

Understanding and Managing Severe Problem Behavior

Presented by

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Example

Acting-Out Behavior

- During independent work in math, students are expected to complete problems that were assigned in the previous class. One student, Michael, is sitting slouched in his seat, feet stretched out, head down staring at the floor and looking very serious. The successive interactions are presented along with a brief description of the teacher and student's behavior.

Teacher

“Michael, it is time to get started with your math.”

“The math you didn’t finish this morning.”

“Well let me see your work please.”

“Good you have done four problems but you need to do ten.”

I announced that at the beginning of class yesterday.”

“Michael, look at the board. See under assignment, one through ten.”

Michael

“What math?”

“I did finish it!”

Michael leans back.

“When did we have to do ten?”

“I don’t remember that!”

“Well that’s the first time I’ve seen it.”

Example Continued

Teacher

“Look Michael. This has gone far enough. You need to finish the rest of your assignment. So please get on with it.”

“OK. Here is your choice. Do the math now or you will have to do it in detention.”

“That’s verbal abuse. I will now do an office referral.”

“Alright. It’s to the Office.” Nudges student on the elbow.

Teacher follows emergency procedures and calls for help resulting in student being escorted to the Office.

Michael

“No way. I’m done!”

“F... you.”

Throws book across the room.

Swings arm in direction of teacher and makes solid contact with teacher’s arm.

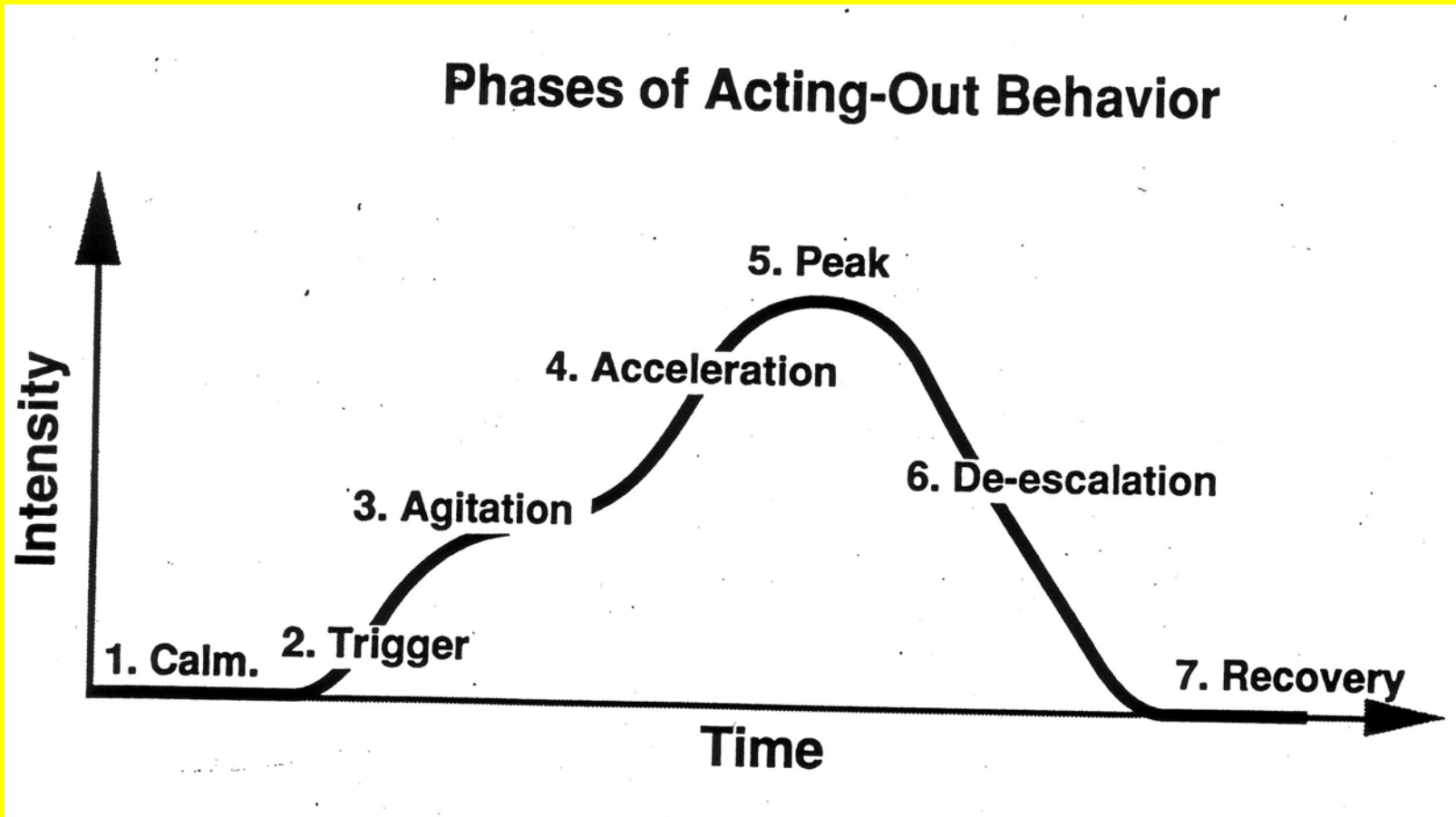
Presence of an Escalating Chain of Behavior

- Questions/argues
- Non-compliance
- Verbal abuse
- Defiance/confrontation
- Aggression

Presence of successive interactions.

- Each student behavior was preceded by a teacher behavior
- A pattern of “My turn... Your turn”
- What if teacher didn’t take a turn?
- What if teacher took a different turn?
- Both examples show an interaction of TWO escalating behavior chains.

Model for Escalating Behavior Chain



Two Essential Components for Managing Severe Acting-Out Behavior

Section 1: Understand the Model

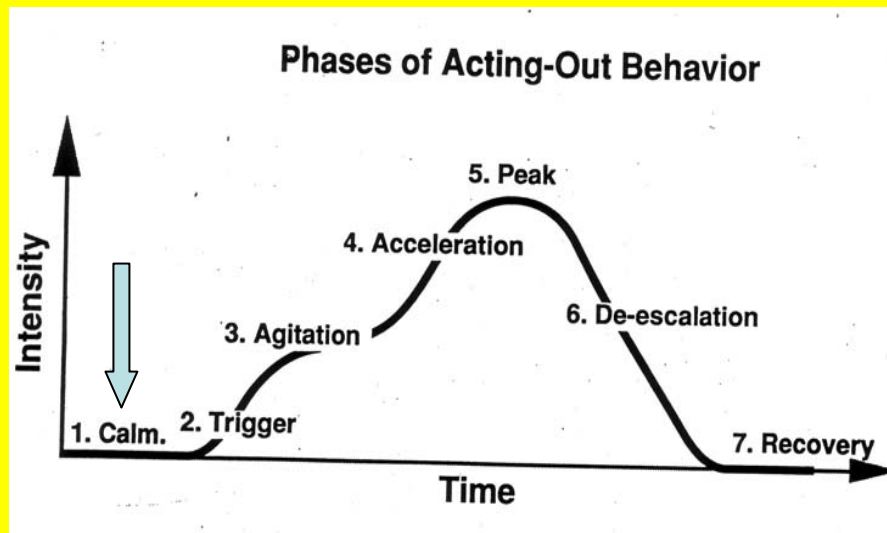
- Patterns
- Specific Behaviors for Each Phase
- Know exactly where the student is in the cycle (placement in Model).

