

Disobedient, Disruptive, Defiant, and Disturbed Students: Behavioral Interventions for Challenging Students

Dr. Howard M. Knoff

Director, Project ACHIEVE

**Director, Arkansas Department of Education's
State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)**

knoffprojectachieve@earthlink.net

www.projectachieve.info

501-312-1484

Presentation Overview

- Foundations of Service Delivery for Behaviorally Challenging Students
- Tier 2 Interventions for Challenging Students:
 - Behavioral Interventions to Increase Appropriate Behavior
 - Behavioral Interventions to Decrease Inappropriate Behavior
- Behavioral Intervention Skills of Staff: A Survey of Interventions for Challenging Students
- Tier 3 Systems and Interventions

Foundations to the Development and Implementation of Effective Services, Programs, and Interventions for Behaviorally Challenging Students



A Definition of "Social Competence"

Social Competence involves:

A child or adolescent's ability to:

- Be socially, emotionally, and behaviorally aware of themselves and others
- Demonstrate successful interpersonal, social problem solving, conflict prevention and resolution, and social-emotional coping and behavioral skills
- Effectively manage their own emotions and behavior

A Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Perspective: Key SEL Competencies

Awareness of Self and Others

Awareness of feelings:	The capacity to accurately perceive and label one's feelings
Management of feelings:	The capacity to regulate one's feelings
Constructive sense of self:	The capacities to accurately perceive one's strengths and weaknesses and handle every day challenges with confidence and optimism
Perspective taking:	The capacity to accurately perceive the perspectives of others

A Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Perspective: Key SEL Competencies

Positive Attitude and Values

Personal responsibility:	The intention to engage in safe and healthy behaviors and be honest and fair in dealing with others
Respect for others:	The intention to accept and appreciate individual and group differences and to value the rights of all people
Social responsibility:	The intention to contribute to the community and protect the environment

A Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Perspective: Key SEL Competencies

Responsible Decision-Making

- Problem identification: The capacity to identify situations that require a decision or solution and assess the associated risks, barriers, and resources
- Social norm analysis: The capacity to critically evaluate social, cultural, and media messages pertaining to social norms and personal behavior
- Adaptive goal setting: The capacity to set positive and realistic goals
- Problem solving: The capacity to develop, implement, and evaluate positive and informed solutions to problems

A Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Perspective: Key SEL Competencies

Social Interaction Skills

- Active listening: The capacity to attend to others both verbally and non-verbally to demonstrate to them that they have been understood
- Expressive communication: The capacity to initiate and maintain conversations and to clearly express one's thoughts and feelings both verbally and nonverbally
- Cooperation: The capacity to take turns and share in both pairs and group situations

A Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Perspective: Key SEL Competencies

Social Interaction Skills

- Negotiation: The capacity to consider all perspectives involved in a conflict in order to resolve the conflict peacefully and to the satisfaction of all involved
- Refusal: The capacity to make and follow through with clear “NO” statements, to avoid situations in which one might be pressured, and to delay acting in pressure situations until adequately prepared
- Help seeking: The capacity to identify the need for support and assistance and to access available and appropriate resources

M

(CASEL, 2003, 2006)

A Cognitive-Behavioral Perspective: Key Behavioral Competencies

- Personal/Self-Management Behaviors
 - Attention Control Cognitions/Skills
 - Emotional Control and Coping Cognitions/Skills
 - Self-Concept/Self-Esteem Cognitions/Skills
- Interpersonal Behaviors
 - Engagement/Response Skills
 - Social Problem-Solving Skills
 - Conflict Resolution Skills
- Environmental/Situational Behaviors
 - Classroom Routine Skills
 - Academic Supporting Behaviors
 - Building Routine Skills

H

Early to Middle Elementary **School Social Skills**

Listening
Following Directions
Asking for Help
Ignoring Distractions
Dealing to Teasing
Contributing to Discussions/
Answering Classroom Questions

Waiting for an Adult's Attention-
How to Interrupt
Dealing with Losing
Apologizing
Dealing with Consequences

Deciding What to Do
Asking for Permission
Joining an Activity
Giving/Accepting a Compliment
Understanding Your/Others'
Feelings

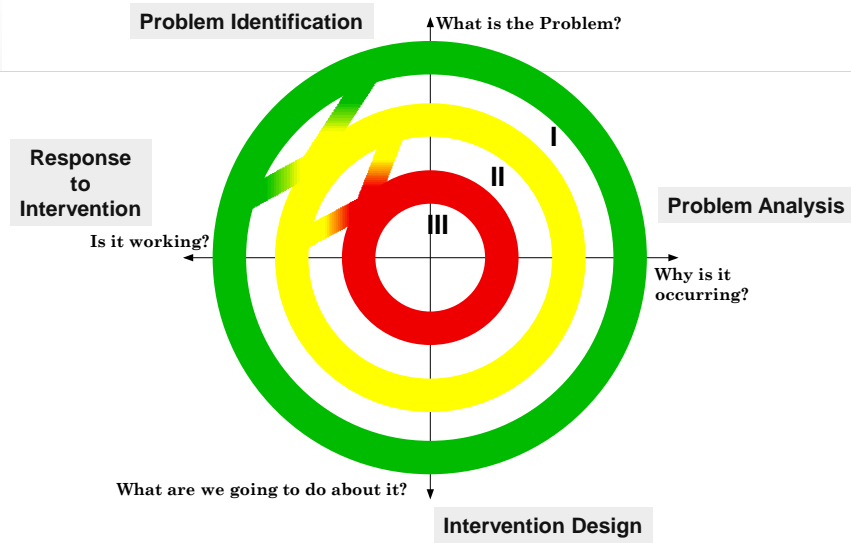
Avoiding Trouble
Dealing with Anger
Dealing with Being Rejected or
Left Out
Dealing with Accusations
Dealing with Peer Pressure

