

Book Study

Prepared by the

Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) Project

***Managing the Cycle of Acting-Out Behavior in the Classroom,
Second Edition***Geoff Colvin and Terrance M. Scott
(Corwin, 2015)**Book Description:**

This book describes strategies for classroom teachers to use in interrupting or managing the cycle of acting-out behavior for students with serious behavior problems. The book has four sections. The first emphasizes the importance of using a proactive approach within a multi-tiered system of prevention. The second describes a seven-phase model that explains the successive interactions of an escalating behavior chain. Section three describes strategies for addressing each phase of the acting-out cycle. The intent of the strategies is to interrupt the cycle at that phase and prevent the escalation of acting-out behavior. The fourth section provides a summary and a case study of how to develop a behavior intervention plan to address all the stages of the acting-out cycle. The appendices provide checklists and forms to use in data analysis and intervention planning.

Target Audience:

- Structuring teams
- Implementing teams
- Behavior
- Building Leadership Teams
- General Staff
- Tier 1 teachers
- Tier 2 teachers
- Tier 3 teachers
- Elementary Team
- Secondary Team

SECTION ONE: A PROACTIVE APPROACH

-Chapter 1. A Proactive Approach—Emphasizing Student Success-

Brief Overview:

Student success is the best predictor of future success. It is the teacher’s responsibility to find the recipe for creating student success by using strategies that have been proven to provide a high probability of success. Failure needs to be addressed early before a pattern of failure is created.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the big ideas for Chapter 1. Do you agree with all of the Big Idea statements? Why or why not?
2. Describe the snowball analogy for student success or failure.
3. How does the logic of prevention, early intervention, and tiered levels of interventions apply to an individual student in the same way it applies to school-wide PBIS?
4. What does probability have to do with intervention selection?

SECTION TWO: A MODEL

-Chapter 2. Analyzing Acting-Out Behavior-

Brief Overview:

This chapter provides an example of escalating behavior ending in serious acting-out behavior. The importance of considering prerequisite academic skills is discussed and the influence of successive interactions in an escalating behavior chain is described.

Discussion Questions:

1. The author says the example of acting-out behavior is a *behavior chain*. What do you think he means by that?
2. Why do you think it is important to focus first on prerequisite academic skills when looking at acting-out behavior?
3. What are some signs of agitation?
4. Why is it important to look at an escalating behavior chain as successive interactions between teacher and student that are a series of “my turn—your turn” events?

-Chapter 3. A Seven-Phase Model for Describing Acting-Out Behavior-**Brief Overview:**

This chapter describes a seven-phase model for acting-out behavior where the phases first increase in intensity to the peak phase, then decrease in intensity to recovery. The behavioral characteristics of each phase are provided, along with an illustration.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the seven phases of the acting-out cycle?
2. Describe some school-based and some non-school based Triggers.
3. What are compound Triggers?
4. What are some increases in behavior that reflect agitation? What are some decreases in behavior that reflect Agitation?
5. What is the difference between Agitation (phase three) and Acceleration (phase four)?
6. What are the characteristics of De-escalation (phase six)?
7. What are the characteristics of Recovery (phase seven)?
8. Have members of the book study group fill out Appendix A on pages 206 and 207 about a student with whom they experienced an escalating behavior chain. Discuss how each teacher's reported experience was similar to or different from the examples for each phase provided in Chapter 3.

SECTION THREE: STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING EACH PHASE OF THE ACTING-OUT CYCLE**-Chapter 4. Structuring the Classroom to Enhance Instruction: Phase One-****Brief Overview:**

A critical strategy for assisting students who display acting out behavior is to provide a classroom environment that is stable, positive, and predictable to promote the Calm phase. This chapter provides examples of proactive preparation strategies for structuring the classroom.

Discussion Questions:

1. How is the design of the physical space of the classroom related to maintaining the Calm phase (phase one)?
2. How is a schedule related to maintaining the Calm phase (phase one)?
3. What are the steps of an instruction plan for teaching classroom expectations? What is the main difference between teaching behavior to secondary and elementary students?
4. What are the advantages of establishing classroom routines? What classroom routines have you developed for your classroom?
5. Discuss the examples of behavior management practices.
6. Why is it important to assess student skill levels to determine the curriculum?