Section 2: Develop Strategies for each phase

- *Implement strategies based on student placement*

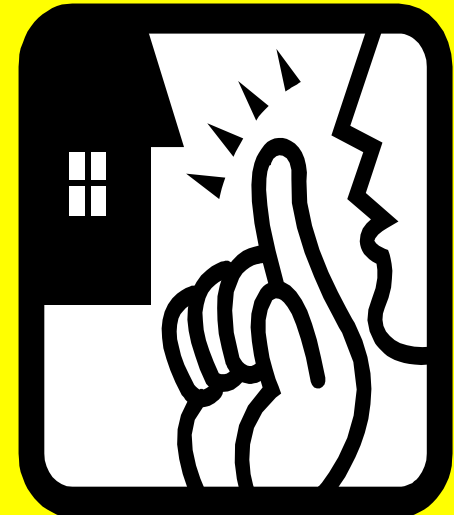
Section One : Model

Phase 1: CALM



Phase One: *Calm*

- **On-task**
- **Follows rules and expectations**
- **Responsive to praise**
- **Initiates behavior**
- **Goal oriented**
- **Socially appropriate**



Summary: Phase 1

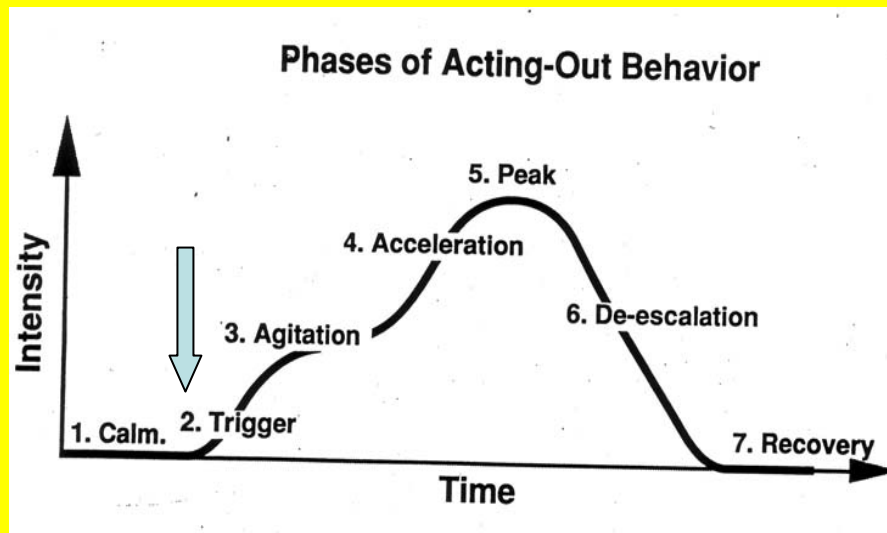
CALM



Overall Behavior
Student is ***COOPERATIVE***

Model

Phase 2: TRIGGERS



Phase Two:

Triggers/Antecedents

School-Based

- **Conflicts**
- **Denial of something needed**
- **Something negative is inflicted**
- **Changes in routine**
- **Provocations**
- **Pressure**
- **Interruptions**
- **Ineffective problem- solving**
- **Academic errors**
- **Corrections**



Summary: Phase 2

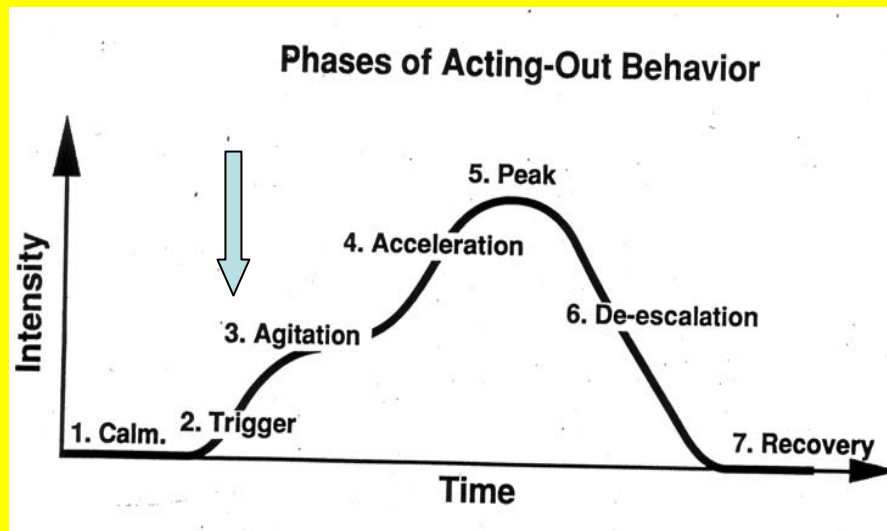
TRIGGERS



Overall Behavior
Series of Unresolved Problems

Model

Phase 3: AGITATION




Phase Three: *Agitation*

Increase in Behavior

- 
- **Eyes dart**
 - **Language non-conversational**
 - **Busy hands**
 - **In and out of group**
 - **Off-task/On-task**

Decrease in Behavior

- 
- **Stares into space**
 - **Language subdued**
 - **Hands contained**
 - **Withdraws from group**
 - **Off-task, “Frozen”**

Summary: Phase 3

AGITATION

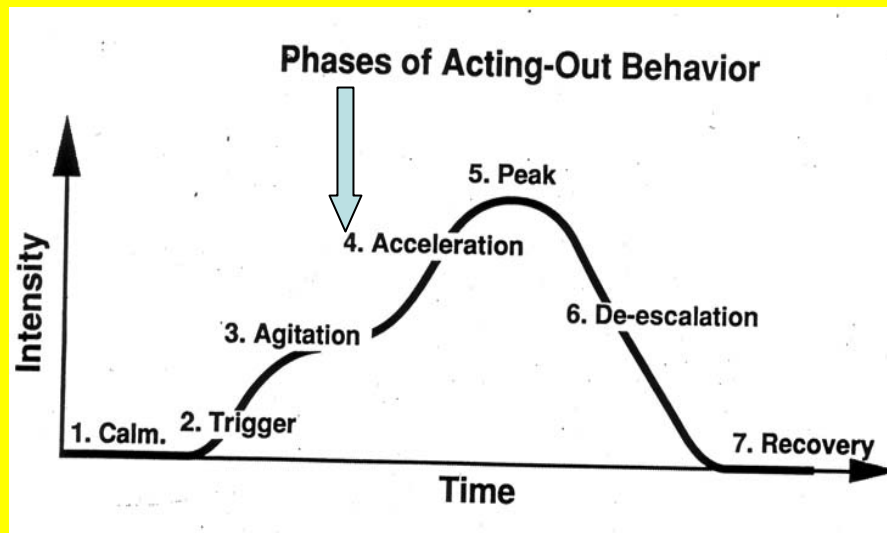


Overall Behavior

Student is ***UNFOCUSED OR NON-DIRECTED***

Model

Phase 4: ACCELERATION



Phase Four: *Acceleration*



- Questioning & arguing
- Non-compliance & defiance
- Off-task
- Provoking students
- Compliance with accompanying inappropriate behaviors
- Criterion problems
- Whining & crying
- Avoidance & escape
- Threats & intimidation
- Verbal abuse

