowledge appropriate requests for items
- Attempt to provide comparable tangible items if requested appropriately
- Consider satiation and proximity of possible desired items
- Encourage teaching first, then as a contingency for access
- Have more than one popular item available
- Keep items out of sight/reach, rotate access of items
- Provide access to desired item, with a timer
- Provide supervision/guidelines for use of items which may come under dispute

- Use a timer to structure access to preferred items
- Use a visual schedule to let students know when their turn will come

Obtaining food

- Provide ready access to inexpensive food items (e.g., crackers, water, etc.)
- Given opportunity to finish lunch or snack before starting class/lesson
- Give opportunity to purchase snack on campus
- Remind student of upcoming lunch, snack, etc.

Avoiding Sensations

- Allow opportunities for student to adjust their seats, positions, etc. if needed for sensory reasons
- Allow scheduled stretch breaks
- Allow to stand to work
- Allow use of “wiggle cushion”, heavy rubber bands, “squish balls”, weighted lap pad, movable chair, slant board, bean bag chairs, etc. (it is important to teach the student how to appropriately use these tools-they are not toys but tools)
- Be conscious of sensory elements in the environment that may be overwhelming and attempt to regulate (lower lights, less noise, sound machine, less things on the wall, eliminate clutter, students in smaller groups, implement voice level management system with students, etc.)
- Mediate the sensory need when student asks appropriately (make environmental change, remove it, provide headphones, change of seating, reduce volume, etc.)
- Move desk away from noxious stimuli
- Provide breaks to re-group
- Provide immediate relief when student indicates that he is overwhelmed (e.g., allow student to go to a quiet area, walk with adult, turn off lights, ask others to quiet down, provide headphones, etc.)
- Provide large motor activity (i.e., have student run laps, walk the playground, hang on monkey bars, pushups, etc.)
- Start the day with some floor calisthenics for students to get some deep pressure in joints
- Provide reinforcement for tolerating sensory issues in longer intervals

- Provide sensory materials in regular routine to maintain optimum learning level
- Reduce distractions
- Talk to the student about the next environment (which he dislikes) and how soon it is coming (to help prepare him)
- Use multi-sensory instructional strategies
- Allow student to run an errand involved heavy work; take a box of books or wear a backpack

Obtaining Sensations

- Allow student to walk around while reading
- Allow to move seat toward desired element (light, heat, good smell)
- Allow younger student to do some work while lying on the carpet
- Give opportunity to “work off” energy when requested
- Give opportunities for preferred sensory stimulation (i.e., music, object while on task)
- Give student preferred item to hold during lessons (younger child-stuffed animal, pillow, etc.)
- Provide access to bathroom pass
- Provide healthy snacks (if hungry)
- Provide selection of activities for student to choose from when bored/overwhelmed (drawing, classroom chore, stretch in the back of the room)
- Try to provide the same sensation (tactile, brightness, smell, sounds, etc.) that student is trying to maintain in non-intrusive ways.
- Allow student to leave jacket hood “up” if on-task