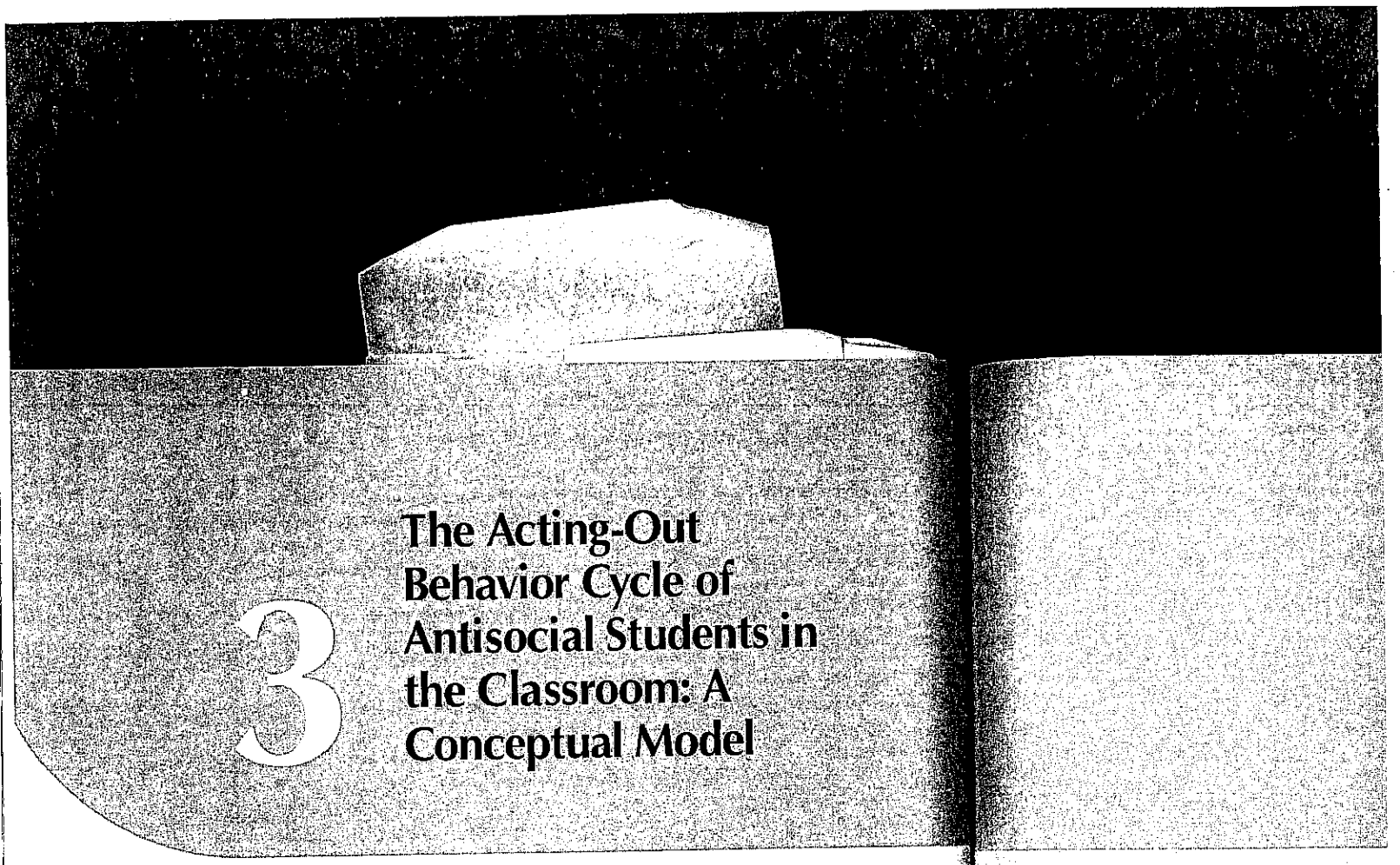


3 The Acting-Out Behavior Cycle of Antisocial Students in the Classroom: A Conceptual Model

Example of an Acting-Out Behavior Pattern Sequence

- Indicators of Agitation
- Presence of an Escalating Behavior Chain
- Presence of Successive Interactions

Seven Phases in an Acting-Out Behavior Cycle

- Phase One: Calm
- Phase Two: Triggers
- Phase Three: Agitation
- Phase Four: Acceleration
- Phase Five: Peak
- Phase Six: De-Escalation
- Phase Seven: Recovery

Summary of Phases in the Acting-Out C

Illustration and Application

Conclusion

Phase Four: Acceleration
Phase Five: Peak
Phase Six: De-Escalation
Phase Seven: Recovery

Summary of Phases in the Acting-Out Cycle

Illustration and Application

Conclusion

3 The Acting-Out Behavior Cycle of Antisocial Students in the Classroom: A Conceptual Model

Example of an Acting-Out Behavior Pattern Sequence

- Indicators of Agitation
- Presence of an Escalating Behavior Chain
- Presence of Successive Interactions

Seven Phases in an Acting-Out Behavior Cycle

- Phase One: Calm
- Phase Two: Triggers
- Phase Three: Agitation
- Phase Four: Acceleration
- Phase Five: Peak
- Phase Six: De-Escalation
- Phase Seven: Recovery

Summary of Phases in the Acting-Out C

Illustration and Application

Conclusion

General education teachers are having to deal with ever-increasing numbers of students who are difficult to manage and teach. In addition, teachers are discovering that the management practices that have worked so well over the years with typical students do not seem to be very effective with these more difficult students. In fact, teachers often report that such practices make situations worse, especially with students who exhibit acting-out or explosive forms of behavior. Antisocial children and youth are very likely to fit this profile.

Table 3.1 presents common assumptions and practices for managing the problem behavior of antisocial students. Four scenarios are described; each scenario contains (1) the commonly held assumption on which the practice is based, (2) the practice that follows logically from the assumption, (3) a classroom example in which the practice is applied, (4) an analysis of the example and the situation, and (5) an alternative approach for dealing with the situation.

In each scenario, problems may arise when commonly used practices are implemented. Some of these problems are predictable while others may be unexpected. First, the students' behavior may escalate unexpectedly. In effect, the teacher addresses one problem and quickly has to deal with a worse problem as a function of the strategies used. Or alternatively, the teacher's strategy may be successful in calming the students down but, in the process, may actually be *reinforcement* of the problem behavior that prompted the situation. Consequently, the next time the students encounter a similar situation, they will be more likely to exhibit the same initial problem behavior in order to engage the teacher. In such situations, it seems patently clear that the students, rather than the teacher, are in control.

The purpose of Chapters 3 and 4 is to illustrate strategies that will enable teachers to understand and effectively address problematic student behavior without causing the behavior to escalate and in a way that solves the situation effectively (that is, both the teacher and the students will be better set up to appropriately manage the situation the next time these circumstances arise). This knowledge is extremely important to teachers as the diversity of classroom environments increases and as more and more students become invested in patterns of antisocial behavior. In this chapter, we present a seven-phase conceptual model to describe the escalation process or *acting-out cycle*. We describe the conceptual model by providing (1) an example of the critical features of an acting-out behavior pattern, (2) a detailed description of the seven sequential phases involved in an acting-out behavior cycle, (3) a summary table describing each phase, and (4) an illustration. In Chapter 4, we describe specific strategies for managing student behavior in each of these phases.

TABLE 3.1 An Analysis of Common Assumptions and Practices for Managing Antisocial Students

Assumption	*Practice*	*Example*	*Analysis*	*Alternative*
Teachers need to be in *control.*	When problems occur, address them immediately and directly.	The class is working on an independent assignment. Students are working well except for two who are talking. The teacher says very firmly, "You are supposed to be working by yourself; there is to be no talk." One student mumbles under his	The two students are talking, which can be presumed to be positive. The teacher essentially interrupts with a "putdown" or possibly sarcastic comment, "You are supposed to be . . ." There is also a dimension of *confrontation.* The student	The teacher approaches the two students and gently interrupts them, secures their attention, and says, "Look, it is time for math. Please get on with it. You can visit later." Essentially, the teacher redirects the students to the math in a non-

EXAMPLE OF AN ACTING-OUT BEHAVIOR PATTERN SEQUENCE

In the following example, a student in a typical classroom exhibits a range of diverse behaviors in an acting-out behavior cycle. The setting and the interactions between Michael and his teacher are described in Box 3.1.

al with ever-increasing numbers of students
addition, teachers are discovering that the
well over the years with typical students do
re difficult students. In fact, teachers often
orse, especially with students who exhibit
ntisocial children and youth are very likely

ns and practices for managing the problem
s are described; each scenario contains (1) the
ractice is based, (2) the practice that follows
m example in which the practice is applied,
n, and (5) an alternative approach for dealing

when commonly used practices are imple-
table while others may be unexpected. First,
ectedly. In effect, the teacher addresses one
e problem as a function of the strategies used.
be successful in calming the students down
ement of the problem behavior that prompted
ne students encounter a similar situation, they
tial problem behavior in order to engage the
clear that the students, rather than the teacher,

o illustrate strategies that will enable teachers
ematic student behavior without causing the
es the situation effectively (that is, both the
up to appropriately manage the situation the
nowledge is extremely important to teachers
ts increases and as more and more students
ehavior. In this chapter, we present a seven-
alation process or *acting-out cycle*. We describe
xample of the critical features of an acting-out
1 of the seven sequential phases involved in an
ry table describing each phase, and (4) an
cific strategies for managing student behavior

typical classroom exhibits a range of diverse
le. The setting and the interactions between
ox 3.1.

TABLE 3.1 An Analysis of Common Assumptions and Practices for Managing Antisocial Students

Assumption	*Practice*	*Example*	*Analysis*	*Alternative*
Teachers need to be in *control.*	When problems occur, address them immediately and directly.	The class is working on an independent assignment. Students are working well except for two who are talking. The teacher says very firmly, "You are supposed to be working by yourself; there is to be no talk." One student mumbles under his breath, and the teacher writes his name on the board. The student then curses at the teacher.	The two students are talking, which can be presumed to be positive. The teacher essentially interrupts with a "putdown" or possibly sarcastic comment, "You are supposed to be . . ." There is also a dimension of *confrontation.* The student reacts by mumbling. The teacher interprets the mumbling as insubordination and provides a penalty. The student reacts further with cursing.	The teacher approaches the two students and gently interrupts them, secures their attention, and says, "Look, it is time for math. Please get on with it. You can visit later." Essentially, the teacher redirects the students to the math in a nonconfrontational way and provides them with an alternative (visit later, but it is math now).
Teachers need to establish *authority.*	Students need to be shown "who is the boss."	A student is out of his seat, walking around the room. The teacher tells him to sit down and do his work. The student says he needs to do something. The teacher says to sit down or he will be in trouble. The student keeps walking around the room. The teacher grasps his arm and tells him to sit down. The student swings his arm free vigorously.	Essentially, the teacher is setting the stage for confrontation by not addressing the student's needs and giving no options. The teacher escalates the confrontation by providing a threat and further by grabbing the student's arm.	The teacher could address the student's needs and then provide an option. For example, the teacher could say, "Michael, you should be in your seat working; what's up?" Michael might say, "I need (such and such a book)." The teacher could say, "Well, please go back to your seat and raise your hand for the book." In this way, the teacher addresses the student's need and provides the student with an acceptable strategy for obtaining the need, given the need is reasonable or appropriate.

