

Practical Approaches to Behavioral Challenges

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Individuals with problem behaviors are often excluded due to the presence of challenging behaviors.

Tip One

- **Know that there is no categorical approach to behavior supports. Accept the fact that there is no single recipe for handling problem behavior, because each individual and situation is different. Must understand/know individual and context.**

“What do we do when...?”

Tip Two

- **Recognize that crisis management is only a short-term solution to problem behavior. It does not necessarily equate long term behavior change.**

Tip Three

- **Realize that a crisis management approach may actually strengthen/reinforce negative behavior.**

Tip Four

- **Always choose your battles. Certain behaviors may be better to ignore. At the very least a/ways respond with a neutral affect and keep words to an absolute minimum.**

Tip Five

- **A punishment approach does not address the function of the behavior and the effects will likely not generalize. Most important, focus on self-control rather than adult-controlled behavioral supports.**

Tip Six

- **Think prevention, rather than reaction when it comes to dealing with problem behavior. The best time to address behavior is when behavior is not happening.**

Tip Seven

- **Know that in order to be maximally effective, a behavior support plan should evolve from a thorough assessment of both the problem behavior and the context in which it occurred. This requires a team approach.**

Behavioral Support Team

- **Group who continually meets to problem solve, support and guide.**
- **Who needs to be involved....**
 - **Members from all environments in which the individual interacts.**
 - **People who know the individual well and have a vested interest.**
 - **People who know supports (and methods of accessing them) as well as potential barriers.**
 - **Members who can allocate personnel and fiscal resources.**

Tip Eight

- **Remember that behavior serves a purpose for the individual, and that our job is to figure out that purpose.**

Tip Nine

- **There are two types of antecedents. For students on the autism spectrum, slow triggers or settings events are often the antecedents that are most important to consider.**

Slow Triggers/Setting Events

- **Conditions that increase the likelihood that behavior will occur.**
 - Anxiety/Biological Issues
 - Schedule/Staff changes
 - Medications changed/missed
 - Irregular sleep patterns
 - Illness/Impending Illness
 - Missed meals
 - Excessive hot/cold temperatures
 - Argument/fight with classmates/parents/teachers
 - Difficulties on the Bus
 - Skills Deficits
 - Lack of Communication System
 - Sensory Issues

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Tip Ten

- **When looking at consequences, it is important to understand the consequence from the perspective of the individual and with this in mind, realize that we may intentionally or unintentionally reinforce problematic behaviors. Focus on positive consequences in terms of those things that maintain or strengthen behavior.**

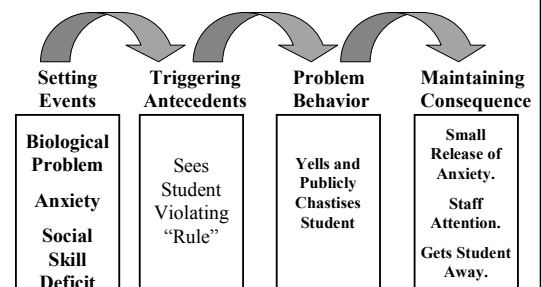
Tip Eleven

- **Realize that not everything impacting an individual's behavior is related to their "autism." Sometimes it is not about autism, but rather resources, quality of life issues or other events in an individual's life.**

Tip Twelve

- **Behavior support plans should logically evolve from hypotheses you develop through the functional behavioral assessment process.**

Hypothesis Statement (Problem Behavior Pathway)



Tip Thirteen

- **Make the teaching of alternative responses an integral part of your behavior response/plan. In truth, IEP goals should be stated in the positive and not the negative.**

Teaching Alternative Behaviors

- **Specific alternative or replacement behaviors that must be made as efficient and effective as the problem behavior(s).**

Alternative Skills

- **Problem-Solving Skills**
- **Choice-Making Ability**
- **Anger Control/Relaxation Training**
- **Self-Management/Control**
- **Communication**
- **Social Skills**

Tip Fourteen

- **Utilize effective instructional approaches when teaching alternative skills. Some of these include the following:**
 - **Provide Choice**
 - **Incidental Teaching**
 - **Organization**
 - **Increase Praise/Rapport**
 - **Minimize Unstructured Time**
 - **Provide Clear Expectations**
 - **Increase Predictability-Visual Supports**
 - **Build Routines**
 - **Direct and Specific Feedback**
 - **Direct and Specific Instruction**

Tip Fifteen

- **The ultimate focus should be on long term strategies that support families and individuals, and that maintain behavioral change.**

Examples of Long Term Strategies

- **An Acceptable Mode of Communication**
- **Focus on Self-Monitoring/Self-Management**
- **Natural Supports**
- **Circles of Friends**
- **Person Centered Planning Process**
- **Families Linked to Community Resources**

Tip Sixteen

- **Behavior support plans must be doable within the contexts in which an individual lives, works and attends schools.**

Tip Seventeen

- **The outcome of a good behavior support plan is not so much that there is a reduction in problem behavior, but rather that there is an increase in alternative behavior.**

Tip Eighteen

- **Bear in mind that in order for behavior support plans to work they must be followed. Make sure that all have reached consensus concerning the course of action and that there is a mechanism for ongoing communication and monitoring of progress.**

Tip Nineteen

- **Realize that effective behavioral change may require that all involved in the individual's life change their behavior, as well.**

Tip Twenty

Changing behavior requires honesty, a willingness to change, relationship building, and a calm perseverance.