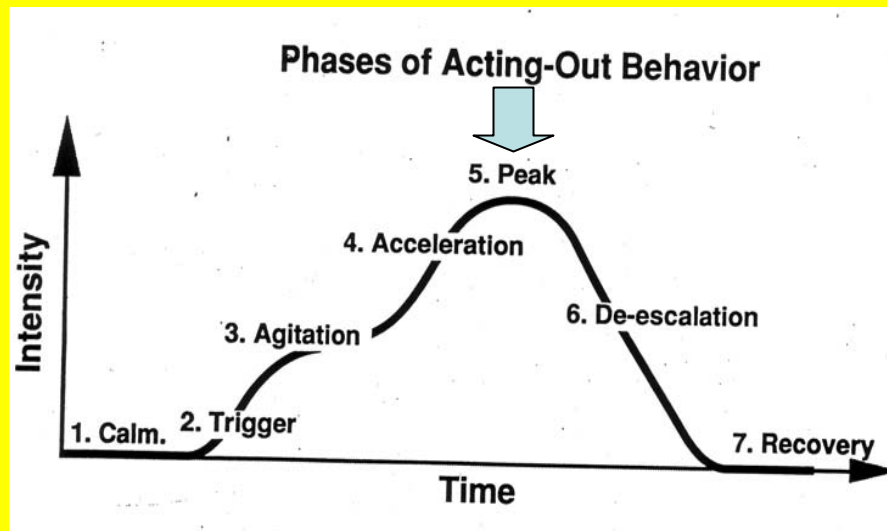
Summary: Phase 4 ACCELERATION



Overall Behavior
Behavior is **DIRECTED & ENGAGING**

Model

Phase 5: PEAK



Phase Five: *Peak*

- **Serious destruction of property**
- **Assault**
- **Self-abuse**
- **Severe tantrums**
- **Hyperventilation**
- **Screaming, running, violence**



Summary: Phase 5 Peak

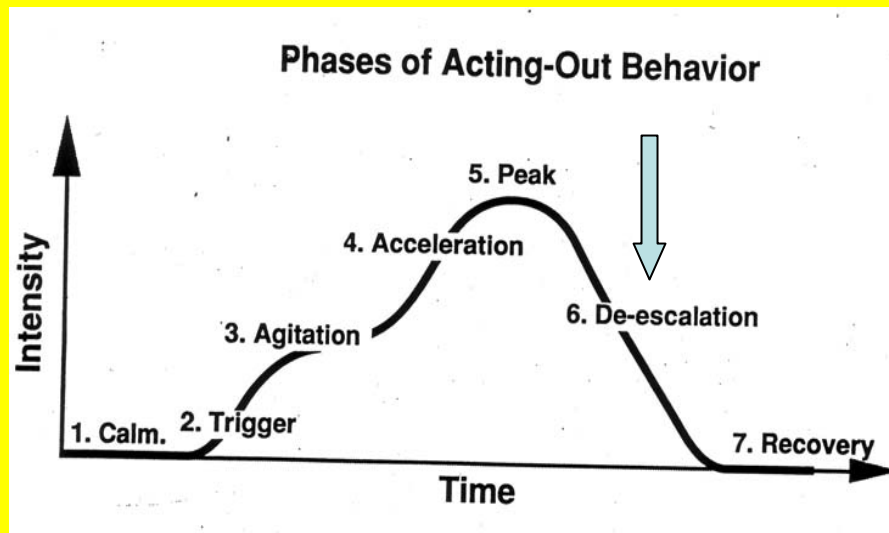


Overall Behavior

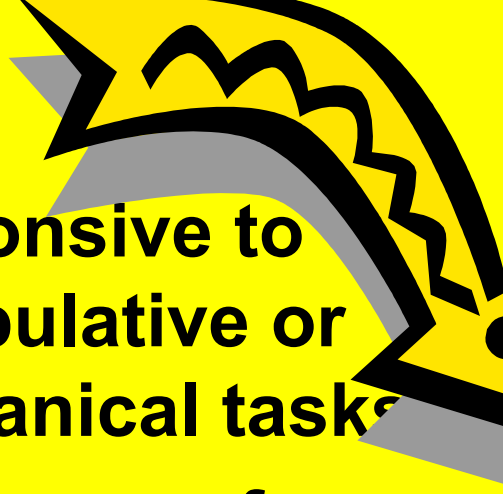
Student is out of control creating safety concerns

Model

Phase 6: DE-ESCALATION



Phase Six: De-escalation

- **Confusion**
 - **Reconciliation**
 - **Withdrawal**
 - **Denial**
 - **Blaming others**
 - **Sleeping**
 - **Responsive to directions**
- 
- **Responsive to manipulative or mechanical tasks**
 - **Avoidance of discussion (unless there is occasion to blame others)**

Summary: Phase 6 DE-ESCALATION

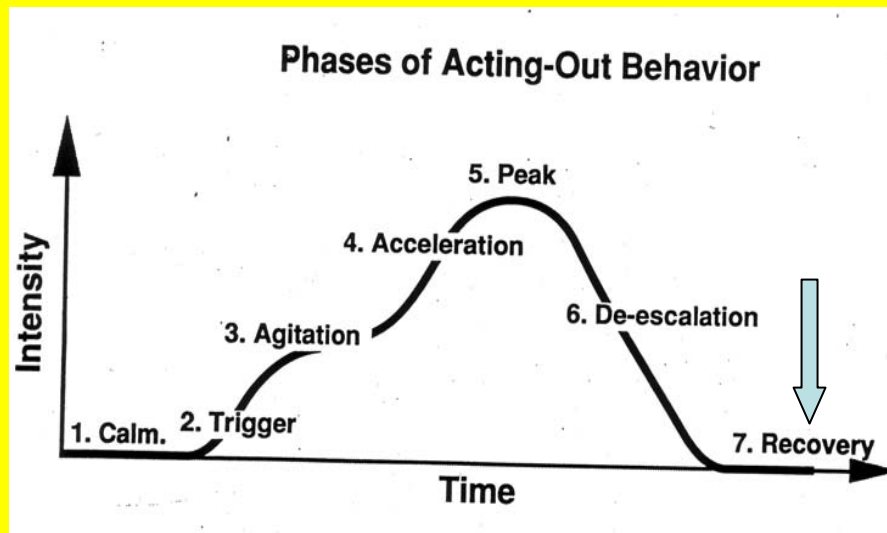


Overall Behavior

Student displays confused behavior

Model

Phase 7: RECOVERY



Phase 7: RECOVERY

- Eagerness for independent work or study
- Subdued in group work
- Subdued in class discussions
- Defensive
- Avoidance of debriefing



