SECTION 8:

REACTIVE STRATEGIES
Big Idea

Reactive Strategies Defined

The team will need to develop strategies when the problem behavior occurs again.

Strategies must be considered in four phases:

- Prompting the student to switch to the Functionally Equivalent Replacement Behavior (FERB) that has been taught
- Managing the problem behavior safely
- Debriefing and/or additional practice of the FERB after the problem is over
- Consequences or punishment may or may not be required or desired by the team

Questions the Team Will Want to Address:

- How can the team best prevent escalation?
- What works to calm the student?
- Who should interact with the student when they are in crisis? What will be the method of interaction?
- Who will debrief (i.e., establish therapeutic rapport) with the student after the incident is over?
- Is there a continuum of consequences for future misbehaviors?
- Are there any other agencies that should be involved in the case of future misbehaviors?—Probation, Police, Child Services, etc.
Line 12. What strategies will be employed if the problem behavior occurs again?

What series of behaviors should adults employ to return the student to rule-following behavior? How can staff best prevent escalation? What words, items or actions work to calm this specific student? Will structured choice help? Will non-emotionally offering a cooling off location until the student is ready to debrief? Who will therapeutically debrief the student after control is achieved? Will consequences such as expulsion/suspensions be necessary, if so under what specific conditions?

Examples in a Hierarchy of Responses, Early to Late Stages:

1. Prompt to the FERB, or redirect to task with additional supports: (Redirecting Phase):
   - Redirect with additional supports: Staff will pay attention to signs of escalating anxiety (i.e., clenched fists, increased voice volume, increased ritualistic behavior, etc) and respond in a verbally supportive manner, assisting with beginning the task. For example, if the student begins to rock, show her the “what I am working for” card, then redirect her gesturally to finish only the immediate task, then terminate the instructional session and provide the desired activity.
   - Prompt to the FERB: Use a non-verbal gestural system to remind the student to “Stop and Think” about use of the functionally equivalent replacement behavior to achieve the same goal that the emerging problem behavior serves. (The stop and think cue has already been successfully taught. 1. “Stop” 2. “Think” 3. “You can make a good choice, you can make a bad choice” 4. “What are you going to do?” 5. “Good choice” 6. “Pat yourself on the back”)

2. Reactive Strategies for When the Problem Behavior is Escalating Beyond Initial Redirection Phase (Managing the Problem Safely):
   - Be directive—Use a gentle/firm “Stop/No” command; consider presenting a structured choice
   - Maintain the safety of peers and student, removing the audience or the student if appropriate
   - Utilize authorized, approved procedures if student is a physical danger to self or others
   - Contact law enforcement if behavior is a serious danger to self/others

3. Strategies for After the Problem Behavior is Over (Debriefing Phase):
   - Allow time for the student to calm down and regain composure/rationality
   - Re-establish the student/adult relationship (therapeutic rapport)
   - Debrief with the student to understand why the problem behavior escalated (debrief) —Complete “Thinking About My Inappropriate Behavior”* or other form (see section 14 of this manual, communication resources). Brainstorm ways to keep the behavior from occurring in the future
   - For students who do not have verbal debriefing skills, consider a practice session of FERB with increased reinforcement. This is an acceptable debriefing activity to regain rule-following behavior and student/staff rapport for these students.

4. Possible Additional Strategies (Consequences or Punishment)
   - The team will determine whether consequences (withholding points, assigning restitution activities, etc.) will be effective in reducing the student’s probability of using the problem behavior again. Caution: Punishment is often delivered inappropriately or non-skillfully or with students for whom punishment backfires. Delivery of aversives can result in a Fight or Flight response, decreasing student/teacher rapport and therefore careful consideration must be given in this area.
   - Administrative disciplinary procedures will be followed (e.g., referral to office; on-site detention; teacher suspension; suspension; recommendation for expulsion)
Reactive Strategies Checklist

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All reactive strategies for problem behavior must select intervention(s) that are:

- **Legal**
  Check state education code; (e.g., California education code prohibits prone, four-limb restraint under most circumstances and prohibits locked seclusion in educational settings)

- **Ethical**
  Does not violate professional standards and is acceptable to uninformed observers

- **Safe for the student, staff and peers**
  Uses techniques proven to be safe, reducing potential harm to the student and others

- **Individualized**
  Builds on the student’s prior successful resolution of the problem

- **Respectfully implemented and socially acceptable**
  to the student, peers and adult observers
  Voice tone, body language and techniques demonstrate respect, care and concern for all

- **Chronologically and developmentally appropriate**
  Selects intervention is comprehensible for the student’s developmental functioning and appropriate for the student’s chronological age

- **Least restrictive for the situation**
  Selected intervention matches the level of dangerousness of the behavior. Physical interventions or removals are selected only when redirection, prompting to a functionally equivalent replacement behavior, planned ignoring or other lesser interventions do not address the problem. For example, non-compliance to a staff request never justifies a physical intervention unless the student is in a dangerous situation requiring immediate physical response from staff (e.g., refusing to move out of the street with cars approaching.)

**Discussion Points:** for staff review during a behavior plan development meeting, or following a reactive strategy implementation:

- ✔ Would we be comfortable using this in a general education environment with students of the same age who do not have disabilities?

- ✔ Would an uninformed, reasonable person and the student’s peers observing this intervention believe this is a respectful response to the student’s problem behavior that all maintains safety for all? (Check implementers’ voice tone and body language and how safety is provided, as needed, for observers.)

- ✔ Is this the least restrictive intervention to assure safety for all? (Check whether redirection or prompting the student to use a replacement behavior would suffice.)

- ✔ Would we be comfortable with parents observing this intervention?

- ✔ Did we give the student time to respond, and use relationship and rapport to address the problem?

- ✔ Did we consider what has calmed this student under similar conditions in the past? (Check interaction style of the implementers, techniques and specific words and actions.)

- ✔ Would we be comfortable with the filming of this intervention, or with this intervention being featured on national tv?
Notes on Lines 12:

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### Components to Evaluate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components to Evaluate</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
<th>Examples:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>I. REACTIVE STRATEGIES</strong> (line 12)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Well designed reactive strategies consider the progression phases in specifying how to respond to a problem behavior.</td>
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| Reactive strategies are clearly communicated and understood by all implementers | 2 = A Strategy for Managing at least one Problem Safely must be present, AND any two other components below are present for that behavior, AND no contaminants are present: (a) catharsis for aggression or (b) aggressive verbal or physical behavior is listed (line 5), but no strategy for managing safely given. | 2 = 2) Managing the Problem Safely: “During Billy’s problem behavior episode (task refusal and profanity) the teacher will sit very close to him, present two choices of which work folder to complete with a peer, using a non-emotional tone, waiting for swearing to end and Billy to choose a task.”  
**AND**  
Other components for that problem behavior are described (2 or more required): 1. a) Prompting FERB:  
“Teacher will non-verbally cue Billy to switch to the FERB, a peer assistance request, using the five hand signals of “stop,” “think,” “you can make a good choice,” “you can make a bad choice” “what will you do?” as taught to the student and practiced previously and followed by hand signals “put yourself on the back” if student signals “good choice” and switches behavior.”  
OR 1. b) Prompting to Redirect, e.g., severe disability example: “If Mary begins to rock, (a weak protest, typically occurring prior to screaming and running, show her the “what I’m working for card”, then redirect her gestures/reinforce only the immediate task before terminating instructional session and providing desired activity.”  
3) Debriefing method(s): 4) Consequences or Punishment:  
“Billy will not receive tokens for the period due to lack of completing the task which would have earned approximately 5 toward the computer game.” or, “If Billy engages in dangerous behavior, such as pushing, hitting or throwing furniture during the protest, he will be referred for immediate school disciplinary response.”  
1 = Managing problem safely strategy for at least one problem behavior is present, but two additional components for that behavior are not present. | 1. **Prompting** - Can continuation or escalation of problem be averted by using a prompt? Remind the student of how to get desired outcome with the FERB?  
2. **Managing safely** - How will staff maintain safety of everyone during escalated behavior? This is critical.  
3. **Debriefing** - What procedures, after calm is restored, help identify how to prevent further occurrences and restore rapport and rule-following behavior?  
4. **Consequences** - may or may not be required or recommended. Do school safety requirements, outside agency or parent requests require specific consequences? Does the team believe a consequence will result in the student avoiding using the problem behavior in the future?  
Debriefing can be a dialogue or a written process or a behavior practice session. For younger or less cognitively able students, where verbal problem solving has not yet proven successful, “debriefing” can entail a session to model replacement behavior, or guided practice with the student of how to use the FERB, or a review of a picture sequence depicting alternative behavior steps or other teaching procedures designed to achieve skill fluency, if that is in question, after the behavior episode.  
Punishment is a consequence the student finds aversive and results in elimination or reduction in problem behavior because the student is motivated to avoid that consequence in the future. Caution: Avoid reinforcing the problem behavior. Sending a student to the office may be thought to be punishment, but the student may actually find it reinforcing!  
Hint: A student screams (function of scream determined to be to escape a task). If student’s task is terminated by the scream, this behavior will become reinforced. Do not allow escape following the scream. Instead, require a very brief compliance prior to the escape (“Raise your hand to leave, Peter.”) |
| Analysis: “Reactive strategy to employ/debriefing procedures to use if problem behavior occurs again.”  
Four components are considered: Prompting, Managing Safely, Debriefing, and Consequences | 1 = A Strategy for Managing at least one Problem Safely must be present, but two additional reactive strategy components for that behavior are not given AND NO contaminator is described on the plan: catharsis for aggression, or no managing safely strategy given on the plan for aggression listed (line 5). | | |