H

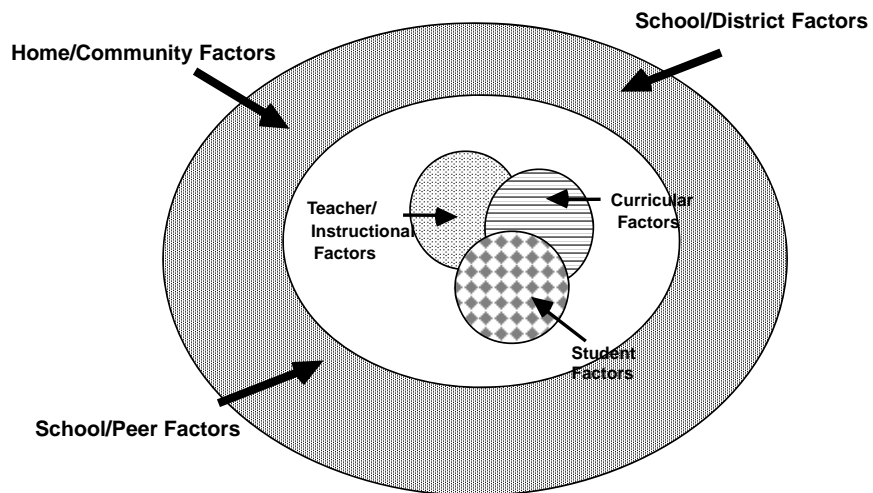
When Students Do Not Succeed Behaviorally... How do Effective Schools Serve Them???

- ✓ Service delivery uses a “Problem-solving, Consultation, Intervention” mode of operation.
- ✓ Interventions focus on changing behaviors; Not treating diagnostic labels, categories, or conditions.
- ✓ Intervention follows a “Response-to-Intervention” prevention-focused model.
- ✓ Interventions are delivered in the Setting of Origin, or in the LRE using the Most Preventive Interventions.

Problem Solving and Response-to-Intervention



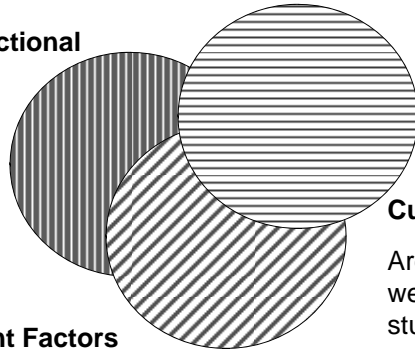
Students Succeed (or Do Not Succeed) in Life Because of their Support Systems



Students Succeed (or Do Not Succeed) in School due to their Instructional Environments

Teacher-Instructional Factors

Are teachers well-matched to their students and curricula?



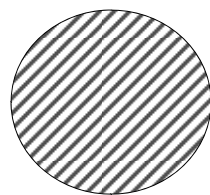
Curricular Factors

Are curricula well-matched to students and teachers?

Student Factors

Are students prepared and "programmed" for success?

Factors within/related to Students that Facilitate Success (or Explain Non-Success)



Student Factors

Are students prepared and "programmed" for success?

Biological/
Physiological Status

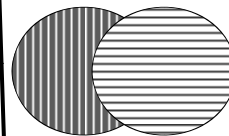
Skills

Motivation/
Accountability

Consistency

Special Situations

Teacher-Instructional Factors



Curricular Factors

The Scientifically-Based Components of Effective Behavior Management

- * We need to teach the social skills, and classroom and building routines that we expect students to demonstrate. “Teaching” involves students learning the “Skills and Scripts” through teacher instruction, modeling, role playing and performance feedback, and the transfer of this training to real-life situations.
- * When teaching social skills, we need to simulate “conditions of emotionality” and guide students through positive practices of the social skills—so that they are better able to handle the real emotional situations in their lives in the future.
- * We need to continually give students opportunities to practice and apply their social skills. Social skills are never fully mastered—students just progress to the “next level” of development and maturation.

The Scientifically-Based Components of Effective Behavior Management

- * Social skill “success,” starting even at the preschool level, means that students (a) respond to adult social skill prompts (b) within a reasonable amount of time, and (c) that they are able to demonstrate their social skills for longer and longer periods of time without prompting.
- * Positive responses and incentives best motivate students to use their social skills. The effective ratio of positives to negatives is for students to experience 5 positive interactions (adult, peer, self) for every negative interaction.
- * Skills need to be taught and learned in order for incentives and consequences to motivate future appropriate behavior.

The Scientifically-Based Components of Effective Behavior Management

- * When students make bad choices, meaningful consequences (used strategically) can be used to communicate to them that they have made a bad choice, and to motivate them to make a good choice the next time (in the future).
- * When using consequences (strategically), adults need to use the most strategic consequence for the student, and the mildest consequence needed to motivate a (future) change of behavior (use the Behavioral Matrix).
- * "If you consequence, you must educate."
- * Consistency is essential. Inconsistency undermines adults' ability to hold students accountable, which often translate into (continued) inappropriate behavior.

Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Targets for Intervention/Change

- Personal/Self-Management Behaviors
 - Attention Control Cognitions/Skills
 - Emotional Control and Coping Cognitions/Skills
 - Awareness/Management of Feelings*
 - Self-Concept/Self-Esteem Cognitions/Skills
 - Interpersonal Behaviors
 - Perspective Taking*
 - Respective for Others*
 - Adaptive Goal-Setting*
 - Social Problem-Solving Skills
 - Engagement/Response Skills
 - Conflict Resolution Skills
- Listening*
Expressive
Communication*
Cooperation*
Negotiation*
Help Seeking*

