Preventing Behavior Escalation to Avoid Dangerous Situations

South Dakota Department of Special Education
MTSS/PBIS
Dr. Kari Oyen, Pat Hubert
Learning Objectives

• Why de-escalate?
• Escalation cycle
• Verbal de-escalation strategies
• Responding to kids that struggle with escalation
Why de-escalate?

Most famous escalation of the 1980’s...
Why de-escalate?

Restraints and Seclusion Abuse
School is Not Supposed to Hurt: 
Investigative Report on Abusive Restraint and Seclusion in Schools

National Disability Rights Network Report on Seclusion and Restraint in U.S. Schools
http://www.napas.org/
SB 46
What will it allow and prohibit?

ENTITLED, An Act to require school districts to adopt a policy limiting the use of restraint and seclusion.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA:

Section 1. That chapter 13-32 be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read:

The school board of each school district shall adopt or revise a school district policy for school district employees on the use of restraint and seclusion. The policy shall contain the following provisions:

(1) A procedure for notifying the parent or guardian of the student, unless the student is emancipated, of an incident requiring the use of restraint or seclusion;

(2) A prohibition on the use of prone restraint, defined as physical pressure applied to any part of the student's body to keep the student in a face down position on the floor or other surface, except when the use is necessary and reasonable in manner and moderate in degree; and

(3) A prohibition on the use of involuntary confinement of a student locked alone in a room, unless there is a clear and present danger.

An Act to require school districts to adopt a policy limiting the use of restraint and seclusion.
Terminology:

“RestRAINT”

*Some method of restricting another’s freedom of movement.*

Three Types of Restraint Procedures:

1. Mechanical
2. Physical (aka Ambulatory or Manual)
3. Chemical
Physical Prompt vs. Restraint

• The term “prompt” most often means support or guidance that allows a student to be successful at starting or completing a behavior. It is a teaching strategy used in errorless learning.

• For example, “a brief, physical prompt is provided to interrupt or prevent aggression, self-abuse, or property destruction.”

• Restraint is NOT a teaching strategy but a safety measure used to stop a behavior.
Seclusion
Terminology: Seclusion

- "Seclusion"
  - Some form of isolation (i.e., no adult present) usually involuntary placement
  - Locked room or secured area
  - Physically prevented from leaving

- Seclusion does not include allowing an individual to take a break from an activity, to move to a quieter or less stimulating location or to enjoy privacy.
Seclusion Rooms
Risks

- Emotional injuries
- Physical injuries
- Medical conditions can increase risk of death
- Some physical characteristics associated with specific disabilities
- SANCTIONS!
Ultimate Risk: *Death*

- **Any** restraint that restricts the free movement of the chest or diaphragm may restrict breathing and contribute to positional or restraint associated asphyxia; the leading cause death from restraint
- Restricted respirations cause cardiac arrhythmia due to oxygen deprivation; death can result
Preventing Inappropriate Use

An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure
- Benjamin Franklin -
Solutions
1. Get Policy in Place

• Share, discuss, train.

Example policy adopted by ASBSD:

Policy
RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

I. Policy Rationale and Philosophy:
Reasonable efforts should be made to prevent the use of restraint and the use of seclusion. A non-aversive effective behavioral system such as Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) should be used to create a learning environment that promotes the use of evidence-based behavioral interventions, thus enhancing academic and social behavioral outcomes for all students.

The District believes that the school environment should be one in which the care, safety, and welfare of all students and staff members are priorities. Efforts to promote positive interactions and solutions to potential conflict should be extensive. In the event that an individual’s behavior presents a threat of imminent harm to self or others the use of approved physical intervention or seclusion strategies to maintain a safe environment may be used as a last resort.
2. Give Staff the Skills They Need to be Successful in PREVENTION
VERBAL DE-ESCALATION

HOW TO IDENTIFY AND DE-ESCALATE AN AGITATED PERSON WHILE KEEPING YOURSELF SAFE.

Adapted from the Indiana Department of Education, many thanks for their efforts.
Crossing the Line into Crisis Situations

*It is important to develop strategies for ensuring personal safety in potentially problem situations.*

- In any conflict, you have a choice
# Seven Stages of Behavior Escalation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>The student .............</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Calm</td>
<td>Is relatively calm and cooperative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Trigger</td>
<td>Experiences unresolved conflicts that serve to trigger the student’s behavior to escalate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Agitation</td>
<td>Is increasingly unfocused and upset.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Acceleration</td>
<td>As the conflict remains unresolved, the student actually FOCUSES on the conflict.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Peak</td>
<td>Is out of control and exhibits the most severe behavior.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 De-escalation</td>
<td>Having vented in the peak stage, the student displays confusion in this phase, but the severity of the peak behavior subsides.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Recovery</td>
<td>Often wishes to participate in <em>non-engagement</em> activities such as going to the nurse or counselor’s office, or putting her head down.</td>
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The Escalation Cycle

- **Behavior Intensity**
  - Calm
  - Trigger
  - Agitation
  - Acceleration
  - Peak
  - De-escalation
  - Recovery

- **Time**

- **Verbal De-Escalation**
Phase One: Calm

- Student is cooperative
- Accepts corrective feedback
- Follows directives
- Sets personal goals
- Ignores distractions
- Accepts praise
- On-task
Four Strategies to keep calm:

1. Classroom Structure
2. Quality Instruction
3. Managing Attention
4. Teaching Behavior
Phase Two: Trigger

Student experiences a series of unresolved problems

- Conflicts/Failure
- Changes in routine
- Pressure
- Ineffective problem solving
- Facing correction procedures
Strategies: Trigger

Intervention is focused on prevention and redirection.

