Responding to Non-Responsive Behavior: Managing Escalations

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*Managing Escalating Behavior* Geoff Colvin

**PURPOSE**
Enhance understanding & ways of escalating behavior sequences

- Understanding
- Best practice
- Considerations
- Your action planning

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**Teacher** | **Jason**
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Jason, please turn in your assignment. | What assignment?
The assignment you didn’t finish during class. | I finished it.
Great, please turn it in now. | I don’t have it with me now.
You have a choice: turn it in or do it again. | You never believe me.
I guess you’ve made the choice to do it again. | Make me.
That’s disrespect…go to the office. | F_____ you!
Moves closer…& puts hand on J. shoulder. | Pulls away, glares, & raises fist as if to strike.

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**CONTINUUM OF SCHOOL-WIDE INSTRUCTIONAL & POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT**

**ALL** ~60% of Students

**SOME**

Primary Prevention: School-/Classroom-Wide Systems for All Students, Staff, & Settings

Secondary Prevention: Specialized Group Systems for Students with Al-Risk Behavior

Tertiary Prevention: Specialized Individualized Systems for Students with High-Risk Behavior

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**THREE KEY STRATEGIES**

- Identify how to intervene early in an escalation.
- Identify environmental factors that can be manipulated.
- Identify replacement behaviors that can be taught & serve similar function.
The MODEL

Time
Behavior Intensity

High
Low

Calm
Peak
De-escalation
Recovery
Agitation
Trigger
Acceleration

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What does your cycle look like?

1. Calm

- COOPERATIVE & ENGAGEABLE
  - Accepts feedback
  - Follows directions
  - Sets personal goals
  - Ignores distractions
  - Accepts praise

Strategies:
- INVEST IN PREVENTION
- Conduct FBA-BIP
- Identify & manipulate triggers & maintainers
- Identify & teach competing alternative
- Engage in frequent successful interactions
- Teach social skills
- Problem solving
- Relaxation response (alternative)
- Reinforce positively
- Set high expectations

The MODEL

2. Trigger

- Responding to series of UNRESOLVED CONFLICTS or CHALLENGES
  - Repeated failures
  - Frequent corrections
  - Interpersonal conflicts
  - Tight timelines & schedules
  - Low success & reinforcement
  - DESCRIBED as
    - Anxious
    - Hyper
    - Distracted
    - Fidgety

Strategies:
- PREVENT & REDIRECT
  - Remember function
  - Modify context
  - Remove from context
  - Increase opportunities to succeed
  - Reinforce social skills

The MODEL
3. Agitation

**Looks like...**
- INCREASED UNFOCUSED BEHAVIOR
- Off task
- Frequent start-stop
- In-out seat
- Increased or decreased talking & interactions
- Social &/or academic w/withdrawal

**Strategies...**
- REDUCE ANXIETY
- Consider function
- Make structural/environmental changes
- Provide reasonable options & choices
- Involve in successful engagement
- Practice social skills

4. Acceleration

**Looks like...**
- Switch to intensive FOCUSED BEHAVIOR
- Non-compliance
- Provocation
- Harassment
- Threatening
- Personal

**Strategies...**
- Intervene w/ FOCUS ON SAFETY
- Remember
  - “Escalation & self-control are inversely related”
  - “Escalation is likely to run its course regardless...”
- SAFETY
  - Remove all triggers & maintainers
  - Follow PLANNED crisis prevention procedures
  - Follow through with PLANNED bottom line
  - Disengage from student
  - Monitor continuously

5. Peak

**Looks like...**
- OUT OF CONTROL
- MOST severe behavior
  - Physical aggression
  - Property destruction
  - Self-injury
  - Escape/social w/ withdrawal
  - Hyperventilation
  - Running away

**Strategies...**
- Focus on SAFETY
  - Shift from crisis prevention to CRISIS INTERVENTION
  - Follow planned procedures

**The MODEL**

- ACCELERATION
- PEAK
- DECELERATION
6. De-escalation

**Looks like...**
- DECREASES in SEVERE BEHAVIOR
- Easily RE-ESCALATED
- CONFUSION
  - Blaming others
  - Denial
  - Social & physical w/ drawal
  - Justification/ minimization of situation

**Strategies...**
- MINIMIZE DEMANDS & ATTENTION
- STRATEGIES
  - Don’t nag
  - Avoid blaming
  - Don’t force apology
  - Consider function & replacement behavior
  - Emphasize start anew

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7. Recovery

**Looks like...**
- Attempts to RE-ENGAGE, but NON-INTERACTIVE
- Attempts corrections
- Watch group activities
- Work alone
- Social w/ withdrawal
- Sleep
- ............

**Strategies...**
- RESTATE & FOLLOW-THROUGH w/ consequences
- Positively reinforce any displays of appropriate behavior
- Re-establish routines & activities
- Debrief
- ......

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FINAL THOUGHT

“It is always important to remember that “If you inadvertently assist the student to escalate, do not be concerned; you will get another chance to do it right the next time around.”

Geoff Colvin (1989)