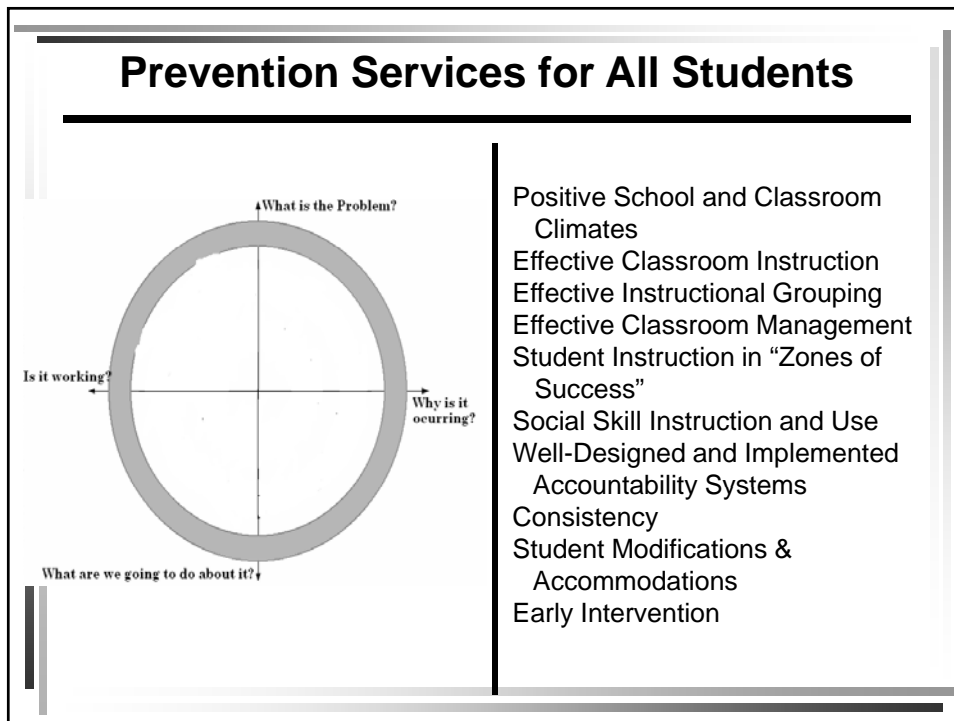
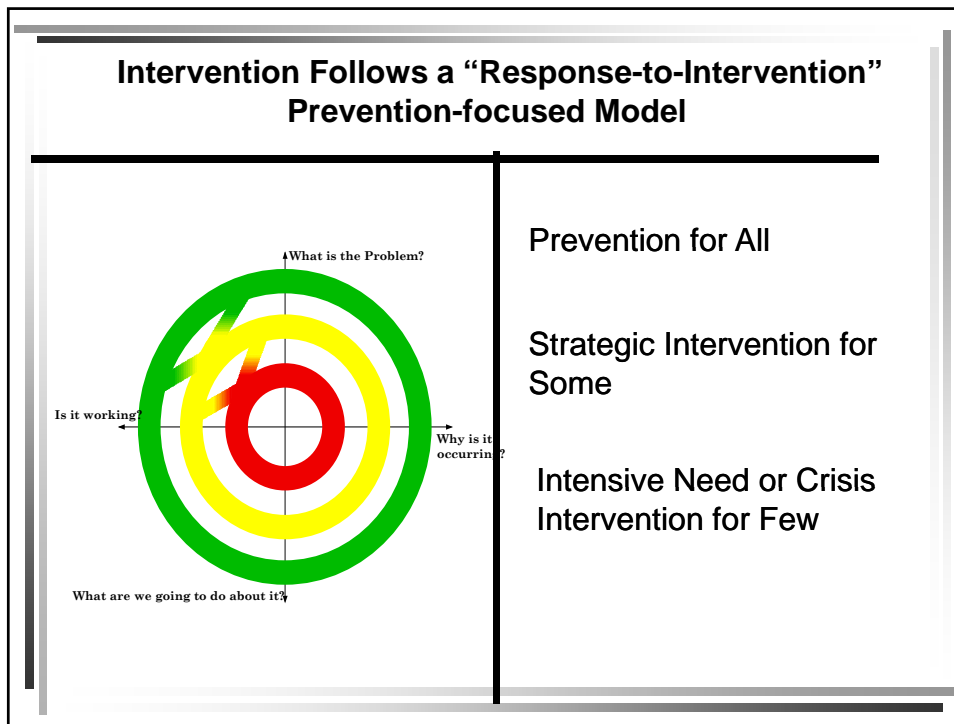
*SEL

Functional Assessment Questions for Students with Behavioral Challenges

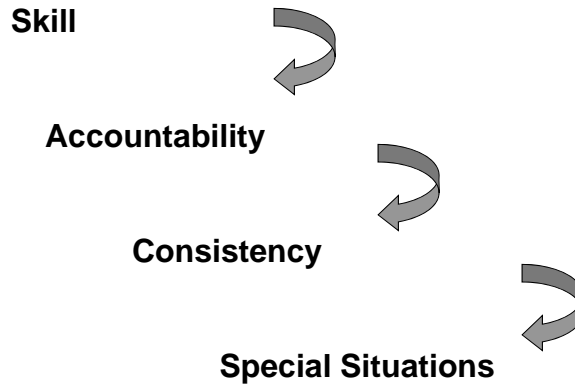
- Are they receiving 5 Positive Interactions for Every 1 Negative Interaction in their classroom or school?
- Are their Teachers identifying, teaching, and reinforcing clear Behavioral Expectations with appropriate Corrective Responses when needed?
- Are their Teachers continuously teaching, prompting, and reinforcing prosocial skills in their classrooms, while demonstrating their own “Good Choice” behaviors with colleagues and students?
- Have the Students mastered their prosocial skills (under conditions of emotionality) and are they able to independent transfer their skills to new situations?

Functional Assessment Questions for Students with Behavioral Challenges

- Are their Teachers using meaningful and powerful Incentives and Consequences to motivate appropriate social behavior and to respond to inappropriate student behavior (by holding students accountable)?
- Are the Students responding to these Incentives and Consequences, or are there competing motivations or student performance deficits?
- Are their Teachers maintaining consistency relative to behavioral expectations, the use of classroom social skills, the use of classroom incentives and consequences when responding to student behavior, etc.?
- Are their Teachers maintaining consistency across students, situations, settings, grade- and building-level colleagues, and other circumstances?