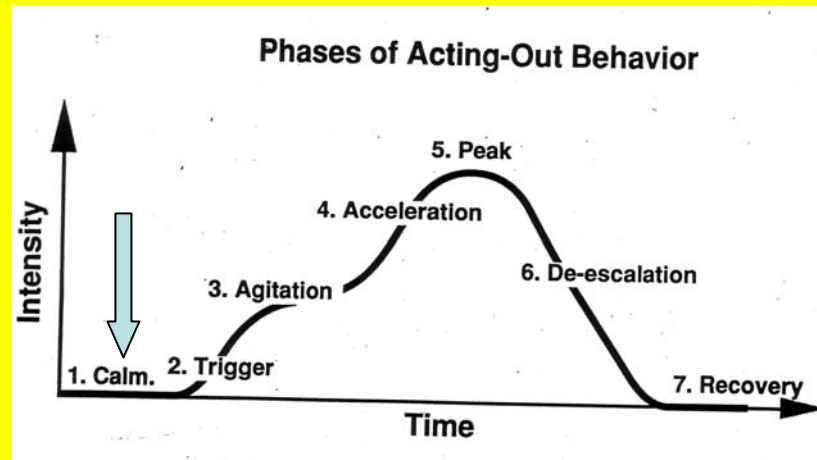
Summary: Phase 7



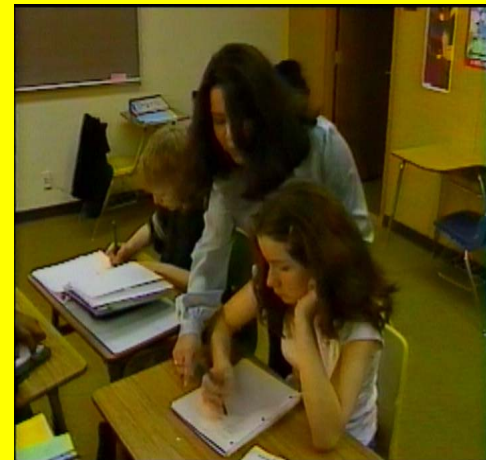
Overall Behavior
Eagerness for **BUSY WORK** &
reluctance to **DISCUSS**

Section 2: Strategies

Phase 1: Calm



Basic Goal:
**Maintain Students in this
Phase**



Strategies Phase 1: Calm

1. Classroom Structure
2. Quality Instruction
3. Managing Attention
4. Teaching Behavior

Strategy 1: Classroom Structure

- Developing an appropriate schedule
- Formulating instructional objectives
- Teaching to mastery
- Continuously measuring student performance and providing feedback

- Using good pacing
- Managing student-interactions
- Specifying and teaching expectations
- Establishing high rates of on task behavior
- Managing student errors
- Shaping student responses

Strategy 2: Quality Instruction

- Choosing an appropriate curriculum
- Focus on basic skills especially reading
- Providing productive or challenging tasks

- Providing sufficient opportunities for student responses
- Focus on learning (academic achievement)
- Develop lessons to enable students to succeed
- Assess accurately and frequently

Remember: “The greatest reinforcer a teacher can offer students is to help them learn.”

Strategy 3: Managing Attention

- a. Contingent Attention (delivered following desirable behavior)
 - Praise
 - Privileges
 - Contracts
 - Awards or rewards
 - Recognition

- b. Non-Contingent (Delivered on initiation by teacher)
 - Greetings
 - Visits
 - Contacts
 - Jobs
 - Phone-calls/emails
 - Notes

Remember: Students need attention in this phase. In later phases they demand attention!

Strategy 4: Teaching Behavior



Basically

*If you want good behavior
you have to teach it.*

Teaching Behavior ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

Key research finding:

“Children below 4th grade require a great deal of instruction and practice in classroom rules and procedures.... Effective management in the early grades, is more and instructional than a disciplinary enterprise.” (Cotton, 1990, p.8)

Teaching Procedures

Use Five Steps for Teaching Expectations

1. Explain
2. Specify student behaviors
3. Practice
4. Monitor
5. Review

(Colvin & Lazar, 1997)

Maintenance Plan

Once initial teaching has been conducted use these three steps for *maintenance*

Provide

1. Reminders
2. Supervision
3. Feedback

Note: These procedures are described and illustrated in the teaching plan for secondary students.

Teaching Behavior

Students Upper Elementary/Secondary

Key Research Findings:

“With older students, researchers have noted that the best results are obtained through vigilantly reminding students about the rules and procedures and monitoring their compliance with them” (Cotton, 1990, p.8).

In addition, Colvin, Kameenui & Sugai (1995) found an additional component of providing feedback also assistend in teaching classroom expectations.

Use three steps for teaching expectations to secondary students

Provide systematic:

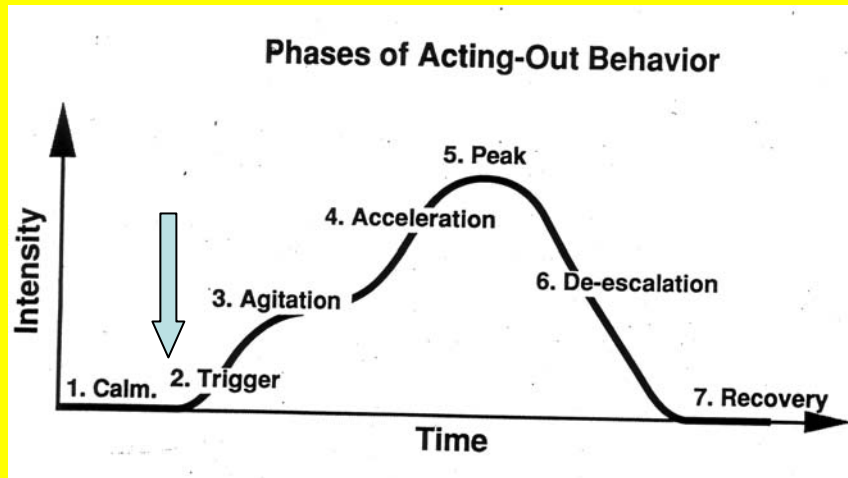
1. Reminders
2. Supervision
3. Feedback

Note:

- These same three steps are used to maintain classroom expectations for elementary students following initial teaching.
- Specialist Teachers (such as Art, Music, Shop, P.E., Lab) would also use these procedures since they have less contact with the students).