• Increase opportunities for success
• Respond to students exhibiting expected behavior
• Reinforce the student’s first on task response
• Intermittently reinforce on-task behavior
Phase Three: Agitation

Overall behavior is unfocused and distracted.

- Off-task
- Questioning/Arguing
- Out of seat
- Bothering others
- Social withdrawal
- Physical characteristics
3

Strategies: Agitation

What to do before a behavior escalates

• Achieve eye contact.
• Use the student’s name.
• Use a non-verbal signal/Silent communication.
• Do the unexpected (redirect/reinforce).
• Get them to think – give them time to decide.
• Reduce distance – use proximity.
• Give more “start” requests instead of “stop” requests.
• Make non-emotional instead of emotional requests.
• Use the “broken record” technique.
Phase Four: Acceleration

Overall behavior is staff-engaging leading to further negative interactions.

- Questioning/Arguing/Threats
- Noncompliance and defiance
- Provocation of others
- Rule violations
# Strategies: Acceleration

Intervention is focused on safety.

- Remove all triggering factors
- Avoid escalating prompts
- Maintain calmness, respect and detachment
- Approach the student in a nonthreatening manner
- Utilize non-confrontational limit-setting procedures
Phase Five: Peak

Overall behavior is out of control

• Physical aggression
• Severe tantrums
• Property destruction
• Self-injury
• Running, screaming
Strategies: Peak

Intervention is focused on safety

- Focus is on crisis management
  - implement your plan (contact the office, clear the room, etc.)

- Safe strategies

- Behavioral Emergency
  - Assessment of Risk Factors
  - Behavior Support Plan
Short-term interventions:

- Isolation or removal of involved student
- Allow time for student to “cool down”
- Removal of other students
Phase Six: De-Escalation

Overall behavior shows confusion and lack of focus.

- Confusion
- Withdrawal
- Denial
- Blaming others
- May respond to concrete directions
Strategies: De-Escalation

Intervention is focused on monitoring for re-escalation of behavior

- Monitor for health/safety of all involved
- Avoid blaming
- Allow time and space
- Engage in independent work
- Cool-down time
- Determine *appropriate* time to debrief
Phase Seven: Recovery

Overall behavior shows an eagerness for busy work and a reluctance to interact.

- Eagerness for independent work
- Subdued behavior
- Defensive behavior
- Sleep
7 Strategies: Recovery

Intervention focuses on returning to normal activities

- Positively reinforce any displays of appropriate behavior
- Debrief/rehearse problem solving routine
- Follow through with consequences
7 Strategies: Recovery

Effective consequences...

Does the consequence

• Model, instruct or teach a more appropriate behavior?
• Interfere with the flow of the lesson?
• Give the learner the choice to redirect and receive instruction?

Is the consequence effective?
Effective verbal de-escalation happens throughout the cycle!
Verbal De-escalation Techniques

• Reasoning with an angry person is not possible.
  – only objective is to reduce the level of agitation so that discussion becomes possible

• De-escalation techniques are inherently abnormal
  – They go against our natural ‘fight or flight’ reflexes

• Remain calm and centered.
• Be professionally detached.
• Requires practice to become useful
Verbal De-escalation tips

• Do not be defensive even if comments, curses, or insults are directed at you. They are not about you.

• Be honest. Lying to calm someone down may lead to future escalation if the dishonesty if discovered. If possible, wait to convey further upsetting news.

• Explain limits and rules in an authoritative, firm, but respectful tone. Give choices, where possible, in which both alternatives are safe ones.

  “Would you like to continue our meeting calmly, or would you prefer to stop now and continue tomorrow?”
So how do we intervene?

- Prevent
- Teach
- Reinforce
- De-Escalate

- AND use functional assessment to effectively intervene!
Functions of Behavior

- All behavior is a form of communication
  - To GET
  - To GET AWAY

ATTENTION

GET

TANGIBLE (objects & activities)

GET AWAY

SENSORY

The behavior will accomplish this!
Behavioral Errors

• Why?
  • “Skill Deficits”--Students do not have appropriate skills
  • “Performance Deficits”--Students have skills, but do not know when to use skills or choose not to use them in specific situations
  • Students have not been taught specific classroom procedures & routines
  • Skills are not taught in context
  • Skills are not rewarded & encouraged consistently
5 Rules of Responding

1. Don’t direct peer pressure to a misbehavior publicly when the matter can be handled gently in private.

2. Do move toward the student creating an aura of personal contact.

3. Develop nonverbal cues.

4. Identify the misbehavior after the reprimand and direct the student toward the desired activity.

5. Direct the sanction to a specific person.
Ten Variables that Affect Compliance

1. Stop using a question format
2. Reduce distance
3. Achieve eye contact
4. Limit to two requests
5. Reduce loudness of request
6. Give the student time
7. Cue alternative
8. Flat tone, words spaced
9. Describe minimal compliance to exit
10. Reinforce
Let’s talk about JUNK BEHAVIOR!!!!!

Any age-typical behavior that may be annoying, but is not harmful to self, others, property, or animals. WHY????????

- To get you to respond or react.
- To make you angry (get even).
- To get you to give in to them.
- To get you to comfort them.
- To make you go away.
- To get you to do it for them.
- Because it is just a habit.
- Because it is what kids do at this age.
Questions...

BABY BLUES

Okay... Does everyone understand this chapter?

Yes!

Have you all finished the sample problems?

Yes!

Are there any questions about the homework?

No!

What's this chapter about?

How am I supposed to know??
Contact us!

- Kari Oyen: kari.oyen@usd.edu
- Pat Hubert: pat.hubert@k12.sd.us