TABLE 3.1 *(Continued)*

Assumption	*Practice*	*Example*	*Analysis*	*Alternative*
Children must not get away with behavior; otherwise, "what will the other children think?"	Misbehavior needs to be addressed quickly and publicly.	Sarah says she is not going to do her work because it is boring. The teacher says, so all can hear, "Sarah, you need to do the work now or you will stay in at recess to do it." Sarah pushes her materials to the floor.	Sarah makes an engaging statement regarding the work. The *public response* of the teacher provides immediate attention and probably draws the attention of the whole class. Sarah will not back down now that the class is watching the confrontation, so she escalates it by pushing her materials to the floor.	The teacher could ignore Sarah and respond to the students on task, or the teacher could—as privately as possible—redirect Sarah to her work and offer to discuss it with her later if she wishes. (This is a good example of a *private response*.)
Students need to be settled down when they become agitated.	Teachers should approach students with empathy, calm them down, and get them back to work.	Billy is muttering and fidgeting and is on the verge of tears. The teacher goes to him, puts his hand on Billy's shoulder, and says calmly, "I see you are upset. Can I help you?" Billy begins to sob, and the teacher stands beside him and helps him start his work.	The teacher succeeds in calming Billy down and getting him back to work. However, next time Billy is upset, he is likely to exhibit the same tearful, fidgety behavior, and the teacher will use the same calming behavior. The teacher may be setting up "learned helplessness" or be falling into the "rescue" pattern. As a result, Billy might never learn how to solve problems himself. Also, with some students, "rescuing" behavior is highly likely to escalate situations or encourage whining.	The teacher may help to settle Billy down as indicated and redirect him to his work. However, the teacher can visit with Billy later and try to help him solve the problem and come up with strategies for managing the problem next time. If, in the future, Billy resorts to sobbing and fidgety behavior because it worked last time, the teacher could gently remind him of the agreed-upon strategy.

Box 3.1 Example of the Cy

During independent work in mat
assigned in the morning period. M
Look for this chain in the follow
compliance, defiance, verbal abus

Teacher

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

"The math you didn't finish this morning."

"Well, let me see it then."

"Good. You have done four but you need to do ten."

"Well, I announced it at the start of the morning that you had to do ten."

"Look at the board. See math one through ten. It's there every day."

"Stop. No more questions. Math one through ten. Do it now."

"If you don't do it now, you will have to do it at recess."

"That language is unacceptable."

In most schools, the behavior exhibited
and the teacher's report would read somethi

Michael was sitting at his desk and not
needed help. He asked questions and be
start work and he refused, saying, "Mal
giving him a choice of doing the work

and get them back to work.

shoulder, and says calmly, "I see you are upset. Can I help you?" Billy begins to sob, and the teacher stands beside him and helps him start his work.

he is likely to exhibit the same tearful, fidgety behavior, and the teacher will use the same calming behavior. The teacher may be setting up "learned helplessness" or be falling into the "rescue" pattern. As a result, Billy might never learn how to solve problems himself. Also, with some students, "rescuing" behavior is highly likely to escalate situations or encourage whining.

can visit with Billy later and try to help him solve the problem and come up with strategies for managing the problem next time. If, in the future, Billy resorts to sobbing and fidgety behavior because it worked last time, the teacher could gently remind him of the agreed-upon strategy.

Box 3.1 Example of the Cycle of Acting-Out Behavior

During independent work in math, the class is expected to complete problems that were assigned in the morning period. Michael is sitting slouched in his seat staring at the floor. Look for this chain in the following interaction: agitation, questioning, arguing, noncompliance, defiance, verbal abuse, physical abuse, and assault.

Teacher	Michael	Pattern
"Michael, it is time to get started with your math."	"What math?"	Questions
"The math you didn't finish this morning."	"I did finish it."	Argues
"Well, let me see it then."	Michael has four problems completed.	
"Good. You have done four but you need to do ten."	"I didn't know that."	Continues arguing
"Well, I announced it at the start of the morning that you had to do ten."	"I don't remember that."	Continues arguing
"Look at the board. See math one through ten. It's there every day."	"Oh. I didn't know that."	Continues arguing
"Stop. No more questions. Math one through ten. Do it now."	"I am not going to do that. It's not fair." or "Make me."	Noncompliance Defiance
"If you don't do it now, you will have to do it at recess."	"F—— you."	Verbal abuse
"That language is unacceptable."	"You want math. Here it is." (*throws math book across room*)	Physical abuse

In most schools, the behavior exhibited by Michael would result in an office referral, and the teacher's report would read something like this:

> Michael was sitting at his desk and not working. I approached him to see if he needed help. He asked questions and began to argue. I gave him a clear direction to start work and he refused, saying, "Make me." I followed the usual procedures of giving him a choice of doing the work now or doing it at recess on his time. He

began to cuss me out and threatened me. I started to fill out an office referral form, and he threw his math book across the room and flipped his desk over. I was worried about the safety of the other students and went to escort him to the office. At this point, he punched me in the face. I have quite a bruise on my face.

The person who has to follow up on this incident, usually the principal or vice-principal, really can only address one item in this disciplinary report—the student hit the teacher. Because of its salience and unacceptability, the principal would be forced to address the last behavior. The hitting could be categorized as assault, and a complaint could be made to the police. If no complaint is made, it is essential that strong negative consequences be delivered, such as suspension and a parent conference. These consequences, if effective, may prevent the student from hitting the teacher again (or they may not). The student may not hit again but may exhibit all of the other behaviors in the behavioral chain leading up to hitting.

Thus, we need to ask the critical question, "What needs to be done to prevent this *whole scene* from happening again?" In this case, we would have to address the beginning of the chain. We can work with Michael in three main areas to effectively address the chain of behavior:

1. Indicators of agitation
2. Presence of an escalating behavior chain
3. Presence of successive interactions

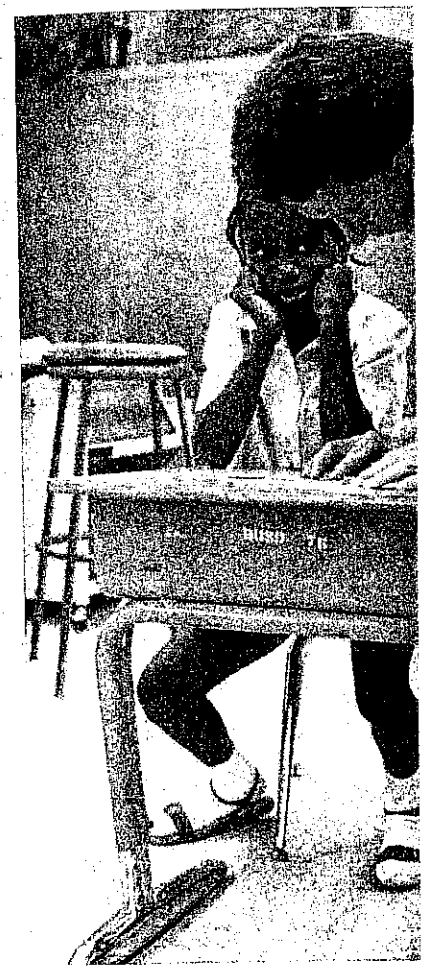
Indicators of Agitation

Michael was sitting in a slouched position, feet outstretched, arms folded, staring at the floor, and basically motionless. These behaviors are general indicators that Michael is having problems coping; it is only a matter of time before his behavior will escalate. There are numerous strategies for addressing his agitation and for assisting him with the problem-solving process. These strategies will be illustrated in Chapter 4 in the section on managing agitation.

Presence of an Escalating Behavior Chain

Michael starts out questioning or challenging the teacher, and each subsequent response from the teacher sets the stage for Michael to argue and ask more questions. Eventually, the teacher tries to terminate the arguing by giving him a clear directive to start work. Michael then refuses, which is called active noncompliance; the "make me" routine is usually referred to as defiance. Michael then moves on or escalates into verbal abuse, intimidation, physical abuse, and finally assault. Each ensuing behavior in this *behavior chain* is more serious than the one preceding it, and the sequence culminates in assaultive behavior. In effect, Michael's behavior began with questioning and finished with assault.

What if the questioning and arguing were terminated early or managed differently? The likely outcome would be that there would be nothing to set the stage for noncompliance. If noncompliance were not present, there would be nothing to set the stage for



An agitated student resisting her teacher's assistar

teacher defiance and verbal abuse. In other early stage, there would be nothing to prom ring at the end of the chain. Thus, teacher a tation would be prevented. In this chapte escalating chain of acting-out behavior invc Chapter 4, we present strategies for interv prevention of such unfortunate and costly cy

ied me. I started to fill out an office referral form,
is the room and flipped his desk over. I was
her students and went to escort him to the office.
he face. I have quite a bruise on my face.

ip on this incident, usually the principal or vice-
tem in this disciplinary report—the student hit the
inacceptability, the principal would be forced to
; could be categorized as assault, and a complaint
mplaint is made, it is essential that strong negative
uspension and a parent conference. These conse-
student from hitting the teacher again (or they may
but may exhibit all of the other behaviors in the

l question, "What needs to be done to prevent this
1 this case, we would have to address the beginning
chael in three main areas to effectively address the

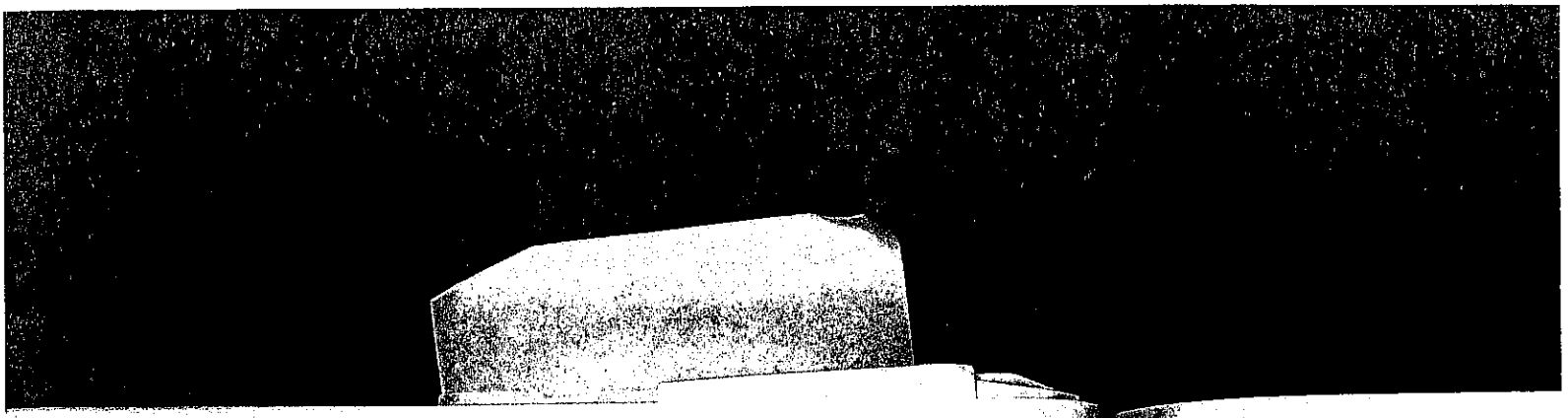
chain

sition, feet outstretched, arms folded, staring at the
se behaviors are general indicators that Michael is
a matter of time before his behavior will escalate.
ldressing his agitation and for assisting him with the
tegies will be illustrated in Chapter 4 in the section

hallenging the teacher, and each subsequent response
Michael to argue and ask more questions. Eventually
rguing by giving him a clear directive to start work
led active noncompliance; the "make me" routine is
ichael then moves on or escalates into verbal abuse
finally assault. Each ensuing behavior in this *behavior*
preceding it, and the sequence culminates in assaultive
vior began with questioning and finished with assault.
rguing were terminated early or managed differently,
there would be nothing to set the stage for noncompli
present, there would be nothing to set the stage for

An agitated student resisting her teacher's assistance. *Elizabeth Crews*

defiance and verbal abuse. In other words, if the chain were interrupted at an stage, there would be nothing to prompt the more serious forms of behavior occur- the end of the chain. Thus, teacher assault and the other forms of adult confron- would be prevented. In this chapter, we describe the successive phases in an ding chain of acting-out behavior involving the teacher and antisocial students. In Chapter 4, we present strategies for intervening early in the chain so as to facilitate prevention of such unfortunate and costly cycles of behavior.



