

BEHAVIOR INFLUENCE TECHNIQUES

1. Planned Ignoring

The teacher using this technique simply doesn't react to the disturbing behavior. No response is made when the behavior occurs. Hopefully the teacher is fully cognizant of the behavior but chooses to ignore it as part of the plan of behavior management. It is generally true that when attention seeking behaviors are ignored, they become non-functional and decrease in frequency. Careful selectivity of the student and behaviors are important in the use of this method.

2. Signal Interference

A signal is a non-verbal technique, such as eye contact, a frown, finger snapping, and so forth. It is a non-verbal form of communication in which the message is clear to both the teacher and to the student. The message is that the student's behavior is unacceptable to the teacher. Its purpose is to alert the student of the fact they are emitting an unacceptable behavior and that the teacher is aware of it and wants the student to get that behavior under control and within acceptable bounds. It thus can serve as an early warning system to students to prevent problems, or to give them a chance to exercise self-control rather than external control. It can also prevent overt trouble and embarrassment with the teacher and thus cause the student to lose "face" with peers or reinforcements from the management systems.

3. Proximity Control

The physical presence of an authority figure (teacher, parent, police officer) usually results in the discontinuation of unacceptable behaviors. Proximity of authority figures can greatly assist the self-control of children experiencing anxiety and frustration particularly if they communicate an aura of assistance rather than annoyance. Troubled children often experience a calming effect by the physical presence of a psychologically warm authority figure.

4. Interest Boosting

All persons become bored with difficult and routine tasks. Interest in most tasks tends to wane over time. The teacher who observes a student losing interest or becoming bored with a task should make an effort to boost or revitalize the child's interest in the task. Interest boosting may help the student reorganize the task and/or mobilize the energy to complete it. Actions by the teacher that can help boost interest are such as: noting how much work has been accomplished already, offering help, pointing out underlying principles or organization patterns, discussing the task with the student, noting how well the work has been done thus far and so forth.

5. Humor

The wise teacher will utilize humor in an effort to relax people and place tasks and events in perspective. Humor can reduce tension and lesson anxiety and frustration. Highly depressed and anxious people do not have much humor nor respond well to it. Increased ability to see the irony of the world and their own selves is one signal for improvement in mental health. This does not include destructive humor which is designed to vent hostility and denigrate themselves or others. Thus humor can be a significant positive tool but must be used cautiously, properly, and in the correct situations.

6. Hurdle Help

Hurdle help is a technique applied to assist a student who is experiencing difficulty with a specific task. It is provided before the student becomes so frustrated that they lose self-control and emit disruptive or self-denigrating behavior. Hurdle help can take the form of encouragement, actual assistance on the task, making available additional materials, time, or equipment, or short and focal instructional review.

7. Program Restructuring

When an activity or lesson is going poorly the wise teacher either restructures the lesson or postpones it until a more appropriate time. Teachers often are committed to the lesson, schedule, or task they have planned and continue on regardless of student response. Prudent teachers are sufficiently observant and flexible to recognize when a lesson is not appropriate and make the changes before the class becomes disruptive, or an individual student suffers failure, or the teacher himself loses self-esteem and positive feelings.

8. Support From Routine

All people get emotional support from know what is going on. A schedule or routine greatly helps us understand where, what, when, and with whom we would be at any given time. This security via routine is especially important to behaviorally disordered children. Consistency, structure, and routine are very significant aspects of a well designed behavior management system.

9. Removal of Seductive Objects

Frequently misbehavior occurs because the student has available some object of attention that is distracting from the task at hand. Young children bring small toys, games and small objects. Older children are distracted by different objects but of no less consequence. When the teacher finds the objects are keeping the student from the assigned task, the object (s) should be quietly confiscated until after class or school. The confiscation should be quiet, kind, yet firm and swift; discussion is not necessary nor often desirable. It is most effective if the students are trained routinely to store seductive objects in an appropriate place before school and also trained that confiscation will take place. Prior training and rehearsal prevents surprises and disruption.

10. Antiseptic Bouncing

When a student is beginning to lose self-control, the teacher removes the student from the situation. This allows the student to regain self-control and not to experience the negatives associated with loss of self-control and disruptive behavior. Antiseptic bouncing is thus a positive measure and not a punishment and should be clearly communicated as such.. It allows the individual to avoid embarrassment, to calm down, to rethink and reorganize, and to begin again or renew the ongoing task.