The “Core” of the Positive Behavioral Self-Management System (PBSS)



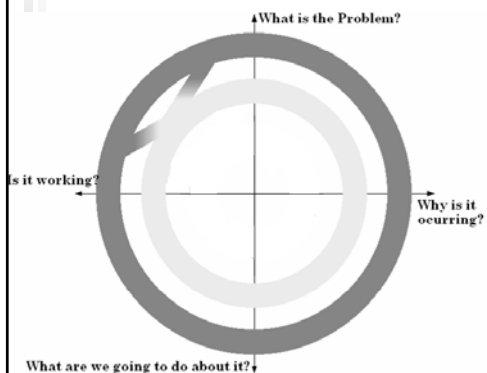
The “Core” of the Positive Behavioral Self-Management System

Skill	The <u>Stop & Think Social Skills</u> Interpersonal, Problem-Solving, and Conflict Resolution Skills Classroom/Building Routines
Accountability	The Behavioral Matrix Grade-Level Classroom Expectations Building and Common Area Expectations The Educative Time-Out Process
Consistency	Skills, Accountability, Staff, Students, Parents
Special Situations-Setting and Student	

Tier 2: Strategic Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Interventions



Strategic Intervention Services for Some Students



Peer/Adult Mentoring Programs
Peer/Adult Mediation Programs

Strategic Behavioral Interventions
(Behavioral Matrix Intensity II and III)
[Response Cost, Positive Practice/
Restitutive Overcorrection, Group
Contingencies, Cognitive-Behavioral
Strategies, etc.]

Small Group Social Skills/
Socialization Training
Anger-/Emotion-/Self-Control Training
Attention-Control Training

Special Situation Groups: Ex.
Divorce, Loss, PTSD, Self-Concept

Student-Focused Social-Emotional, Behavioral Targets for Intervention/Change

- Personal/Self-Management Behaviors
 - Attention Control Cognitions/Skills
 - Emotional Control and Coping Cognitions/Skills
 - Awareness/Management of Feelings*
 - Self-Concept/Self-Esteem Cognitions/Skills
- Interpersonal Behaviors
 - Perspective Taking*
 - Respective for Others*
 - Adaptive Goal-Setting*
 - Social Problem-Solving Skills
 - Engagement/Response Skills
 - Conflict Resolution Skills

Listening*
 Expressive
 Communication*
 Cooperation*
 Negotiation*
 Help Seeking*

*SEL

Tier 2 Student-Focused Interventions



Five Intervention Examples for Disobedient, Disruptive, Defiant, and Disturbed Students

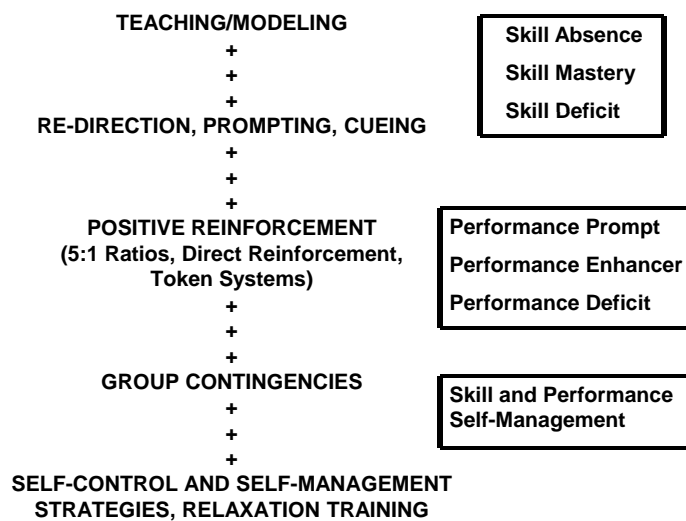
Establishing or Increasing Appropriate (Self-Management) Behavior:

- ** Intensive Social Skills Instruction
- ** Prompting, Cuing, and Stimulus Control Instruction
- ** Re-conditioning Emotional Control

Reducing or Eliminating Inappropriate Behavior:

- ** Differential Reinforcement of-- Other, Low Rates, Incompatible, or Alternative Behavior
- ** Response Cost

Strategies Designed to Increase Behavior



Some Students Need More Intensive Social Skills Training

Goals of an Evidence-Based Social Skills Program:

- ❖ Teach Children Interpersonal, Problem-Solving, and Conflict Resolution Skills
- ❖ That facilitate their Social-Emotional/Behavioral Development, and
- ❖ Help them develop Self-Management Skills

Intervention: Strategic/Intensive Teaching/Modeling Social Skills

Social Skills Targets/Outcomes

Listening	Waiting for an Adult's Attention-Following
How to Interrupt	Directions
Asking for Help	Dealing with Losing
Ignoring Distractions	Apologizing
Dealing to Teasing	Dealing with Consequences Contributing to
	Discussions/Answering Classroom
	Questions
Deciding What to Do	Avoiding Trouble
Asking for Permission	Dealing with Anger
Joining an Activity	Dealing with Being Rejected or Left Out
Giving/Accepting a Compliment	Dealing with Accusations
Understanding Your/Others' Feelings	Dealing with Peer Pressure

Some Students Need for More Intensive Social Skills Training

Critical Questions:

- ❖ Has the student been taught specific social skills. . . and to mastery?
- ❖ Did the social skills instruction use a social learning theory and cognitive-behavioral approach using “Skills and Scripts”?
- ❖ Did the approach teach “under conditions of emotionality”?
- ❖ Did the approach use a “Teach-Apply-Infuse” pedagogy?

