

Behavioral Intervention Strategies

An important goal in education is for all students to be successful in school and in life. Behavioral Interventions are essential for providing behavioral support to those students who display challenging behaviors. Interventions lead students to improved behavior so they can achieve success. Different types of student behavior require different types of interventions. The following research-based intervention strategies are used to establish and maintain a learning climate that promotes both teaching and learning.

- Redirection/Calming -

Watch for signs of student frustration and use de-escalation strategies to redirect and calm a student.

Be alert to triggers that lead to misbehavior

Use a soft, soothing voice when redirecting/directing a student to focus

Call student by name and discreetly redirect

Intervene quickly at the first sign of a student losing control

Use verbal or nonverbal cues to refocus a student

Assign a task for redirection (e.g., passing out paper, running an errand)

Play soft, classical background Music

Use relaxation exercises (e.g. take deep breaths, count slowly, use laughter)

Teach students to use positive self-talk

Model and practice Give Me Ten (e.g., count forward or backwards to 10)

Allow time for student to refocus and gain self-control

Lead students to recognize when a problem situation might occur and what action to take

Provide a cool down area in the classroom that a student can access when needed

Allow student to take a walk with supervision

Use physical activities to relieve stress (e.g., walking fast, using clay, squeezing a stress ball)

-Giving Directions -

Give explicit directions in an appropriate environment to promote student success.

Use a signal to gain the attention of students prior to giving directions (e.g., clapping pattern)

Face students when you address them

Give directions when you have the attention of all students

Obtain eye contact and use close proximity for struggling students

Give clear, simple directions

Give one direction at a time, dividing the task into smaller segments

Avoid vague language so that students know precisely what to do and what behavior is expected

Write directions on the board or use visual displays to add meaning

Model directions using a visual reminder for all to see

Use a buddy system for students who need additional assistance

Have students rephrase or retell the directions to a partner to check for understanding

Read written directions to the class

Encourage students to highlight or underline key words in written directions

Allow students to ask questions to clarify any misunderstandings

After directions are given allow five seconds "wait time" for students to comply

Repeat directions after "wait time" if needed

Include directions for procedures when students complete tasks or assignments

Give praise and positive feedback to students when explicit directions are followed

Follow up with praise and reinforcement after a task is completed

Use non-disruptive techniques such as eye contact, close proximity

Follow through with a mild consequence for non-compliance to directions

- Discipline/Consequences -

Address misbehaviors to increase appropriate behaviors.

Take proactive steps to establish a positive classroom climate

Clearly define expectations and motivate students with positive reinforcement

Teach rules and procedures

Plan and inform students of consequences that relate to misbehaviors

Teach student to take responsibility for self and actions

Follow through with consistent consequences in a timely manner

Communicate the classroom behavior plan to students and parents

Deal with misbehaviors promptly, fairly, consistently, and equitably

Use I messages to let students know what is expected (e.g., "Linda, I need you to")

Avoid using threats

Report serious infractions to campus administrator

Initial corrective interventions could include:

- **proximity (49A)**
- **quiet redirection (49B)**
- **private nonverbal cues (49C)**
- **verbal reminders (e.g., "Beverly, remember to ____.") (49D)**
- **directives (e.g., "Sam, I need you to ____.") (49E)**
- **repeated practice**

Consequences that occur after warnings are given might include:

- **loss of privilege**
- **time of silence**
- **correct inappropriate action (e.g., "Martin, please go back and walk down the hallway.")**

- temporary time away from the group, yet remain in the classroom
- log misbehaviors in a notebook
- student reflects on misbehavior through journaling
- teacher/student conference
- parent contact (e.g., phone call, note home, report card note, parent conference)

Follow campus guidelines and campus plan for corrective action

-Defiant and Challenging Behavior -

Use strategies to manage students who exhibit defiant or challenging behaviors.

Analyze and document an situation to help determine what might have triggered the misbehavior.

- What was the behavior the student displayed?
- What should the student have been doing at the time of the displayed behavior?
- What occurred prior to the behavior?
- When did the behavior occur (time of day; before, during, or after a particular subject or activity)?
- Is there an observable pattern among the gathered information?

Determine if the environment needs adjustment to avoid the display of inappropriate behavior

Develop a plan to prevent triggers (lack of sleep, confusing directions) that lead to misbehavior

Increase positive reinforcement and feedback

Have planned responses to avoid an emotional reaction

Avoid immediate responses when in an emotional state

Recognize improvements in behavior with praise and encouragement

Encourage defiant students to keep a daily log of successes and accomplishments

Teach students to take responsibility for their behaviors

Model a firm, fair, and consistent approach when dealing with difficult behaviors

Refrain from engaging in an argument or power struggle

Refuse to threaten or plead with students

Teach students an alternative to aggression (e.g., Stop, Think, Act)

Acknowledge student's feelings when upset (e.g., "I understand you are upset.")

Use diffusing statements (Rest for a few minutes and then we will talk.)

Avoid taking behaviors and comments personally

Use what questions and avoid why questions (What were you doing? What will you do differently?)

Use a calm manner and positive body language

Keep a sense of humor

Hold private conversations away from others

Eliminate nagging, fussing, demands, and threats from conversation

Avoid judgmental comments

When investigating a situation: actively listen, ask clarifying questions, and restate what was said

Involve the counselor as a support person

Determine the root cause of the problem (e.g., hunger, illness, family, academic difficulty)

Share literature that provides positive examples of appropriate behavior or character

Involve the student in developing a behavior plan that is meaningful and motivating to the student

Build strong home and school relationships

Offer choices (e.g., "You have a choice. You may ___ or ___)

Teach students a problem-solving approach to use when confronted with a conflict

Design activities to help students feel an integral part of the classroom and campus

- Transitions -

Reduce the amount of downtime between activities or a change in subjects (83)

Establish clear, consistent routines and expectations for accomplishing daily tasks and activities

- **(e.g., entering the classroom, taking attendance, handing in homework, working in groups, working independently)**

Provide daily warm-ups or bell-ringer activities for immediate student engagement

Post and adhere to a daily or weekly schedule incorporating transitional times

Eliminate disruptions between lessons or activities through careful planning and preparation

Model appropriate procedures and signals for transitioning and have students practice often

Design the layout of the classroom to facilitate a smooth flow and easy movement

Make materials quickly and easily accessible to students

Give consistent visual or auditory signals and verbal cues to alert students to a transition

- **(e.g., bell ringing, clapping rhythm, countdown, overhead timer, sounding a clicker, playing music, performing a chant)**

Use transition signals in advance to allow students to finish and prepare for the next activity

Provide "transition time" for students to follow through and/or prepare before the next activity

Circulate among students during transitions to intervene before a disruption occurs or escalates

Provide acknowledgements or other reinforcements for smooth and successful transitions

Use relaxation and visual imagery exercises to set a calm atmosphere when needed

Teach, model, and practice specific procedures and expectations for out-of-class activities

Monitor students during class changes, lunch, recess, and dismissal

Provide behavioral contracts for students who have difficulty in out-of-class settings

Offer school-wide acknowledgements to motivate appropriate behaviors outside the classroom

Prepare and organize instructional materials in daily files or baskets for easy access

Refer to the Mentoring Minds' Behavior Guide™ for more behavior strategies