



Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy: Practical Solutions for Minimizing Behavioral Challenges in Students with Special Needs



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Needs Assessment: online or hard copy (justice)

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Presentation Focus

Part 1

- Special needs populations and behavior
- What can we do?
- Video samples of strategies in action
- General reminders

Part 2

- Interactive simulation
- Points to remember
- Considering impact of crisis/escalation
- Scenarios for application and discussion

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Special Needs Populations and Behaviors

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Students with Special Needs & Behavior

- Behavior is typically **NOT** a part of disorders, rather:
 - Assorted learning, emotional, social and other challenges may lead to anxiety and frustration
 - Effectively communicating needs and frustration as well as understanding what is asked can be a challenge for many of special education students
 - We build in strategies to compensate for our challenges—yet problem solving and organization can also be a challenge
 - Behavior is natural and often works well to get the point across
 - **AS SUCH, BEHAVIOR serves as COMMUNICATION**

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Sample Behaviors



- Falling to the floor
- Yelling, cussing
- Hitting, kicking, pinching (self/others)
- Throwing objects
- Noncompliance
- Verbal refusal
- Running away
- Others?

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Functions of Behaviors

- Behaviors may function to communicate need for *attention, access to desired objects/activities, avoidance/escape* of undesired situations and/or access to *sensory/calming* options
- If behaviors do effectively communicate and/or get what they want, the student will do over and over again
- Critical goal: limit ability of problem behavior to work

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We all do it: sample behaviors



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- Even everyday situations can promote feelings of intensity, concentration, boredom and upset
- This can lead to increased anxiety that we need to censor and/or behavior to help us to calm
- Video**—repetitive behaviors-special needs and neurotypical examples

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Monitoring Behaviors



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- Those with special needs may adopt some other behaviors that are less commonplace but are also effective for calming
- As anxiety increases, the level, intensity, type of behavior may change—repetitive behaviors may change to elopement, SIB and other behaviors as a means to avoid the high anxiety situations

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Special Needs and Emergencies



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- Individuals with developmental disabilities (e.g., ASD) are 7 times more likely to come in contact with law enforcement than their typically developing peers (Curry et al., 1993).
- Ability to censor, problem solve, and/or communicate more socially appropriate responses may be a challenge
- As such, greater risk for becoming anxious, non-compliant and aggressive when interacting during emergencies (Cannata & Rzcudlo, 2007).

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What Can We Do?



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What Can We Do?

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Focus on Student Strengths to Prevent Behaviors



- Often negative behaviors draw most response/assist
 - understand not trying to be disrespectful
 - just doing what works; don't let it
- Focus on and attend to successes and strengths
 - Incompatible behaviors—e.g., quiet voice, hands to self, feet on floor, bottom in seat
 - Replacement behaviors—e.g., counting, to safe place, use words to ask for help
- Strategies introduced with special education represent ways to build upon student strengths to increase success

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Focus on Student Strengths to Prevent Behaviors



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Typical strengths of special education students

- Learning with visual information
- Responding to structure and consistency
- Learning routines and gradual steps
- Cooperating most when incorporate interest/motivation

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Effective behavioral plans rely upon...

...a number of essential elements:

- Proactive strategies that set students up for success*
- Consequences minimize the effect of negative behaviors
- Skills teach appropriate behaviors as replacement to problem behaviors
- Collaboration fosters consistency

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Proactive Behavior Supports

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We all love it: Predictability

- We all have systems and tools to help us to anticipate what to expect:
 - Calendars, palm pilots, smart phones to start/end a task
 - Schedules and planners for where to be and what we will be doing
 - Traffic and highway signs and signals so all know rules/expectations
 - Walmart or Loew's—whew!
- Special needs students need help in organizing and picking up on sometimes subtle cues about any changes and what is expected—need help with systems

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Proactive Supports

Does the child know what to expect?

Build on Strengths: Physical and Visual Structure

- Assists with sense of predictability and stability
- Helps with understanding boundaries and expectations
- Limits distraction/sensory overload
- Increases independence
- Reduces anxiety and decrease behavior

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Proactive Supports

Does the child know what to expect?

Boundaries

- Tape to designate boundaries of space
- Marking where to sit

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Proactive Supports

Does the child know what to expect?

Labeling

- Labeled areas and instructions
- Visual reminders

Adult Only **Do not Touch**

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Proactive Supports

Does the child know what to expect?

Organization and Choice



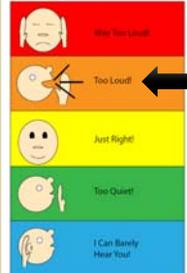
- Organization of materials**
 - labeled place to put backpack, coat
 - labeled bin for loose items
- Sensory/hobby boxes OR fidget bags**
 - fidgets can be in labeled bin at front
 - assist "down times"
 - good for distraction and motivation

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Proactive Supports

Does the child know what to expect?