Strategies

Phase 2: Triggers



Strategies Triggers

Three Major Areas

- A. Formal programs or services
- B. Pre-Correction
- C. Addressing Non-School Based Triggers

A. Formal Programs or Services

1. Curriculum interventions (such as social skills, anger management).
2. Counseling support (individual and/or group).
3. Community services (such as in depth counseling, psychiatric support)
4. Medical assistance

B. Pre-Correction

Key Points

- “Pre-” means before; “-Correct” means after
- “Pre-Correction” means ***anticipating*** problem behavior and ***intervening beforehand***

- By **identifying triggers**, prevention steps can be taken
- Problem behavior is **prevented**
- Expected behavior ***replaces*** problem behavior

Pre-Correction Checklist and Plan

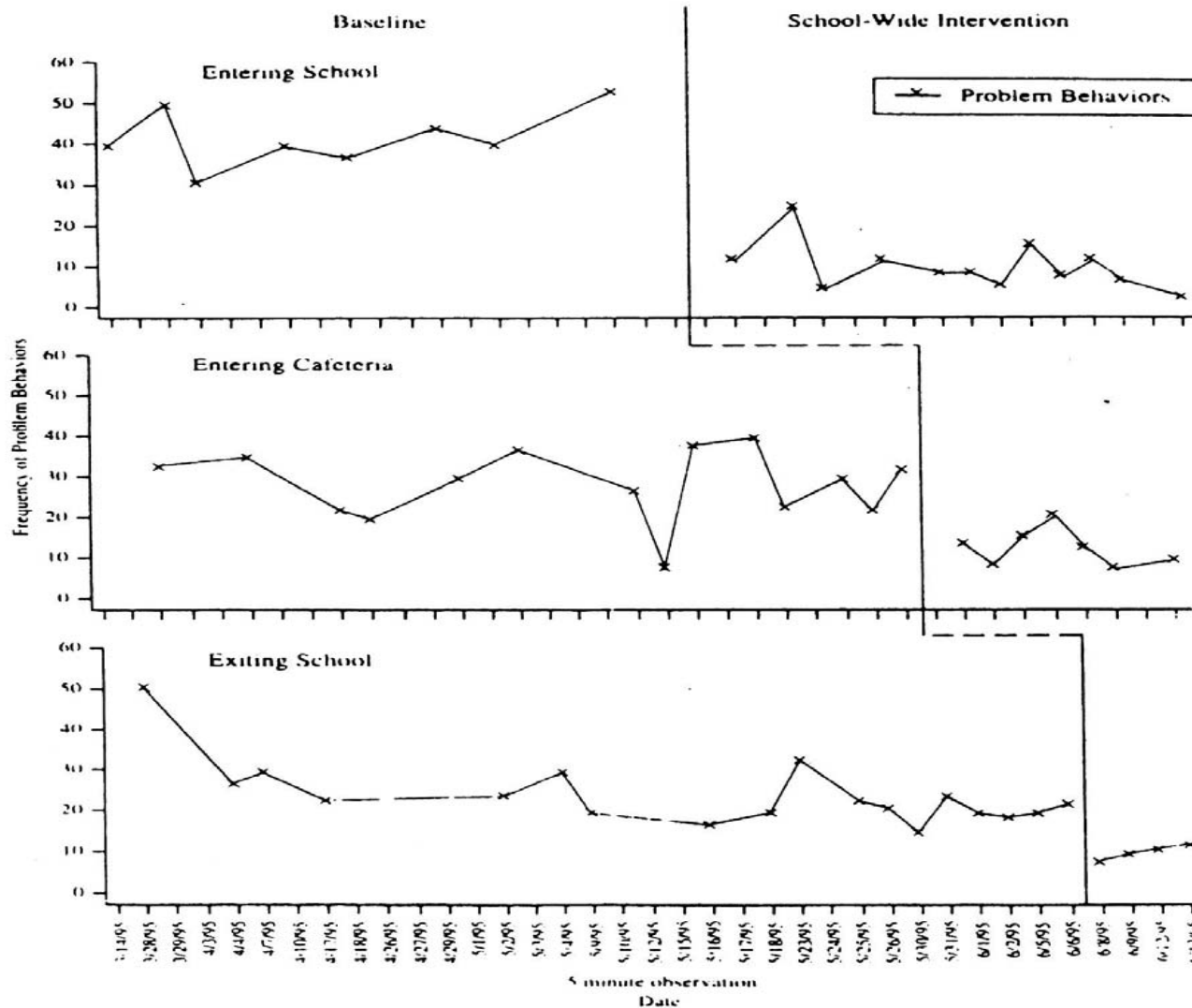
Teacher
Date

Student
Class

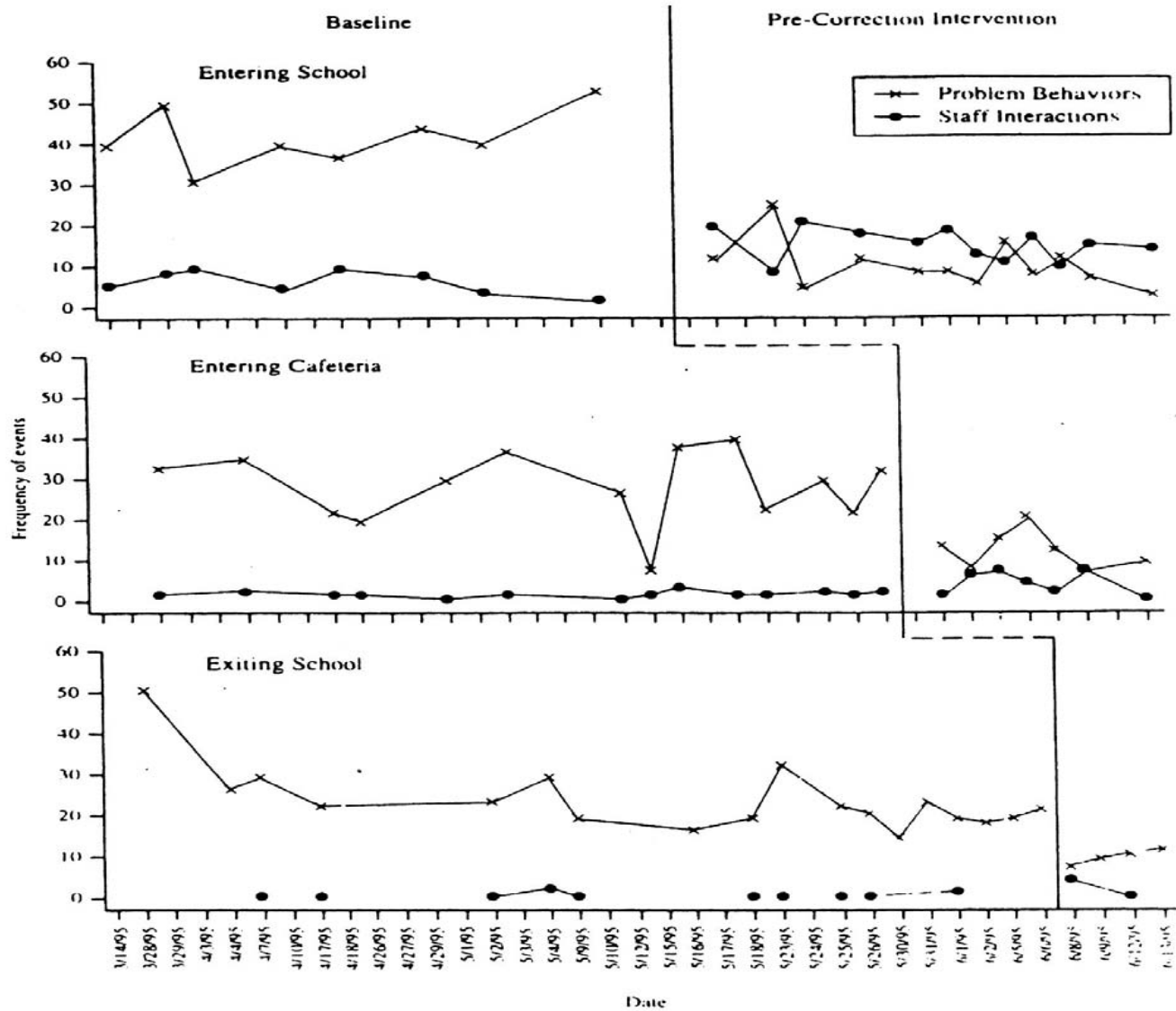
- 1. Context
Problem Behavior
- 2. Expected Behavior
- 3. Context Modification
- 4. Behavior Rehearsal
- 5. Strong Reinforcement
- 6. Prompts
- 7. Monitoring Plan