Presence of Successive Interactions

The office report in our example is clear regarding Michael's behavior; however, the specific dynamics of the teacher's behavior are only implied. Unfortunately, in this kind of situation we are looking at a series of *escalating interactions* that involve *both* teacher and student behavior. For each student behavior, there is a corresponding or reciprocal teacher behavior. Each successive student behavior is preceded by a discrete teacher behavior. It could be argued that each teacher behavior sets the stage for the next student behavior. These teacher-student interactions could be described as a series of "my turn, your turn" events. For example, Michael questions the assigned work (math) (Michael's turn). The teacher answers him (teacher's turn). Michael argues (Michael's turn). The teacher directs him to work (teacher's turn). Michael refuses (Michael's turn). The teacher provides choices (teacher's turn), and so on, ending with Michael hitting the teacher.

What if the teacher refused to take a turn? There would be nothing to set the stage for Michael's turn. In other words, Michael's behavior would be eliminated. A critical component in managing this kind of *reactive behavior* pattern is to recognize that we are dealing with *successive interactions*; if these interactions were managed differently (specifically teacher behavior in this case), then the behavioral chain could be dismantled or prevented from occurring.

In effect, this chain of behavior involving Michael and his teacher could have been prevented by using effective strategies to (1) manage Michael's initial agitation, (2) intervene early in the chain, and (3) manage the successive interactions. The dynamics of these critical procedures will be presented more fully in the strategies section of Chapter 4.

SEVEN PHASES IN AN ACTING-OUT BEHAVIOR CYCLE

The escalating behavior pattern exhibited in the preceding example can be illustrated in seven successive phases. The phases that describe the severity or intensity of this behavioral cycle over time are depicted in Figure 3.1. The graph rises as the interaction escalates and falls when it de-escalates. This conceptual model was developed initially by Colvin (1992) to represent the interdependent behavioral dynamics of teacher-student responses occurring during escalating interactions.

Teachers, as well as parents and peers, are often inadvertently trapped in escalating *social interactions* with antisocial students that prove to be extremely disruptive and damaging to relationships. Antisocial students carry high levels of agitation due to the stresses they are under and the neglect and abuse to which they are exposed in nonschool settings. This agitation serves as fuel that drives a coercive behavioral process that is often triggered by innocuous events such as asking questions, making requests, or giving directives. The situation is analogous to a powder keg that is triggered by a spark. The resulting explosion is difficult to control or avoid and does extensive damage. This is exactly the process involved in escalating teacher-student social interactions.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the *escalation* and de-escalation processes involved in this highly coercive process. Understanding this phenomenon is essential to dealing with the intense behavioral challenges presented by antisocial students.

The Acting-Out Behavior Cycle of Antiso

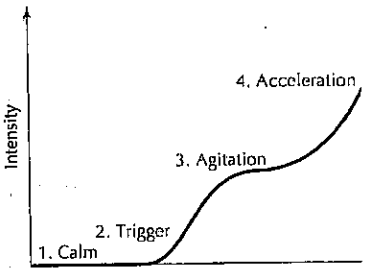


FIGURE 3.1 Phases of Acting-Out (1992).

The *behavioral phases* in the chain The behavioral content of each phase ha by the authors in working with antisoc antisocial students are noted that are as phases identified in this acting-out cycl interaction between the teacher and the highly aversive. In many cases, antisoci home in dealing with family members surest and quickest paths to rejection by

On-Task Behavior. Antisocial stud acting-out behavior cycle. To all outv generally cooperative, and responsive tc often report that "Most of the time, 'S at other times . . ." (which is usually the Bear in mind that antisocial students m ior when compared with other students in appropriate classroom activities for in the normal events of the classroom.

Following of Rules and Expectatic the rules as an accomplishment. They a on, these same rules may become the so confrontations.

Responsiveness to Praise. As with positive attention and adult approval. T nately, the appropriate behavior of ant (probably because the teacher needs a b

· regarding Michael's behavior; however, the
· are only implied. Unfortunately, in this kind
alating interactions that involve *both* teacher and
ır, there is a corresponding or reciprocal teacher
r is preceded by a discrete teacher behavior. It
ɔr sets the stage for the next student behavior.
ıe described as a series of "my turn, your turn"
ɔe assigned work (math) (Michael's turn). The
ıael argues (Michael's turn). The teacher directs
efuses (Michael's turn). The teacher provides
; with Michael hitting the teacher.
turn? There would be nothing to set the stage
ıael's behavior would be eliminated. A critical
tive behavior pattern is to recognize that we are
interactions were managed differently (specifi-
ı the behavioral chain could be dismantled or

olving Michael and his teacher could have been
(1) manage Michael's initial agitation, (2) inter-
ıe successive interactions. The dynamics of these
·e fully in the strategies section of Chapter 4.

: CYCLE

ɔd in the preceding example can be illustrated in
describe the severity or intensity of this behav-
re 3.1. The graph rises as the interaction escalates
ɔeptual model was developed initially by Colvin
ɔehavioral dynamics of teacher-student responses

ers, are often inadvertently trapped in escalating
s that prove to be extremely disruptive and dam-
ıts carry high levels of agitation due to the stresses
ɔ to which they are exposed in nonschool settings.
coercive behavioral process that is often triggered
stions, making requests, or giving directives. The
ıat is triggered by a spark. The resulting explosion
es extensive damage. This is exactly the process
ocial interactions.
and de-escalation processes involved in this highly
ıenomenon is essential to dealing with the intense
social students.

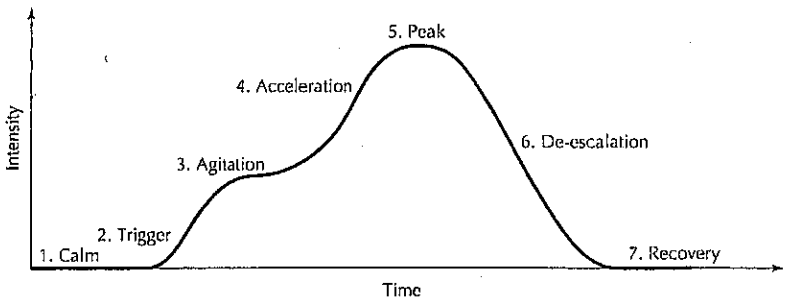


FIGURE 3.1 Phases of Acting-Out Behavior. *Source:* Colvin (1992).

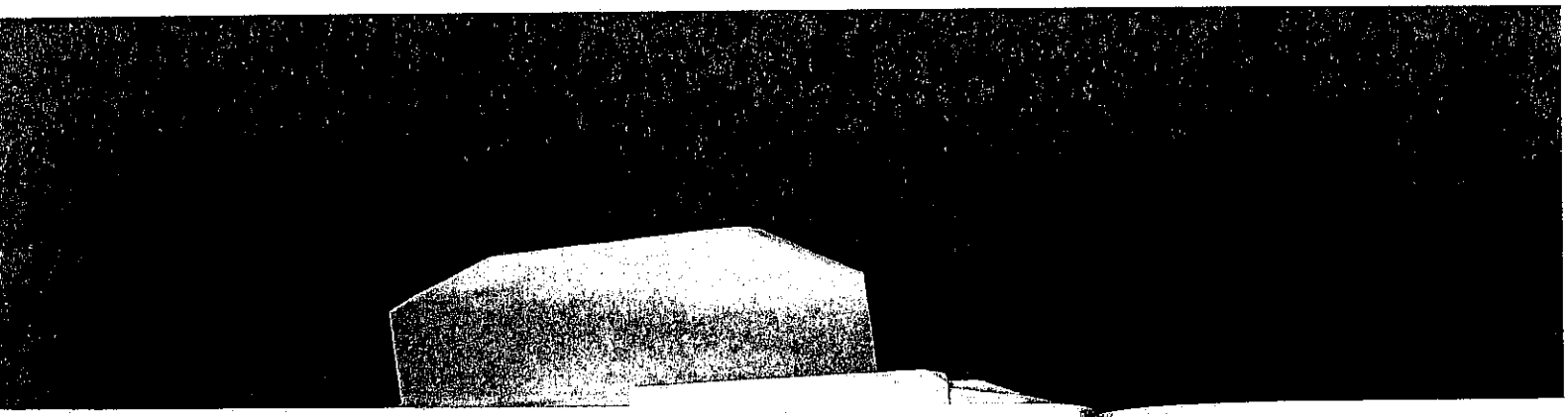
The *behavioral phases* in the chain are described in detail in the following sections. The behavioral content of each phase has been derived from numerous observations made by the authors in working with antisocial students. Typical behavioral characteristics of antisocial students are noted that are associated with their responses to each of the seven phases identified in this acting-out cycle. In most cases, these cycles involve an escalated interaction between the teacher and the antisocial student that is intense, explosive, and highly aversive. In many cases, antisocial students learn this coercive behavior pattern at home in dealing with family members and bring it to school. It represents one of the surest and quickest paths to rejection by school staff and peers.

Phase One: Calm

On-Task Behavior. Antisocial students are relatively calm in the initial phase of the acting-out behavior cycle. To all outward appearances, their behavior is appropriate, generally cooperative, and responsive to teacher-imposed rules and expectations. Teachers often report that "Most of the time, 'So and So' is a delight to have in the classroom but at other times . . ." (which is usually the primary reason for a discipline-referral meeting). Bear in mind that antisocial students may never actually be models of appropriate behavior when compared with other students. However, on occasion, such students may engage in appropriate classroom activities for extended periods and participate, to some degree, in the normal events of the classroom.

Following of Rules and Expectations. In the calm phase, students regard obeying the rules as an accomplishment. They are likely to say, "It made my day." However, later on, these same rules may become the source of severe challenges, limit testing, and teacher confrontations.

Responsiveness to Praise. As with other students, antisocial children and youth need positive attention and adult approval. Teacher praise can be important to them. Unfortunately, the appropriate behavior of antisocial students is often ignored during this phase (probably because the teacher needs a break from dealing with these demanding students).



Initiation of Behavior. When students are relatively calm, they will often initiate appropriate behavior to others (for example, sharing or being of assistance to peers). Thus, it is important to remember that antisocial students can be helpful to others and that they will exhibit these kinds of desirable behaviors on occasion.

Goal-Orientedness. Like everyone, antisocial students need to succeed and have a sense of competence. They will be responsive if appropriate goals can be established that they are likely to meet. In general, this student population does not experience academic or social success in school, so it is critical to provide structures during this phase that will assist them in achieving these extremely important outcomes.

Summary of Phase One: Calm

Overall behavior is cooperative, compliant, and desirable

Phase Two: Triggers

Two sets of triggers operate in this phase: school-based and nonschool-based. These triggers represent pressure points that increase the general level of agitation that antisocial students experience.

School-Based Triggers

Conflicts. The sources of *student conflicts* fall into two broad categories: (1) denial of something the students want or need and (2) something negative is inflicted on the students. In the first case, antisocial students typically do not have good communication skills, so when they need something, their limited verbal skills often do not allow them to communicate effectively (or communicate in a way that is acceptable). If antisocial students perceive their need as being denied, they often react angrily and may be assigned penalties for this reactive behavior. In effect, the original needs or goals are denied and the students end up in trouble for reacting in an inappropriate manner.

In the second case, antisocial students are provoked by a perception that something negative is being inflicted on them—such as a student accidentally bumping into them, refusing to allow them to play in a game, or calling them names. The students then react to such negative events and may experience social or other penalties for the behavior. Antisocial students often become frustrated in this process because they perceive the situation as not being their fault, yet they are victimized via penalties or other sanctions.

Changes in Routine. These students react negatively to sudden changes in routines, especially if the activity is something that has fully engaged them. In general, transitions are difficult for them.

Provocations. Other students see antisocial students as "fair game." These "normal" students can predictably cause their antisocial peers to escalate through provocations, such as name calling, teasing, and interfering with their property. They are viewed as a good tease by peers.

Pressure. School is a high-demand situa
a wide variety of directions and complete
course of a school day. Antisocial students
planning and adaptive-behavior skills. The
sense. The ordinary demands of the schoc
anxiety, and other emotional behaviors.

Ineffective Problem Solving. Antisoc
fying sources of problems, generating adapt
others, and implementing plans accordingly
directly taught to antisocial students.