Explicit rules and reminders for positive behaviors/skills



Lunch Reminders

- Sit on your seat
- Use quiet hands and quiet voice
- Follow adults' directions

Things NOT to Say

Things to Say

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Proactive Supports

Is the child transitioning (change occurring)?

Visual Schedules



- Provides information about expected sequence of activities, day...
- Helps child with transitions
- Helps child with sense of predictability and stability
- Provides focus and decreases distraction and overload
- Must be used consistently

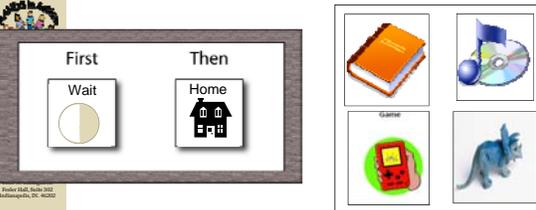


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Proactive Supports

Visual Supports

Mini Schedules



Predicting, visual support, motivation, and choice all in one!

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Proactive Supports

Is the child being asked to start or stop an activity?

Passage of Time



- Does the student:
 - Know when something is about to begin? (e.g., staying in seat)
 - Know when something is about to end?
 - Understand environmental cues around him/her to predict transitions or change? (e.g., when time to stop talking)
- Provide a means for predicting

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Behavior Consequences

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Identify the Precursors

- Most behaviors are not 0 to 60 unless with long history
- Learn the setting events or other more immediate precursors to problem behaviors
- Can sometimes redirect and/or distract to break the chain of behavior

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Behavior Consequences Differential Reinforcement

- Set up for success by limiting ability of problem behavior to work
- Respond differently to behaviors wish to increase or decrease
 - Positive behavior → POSITIVE ATTENTION
 - Misbehavior → PLANNED IGNORING
- Give specific praise to behaviors incompatible with negative behavior
- Ignore the behavior not the person:
 - › Avoiding eye contact
 - › Avoiding talking to student
 - › Maintaining neutral expression/body posture
 - › Blocking without verbal response
- Make desirable behavior more rewarding than misbehavior

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Behavior Consequences Rewards

- Use positive praise, specifically labeling the behavior you like
 - I like the way you are sitting
 - Nice job using a quiet voice
- Know what is valued by the student as a reward
 - Consider figure, peer, special adult, computer/ipad
 - Reward not same as a reinforcer
- Provide choice of a number of options

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Punishment

- Includes reprimands, long explanations, loss of privileges, time out
- Doesn't teach what to do
- Can lead to inadvertent attention to bx
- Can lead to counter aggression
- Often ill-defined limits, boundaries and expectations can be core issue

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Extinction Bursts

- Common when consequences change
- Important to follow through to prevent increased and more rapid escalation at next event as long as safety ensured
- Giving in will make the next time more difficult

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SUPPORT ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIORS/SKILLS

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Alternative Behaviors Should Be

Look for cues* that alternative behaviors are being taught as potential replacements to behavior so can utilize/prompt:

- Functional Communication (e.g., devices, pics)
- Social Skills
- Coping/Relaxation (e.g., deep breaths, tactile objects)

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Reinforce Alternative Behaviors Support Through Prompting

- Prompting need not always be verbal—can further escalate
- With use of visuals and supports noted, prompting can be:
 - Gestural—e.g., point to picture of stand up, first-then, countdown OR blocking
 - Model—e.g., show what standing up looks like and say “like me”
 - If verbal needed—use to break the steps down—e.g., “check schedule” becomes “stand up” followed by “walk to schedule”, etc.
- Physical last option

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Reinforce Alternative Behaviors Supporting Functional Comm Skills

Picture/written cues
To provide written/pic cues for expectations and positive ways to communicate needs: e.g., “I need help”

Self-talk
Indirect verbal cues of how to get needs met:
• “If I wanted help, I would say ‘help, please.”
• Need provided when use FC

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Reinforce Alternative Behaviors Supporting Social-Communication Skills

Social narratives*
Brief description of situation that is negative and providing a plan for appropriate behavior leading to positive outcomes

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Reinforce Alternative Behaviors Supporting Coping Strategies

Provide options for coping with stress/frustration

Relaxation Techniques

Hand massage	Think about something nice	Blow up a balloon in your classroom
Wiggle your hands	Make your stomach into a wad!	Place your hands on your feet

Sometimes I get angry.

When I get angry, I have different choices I can make.