Worksheet: Develop a pre-correction checklist and plan to address a problem in your own classroom. A sample plan follows with a blank form for your plan.

Study: Colvin, G., Sugai, G., Good III, R.H., & Lee, Y. (1997). *Using active supervision and pre-correction to improve transition behaviors in an elementary school.* School Psychology Quarterly, 12, 344-363.



Effect of Supervisor Interactions on Problem Behavior



Results of Pre-Correction Study

Major Findings:

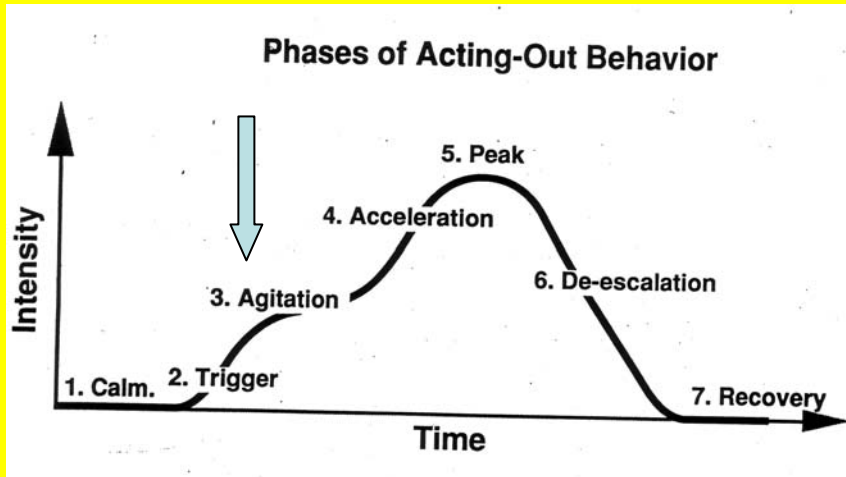
- Active supervision combined with pre-correction significantly reduced problems
- Active supervision defined as: ***Moving around, looking around and interacting with children***
- Interactions between supervisor and children negatively correlated to high degree (-83%)
- Actual number of adults present did not affect student behavior (range 1-5)
- Some students persisted with problem behavior implying they needed a more individualized intervention.

C. Addressing Non-School Based Triggers

- Documentation
- Advocacy
- Parent conferences-partnerships
- Utilizing school support services
- Partnerships with agencies-Wraparound
- Other

Strategies

Phase 3: AGITATION



Agitation Strategies

Key Issues

1. If not addressed student may
 - a. **Escalate** or
 - b. Remain **distracted** making instruction difficult
2. Strategies are **accommodations**
3. Implement **before** onset of escalation

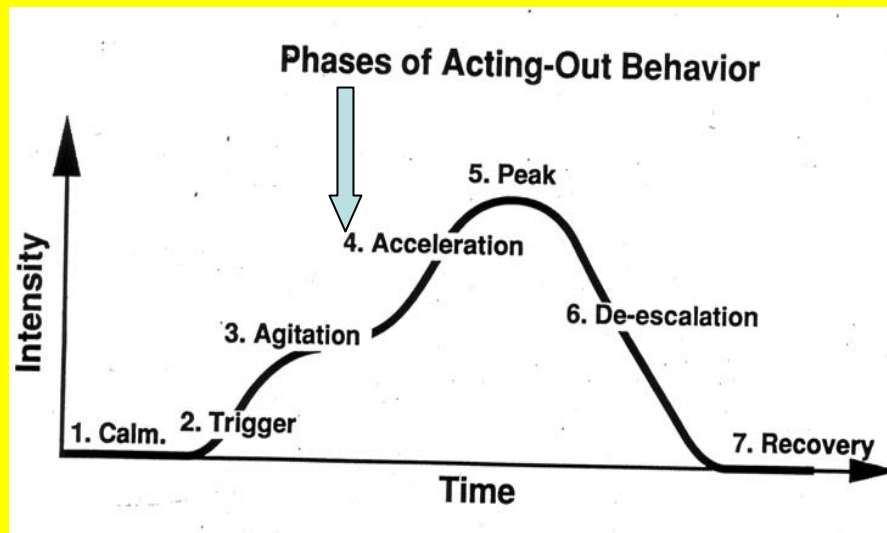
Strategies for AGITATION

1. Teacher empathy
2. Space
3. Options
4. Preferred activities
5. Teacher proximity

5. Independent activities
6. Authorize student choices (as appropriate)
7. Movement activities (jobs)
8. Student involvement
9. Relaxation techniques
10. Pre-arranged signal