Errors. In many cases, antisocial student
will avoid new work because they are lik
processes and the assignment of academic t

Corrections. Similarly, antisocial studer
after errors have been made or with being r
and debriefings may actually prompt substa

Nonschool-Based Triggers

Dysfunctional Homes. Many student
from needy homes where there may be pov
parental modeling of appropriate behavior

Health Problems. Parents, in many cas
limited incomes. An appointment with t
Consequently, these children may not go t
viruses and infections, and often come to s
to stay home with them.

Nutrition. Perhaps as a result of povert
not have regular, well-balanced meals and
duces an agitated emotional state.

Sleep. Sleeping patterns are often irregu
sleep in crowded and squalid conditions.

Substance Abuse. Alcohol abuse and u
lems among these families. A growing p
addicted mothers. The problem of agitati
children makes them extremely difficult to
public schools, and they often display serio
behavior.

Gangs. Membership in gangs sets the
especially with school authority and peer r
also associated with a dramatic increase i
students in school becomes a salient issue w

its are relatively calm, they will often initiate
e, sharing or being of assistance to peers). Thus,
l students can be helpful to others and that they
iors on occasion.

ntisocial students need to succeed and have a
sive if appropriate goals can be established that
ident population does not experience academic
o provide structures during this phase that will
nportant outcomes.

mpliant, and desirable"

se: school-based and nonschool-based. These
ease the general level of agitation that antisocial

cts fall into two broad categories: (1) denial of
id (2) something negative is inflicted on the
nts typically do not have good communication
r limited verbal skills often do not allow them
icate in a way that is acceptable). If antisocial
d, they often react angrily and may be assigned
ect, the original needs or goals are denied and
in an inappropriate manner.
s are provoked by a perception that something
as a student accidentally bumping into them,
or calling them names. The students then react
nce social or other penalties for the behavior.
ited in this process because they perceive the
are victimized via penalties or other sanctions.
react negatively to sudden changes in routines,
has fully engaged them. In general, transitions

ocial students as "fair game." These "normal"
cial peers to escalate through provocations, such
with their property. They are viewed as a good

Pressure. School is a high-demand situation in which students are expected to follow a wide variety of directions and complete a number of often complex tasks during the course of a school day. Antisocial students do not manage their time well and have poor planning and adaptive-behavior skills. They are generally poorly organized in a personal sense. The ordinary demands of the school day can set the stage for panic, depression, anxiety, and other emotional behaviors.

Ineffective Problem Solving. Antisocial students have limited strategies for identifying sources of problems, generating adaptive options, evaluating them, negotiating with others, and implementing plans accordingly. Such strategies need to be systematically and directly taught to antisocial students.

Errors. In many cases, antisocial students will stop working when they make errors or will avoid new work because they are likely to make mistakes. Thus, error-correction processes and the assignment of academic tasks are often emotion-laden occasions.

Corrections. Similarly, antisocial students often have problems in accepting assistance after errors have been made or with being required to try a task again. Teacher corrections and debriefings may actually prompt substantial increases in their agitation levels.

Nonschool-Based Triggers

Dysfunctional Homes. Many students who have severe behavior disorders come from needy homes where there may be poverty, unemployment, abuse, neglect, and poor parental modeling of appropriate behavior and positive attitudes toward school.

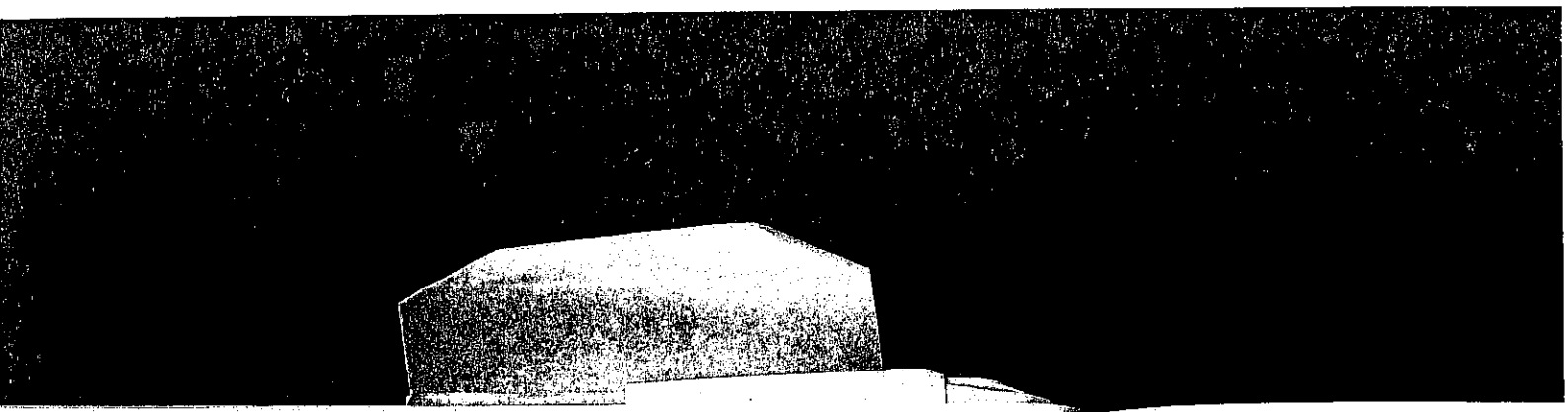
Health Problems. Parents, in many cases, do not have health insurance and have very limited incomes. An appointment with the doctor could use up several days' income. Consequently, these children may not go to the doctor for the common illnesses, such as viruses and infections, and often come to school sick because their parents cannot afford to stay home with them.

Nutrition. Perhaps as a result of poverty and ineffective parenting, these children do not have regular, well-balanced meals and are often hungry. Severe hunger usually produces an agitated emotional state.

Sleep. Sleeping patterns are often irregular and, in some cases, such children have to sleep in crowded and squalid conditions.

Substance Abuse. Alcohol abuse and use of controlled substances are common problems among these families. A growing population of children are born to substance-addicted mothers. The problem of agitation and attention disorders presented by these children makes them extremely difficult to teach and manage in school. Many are now in public schools, and they often display serious forms of agitated, and sometimes antisocial, behavior.

Gangs. Membership in gangs sets the stage for serious problem behavior at school, especially with school authority and peer relationships. Membership in juvenile gangs is also associated with a dramatic increase in criminal behavior. The safety of adults and students in school becomes a salient issue with gang membership.



Summary of Phase Two: Triggers

Overall behavior involves a series of unresolved problems

Phase Three: Agitation

The agitation phase can last for a considerable amount of time, depending on the events that take place or on which stimuli are present. The graph in Figure 3.1 flattens out during the agitation phase to illustrate the longer duration of this phase.

Students often display high levels of agitation as a function of an inability to effectively manage the triggers identified in Phase Two. *Agitation* is a behavioral term that includes emotional dispositions such as being angry, upset, depressed, worried, anxious, and frustrated. Agitation is manifested both by increases and decreases in student behavior.

Increases in Behavior

Darting eyes. Students look here and there with a certain level of intensity but with little focus or purpose to their eye movements.

Nonconversational Language. Students' responses are such that it is difficult to build a conversation. For example, you greet Tony and ask, "How was your weekend?" He might respond, "Fine." Then you ask, "What did you do?" He answers, "Nothing much." And so on.

Busy Hands. Students are prone to drum their fingers, rub their thighs, tap their pencils, open and close their books, tug at their clothes, and display a general increase in hand movements.

Moving In and Out of Groups. Students will want to join groups and then pull out or will ask to play and then do something else.

Off-Task, Then On-Task Behavior. Students will start a task, stop, do something else, and then start up again. There appears to be little, if any, fixed or sustained attention to academic tasks or related activities.

Decreases in Behavior

Staring into Space. Students appear to be daydreaming and just staring into space.

Subdued Language. Language is largely nonconversational with an extra dimension of weak delivery; that is, one often has to get close to hear what the students are saying (which may upset them more because they usually want to be left alone at this point and maintain their space).

Contained Hands. When agitated, anti
pockets, sit on them, or fold their arms and

Withdrawal from Groups. There is a
behind, and to engage in isolated activities.

Summary of

Overall beha

The previous phase, agitation, characterizes
contrast, in Phase Four, student behavior is
students typically exhibit escalating behavio
from the teacher. In other words, students
that are very likely to engage some other pe

Questioning and Arguing. Students se
and then proceed to argue about the respons
student is not seeking essential information
tational interaction.

Noncompliance and Defiance. Studen
a teacher directive, demand, or behavioral ex
responses such as, "I'm not going to do that,

Off-Task Behavior. Teachers have a gen
demically engaged in assigned tasks or activ
do not get started promptly with assigned w
provide a directive to begin work.

Provocation of Others. Students exhib
cause them to react strongly (for example, n
and interfering with other people's property

Compliance with Accompanying Ina
event, often called limit testing, has two co
assigned task but (2) exhibit additional socia
Arlene may be asked to sit down. She sits d
under her breath (additional behavior that is

Criterion Problems. Another form of li
when students perform at a standard clearly

unresolved problems

able amount of time, depending on the events
resent. The graph in Figure 3.1 flattens out
longer duration of this phase.
igitation as a function of an inability to effec-
hase Two. *Agitation* is a behavioral term that
ng angry, upset, depressed, worried, anxious,
both by increases and decreases in student

here with a certain level of intensity but with
ents.

nts' responses are such that it is difficult to
ect Tony and ask, "How was your weekend?"
, "What did you do?" He answers, "Nothing

um their fingers, rub their thighs, tap their
their clothes, and display a general increase in

nts will want to join groups and then pull out
else.

Students will start a task, stop, do something
s to be little, if any, fixed or sustained attention

be daydreaming and just staring into space.

ly nonconversational with an extra dimension
get close to hear what the students are saying
usually want to be left alone at this point and

Contained Hands. When agitated, antisocial students often put their hands in their pockets, sit on them, or fold their arms and just sulk.

Withdrawal from Groups. There is a tendency to pull away from a group, to lag behind, and to engage in isolated activities.

Summary of Phase Three: Agitation

Overall behavior is unfocused and off-task

Phase Four: Acceleration

The previous phase, agitation, characterizes students who are unfocused and off-task. By contrast, in Phase Four, student behavior is quite focused. During this phase, antisocial students typically exhibit escalating behavior that assures a predictable and rapid response from the teacher. In other words, students exhibit *engaging behaviors*—that is, behaviors that are very likely to engage some other person (for example, the teacher).

Questioning and Arguing. Students set themselves up to need help or ask questions and then proceed to argue about the responses or details of the task at hand. Typically, the student is not seeking essential information but rather engaging the teacher in a confrontational interaction.

Noncompliance and Defiance. Students refuse to cooperate, usually in response to a teacher directive, demand, or behavioral expectation. For example, the teacher may hear responses such as, "I'm not going to do that," "That's not fair," or "Make me."

Off-Task Behavior. Teachers have a general expectation that students should be academically engaged in assigned tasks or activities. Thus, when students stop working or do not get started promptly with assigned work, the teacher will approach, offer help, or provide a directive to begin work.

Provocation of Others. Students exhibit behaviors that irritate others and perhaps cause them to react strongly (for example, name calling, insults, racial slurs, put-downs, and interfering with other people's property).

Compliance with Accompanying Inappropriate Behaviors. This behavioral event, often called limit testing, has two components: (1) students actually complete the assigned task but (2) exhibit additional social behavior that is unacceptable. For example, Arlene may be asked to sit down. She sits down (compliance) but mutters an obscenity under her breath (additional behavior that is unacceptable).

Criterion Problems. Another form of limit testing, called partial compliance, occurs when students perform at a standard clearly below the expected level. For example, the

An escalating teacher-student interaction. *Kathleen Olson*

teacher may ask for a page of writing, and Carl completes only half a page. Or Marie will write semilegibly (even though prior samples show she can write legibly).

Whining and Crying. This behavior often prompts immediate teacher attention or assistance and may cause adults to show a high level of irritation.