-Chapter 5. Instructional Practices for Engaging Students: Phase One-**Brief Overview:**

This chapter describes important instruction practices for the major parts of a lesson (opening, main body, and closing), and assumes a reciprocal relationship between effective delivery of instruction and on-task behavior and cooperation.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are important practices described by the authors for the opening of a lesson? Do you use any of these practices in your own teaching?
2. What are important practices described by the authors for the main body of a lesson? Do you use any of these practices in your own teaching?
3. What are important practices described by the authors for the closing of a lesson? Do you use any of these practices in your own teaching?
4. Of the instructional practices described in this chapter, which do you think are most important? Why?
5. Ask volunteers from the study group to complete Appendix G as a self-study of use of important instructional practices. Have the study group assist with developing and implementing an action plan based on the results of the self-study.

-Chapter 6: Precorrection Strategies for Triggers: Phase Two-**Brief Overview:**

Triggers set the occasion for inappropriate behavior that may escalate. This chapter describes first level strategies for addressing triggers, through the combined use of both antecedents and consequences. Because consequences tend to be reactive and may escalate behavior, the focus of this chapter is on antecedents, in the hope that the problem behavior can be preempted and replaced.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the difference between first level and second level strategies?
2. What is precorrection? What is the difference between correction and precorrection?
3. What are the seven precorrection steps for managing predictable behavior problems?
4. Describe an important characteristic or practice for each of the seven steps.
5. Discuss the case study on pages 96 and 97. What do you think of the example precorrection checklist in Box 6.1 on page 97?
6. If some study group members are willing, try out the checklist in Appendix H. Is this simple form helpful in organizing your thinking about a student's behavior?

-Chapter 7. Functional Behavioral Assessment for Triggers: Phase Two-**Brief Overview:**

This chapter describes a simplified version of a functional behavior assessment, needed for selecting behavior interventions. The FBA is described in the context of the Trigger phase (phase two), but the information obtained will be useful in all the phases of the cycle of acting-out behavior.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important to determine the function of problem behavior before developing an intervention plan?
2. How do you conduct Step One: Determining the Predictability of Behavior?
3. What do you do during Step Two: Determine the Function of Behavior?
4. How do you conduct Step Three: Determine and Teach Appropriate Replacement Behavior?
5. What do you do during Step Four: Create an Environment to Facilitate Success?
6. Describe Step Five: Develop Functional Consequences.

-Chapter 8. Teaching Social Skills for Managing Triggers: Phase Two-**Brief Overview:**

Teaching social skills is a strategy for managing triggers that set off problem behaviors. It is important both to teach appropriate social behavior across the school and to provide explicit and direct instruction for those students who are lacking in social skills or who have learned inappropriate social interactions.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is social skills development important?
2. What are some social skills assessment procedures?
3. Describe the decisions related to scheduling and logistics that need to be made prior to initiating social skills instruction.
4. Why are generalization strategies important? Describe generalization strategies for prior to, during, and after instruction.
5. What are group management strategies?
6. Discuss the seven major assumptions underlying social skills instruction (see Box 8.4 on page 133). Do you agree or disagree with these assumptions? Why?
7. What are the important components of teaching social skills?
8. Explore the checklists in Appendices J, K, L, M, and N. If members of the study group volunteer to try out a checklist, have them discuss their experience with the group.

-Chapter 9. Calming Strategies for Managing Agitation: Phase Three-**Brief Overview:**

This chapter described strategies for managing student agitation. Some of these strategies provide emotional support and some are instructional accommodations, both of which are designed to avoid further escalation of the acting-out cycle. If successful, they have the added benefit of enabling students to re-engage in instruction.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is teacher empathy an important supportive strategy?
2. Conduct a jigsaw activity where each person in the book study group selects one of the strategies for managing agitation and describes it to the rest of the group.
3. As a group, discuss which of these strategies you have used in the classroom and the outcomes you experienced with that strategy.
4. Describe student self-management. When should it be taught?
5. What is behavior momentum? What are the steps for successful use of this strategy?
6. What are the two possible problems described in this chapter? What are the remedies described? Do you agree that those remedies would be useful in addressing these problems?