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Collaboration and Consistency

Shared responsibility and support is key

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Videos: Strategies in Action

Across settings, behaviors, ages:
Classroom Academics and Transitions
Functional/Group Activity
Medical Procedures

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Putting it all into Practice



- Key points to reiterate
- Scenario application and discussion (part 2)

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Utilize Clear Communication



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Remember: challenges in social, communication, anxiety, etc. can lead to increased anxiety and behavior—want to set up for success:

- Get the student's attention (state name, close)
- Use brief, simple language for instructions and preparations
- State rules positively (tell what to do)
- State rules with clarity so expectations clear
- Give single instructions (not multi-step)
- Support with visuals/models
- Provide time to process (especially if clear engaged)—may have slow processing

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Plan ahead



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- Identify precursors so can break the chain with redirection or distraction
- Know the students and/or post key info
 - E.g., key strategies, child-specific info (e.g., favorite adult, medical issues, motivation, behavioral tendencies)
- Have tools to support the unexpected (e.g., communication pulley, count down, choices, first-then...pencil/paper!) in strategic places
- Discuss everyone's roles and signals to set in motion

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Promote positive behaviors



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- Provide choice/options of how to accomplish
- Provide motivation (e.g., first-then)
- Praise incompatible behaviors
- Accept tendencies (e.g., do not take personally, allow safe repetitive objects/bx, may not give ec)
- Limit sensory distractions (e.g., many people, lights, sirens)—may be over/under
- Remain calm (e.g., flat affect)—bx may be way to engage, your escalation can escalate them, may not understand appropriate behavior to context (e.g., authority)

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Other strategies



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- Assess/remove setting and individual factors that could be exacerbating (e.g., pain, heat, cool, thirst, hunger, fatigue, bladder, crowds)
- Supportive but ready stance
- Summon individuals with positive relations
- One person delivering info at a time—check in when arrive and await cue
- Inquire if not know about communication, effective strategies, reinforcers, preferred adults

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- Training Consultation Opportunities (Real Time Needs)**
 - 1. Individualized training
 - 2. Group training
 - 3. Regional training
 - 4. Statewide training
 - 5. National training
- Online Training Opportunities for Professional Development**
 - 1. Free self-paced training
 - 2. Free self-paced training with live support
 - 3. Free self-paced training with live support and a certificate
- Practical Publications & Resource Toolkits**
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 - 2. Free self-paced training with live support
 - 3. Free self-paced training with live support and a certificate
- Tools and Templates for Visual Strategies & Supports**
 - 1. Free self-paced training
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- Resources to Support Inclusion & Cultural Diversity**
 - 1. Free self-paced training
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 - 3. Free self-paced training with live support and a certificate
- Webinars, Seminars, Conferences & Live Academic Activities & Other Activities**
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BREAK
Please make sure you have signed in & take a few moments to complete the survey...

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Welcome Back!

Part 2

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Challenges of Students with Special Needs: Recap

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Students with Special Needs & Behavior

- Behavior is typically **NOT** a part of disorders, rather:
 - Assorted learning, emotional, social and other challenges may lead to anxiety and frustration
 - Effectively communicating needs and frustration as well as understanding what is asked can be a challenge for many of special education students
 - We build in strategies to compensate for our challenges—yet problem solving and organization can also be a challenge
 - Behavior is natural and often works well to get the point across
 - AS SUCH, **BEHAVIOR** serves as **COMMUNICATION**

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Range of Behaviors

- Falling to the floor
- Yelling, cussing
- Hitting, kicking, pinching (self/others)
- Throwing objects
- Noncompliance
- Verbal refusal
- Running away
- Other

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Functions of Behaviors

- Behaviors may function to communicate need for *attention, access to desired objects/activities, avoidance/escape of undesired situations and/or access to sensory/calming options*
- If behaviors do effectively communicate and/or get what they want, the student will do over and over again
- These may occur in basic everyday contexts in which are embarrassed, don't understand an assignment, are bored, etc.
- Layering a level of crisis will lead to escalations of anxiety and behavior

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Videos

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- Recall examples of behaviors we all and those with special needs might exhibit when anxious in even every day situations
- ...a simple example to get a sense of how the students may feel on a day to day basis with even simple tasks...(airplane)
- Now consider impact on challenges, anxiety, and behaviors in contexts we would all see as non-routine or escalated...

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Key points to remember

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- Intervention is tied to function not type and intensity of behavior –key to the appropriate response (e.g., even if high level of aggression-- crisis team or time out may reinforce depending on function)
- Approaches work with all ages, disabilities and behaviors
- A comprehensive approach is needed:
 - Setting the student up for success in the environment
 - Providing least intrusive and positive consequences
 - Promoting use of skills serving as alternatives to problem behavior (e.g., words, signs, gestures, safe place)

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Scenarios and Discussions

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Scenarios and Discussions

Putting into practice...few details, fill in as need or as relevant to your own contexts!

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Scenarios: Guided Discussion

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- What information do you need to assess/take into account?
 - Setting factors (e.g., sounds, people, smells, tasks, activities, materials, late start)
 - Student factors (e.g., bored, non-verbal, visual, sensory, dx, illness, functioning)
 - Roles/responsibilities
 - BIP vs. CPI
 - Other
- What tools/strategies could be helpful during such an incident? (e.g., choice board, count down, first-then, timer, blocking/ignoring, prompt cues)
- What preparations would assist in preventing/improving response next time? (e.g., know students and reinforcers, role of staff, cues/signals, availability of BIP/other info on child, social narratives, training skills, distractions/engagement)

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