Avoidance and Escape. With these forms of behavior, students are seeking to avoid a current activity or some activity scheduled to occur in the near future. This often puts pressure on teachers or places them in a situation of having to negotiate with students.

Threats and Intimidation. When antisocial students deliver threats, there is the expectation that the threatened person will respond in an intimidated fashion. For example, when the teacher tells Joseph he must complete an assignment either now or after school, he replies, "I know where you live." Such threats are a serious form of implied aggression and pose a potential danger that should not be dismissed.

Verbal Abuse. Similarly, when students use offensive language toward staff, staff will usually respond immediately. They rarely ignore the situation.

Destruction of Property. When stude
take immediate action.

Serious Behavior in General. Any se
diate response from staff, which sets th
students.

Summary

Overall b

All behaviors in this phase are characteriz
threat to the safety of others.

Serious Destruction of Property. T
damage to property.

Assault. Someone is a target or victim c
objects, hair pulling, and even more serio
weapons.

Self-Abuse. These self-directed behav
head banging, and scratching.

Severe Tantrums. Tantrums may not
iors such as screaming, yelling, and flai
disruptive.

Hyperventilation. This behavior, tho
stressed or agitated the students may be.

Summ

Overal

This phase marks the beginning of the st
duction in agitation. However, students i
responsive to adult social influence.

Carl completes only half a page. Or Marie will
ples show she can write legibly).

often prompts immediate teacher attention or
high level of irritation.

ırms of behavior, students are seeking to avoid
led to occur in the near future. This often puts
uation of having to negotiate with students.

ntisocial students deliver threats, there is the
ill respond in an intimidated fashion. For ex-
ust complete an assignment either now or after
e." Such threats are a serious form of implied
it should not be dismissed.

s use offensive language toward staff, staff will
ignore the situation.

Destruction of Property. When students deliberately destroy property, staff always take immediate action.

Serious Behavior in General. Any serious behavior will typically lead to an immediate response from staff, which sets the stage for an escalated confrontation with students.

Summary of Phase Four: Acceleration

Overall behavior is teacher-engaging

Phase Five: Peak

All behaviors in this phase are characterized by *serious* disruption and often represent a threat to the safety of others.

Serious Destruction of Property. These behaviors involve substantial and costly damage to property.

Assault. Someone is a target or victim of assault, such as punching, kicking, throwing objects, hair pulling, and even more serious behaviors including assault with objects or weapons.

Self-Abuse. These self-directed behaviors involve hitting, pinching, hair pulling, head banging, and scratching.

Severe Tantrums. Tantrums may not pose a threat to the safety of others, but behaviors such as screaming, yelling, and flailing on the floor will prove to be seriously disruptive.

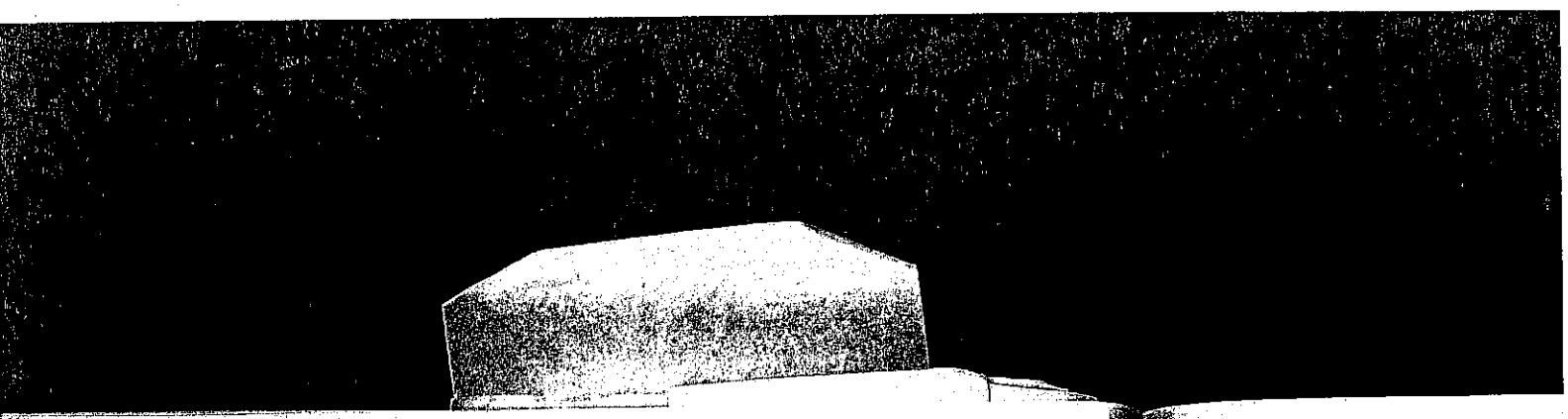
Hyperventilation. This behavior, though relatively harmless, is an indicator of how stressed or agitated the students may be.

Summary of Phase Five: Peak

Overall behavior is out of control

Phase Six: De-Escalation

This phase marks the beginning of the student's disengagement and corresponding reduction in agitation. However, students in this phase are not especially cooperative or responsive to adult social influence.



Confusion. Immediately following a serious incident of being out of control, students sometimes display confused, random behavior, such as wandering around in a circle, staring at the floor, fidgeting, sitting, and standing.

Reconciliation. Some students will want to make up, to see if they are still liked. They will offer to help or come close and stand near the teacher. Some may verbalize that they are sorry for what occurred.

Withdrawal. Students often will put their heads down and try to sleep. In some cases, they may be fatigued from the incident, and in other cases, they may simply need to quiet down. Students will sometimes sleep following a serious incident, which could result from a combination of fatigue, depression, and withdrawal.

Denial. Many students will engage in denial about their behavior, especially regarding the most serious behavioral episodes in the chain. The denial is often paired with blaming someone else.

Blaming Others. Students will frequently become animated as they blame others for the incident in question. For example, a student might say, "Well if she had let me see the nurse, none of this would have happened. It's all her fault." In addition, students will probably talk about the initiating behaviors occurring early in the behavioral chain, when blame can be directed toward some other person.

Responsiveness to Directions. Many supervisors have found that students at this point are sometimes responsive to very concrete directions, such as "Michael, would you sit over there on the bench, please?"

Responsiveness to Manipulative or Mechanical Tasks. In these situations, students often like to become engaged in tasks that are quite mechanical, such as leafing through magazines and playing with Legos.

Avoidance of Discussion. At this point, most students will avoid discussion and opportunities for debriefing unless there is an opportunity to blame others.

Summary of Phase Six: De-Escalation

Overall behavior displays confusion

Phase Seven: Recovery

In this final phase, behavior returns to a nonagitated, relatively normal state and reflects behavioral indicators of recovery.

Eagerness for Independent Work or Activity. Typically, the students will seek some kind of relatively independent "busy work," such as writing, coloring, or looking up words in a dictionary and writing down their meanings. These activities need to be relatively easy; students will tend to

assistance.

Subdued Behavior in Group Wo
students are difficult. Strategies such
this phase.

Subdued Behavior in Class Discu
responses are typically muted and cry

Defensive Behavior. Some antisoc
tious and almost studied. They may
too much at this point.

Avoidance of Debriefing. Studer
(that is, what they did, the events le
taken).

Summary of Phase Seve

Overall behavior shows
discuss

The summary in Box 3.2 provides
The lists of behaviors are not meant
of behavior for that particular phase.

At this point, we present an illustra
behavior. Form 3.1 allows us to desig
in each phase of the acting-out cycle
in which the student's specific behav
strategies for managing each of the p
will be described for implementatio
Form 3.2 is a blank version of Form
specific behaviors of an antisocial stu

In this chapter, we have presented a
social behavior. Behavioral descriptic
exhibit this behavioral pattern. The

ious incident of being out of control, students
vior, such as wandering around in a circle,
tanding.

unt to make up, to see if they are still liked.
and near the teacher. Some may verbalize that

eir heads down and try to sleep. In some cases,
d in other cases, they may simply need to quiet
owing a serious incident, which could result
and withdrawal.

enial about their behavior, especially regarding
chain. The denial is often paired with blaming

ntly become animated as they blame others for
ident might say, "Well if she had let me see the
l. It's all her fault." In addition, students will
s occurring early in the behavioral chain, when
person.

ty supervisors have found that students at this
ncrete directions, such as "Michael, would you

Mechanical Tasks. In these situations, stu-
tasks that are quite mechanical, such as leafing
os.

oint, most students will avoid discussion and
is an opportunity to blame others.

De-Escalation

s confusion

a nonagitated, relatively normal state and reflects

or Activity. Typically, the students will seek
usy work," such as writing, coloring, or looking
down their meanings. These activities need to be

relatively easy; students will tend to avoid difficult tasks or tasks that require teacher assistance.

Subdued Behavior in Group Work. Activities involving interactions with other students are difficult. Strategies such as cooperative learning should not be initiated in this phase.

Subdued Behavior in Class Discussions. Discussions are also difficult and student responses are typically muted and cryptic.

Defensive Behavior. Some antisocial students will display behavior that is very cautious and almost studied. They may be confused or simply may have learned not to say too much at this point.

Avoidance of Debriefing. Students are generally reluctant to talk about an incident (that is, what they did, the events leading up to it, and the alternatives they could have taken).

Summary of Phase Seven: Recovery

Overall behavior shows eagerness for busy work and reluctance to interact or discuss

SUMMARY OF PHASES IN THE ACTING-OUT CYCLE

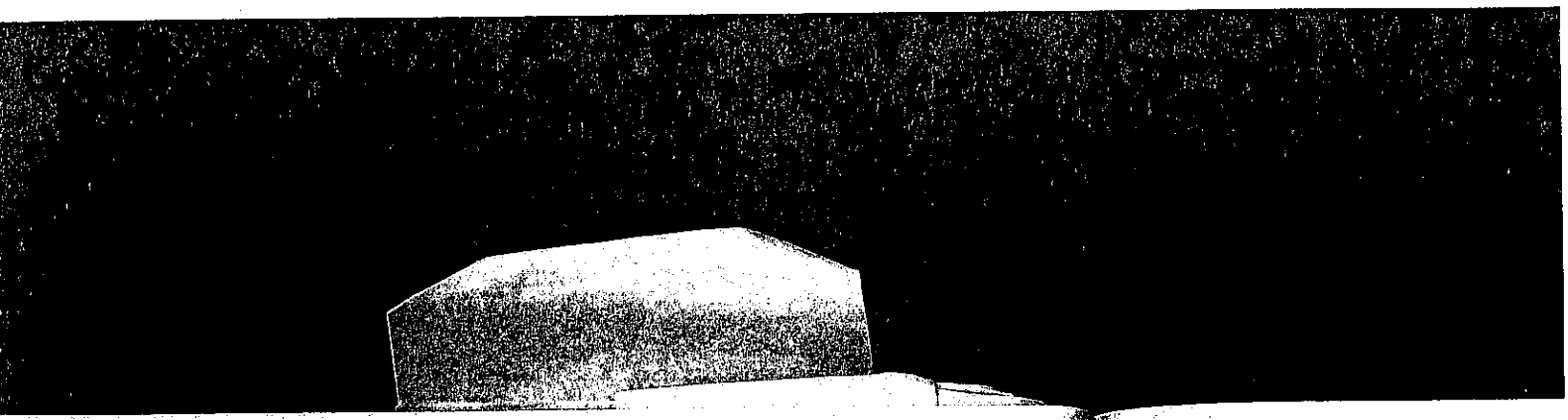
The summary in Box 3.2 provides an overview of each phase in the acting-out cycle. The lists of behaviors are not meant to be exhaustive; rather, they are examples of a class of behavior for that particular phase.