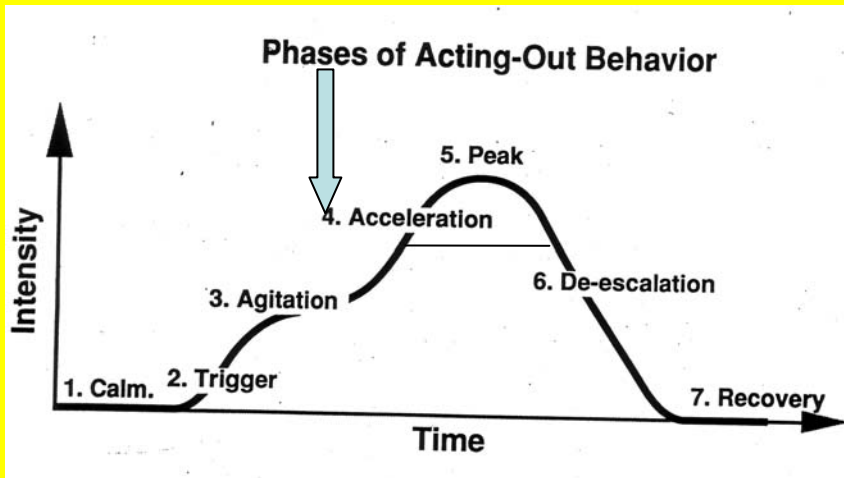
Strategies

Phase 4: ACCELERATION



Strategies

Phase 3. Acceleration



Two Applications

1. Onset of Peak Phase
2. Sustained acceleration

Strategies

Acceleration Phase

1. Avoid escalation responses
2. Re-Direct & maintain on task behavior
3. Emphasize student choices & responsibilities

4. Utilize non-confrontational limit setting procedures
5. Administer consequences
6. Debrief and problem solve
7. Track results

6. Debrief and problem solve

Conduct this activity following consequences-
separate from consequences

Use a problem solving format:

1. What did you do? (name the behavior)
2. Why did you do it? (capture student's need)
3. What else could you have done that would
 - a. Meet your need and
 - b. Be acceptable

4. Obtain agreement on what the student will do next time
5. Be ready to reinforce occurrences of alternative responses at first opportunity

Avoid Escalation Responses

- **Getting in the student's face**
- **Discrediting student**
- **Nagging or preaching**
- **Arguing**
- **Engaging in power struggles**



- **Tugging or grabbing the student**
- **Cornering the student**
- **Responding in kind (challenges or threats)**
- **Overly defensive**
- **Following student behavior with corresponding demands**
- **Shouting or raising voice**

2: Re-Direct & Maintain on task behavior

1. Respond to students exhibiting expected behavior
2. Delay responding to inappropriate behavior
3. Provide prompts for expected behavior (re-direct)

4. **AVOID** responding to off task behavior
5. Immediately reinforce student's **first** on task response
6. Intermittently reinforce on task behavior

3. Emphasize student choices & responsibilities

1. In problem context identify problem
2. Indicate that student needs to take care of the problem
3. Present options if need be

4. Direct student to select option
5. Reinforce making a choice
6. Reinforce first student response

4. Utilize non-confrontational limit setting procedures

Context:

1. Defiance, non-compliance.
Insubordination

OR

2. Sustained minor disruptive behavior
“enough is enough”

1. Pre-teach the procedures
2. Delivery of “ultimatum”
 - a. Present **expected behavior** and **negative consequence** as a **decision**
 - b. Allow a **few seconds** to **decide**
 - c. **Withdraw** and attend to other students or task
3. Follow-through based on student’s decision.

“Michael, you are asked to join the group or you will miss recess. You have a few seconds to decide.”

Teacher then moves to other students, returns to Michael in a few seconds and follows through a/c to his choice.

5. Administer consequences

1. Consequences should be **expected**
2. Consequences are a **function** of the student's choices/decisions
3. Deliver the consequences consistently, and as “matter of fact” as possible

Administer Consequences Cont'd

4. Focus on the behavior warranting consequences, “because you hit you will have to miss recess.”
5. Catch the student being appropriate following the consequences and reinforce
6. Reinforce occurrences of appropriate choices in future situations

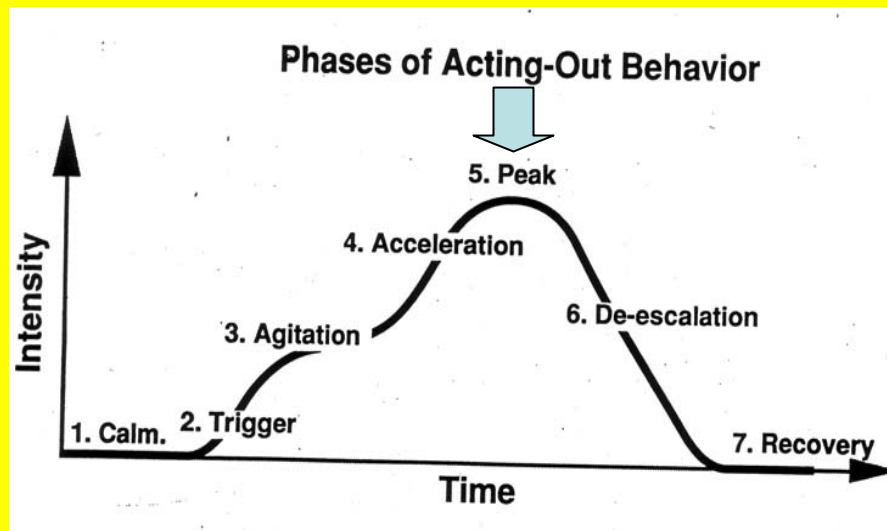
7. Track results

Is the plan working?

1. Develop tracking system to evaluate progress:
 - a. Office referrals
 - b. Incident reports
 - c. Teacher data system
 - d. Observations

Strategies

Phase 5: PEAK



Crisis Management

- **Systems response**
- **Safe strategies**



Systems Response

1. Pre-requisites-Legal Requirements
2. Short term interventions
3. Long term interventions

Legal Requirements



- 1. Definition of Restraint***
- 2. Use of Restraint***
- 3. Definition of Emergency***
- 4. Clarification Regarding Restraint***
- 5. Training on Use of Restraint***
- 6. Notification/Documentation Requirements***
- 7. Data Collection Requirement***

Short-Term Interventions

- Isolation or removal of involved student
- Allow time for student to “cool down.”
- Removal of other students (maintain supervision!)
- Utilize calm, detached responses to student
- Parent contact

Short term interventions cont'd

- Police call
- Crisis team call
- Restraint
- Short term suspension
- Behavior support plan



SAFETY TIPS



- **Move slowly and deliberately**
- **Keep reasonable distance**
- **Minimize body language**
- **Speak privately**
- **Speak calmly**

- **Speak respectfully**
- **Use simple language**
- **Acknowledge cooperation**
- **Withdraw if problems escalate**
- **Give student space**
- **Do not communicate “urgency to gain control”**

Long Term Interventions

- **Additional Assessment**
 - **Functional Behavioral Assessment**
 - **Mental Health or Other Health Assessment**
 - **Assessment of Risk Factors**
- **Specific Behavior Support Plan**
- **Follow-up**