Evidence-based Components of Effective Social Skills Programs

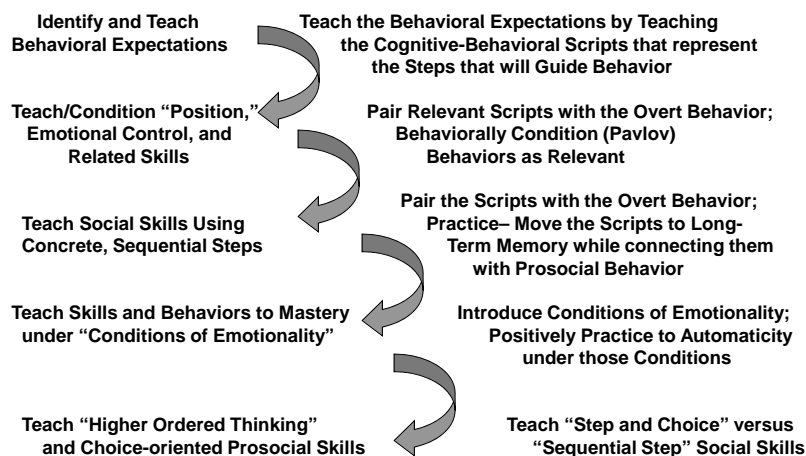
- ** Use a Universal language that facilitates consistent “self-talk,” and that students learn, memorize, and eventually use at a level of automaticity
- ** Use a Universal (social learning theory) teaching process that results in student learning, mastery, and self-management.
- ** Teach “Skills and Scripts” that guide internal language and produce behavioral outcomes
- ** Teach explicitly for “conditions of emotionality” and “transfer of training”

Teaching Cognitive-Behavioral Skills

- Teach
- Model
- Role Play
- Performance Feedback
- Transfer of Training



A DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCE OF TEACHING STEPS FOR SELF-MANAGEMENT (SOCIAL) SKILLS INSTRUCTION . . . in a PBSS



Teaching Social Skills with the Stop & Think Social Skills Program: Skills & Scripts

- “Stop & Think”
- “I’m going to make a Good Choice!”
- “What are my Choices or Steps?”

THE SKILL BOX: GO TO SKILL SCRIPT



- “Now, I’m ready to ‘Just do it!’”
- “Great! I did a Great Job!”

“Skills and Scripts”-- In Step 3’s “Skill Box”



Requesting Assistance:



1. Decide: “Do I really need help or should I try do this by myself once more.”
2. If you need help, identify the person who will help you the most.
3. If in class, get that person’s attention (in an appropriate way) and wait for the person to listen to you.
- 3b. If not in class, walk up to the person who can help you and wait for him or her to listen to you.
4. Get ready to ask for assistance, telling the person specifically what you need.

“Skills and Scripts”--
In Step 3’s “Skill Box”

↙
When You are Teased, Taunted, or
Verbally Harassed:



1. Take deep breaths and count to five.
2. Think about what Good Choices you can make.
You can:
 - a. Ignore the person and turn away from him/her.
 - b. Tell the person how you feel; Ask him/her to stop.
 - c. Move or walk away from the person.
 - d. Find a teacher or other adult to help.
3. Pick and plan your best choice.
4. If your choice doesn’t work, try another choice.

“What are Your Choices or Steps. . .”

↙
When Peers Pressure You

1. Listen to what the others want you to do.
2. Decide if what they want is a Good Choice or a Bad Choice.
3. If it is a Bad Choice, think about your Good Choices.
You can:
 - a. Tell them you won’t do it in a firm voice.
 - b. Suggest something else to do.
 - c. Suggest something else to do.
 - d. Walk away, go to a safe place, do something else.
 - e. Ask an adult for help.
4. If the peer pressure continues, you can:
 - a. Walk away, go to a safe place, do something else.
 - b. Find an adult for help.
5. Pick and plan your best choice.

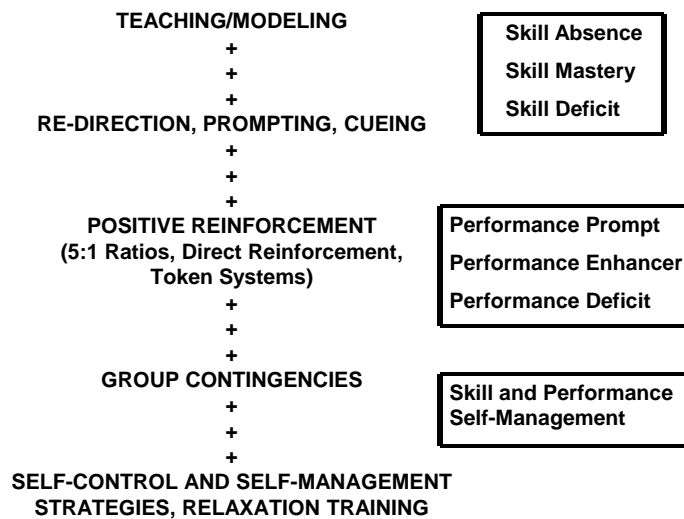
The Social Skill Teaching Process

- Teach
- Model
- Role Play/Performance
- Feedback
- Transfer of Training



- Application/Simulation Activities
 - Teachable Moments

Strategies Designed to Increase Behavior



Increasing Behavior: Prompting/Cueing Behavior (Stimulus Control)

Implementation Steps

Goal: Increased a desired appropriate or replacement behavior

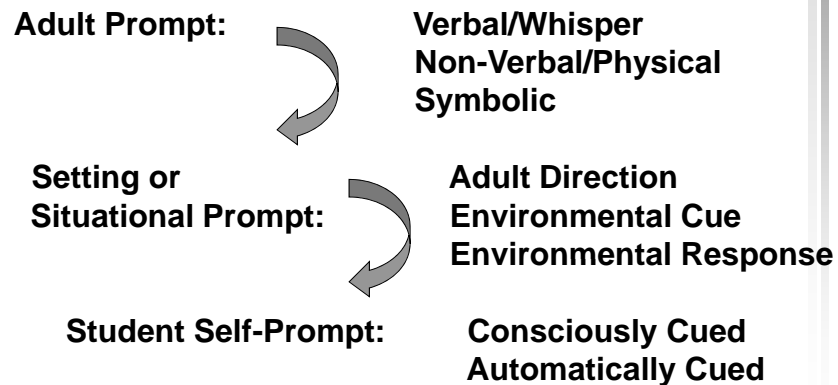
- Specifically identify Behavioral Goal/Target
- Validate that the Student has Mastered the Target Behavior in/under multiple settings/conditions (if mastery has not occurred, instruction is needed)
- Teach the Student:
 - * The Prompting Language (Verbal, Non-Verbal/Gestural, Physical, Picture/Symbolic)
 - * The Behavioral Expectations
 - * The Incentives and Consequences (Connect with the Behavioral Matrix)