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

At this point, we present an illustration of a student who exhibits serious acting-out behavior. Form 3.1 allows us to design procedures for remediating problematic behavior in each phase of the acting-out cycle. The form is divided into two sections: *assessment*, in which the student's specific behaviors are identified for each phase of the cycle, and *strategies* for managing each of the phases. In the next chapter, corresponding strategies will be described for implementation at the onset of each of these identified behaviors. Form 3.2 is a blank version of Form 3.1. Readers can use this form to practice identifying specific behaviors of an antisocial student in each phase.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have presented a seven-phase model for describing serious acting-out social behavior. Behavioral descriptions were culled from a large sample of students who exhibit this behavioral pattern. The primary purpose of classifying behavior in this way



Box 3.2 Summary of the Acting-Out Cycle

Phase One: Calm

1. On-task behavior
2. Following of rules and expectations
3. Responsiveness to praise
4. Initiation of behavior
5. Goal-orientedness

Phase Two: Triggers

School-Based

1. Conflicts
   a. Denial of something they need
   b. Something negative is inflicted
2. Changes in routine
3. Provocations
4. Pressure
5. Ineffective problem solving
6. Errors
7. Corrections

Nonschool-Based

1. Dysfunctional homes
2. Health problems
3. Nutrition
4. Sleep
5. Substance abuse
6. Gangs

Phase Three: Agitation

Increases in Behavior

1. Darting eyes
2. Nonconversational language
3. Busy hands
4. Moving in and out of groups
5. Off-task, then on-task behavior

Decreases in Behavior

1. Staring into space
2. Subdued language
3. Contained hands
4. Withdrawal from groups

Box 3.2 *(Continued)*

Phase Four: Acceleration

1. Questioning and arguing
2. Noncompliance and defiance
3. Off-task behavior
4. Provocation of others
5. Compliance with accompanyi
6. Criterion problems
7. Whining and crying
8. Avoidance and escape
9. Threats and intimidation
10. Verbal abuse
11. Destruction of property
12. Serious behavior in general

Phase Five: Peak

1. Serious destruction of property
2. Assault
3. Self-abuse
4. Severe tantrums
5. Hyperventilation

Phase Six: De-Escalation

1. Confusion
2. Reconciliation
3. Withdrawal
4. Denial

cle

onschool-Based
Dysfunctional homes
Health problems
Nutrition
Sleep
Substance abuse
Gangs

ecreases in Behavior
Staring into space
Subdued language
Contained hands
Withdrawal from groups

Box 3.2 *(Continued)*

Phase Four: Acceleration

1. Questioning and arguing
2. Noncompliance and defiance
3. Off-task behavior
4. Provocation of others
5. Compliance with accompanying inappropriate behaviors
6. Criterion problems
7. Whining and crying
8. Avoidance and escape
9. Threats and intimidation
10. Verbal abuse
11. Destruction of property
12. Serious behavior in general

Phase Five: Peak

1. Serious destruction of property
2. Assault
3. Self-abuse
4. Severe tantrums
5. Hyperventilation

Phase Six: De-Escalation

1. Confusion
2. Reconciliation
3. Withdrawal
4. Denial

Box 3.2 *(Continued)*

5. Blaming others
6. Responsiveness to directions
7. Responsiveness to manipulative or mechanical tasks
8. Avoidance of discussion (unless there is occasion to blame others)

Phase Seven: Recovery

1. Eagerness for independent work or activity
2. Subdued behavior in group work
3. Subdued behavior in class discussions
4. Defensive behavior
5. Avoidance of debriefing

is to enable practitioners to understand the behavioral processes involved in escalating interactions between teachers and students. The descriptions tell the teacher what problematic student behavior to expect at each stage of explosive teacher-student interactions that are increasingly a fact of daily school life. The strategies corresponding to each phase in the acting-out cycle are presented in the next chapter.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why do common or traditional approaches to problem behavior often escalate students with severe antisocial problems?
2. Why is it difficult to change the cycle of acting-out behavior by focusing on the serious behavior component of the chain?
3. What are the main advantages to identifying the behavioral phases in the acting-out cycle?
4. What are the seven phases in the acting-out cycle and common behavioral indicators for each of these phases?
5. What function do successive interactions play in the acting-out cycle?
6. Using a student you have observed or worked with who displays serious acting-out behavior, describe the specific behaviors for each phase of the acting-out cycle.

ACTING-OUT BEHAVIOR

Student Name: *Dominic Smith*
Date: *3/4/93*
Teacher(s): *Walt Jones, Andrea*
Class: *7th Grade*

ASSESSMENT

Calm
Likes to help
Displays successful work
Enjoys games
Likes the computer

Triggers
Repeating tasks
Teasing remarks and putdowns from other students
Correcting behavior
Consequences for problem behavior

Agitation
Walks around the room
Scowls at other students
Pouts and mumbles to himself
Does not concentrate on his wor

Acceleration
Argues and will not quit
Defiance, "Make me"
Name calls and threatens student
Raises his voice and shouts

FORM 3.1 Description of the Cycl Behavior

iks
:o blame others)

ıc behavioral processes involved in escalating
s. The descriptions tell the teacher what prob-
stage of explosive teacher-student interactions
ife. The strategies corresponding to each phase
: next chapter.

aches to problem behavior often escalate stu-

le of acting-out behavior by focusing on the
n?
tifying the behavioral phases in the acting-out

g-out cycle and common behavioral indicators

ns play in the acting-out cycle?
worked with who displays serious acting-out
rs for each phase of the acting-out cycle.

ACTING-OUT BEHAVIOR

Student Name: *Dominic Smith*
Date: *3/4/93*
Teacher(s): *Walt Jones, Andrea DeForest, Aletia McHenry, Joe Carpenter*
Class: *7th Grade*

ASSESSMENT	STRATEGIES
Calm	**Calm**
Likes to help	
Displays successful work	
Enjoys games	
Likes the computer	
Triggers	**Triggers**
Repeating tasks	
Teasing remarks and putdowns from other students	
Correcting behavior	
Consequences for problem behavior	
Agitation	**Agitation**
Walks around the room	
Scowls at other students	
Pouts and mumbles to himself	
Does not concentrate on his work	
Acceleration	**Acceleration**
Argues and will not quit	
Defiance, "Make me"	
Name calls and threatens students	
Raises his voice and shouts	

FORM 3.1 Description of the Cycle of Acting-Out Antisocial Behavior

ASSESSMENT	STRATEGIES
Peak	**Peak**
Throws objects around the room	
Hits other students	
Yells and screams	
De-Escalation	**De-Escalation**
Goes very quiet, puts his head down	
Complains that no one likes him and that it is not fair	
Talks to himself a lot	
Likes to fiddle with things	
Recovery	**Recovery**
Somewhat subdued	
Likes to work alone	

FORM 3.1 *(Continued)*

KEY TERMS

acceleration phase
acting-out cycle
agitation phase
authority
behavioral phases
behavior chain
calm phase
confrontation
control
de-escalation phase
engaging behaviors
escalating interactions
escalation
peak phase
private response
public response
reactive behavior
recovery phase
reinforcement
social interactions
student conflicts
successive interactions
trigger phase

ACTING-OUT BEHAVIOR

Student Name:
Date:
Teacher(s):
Class:

ASSESSMENT

Calm

Triggers

Agitation

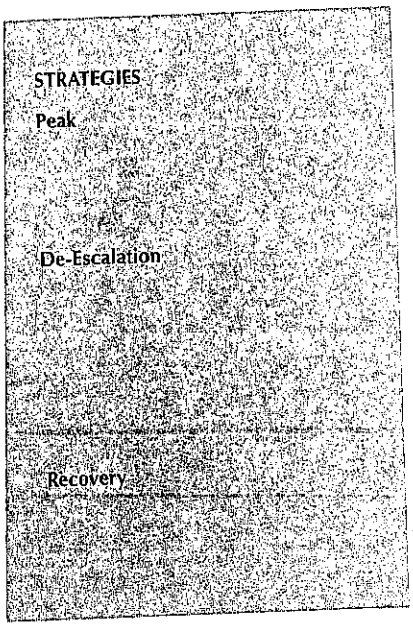
Acceleration

Peak

De-Escalation

Recovery

FORM 3.2 Assessment and Interven Behavior



escalation
peak phase
private response
public response
reactive behavior
recovery phase
reinforcement
social interactions
student conflicts
successive interactions
trigger phase

ACTING-OUT BEHAVIOR

Student Name:
Date:
Teacher(s):
Class:

ASSESSMENT	STRATEGIES
Calm	Calm
Triggers	Triggers
Agitation	Agitation
Acceleration	Acceleration
Peak	Peak
De-Escalation	De-Escalation
Recovery	Recovery

FORM 3.2 Assessment and Intervention Plan for Acting-Out Behavior

4 Strategies for Managing the Phases of Acting-Out Behavior

Strategies for Each Phase of the Acting-Out Cycle

Phase One: Calm
Phase Two: Triggers
Phase Three: Agitation
Phase Four: Acceleration
Phase Five: Peak
Phase Six: De-Escalation
Phase Seven: Recovery

Summary Form and Case Study

Conclusion

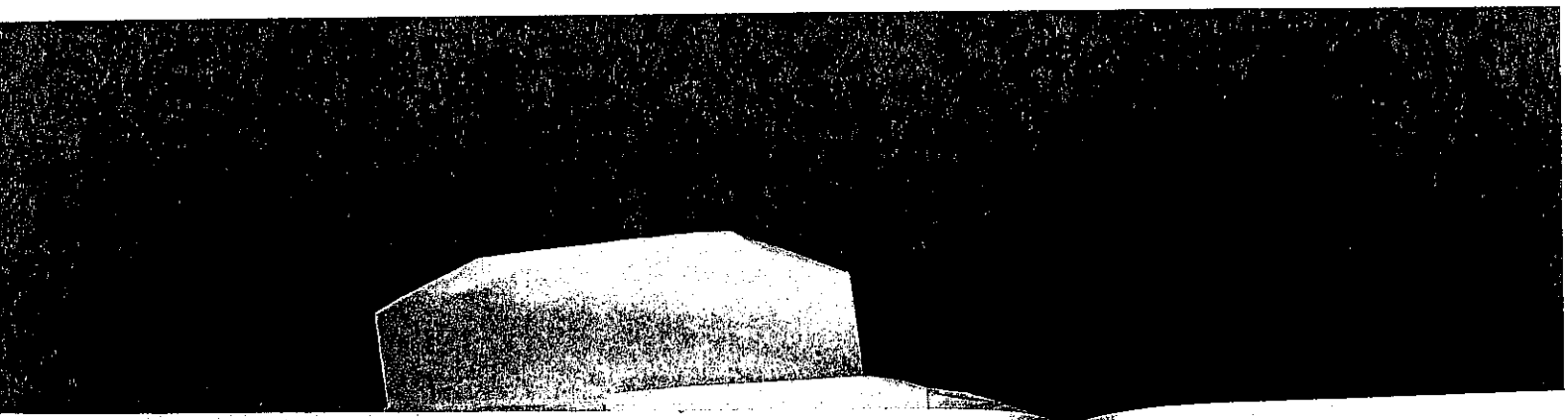
for Managing
es of Acting-Out

-Out Cycle

Phase Six: De-Escalation
Phase Seven: Recovery

Summary Form and Case Study

Conclusion



In the previous chapter, we presented a seven-phase conceptual model for describing serious acting-out behavior. Each phase represents a link in the behavioral chain. In this chapter, we describe strategies specifically designed for managing problematic student behavior in each of these phases. The basic approach is for the teacher, or other school professional, to effectively manage the behaviors in the early phases of the acting-out cycle so as to prevent the more destructive, subsequent phases. In doing this, the teacher is *interrupting the behavior chain*, thus preempting the later phases, in which more serious behaviors occur.In Phases One through Four (calm, triggers, agitation, and acceleration), the emphasis is on effective teaching and management practices. In the remaining phases, the emphasis is on safety, crisis management, reentry, and follow-up. An illustration (continuing from the previous chapter) is described to demonstrate specific strategies for handling antisocial students in each phase. The seven phases in the cycle of serious acting-out behavior are restated here:

Phase One: Calm

Phase Two: Triggers

Phase Three: Agitation

Phase Four: Acceleration

Phase Five: Peak

Phase Six: De-Escalation

Phase Seven: Recovery

STRATEGIES FOR EACH PHASE OF THE ACTING-OUT CYCLE

Phase One: Calm

It is important for educators to treat the first phase, calm, as a high priority. If effective strategies are applied here, the students' appropriate behavior will likely be maintained, and serious behavior problems may not occur. In addition, the more antisocial students can be maintained in this phase the more they will experience the positive consequences that naturally flow from peers, teachers, and school staff. Four basic strategies for achieving this goal are: (1) classroom structure, (2) quality instruction, (3) providing attention, and (4) teaching social behavior.