Activity:

Additional Considerations

- **Additional Assessments**
 - Consider additional evaluation for written language and/or emotional concerns
- **Additional Interventions**
 - Referral to community programs for medical and supportive services

- **LRE Issues**
 - **Appropriate interventions will avoid the need for a more restrictive environment**
- **PBS Issues**
 - **Positive interventions will reduce the frequency of behavior emergencies and need for restraint**



Big Ideas

Crisis Management



- **Defuse behavior by interrupting the crisis behavior early in the behavior chain**
- **Understand the phase of escalation in student behavior to better respond to the behavior**
- **Prepare a school wide or system response to crisis behavior**



Big Ideas Cont'd

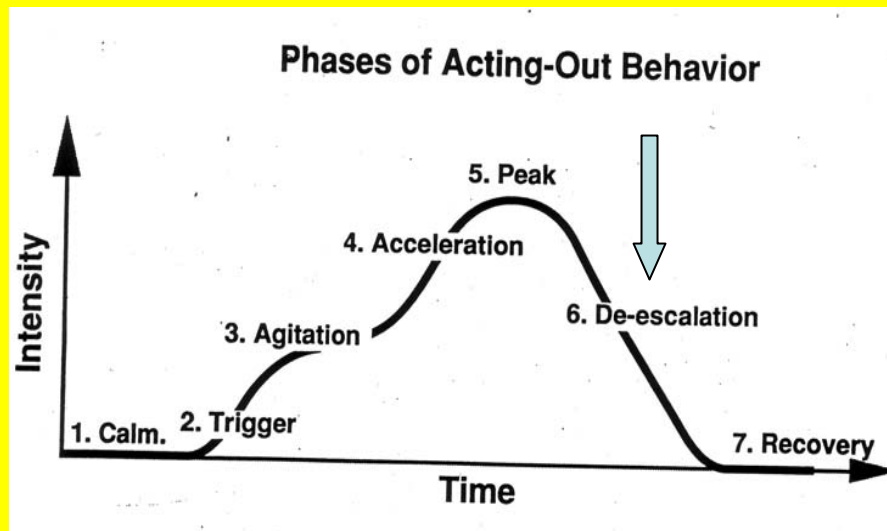


- **Plan for behavioral emergencies**
- **Train staff in the use of professionally accepted methods of physical restraint**

- **Understand the intent of restraint- specifically SAFETY –IT IS NOT TO BE USED AS A ‘POWER STRUGGLE TOOL’**
- **Prevent or reduce the use of physical restraint by using positive interventions**

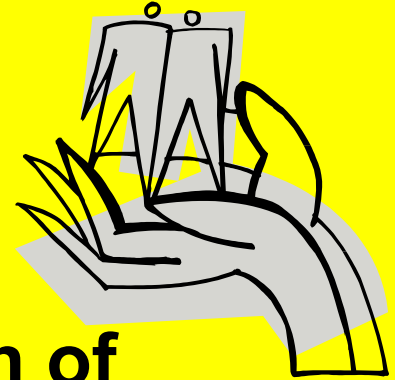
Strategies

Phase 6: DE-ESCALATION



Managing the De-escalation Phase

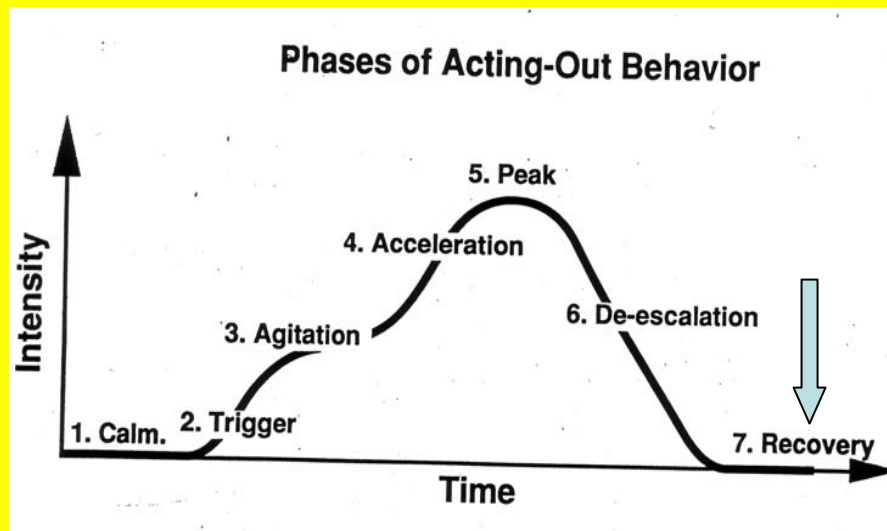
- **Monitor for health and safety of all involved**
- **Monitor student for re-escalation of behavior**
- **Allow time and space**



- **Provide opportunity for non-judgmental discussion**
- **Provide easy/concrete tasks**
- **Determine appropriate time to de-brief with student and staff**

Strategies

Phase 7: RECOVERY



Phase Seven: *Recovery*

**Return to Phase One:
Calm**

**Assist student in
returning to normal
activities**

Recovery Phase: Strategies

1. Focus on normal routines
2. Do not negotiate on consequences
3. Reinforce appropriate behavior

Recovery Phase Strategies Cont'd

4. Strongly acknowledge appropriate handling of previous difficult situations
5. De-Brief (see next slide)
6. Communication student can succeed with effort and help
7. Review and revise plan as needed

Debriefing Session

- **What did you do?**
- **Where, when, and why did the problem behavior occur?**
- **What could you do differently next time?**
- **What do you need to do next?**
- **What is the action plan**
- **How do we check on how you are doing?**

Safe Strategies for Managing & Preventing Behavioral Crises

KEY ELEMENTS

- **Before**
- **During**
- **After**



Before

Focus

Use sound preventive procedures

During

Focus

Goal is “Safety First”

After

Focus

**Gather sufficient information to
refine procedures and prevent
subsequent crises**

References

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- Wellman Begun, R., & Humi, F.J. (Editors) (1998). *Violence prevention skills: Lessons and activities for secondary teachers*. West Nyack, NY: The Center of Applied Research in Education.

Additional Products Published by Geoff Colvin

Books

- Colvin, G. (2004). *Managing the cycle of serious acting-out behavior*. Eugene, OR: Behavior Associates.
- Colvin, G. & Lazar, M. (1997). *The effective elementary classroom: Managing for success*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Videos

- Colvin, G. (2004). *Managing non-compliance: Effective strategies for K-12 teachers*. Eugene, OR: IRIS Media
- Colvin, G: (2000) *Defusing anger & aggression: Safe strategies for secondary school educators*. Eugene, OR: IRIS Media.
- Colvin, G. (2001). *Managing threats: A school-wide action plan*: Eugene, OR: IRIS Media.

(All available through Behavior Associates: (541) 485-6450)

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