Increasing Behavior: Prompting/Cueing and Stimulus Control

Implementation Steps -2

- Roleplay to Mastery
- Identify Short- and Long-term Behavioral Success
- Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Protocol
- Transfer the Training/Implement and Apply
- Evaluate and Move to Self-Management

Moving Prompting/Stimulus Control to Self-Management











Increasing Behavior: Prompting/Cueing and Stimulus Control

Examples of Prompts:

- “The Look”
- Hand or finger clap/snap
- “Stop and Think” non-verbal prompt
- Finger to: lips, ear, head, etc.
- Classroom lights
- Bell or other auditory signal
- Proximity
- Shoulder touch
- Verbal or non-verbal Redirection
- Warning
- Folder mark
- Moving student to another seat

4th Grade

	Expected Classroom Behaviors: Follow directions the first time given Speak only with permission Leave seat only with permission Complete all assignments Show respect (use positive words, treat people and property with respect, etc)	Incentives & Rewards: Gold cards Lunch in the classroom Extra recess Good notes home Treasure box Verbal praise Marble/Compliments Jar	
	Intensity 1 Behaviors: Passive off-task behaviors Talking out of turn Not following directions Name calling Leaving seat without permission Running in class Not listening/not paying attention Non-speech noises that disrupt Rocking, tilting, falling out of seat Talking without permission Teasing Tatting	Corrective Responses: Visual, non-verbal, physical prompt Proximity Redirection Warning "Stop and Think" prompt Folder mark Move student to another seat Note sent home	
	Intensity 2 Behaviors: Continuing Intensity 1 Behaviors Not following directions (passive or active defiance) Arguing with teacher/talking back Chronic socializing with peers Poor attitude/rudeness Lying Inappropriate language Swearing	Consequences: Move student to another seat Loss of privileges Loss of recess Time-out in class Phone contact with parent Parent/teacher conference	
	Intensity 3 Behaviors: Continuing Intensity 2 Behaviors Not following directions/significant defiance Throwing furniture/dangerous materials Physical aggression/fighting with intent to cause bodily harm Taunting Vandalism Cheating Bullying/verbally threatening behavior Physically threatening behavior	Consequences: Office referral	

Strategies Designed to Increase Behavior

TEACHING/MODELING + + + RE-DIRECTION, PROMPTING, CUEING	Skill Absence Skill Mastery Skill Deficit
+ + POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT (5:1 Ratios, Direct Reinforcement, Token Systems)	Performance Prompt Performance Enhancer Performance Deficit
+ + GROUP CONTINGENCIES	Skill and Performance Self-Management
+ SELF-CONTROL AND SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES, RELAXATION TRAINING	

Increasing Behavior: Self-Control

- Goal: Decrease a student's emotional reaction to a trigger situation such that s/he avoids demonstrating an inappropriate behavior or response, and is able to cope with the situation while demonstrating while appropriate behaviors.
- Age Levels where Most Effective: Elementary through high school
- Sample of Behavioral Targets: Any inappropriate verbal, motor, physical, or other behavioral response to an emotional trigger or situation; any desired, prosocial, or appropriate interpersonal, problem solving, conflict resolution, cognitive, or coping behavior/response to an emotional situation.

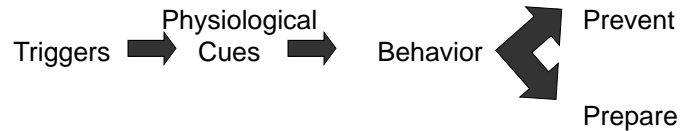
Increasing Behavior: Self-Control

Behavioral Principles:

- Most Emotional Behavior is Conditioned
- Changing Conditioned Behavior:
 - Un-Condition, Re-Condition, Counter-Condition
- Identify Negative Triggers—Prevent/Prepare
- Identify Physiological Cues—Control and Condition
- “If you consequate, you must educate”

Increasing Behavior: Self-Control

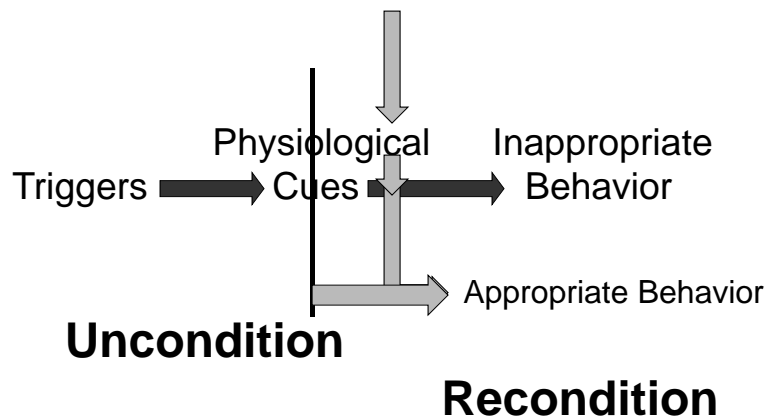
The Emotional Reaction Paradigm:



Skills can be demonstrated as long as a person is not past the "Physiological Point of No Return"

Increasing Behavior: Self-Control

Counter-Condition



Increasing Behavior: Self-Control

Steps or Intervention Considerations:

- Identify either inappropriate student behaviors that occur due to emotional triggers or lack of student self-control; or situations where a student needs to learn emotional self-control in order to be successful
- Identify the (neutral or appropriate) Replacement Behaviors that are counter to the inappropriate behaviors above, and/or the specific Behavioral Goal or Target desired (i.e., the appropriate behavior to demonstrate while the inappropriate behavior is stopped or eliminated)
- Identify the student's Physiological Cues that indicate that s/he is experiencing a "condition of emotionality"

Increasing Behavior: Self-Control

Steps or Intervention Considerations -2:

- Self-Awareness or Stimulus Control. Discuss and Identify with the Student his/her Triggers, Physiological Cues, Behavioral Goal or Target Behavior, and how s/he can either "Prevent or Prepare" to handle an emotional trigger
- Teach, model, roleplay, and apply a physiological and cognitive relaxation response to one or more emotional triggers using the Stop & Think Social Skills ("Stop & Think," "Make a Good Choice," "Take a Deep Breath")
- Develop concrete and sequential behavioral scripts that result in the desired Replacement or Target Behaviors even when the student is confronted with emotional triggers or physiological reactions

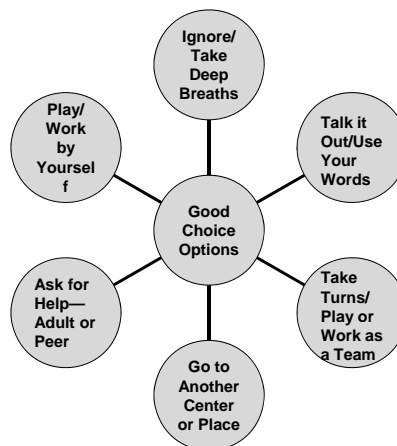
Increasing Behavior: Self-Control

Steps or Intervention Considerations -3:

- Teach the entire “skill and script” process, including the relaxation response to the student. Roleplay to Mastery a number of situations where the Target Behavior is needed, conditioning the student to immediately use the skill and script upon awareness of either the situational trigger or the physiological cue.
- Provide the student a number of Application Sessions, in the classroom and/or in the common areas of the school, where s/he needs to use the Target Behavior
- As part of the training, consider using the “Good Choice Options Wheel”
- Develop and train the student on an evaluation log so that s/he can track emotional situations that occur on a routine basis, and self-monitor the successful and unsuccessful use of the self-control procedure

Increasing Behavior: Self-Control

The Good Choice Options Wheel:



Increasing Behavior: Self-Control

Steps or Intervention Considerations -4:

- Transfer all of this training and implement the self-control procedure during a specific time of the day where it has the highest probability of success. Teachers should do frequent, but random, reliability checks to ensure that the student is accurately performing all of the self-control steps.
- Expand student's use of the self-control process, increasingly, to the entire day.
- Have periodic feedback meetings with the student on his/her progress, use of the self-control process, feelings of success, and actual behavioral change.

Increasing Behavior: Self-Control

What is the Difference between:

Conditioned Behavior (Pavlov)

VERSUS

Motivated Behavior (Skinner)???

ANSWER: TWO SECONDS

Strategies Designed to Decrease Behavior

Differential Reinforcement of Other (DRO),
Incompatible (DRI), or Low Rates (DRL) of Behavior

+

+

+

EXTINCTION-IGNORING

+

+

+

RESTITUTIONAL OR POSITIVE PRACTICE OVERCORRECTION

+

+

+

RESPONSE COST

+

+

+

TIME-OUT

Decreasing Behavior: DRO/L/I/A

- Goal: Decrease mild inappropriate behavior while shaping and increasing appropriate or replacement behaviors.
- Age Levels where Most Effective: Elementary through High School (with adaptation)
- Sample of Behavioral Targets: Any mild or moderate (Intensity I or II) inappropriate behavior, through the process of reinforcing and increasing an appropriate, desired, and/or replacement behavior (e.g., teasing, talking back, talking out, cursing, off task behavior, out of seat behavior, noncompliance, turning in messy papers, name calling, physical aggression, tantrums, etc.)

Decreasing Behavior: DRO/L/I/A

Description:

This is one of the least aversive and intrusive interventions used to decrease and eliminate inappropriate behavior, while increasing and solidifying appropriate behavior. The intervention involves the use of different reinforcement approaches such that an inappropriate behavior is directly or indirectly targeted for change.

Decreasing Behavior: DRO/L/I/A

Description:

- Differential Reinforcement of Other Behavior; DRO
Where the student receives reinforcement for engaging in behavior other than the inappropriate target behavior
- Differential Reinforcement of Low Rates of Behavior; DRL
Where the student receives reinforcement for engaging in lower and lower rates of the inappropriate target behavior to the point of extinction
- Differential Reinforcement of Incompatible or Alternative Behavior; DRI, DRA
Where the student receives reinforcement for engaging in behaviors that are either incompatible with or are alternatives to the inappropriate target behavior, thereby eliminating it

As with any reinforcement approach, powerful and meaningful (to the student) reinforcers will be needed to motivate a change in the inappropriate behavior.

Strategies Designed to Decrease Behavior

Differential Reinforcement of Other (DRO),
Incompatible (DRI), or Low Rates (DRL) of Behavior

+

+

+

EXTINCTION-IGNORING

+

+

+

RESTITUTIONAL OR POSITIVE PRACTICE OVERCORRECTION

+

+

+

RESPONSE COST

+

+

+

TIME-OUT

Decreasing Behavior: Response Cost

- Goal: To systematically decrease or eliminate mild to moderate inappropriate behavior while increasing appropriate or replacement behaviors.
- Age Levels where Most Effective: Elementary through Middle School (with adaptation)
- Sample of Behavioral Targets: Any persistent and/or moderate or significant (Intensity II or III) inappropriate behavior that has not responded to more positive behavioral interventions, where long-term elimination of the inappropriate behavior has not been successful, and as specified in the research (e.g., for aggression, inappropriate verbalizations, hyperactivity, fire setting, self-injurious behavior, tantrums)

Decreasing Behavior: Response Cost

Description:

This intervention is designed to systematically decrease or eliminate mild to moderate inappropriate behavior by providing a student with a strategically selected number of tokens, points, coupons, or other “take-aways” that the student “loses” whenever s/he exhibits the Target or inappropriate behavior.

The explicit goal for the student is to complete a specific time period still having one or more tokens that can then be “cashed in” for a desired reinforcement. Tokens are kept when the student does not demonstrate the inappropriate target behavior, and the number of tokens given to the student is determined (a) first, by how often the inappropriate behavior is exhibited before the intervention is begun (i.e., the Baseline of the behavior), and (b) thereafter by the student’s success as the intervention is implemented. Thus, as the student exhibits the inappropriate behavior less and less (that is, keeps more and more tokens over time), the teacher decreases the number of tokens such that the inappropriate behavior is systematically decreased and eventually eliminated.

Decreasing Behavior: Response Cost

- **Description:**

Bonus Response Cost is a variation of this intervention where the student earns a bonus token for retaining a certain number (e.g., all) of tokens during a prescribed time period.

The Response Cost Lottery is another variation where a group of students involved in the same intervention put their earned tokens into a lottery which is used to select those “winning” reinforcers. The motivation here is that the students with the largest number of tokens (having demonstrated the least amount of inappropriate behavior) will have the highest probability of winning the most desired reinforcers.

Decreasing Behavior: Response Cost

Implementation Steps:

- Identify specifically the specific behavior or offense that needs to be decreased or eliminated, while identifying the appropriate behavior that helps the student to avoid performing the inappropriate behavior
- Complete a functional assessment of the behavior, including a history of when, where, how often, and with whom the behavior has occurred in the past, while determining why the inappropriate behavior is occurring (e.g., emotional control problems, attention, power/control, revenge, escape, etc.)
- Through this functional assessment, determine the Baseline frequency of inappropriate behavior across a specific period of time (e.g., per hour, per period, per day)

Decreasing Behavior: Response Cost

Implementation Steps -2:

- Validate that the Target Student has mastered the appropriate behaviors that will help him/her to be successful in/under the multiple settings/conditions of concern (if mastery has not occurred, instruction is needed)
- Discuss and Identify with the Student a range of possible meaningful and powerful tangible (actual or symbolic/exchangeable) and intangible, extrinsic and intrinsic reinforcers
- Choose the reinforcer to be received for the Target Behavior, determine the Reinforcement Schedule, and specify how the reinforcer will be delivered
- Roleplay to Mastery the behavior and reinforcement process (Student/Teacher), especially focusing on times when the student is unsuccessful and a token needs to be taken away (i.e., the Accepting a Consequence skill, and the "if you consecuate, you must educate principle)

Decreasing Behavior: Response Cost

Implementation Steps -3:

- Choose the number of tokens that will be given to the Target Student and select a time period for implementing the intervention. Initially, the number of tokens should give the student a near-100% probability of success.
- Develop a Monitoring, Charting, and Evaluation Protocol, and explain it to the student
- Transfer the Training/Implement and Apply
- When the student has had three successful time periods (e.g., days) where s/he earned the reinforcement, decrease the number of tokens based on both the number of tokens earned during the period of success and the need to maintain the student's success during the first part of the intervention

Decreasing Behavior: Response Cost

Implementation Steps -4:

- On a weekly (or more frequent, as needed) basis, meet with the student to evaluate his/her progress and discuss future targets and reinforcers
- Evaluate, Thin, and Fade the reinforcement contingencies over time, and move student self-management

Decreasing Behavior: Response Cost

Critical Implementation Considerations:

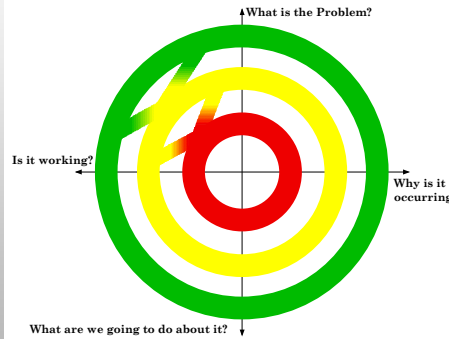
- Make sure that the student has the skill to stop performing the inappropriate behavior and to demonstrate the appropriate behavior (as relevant)
- Make sure the Incentives/Consequences are meaningful and powerful
- Make sure that the initial reinforcement criteria are based on the Baseline Data and give the Student at least a 90-95% probability of success
- One way to fast-track and motivate higher levels of desired behavior and a quicker decrease of inappropriate behavior is to tier the incentives to different levels of retained response tokens.
- As the student is successful, increase the behavioral expectations, while decreasing the incentives over time

Decreasing Behavior: Response Cost

Critical Implementation Considerations:

- Remember that an unsuccessful day may motivate student success for the next day
- Be Consistent– need to maintain the Intervention “Past the Student’s History of Inconsistency”
- This intervention can be combined with a DRO or DRI if it helps to decrease and eliminate the inappropriate behavior
- This intervention can be combined with the Group Contingency interventions to decrease inappropriate behavior while increasing appropriate behavior

Crisis Management/Intensive Need Services for Few Students



Individual Counseling/Behavior
Therapy
(Behavioral Matrix Intensity III
and IV)

[Relaxation Therapy,
Desensitization, Cognitive-
Behavioral Strategies, etc.]

School-Based Mental Health
Services

Intensive Wrap-Around/
Continuum of Care
Programming

Dr. Howard M. Knoff

**State Improvement Grant/Project ACHIEVE
Arkansas Department of Education**

**49 Woodberry Road
Little Rock, AR 72212**

**501-312-1484
knoffprojectachieve@earthlink.net**

**Project ACHIEVE Website:
www.projectachieve.info**