Classroom Structure. A number of strategies for establishing *classroom structure* are described in Chapter 6. Students who may exhibit explosive behavior benefit from a predictable environment. The structure provides a sense of security for such students, which helps them to remain calm and reduces the likelihood of unforeseen circumstances arising that may trigger inappropriate behavior. Teachers who have antisocial students should assess the degree to which structural variables are operative in their classroom and the degree to which specific structural variables could assist those students who may potentially exhibit acting-out or antisocial behavior.

CODE: IMPORTANCE	I
A. Very important	1
B. Somewhat important	2
C. Not important	3
Structure Variable	
1. Behavior expectations	
2. Reinforcement procedures	
3. Problem-solving correction procedures	
4. Lesson focus specified	
5. Target skills identified	
6. Lesson feedback given	
7. Entry activity utilized	
8. Independent routines targeted	
9. Everyone's attention secured	
10. Students engaged in task immediately	
11. Problems addressed early	
12. Initial explanations brief	
13. Planned variations of instructions used	
14. Dead time avoided	
15. Plan for difficult transitions	
16. Students settled before end of period	
TOTALS	

FORM 4.1 Classroom Structure Implem

Teachers can assess the extent to which classroom by conducting a self-evaluation or b teacher) observe, evaluate, and report back t room structure is presented in Form 4.1. Tea structural variables according to their *impor* (2) tally scores for each structural variable.

ven-phase conceptual model for describing esents a link in the behavioral chain. In this lesigned for managing problematic student approach is for the teacher, or other school aviors in the early phases of the acting-out subsequent phases. In doing this, the teacher pting the later phases, in which more serious r (calm, triggers, agitation, and acceleration), nagement practices. In the remaining phases, ent, reentry, and follow-up. An illustration escribed to demonstrate specific strategies for The seven phases in the cycle of serious acting-

first phase, calm, as a high priority. If effective appropriate behavior will likely be maintained, occur. In addition, the more antisocial students e they will experience the positive consequences and school staff. Four basic strategies for achiev-, (2) quality instruction, (3) providing attention,

f strategies for establishing *classroom structure* are may exhibit explosive behavior benefit from a e provides a sense of security for such students, educes the likelihood of unforeseen circumstances behavior. Teachers who have antisocial students ural variables are operative in their classroom and al variables could assist those students who may cial behavior.

CODE: IMPORTANCE

A. Very Important
B. Somewhat important
C. Not important

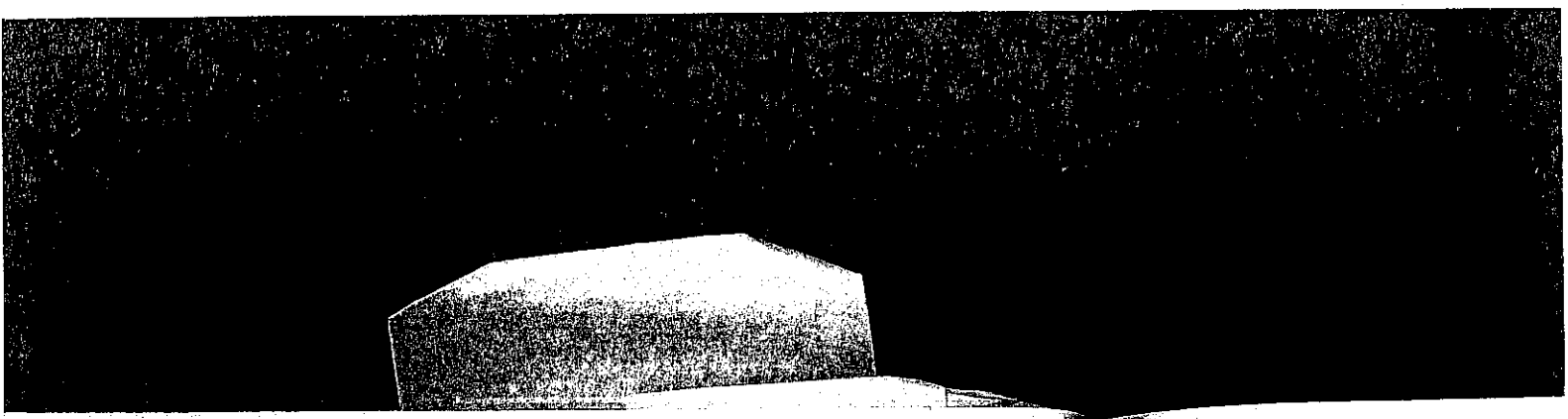
IMPLEMENTATION

1. Firmly in place
2. Somewhat in place
3. Not in place

Structure Variable	Importance	Implementation
1. Behavior expectations		
2. Reinforcement procedures		
3. Problem-solving correction procedures		
4. Lesson focus specified		
5. Target skills identified		
6. Lesson feedback given		
7. Entry activity utilized		
8. Independent routines targeted		
9. Everyone's attention secured		
10. Students engaged in task immediately		
11. Problems addressed early		
12. Initial explanations brief		
13. Planned variations of instructions used		
14. Dead time avoided		
15. Plan for difficult transitions		
16. Students settled before end of period		
TOTALS		

FORM 4.1 Classroom Structure Implementation

Teachers can assess the extent to which structural variables are in place in their classroom by conducting a self-evaluation or by having someone else (a counselor, another teacher) observe, evaluate, and report back to them. An instrument for assessing classroom structure is presented in Form 4.1. Teachers can use this form to: (1) rate several structural variables according to their *importance* and their *level of implementation* and (2) tally scores for each structural variable.



Once implementation levels of structural variables have been assessed, the next steps are to: (1) analyze why important structural variables are not in place, if they are found to be missing, and (2) develop an action plan to implement the missing variables.

In order to assess which structural variables are more conducive to maintaining calm, on-task behavior with antisocial students, teachers can observe the students under naturally occurring variations in classroom structure and look for differential performance. Alternatively, they can directly manipulate some of the structural variables and observe how they affect students' performance. While many structural variables contribute to the predictability of the classroom environment, the following five are regarded as particularly crucial (these variables are described and illustrated in Chapter 6):

1. Preparation
2. Planned variation in the delivery of instruction
3. Classroom organization
4. Teacher expectations
5. Behavior management system

Quality Instruction. Gettinger (1988) identified *quality instruction* as one of the earliest proactive strategies that should be considered in classroom management. As a rule, if students are successfully engaged academically, there will be fewer associated behavior problems. Similarly, if antisocial students are productively engaged in an assignment or instructional task, there is far less likelihood of other competing classroom stimuli triggering inappropriate behavior.

In a survey of instructional practices in classrooms for students with serious emotional disturbances, Knitzer, Steinberg, and Fleisch (1990) found little evidence of focused academic instruction. Moreover, in an extensive review of the published literature on this topic, Ruhl and Berlinghoff (1992) report a paucity of research on the topic of academic interventions with students having antisocial or acting-out behavior patterns. It appears that the role of effective instructional variables is noticeably absent in much of the published research on students having serious behavior problems.

Colvin, Greenberg, and Sherman (1993) describe the overall *academic profile* of students with problem behavior as having the following key features:

- High rates of off-task behavior
- Poor academic and work-related skills
- Splinter skills in basic academic areas
- Low achievement

These skill deficits can actively interfere with learning and make the delivery of instruction difficult. Thus, managing student behavior often becomes a primary teacher focus at the expense of instruction. One possible remedy for this situation might be to use curricula that directly address the skill deficits exhibited by students with problem behavior. An appropriate curriculum should have the following features:

- Buffer the impact and attenuate the int
students during instruction.
- Enable teachers to instruct antisocial stu
a level commensurate with their ability.
- Strengthen weak academic skills.
- Enable students functioning below grad

Direct instruction has a number of feat
these challenging needs. Engelmann and C
sign components of the direct-instruction
features that have particular relevance for
problems are listed here:

- Concepts are presented systematically tc
- Skill components are carefully sequence
ing blocks.
- Procedures are specified in detail to assi
- Correction procedures are carefully spe
- Sufficient practice is prescribed.
- Cumulative review and practice are bui

In summary, quality instruction is an i
calm phase. However, academic interven
antisocial students have not been widely ac
tured curricula have considerable potentia
skills of students with problem behavior.
important to implement the best available
know guide effective teaching and instruc
practices are essential if such students are tc

Providing Attention. Unfortunately, s
terns are often left alone and ignored wl
mistake has serious implications for the sch
may believe that (1) they themselves need a
take an inordinate amount of teacher time
or (2) it is best to leave antisocial studen
attention may prompt their disruptive be
backward in terms of sound behavior-mar
& Sugai, 1988). Essentially, if students rec
and out of control than when they are cal
problematic behavior as opportunities allc
sure that all students, and especially antisoc
this calm phase. Two basic strategies
noncontingent.

al variables have been assessed, the next steps
l variables are not in place, if they are found
ı to implement the missing variables.
ıriables are more conducive to maintaining
ents, teachers can observe the students under
ı structure and look for differential perfor-
ıipulate some of the structural variables and
ıce. While many structural variables contrib-
vironment, the following five are regarded as
ribed and illustrated in Chapter 6):

ruction

identified *quality instruction* as one of the ear-
sidered in classroom management. As a rule, if
ically, there will be fewer associated behavior
are productively engaged in an assignment or
od of other competing classroom stimuli trig-

in classrooms for students with serious emo-
nd Fleisch (1990) found little evidence of fo-
an extensive review of the published literature
2) report a paucity of research on the topic of
ing antisocial or acting-out behavior patterns.
tional variables is noticeably absent in much of
serious behavior problems.
993) describe the overall *academic profile* of stu-
e following key features:

s

erfere with learning and make the delivery of
ident behavior often becomes a primary teacher
ı possible remedy for this situation might be to
ill deficits exhibited by students with problem
uld have the following features:

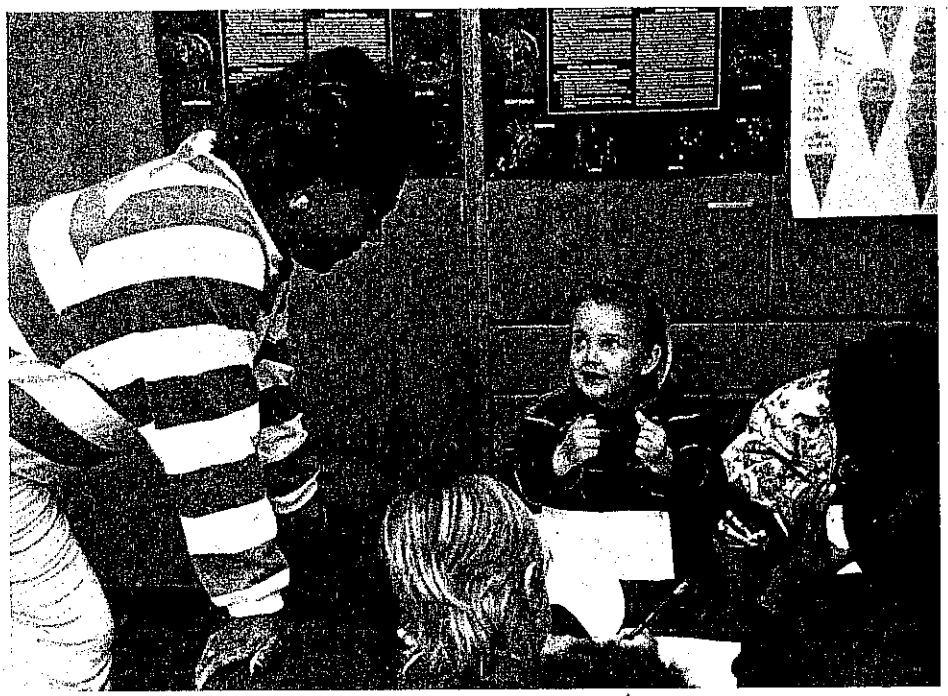
- Buffer the impact and attenuate the influence of behavioral problems exhibited by students during instruction.
- Enable teachers to instruct antisocial students so that academic achievement occurs at a level commensurate with their ability.
- Strengthen weak academic skills.
- Enable students functioning below grade level to catch up.

Direct instruction has a number of features that are particularly suitable for meeting these challenging needs. Engelmann and Carnine (1982) have presented the critical design components of the direct-instruction model in considerable detail. Some of the features that have particular relevance for instructing students with serious behavior problems are listed here:

- Concepts are presented systematically to control for misinterpretations.
- Skill components are carefully sequenced to ensure that students learn the basic building blocks.
- Procedures are specified in detail to assist teachers in presenting the content.
- Correction procedures are carefully specified.
- Sufficient practice is prescribed.
- Cumulative review and practice are built into the curricula.

In summary, quality instruction is an important tool for maintaining students in the calm phase. However, academic interventions and curricula specifically designed for antisocial students have not been widely addressed to date. It appears that highly structured curricula have considerable potential for improving the academic and behavioral skills of students with problem behavior. Regardless of the curricular approach, it is important to implement the best available practices with antisocial students which we know guide effective teaching and instruction. The support systems inherent in these practices are essential if such students are to progress academically.

Providing Attention. Unfortunately, students who display antisocial behavior patterns are often left alone and ignored when they are calm and on-task. This critical mistake has serious implications for the school adjustment of antisocial students. Teachers may believe that (1) they themselves need a break in such instances because these students take an inordinate amount of teacher time and attention when their behavior is escalating or (2) it is best to leave antisocial students alone when they are calm because teacher attention may prompt their disruptive behavior to occur. This assumption is exactly backward in terms of sound behavior-management theory and practice (Wolery, Bailey, & Sugai, 1988). Essentially, if students receive more attention when they are acting out and out of control than when they are calm, they are *much* more likely to continue the problematic behavior as opportunities allow. Teachers should develop structures to ensure that all students, and especially antisocial students, receive adequate attention during this calm phase. Two basic strategies for *providing attention* are contingent and noncontingent.



Maintaining positive student behavior. *Elizabeth Crews*

Contingent attention refers to attention that is delivered in response to appropriate behavior. For example, if students finish their work on time, they may be allowed a break; or if they stay on-task during a period, they may earn some sort of brief privilege or free-time activity. Contracts may be designed to provide additional structure in order to teach students that positive consequences follow the occurrence of appropriate behavior (Sugai & Tindal, 1993). This arrangement will run counter to most of the prior experience of antisocial students and will need to be consistently applied in order to have the desired effect.

Noncontingent attention refers to strategies designed to provide teacher contacts with students who do not get adequate attention. These strategies provide generalized, noncontingent attention of a positive nature to antisocial students *before* they have had an opportunity to misbehave. Attention of this type serves as a pre-correction geared toward making it unnecessary for antisocial students to act out in order to meet their attention needs. It also serves as a means of communicating positive regard and social interest in

antisocial students—a rare event in their
frequent incidental contact with the antis
setting up class activities or distributing ma
the teacher will have a fixed schedule for mal
should create a list of jobs or activities so th
sibilities, and opportunities may be provid
them.

Teaching Social Behavior. In Chapte
teaching appropriate social behavior and s
tional principles developed for teaching ac
already familiar to many teachers, a proble
that social behavior needs to be taught in th

Unfortunately, antisocial children are
havior pattern (by parents and others) that
themselves, their peers, and teachers. Antis
and supported in their attempts to replace
adaptive pattern. As a rule, they cannot d
well as others (psychologists, parents, peers,
ideally positioned to assist antisocial student
pattern of behavior.

Triggers cause or initiate conflicts betwee
managing student behavior in this phase
procedures. We describe three types of str
correction, and (3) individual problem solvi

Formal Strategies for Problem Solving

The three most commonly used formal strat
are: (1) curricular interventions, (2) individ
district resources, and (3) services purchased

Curricular Interventions. Many publ
developed for social skills, anger manageme
making (Alberg, Petry, & Eller, 1994; Go
McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984; Walker, Mc
1983; Walker, Todis, Holmes, & Horton,
deficits in these areas (Patterson, Reid, & Di
tional procedures exist to *directly* teach the
library of curricula and adapt their teach
students. In a review of studies that examin
Zaragoza, Vaughn, and McIntosh (1991) in

on that is delivered in response to appropriate
i their work on time, they may be allowed a
riod, they may earn some sort of brief privilege
esigned to provide additional structure in order
es follow the occurrence of appropriate behavior
it will run counter to most of the prior experi-
to be consistently applied in order to have the

tegies designed to provide teacher contacts with
tion. These strategies provide generalized, non-
e to antisocial students *before* they have had an
his type serves as a pre-correction geared toward
dents to act out in order to meet their attention
municating positive regard and social interest in

antisocial students—a rare event in their lives. For example, the teacher may initiate frequent incidental contact with the antisocial students or give them a regular job of setting up class activities or distributing materials. The regularity of the task ensures that the teacher will have a fixed schedule for making social contact with the students. Teachers should create a list of jobs or activities so that such students can be given specific responsibilities, and opportunities may be provided for the teacher to interact positively with them.

Teaching Social Behavior. In Chapter 10, we present systematic procedures for teaching appropriate social behavior and specific social skills that derive from instructional principles developed for teaching academic skills. Although these procedures are already familiar to many teachers, a problem sometimes occurs in convincing teachers that social behavior needs to be taught in the same way as academic content.

Unfortunately, antisocial children are often inadvertently taught a maladaptive behavior pattern (by parents and others) that is highly aversive and often destructive to themselves, their peers, and teachers. Antisocial students have to be directly instructed and supported in their attempts to replace their maladaptive behavior pattern with an adaptive pattern. As a rule, they cannot do this without assistance from the teacher as well as others (psychologists, parents, peers, consultants). Teachers are well equipped and ideally positioned to assist antisocial students in acquiring and maintaining an appropriate pattern of behavior.

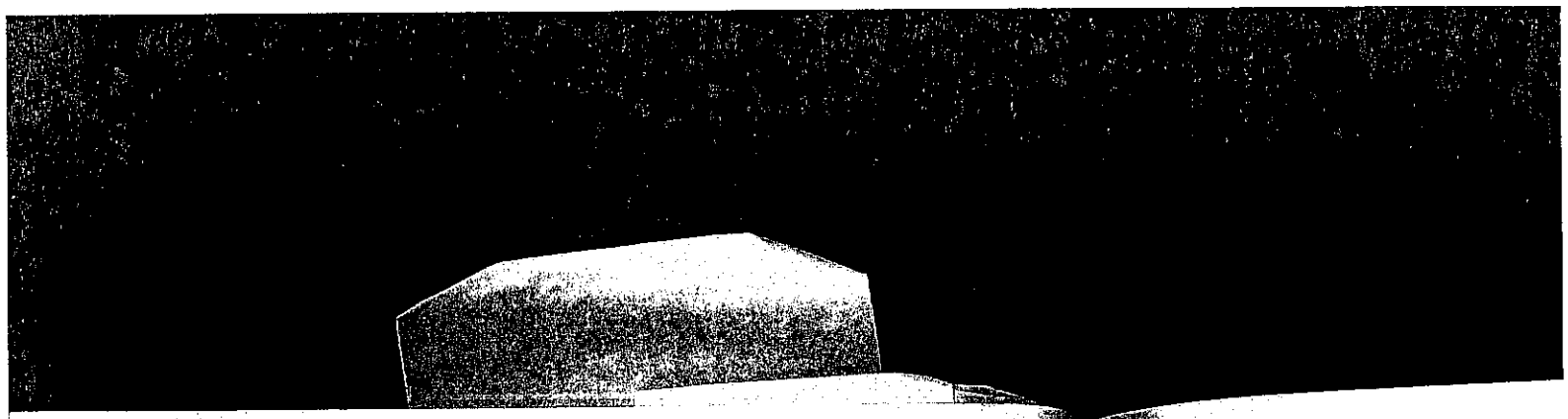
Phase Two: Triggers

Triggers cause or initiate conflicts between teachers and students. The strategies for managing student behavior in this phase use problem-solving and conflict-resolution procedures. We describe three types of strategies: (1) formal problem solving, (2) pre-correction, and (3) individual problem solving.

Formal Strategies for Problem Solving

The three most commonly used formal strategies for assisting students to manage triggers are: (1) curricular interventions, (2) individual assistance plans developed from school and district resources, and (3) services purchased from specialists.

Curricular Interventions. Many published and unpublished curricula have been developed for social skills, anger management, problem solving, and responsible decision making (Alberg, Petry, & Eller, 1994; Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw, & Klein, 1980; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984; Walker, McConnell, Holmes, Todis, Walker, & Golden, 1983; Walker, Todis, Holmes, & Horton, 1988). Antisocial students have serious skill deficits in these areas (Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992). Curricula and effective instructional procedures exist to *directly* teach these skills. Teachers should develop their own library of curricula and adapt their teaching to meet the diverse needs of antisocial students. In a review of studies that examined the effectiveness of social skills programs, Zaragoza, Vaughn, and McIntosh (1991) indicate that a number of programs have been



successful with children and youth who have behavior problems. Chapter 10 focuses on social-skills training resources and teaching guidelines for use with antisocial students.

Gleason, Colvin, and Archer (1991) report that students who exhibit problem behavior in the classroom often have serious deficits in study skills as well. Colvin (1988) introduced study skills curricula developed by Archer and Gleason (1989) to students with severe behavior disorders and reported significant gains in their academic performance and appropriate classroom behavior.

Individual Assistance from Schools and District Resources. Schools and school districts typically have specialists, such as behavioral consultants, counselors, social workers, and school psychologists, who work in support roles to teachers. It is often particularly helpful for students with antisocial behavior patterns to work with such specialized staff members to help them unravel escalation triggers and develop strategies to solve them. In addition, these meetings provide students with an opportunity to have some undivided adult attention, which can have beneficial effects.

Services Purchased from Community Specialists. Students with more severe antisocial behavior may need professional expertise beyond that available from school and district resources. These students may exhibit extreme emotional and behavioral problems. In such cases, school districts often contract with specialists from community agencies, such as mental health services, psychiatric hospitals, crisis intervention centers, universities, and private consulting firms. If additional services are obtained from outside the school system, it is important to coordinate them carefully with in-district services (Jones, 1992).

Pre-Correction Plan

The foundation of a *pre-correction* plan is to identify the context in which the predictable problem behavior occurs. In other words, school staff need to identify the specific triggers that set the stage for the occurrence of the problem behavior. The rest of the plan is designed to assist the student in exhibiting expected or adaptive replacement behaviors in these contexts.

Individual Problem-Solving Plan

This strategy is basically a derivation of a pre-correction plan that has a particular focus on implementation procedures applied to the antisocial student and others with moderate to severe behavior problems. The overall steps are: (1) clearly identify the source of the problem, (2) identify possible solutions or options, (3) assist students in evaluating options and selecting an option, (4) discuss results and implications of the choice, (5) develop an implementation plan (that is, specify tasks and who is responsible for each task), and (6) develop criteria for success and specify review dates.

Clearly Identify the Source of the Problem. The purpose of this step is to assist the student in identifying the triggers or sources of the problem. Questions such as "What got you mad in the first place?" "What went wrong for you?" and "What started all of this?" can be very helpful.

Identify Possible Solutions or Options. step is to list possible options. Sample intervie do about this?" "Instead of doing that, what we make to avoid this next time?" It is impo definite answers at this step; you are just mak will see which option might work best.

Assist Students in Evaluating Options teacher assists the student in examining the p students are reluctant to accept responsibility such options. