

RESEARCH-SUPPORTED PRACTICES FOR PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING DISRUPTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS

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Overview

- The research supports teacher behaviors and management strategies that have been linked to higher levels of academic functioning and lower levels of problem behaviors.
 - School- and class-wide prevention strategies
 - Strategies to increase desirable behaviors
 - Strategies to decrease undesirable behaviors
 - Strategies for the most disruptive students

Gaps in Intervention Research for Disruptive & Aggressive Students

- Most studies have been conducted in clinical settings, with male subjects, and provide limited information concerning ethnicity and socioeconomic status (SES).
- Results of treatment interventions in residential settings have not transferred to natural settings, including the home or school
- Most studies use single-subject methodology, which makes it more difficult to predict how effective the intervention will be with a group or classroom of children.
- School-based group intervention studies with this population have been few in number, and the limited findings have shown disruptive students to be very resistant to treatment.

NIMH Critical Gaps in Knowledge

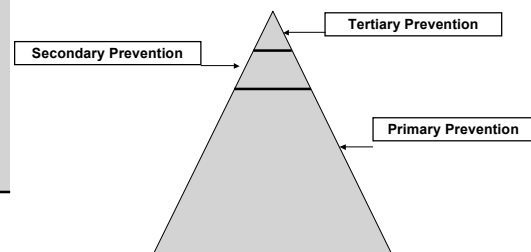
- Psychosocial treatment efficacy
- Comorbidity of disorders
- Potentially life-threatening conditions
- Predictors or "gateway conditions"

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) *Blueprint for Change* (National Advisory, 2001)

Two Ways to Approach Intervention for this Population

- Apply the three-tiered approach to the top tier of the pyramid
- Use the decision-tree problem-solving approach

The 3-Tiered Prevention Model



Decision Tree for Designing Individual Behavioral Interventions – Step 1

- Is the target student the only one exhibiting (or failing to exhibit) this behavior?
 - **No** – Are schoolwide positive behavioral supports in place?
 - **No** – consider implementing schoolwide interventions or supports
 - **Yes** – proceed

Decision Tree – Step 1 (cont.)

- Is the target student the only one exhibiting (or failing to exhibit) this behavior?
 - **Yes** – Are classwide positive behavioral supports and effective teaching strategies in place?
 - **No** – consider implementing classroom or group interventions or supports
 - **Yes** – proceed

Decision Tree – Steps 2 a and b

- Does the behavior interfere with learning of the target student or others?
 - **No** – perhaps does not merit intervention
 - **Yes** – proceed
- Does behavior interfere with formation of positive relationships with peers and significant others?
 - **No** – perhaps does not merit intervention
 - **Yes** – proceed

Decision Tree – Step 3a

- Has environmental analysis been performed?
 - **No** – conduct environmental analysis, then proceed
 - **Yes** – proceed

Decision Tree – Step 3b

- Has an environmental antecedent been identified?
 - **No** – proceed
 - **Yes** – conduct environmental manipulation
 - Did the environmental manipulation resolve the problem?
 - **No** – proceed
 - **Yes** – stop and monitor long-term effectiveness

Decision Tree – Step 4

- Has trigger analysis been performed?
 - **No** – conduct trigger analysis, then proceed
 - **Yes** – proceed
- Has a significant trigger been identified?
 - **No** – proceed
 - **Yes** – Is trigger/response pattern modifiable?
 - **No** – proceed
 - **Yes** – design intervention to alter trigger or teach new response

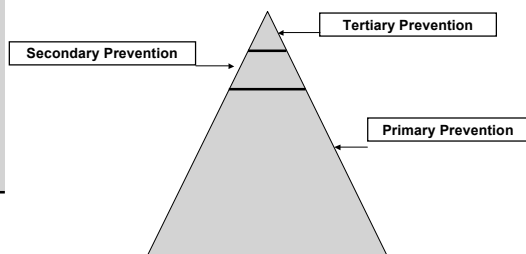
Decision Tree – Step 5

- Has functional assessment been performed?
 - **No** – conduct functional assessment
 - **Yes** – Does it provide sufficient information?
 - **No** – conduct functional assessment
 - **Yes** – design intervention based on hypothesis, then evaluate impact

Decision Tree – Step 6

- Was the intervention successful?
 - **No** – Consider the following questions, then modify the intervention:
 - Does the student understand the expectation?
 - Can the student perform the desired behavior?
 - Can the student perform the behavior fluently?
 - Is the reinforcement strategy powerful enough?
 - Is the reinforcer being delivered quickly enough?
 - Is the replacement behavior as efficient as the original behavior (rate and intensity)?
 - **Yes** – Celebrate and implement periodic checks for maintenance

The 3-Tiered Prevention Model



Research-Supported Interventions: Primary Prevention (Tier 3, Level 1)

- Provide developmentally appropriate programming
- Build therapeutic relationships with students
- Adjust the classroom management system
- Avoid power struggles

Research-Supported Interventions: Secondary Prevention (Tier 3, Level 2)

- Consider FBA and trigger analysis
- Use CBM techniques (CBM) to teach conflict resolution and anger management skills
- Implement a bullying reduction program

Research-Supported Interventions: Tertiary Prevention (Tier 3, Level 3)

- Provide mentors for individual students
- Provide parent training and support
- Debrief after a disruptive incident
- Provide therapy

Provide Developmentally Appropriate Programming (Tier 3, Level 1)

- **Attachment:** Positive social bonds are prerequisites to prosocial behavior.
- **Achievement:** Setting high expectations means refusing to accept failure.
- **Autonomy:** True discipline lies in demanding responsibility rather than obedience.
- **Altruism:** Through helping others, young people find proof of their self worth. (Brendtro & Long, 1995, p. 56).
- Students with EBD also need opportunities for appropriate socializing experiences and vigorous exercise (Guetzloe, 1992).

Build Therapeutic Relationships with Students (Tier 3, Level 1)

- Develop rapport
- Monitor your own emotional arousal levels
- Avoid reacting to provocation
- Stay calm, if you must respond
- Don't take things personally
- Allow time for cooling down
- Start each day with a clean slate – model forgiveness
- Believe in students

Adjust the Classroom Management System (Tier 3, Level 1)

- Set realistic expectations for student compliance
- Use shaping and chaining techniques
- Establish rules, routines, and structure
- Provide constant supervision
- Focus on antecedent manipulation to increase compliance, reduce the need for punitive consequences
 - Pre-correction
 - Behavioral momentum
 - Contingency contracts, token economies and level systems
- Deliver negative consequences consistently, in a matter-of-fact, nonthreatening tone of voice, and in proportion to the misbehavior.

Avoid Power Struggles (Tier 3, Level 1)

- Avoid power struggles unless the stakes are too high to ignore (i.e., danger to self and others, major property damage, total disruption of teaching environment). Pick your battles.
- Shift your focus from viewing resistance as the child's behavior to viewing resistance as the result of the adult's behavior. (Maag, 2000)

Avoid Power Struggles (cont.)

- Ask questions; provide choices/options
 - Would you rather
 - do the odd or even problems?
 - work individually or with a partner?
 - work with pencil and paper or on the dry erase board?
 - work at your desk or at the table by the window?
 - use a calculator or the computer to check your work?
 - Do you prefer
 - wide-line or narrow-line paper?
 - to finish the paper before turning it in or would you like me to check the first few before you proceed?
 - to do this between 8 and 8:30 or between 8:30 and 9?

Avoid Power Struggles (cont.)

- Use positively-worded (i.e., alpha) rather than negatively-worded (beta) statements
- Ignore obvious limit-testing and face-saving behavior whenever possible
- Avoid saying "no" to student requests if a conditional response is possible
- Use paradoxical directives that instruct the child to continue to engage in an undesirable behavior (Maag, 2000). If they comply, they aren't resisting; if they don't comply, they are no longer engaged in the problem behavior.

Consider FBA and Trigger Analysis (Tier 3, Level 2)

- When and where?
- Under what conditions?
- What are they getting or getting out of?
- Proactive or reactive?
- Affective or predatory?
- Hostile or instrumental?
- Direct or indirect?
- Overt or covert?

CBM Techniques (Tier 3, Level 2)

- Social skills training
- Self-talk and instruction
- Self-monitoring and recording
- Self-evaluation
- Self-reinforcement
- Problem-solving

Implement a Bullying Reduction Program (Tier 3, Level 2)

- Bullying involves
 - a pattern of repeated aggression;
 - deliberate intent to harm or disturb a victim despite apparent victim distress; and
 - a real or perceived imbalance of power (e.g., due to age, strength, size), with the more powerful child or group attacking a physically or psychologically vulnerable victim.

Implement a Bullying Reduction Program (cont.)

- Heinrich (2003) identified four groups of concern:
 - (1) the passive target – who does nothing to provoke the attack and may lack the skills needed to resist,
 - (2) the provocative target – who often seems to bring the attack on herself (e.g., by teasing or name-calling),
 - (3) the bully – who actually commits the acts of aggression or intimidation,
 - (4) the bystander – who observes the bullying and does not actively intervene or respond to protect the victim.

Implement a Bullying Reduction Program (cont.)

- Bullying interventions should take a systematic approach, not just focusing on individual students but on the ecology of the behavior that supports the pattern of behavior in the school environment at the school, class and individual level.

Provide Mentors for Individual Students (Tier 3, Level 3)

- Mentoring essentially means pairing high-risk students with a positive role model who is either an adult or an older student.
- That individual meets with the student on a regular basis to provide a sounding board, and to attempt to positively influence student problem solving and choice making.

Provide Parent Training and Support (Tier 3, Level 3)

- The most effective interventions for children and youth with disruptive behavior disorders have been multimodal, multifaceted interventions that address family functioning via parent training (Brendtro & Long, 1995; Burke et al., 2002; Center for, 2001; Center & Kemp, 2003).
- Activities may include training in behavior management, effective communication, and problem solving for both the target child and her parents.

Debrief After a Disruptive Incident (Tier 3, Level 3)

- Regardless of the location where de-escalation takes place, the purposes are to provide the student with a chance to regain self-control and implement their relaxation and problem-solving skills.
- The debriefer's job is to show interest, empathy and respect as the student is de-escalating and to facilitate the problem-solving process. Depending on the student's age, cognitive and developmental level, this may involve process verbally or asking the student to complete a "think sheet."

Provide Therapy (Tier 3, Level 3)

- Although there is some evidence that individual therapy may not be the most effective intervention for ODD and CD (Burke et al., 2002), it may be useful as part of a multifaceted treatment plan that addresses co-existing conditions that do respond to clinical interventions.
- Both multisystemic therapy (MST) and rational-emotive therapy have been identified as "probably efficacious" for this population (National Advisory, 2001; Center & Kemp, 2003) and should be considered as part of the IEP and/or treatment plan, perhaps in conjunction with community mental health providers.