-Chapter 10. Defusing Strategies for Managing Acceleration: Phase Four-**Brief Overview:**

During the acceleration phase the focus is on the way teachers respond. The strategies require the adult to have a calm, planned, respectful and detached manner. It is important to present choices in a way that puts responsibility on the student. The chapter also describes the importance of debriefing.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are escalating prompts? Why are they so difficult to avoid in this phase?
2. Discuss the examples of escalating prompts. Have you ever found yourself engaging in these behaviors? If so, what was the outcome of these behaviors?
3. What is the most powerful response that staff can engage in? How do you achieve calmness?
4. Why are respect and detachment important?
5. What are the guidelines for approaching a student in a non-threatening manner (Box 10.2, page 161)? Do you think you can remember and engage in those behaviors when the student is in the acceleration phase?
6. Describe the steps for the non-confrontational limit-setting strategy. What is the key to managing these situations?
7. Why is debriefing important? What are the steps in the debriefing process?

-Chapter 11. Safe Management Strategies for Peak Behavior: Phase Five-**Brief Overview:**

This chapter describes how a school can develop written emergency procedures, including attending to prerequisite steps, developing a crisis team, preparing an action response plan, and identifying important follow-up activities.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the guiding principles in dealing with safety issues?
2. Discuss the prerequisites for establishing safe schools. Are they in place in your school?
3. What are major parts of a school crisis action response plan?
4. Consider using Appendices O, P, and Q to review your school's crisis action response plan or emergency plan. If no one in your book study group is familiar with this plan, determine who could come and provide information about the plan.

-Chapter 12. Reintegration Strategies for De-escalation: Phase Six-**Brief Overview:**

This chapter describes a series of steps to bring students down from the serious acting-out behavior of the peak phase to resumption of normal activities. These steps include (1) isolate the student, (2) decide whether to send the student home or retain the student, (3) engage in independent work with clear criteria, (4) complete exit paperwork as appropriate, (5) determine consequences, (6) restore the environment as applicable, and (7) resume the regular schedule. The primary purpose of these steps is to help the student regain composure and provide a focus on cooperation.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the guidelines for implementing the step of isolating the student? Why is it important that the student be supervised?
2. What are the guidelines for ensuring that the independent work assignment will assist the student to recover?
3. Review the behavior forms provided in Appendices R and S. Discuss the authors' description of how completion of a behavior form should be handled. Why do you think they advise not being in a hurry for the student to complete the form?
4. Discuss the supervisor behavior described in Box 12.1 on page 190. Why do you think adequately completing item #1: "What was your behavior?" is so important?
5. Discuss steps five, six, and seven. Why do you think they are important for moving the student from the peak phase to the recovery phase?

-Chapter 13. Resumption Strategies for Managing Recovery: Phase Seven-**Brief Overview:**

The main objective for the strategies described in this chapter is to continue the transition from De-escalation (phase six) to full participation in classroom activities. A debriefing process is described to help the student problem solve and increase the likelihood they can respond appropriately to future events.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are potential problems when the student returns to the regular classroom setting?
2. What are the transition steps? What is their purpose?
3. What are the three essential features of the debriefing strategy?
4. How should a debriefing plan be used? When should it be used?
5. Review the guidelines in Box 13.1 on page 197 and the example of a completed debriefing form (Appendix T) on the next page. Do you think the form should include other questions? Why or why not?

SECTION FOUR: CLOSING**-Chapter 14. Summary and Case Study-****Brief Overview:**

This chapter provides a summary of the previous chapters, and provides a case study to illustrate the acting-out cycle and how the strategies for each phase of the cycle might be applied.

Discussion Questions:

1. Review the summary on page 144. Do you think any of the strategies or forms would be useful in your school? How can you ensure that those strategies and forms are put into practice?
2. Discuss the case study. Do you agree with the strategies selected? How might you modify or adjust the example behavior support plan (Box 14.1 on pages 203 and 204)?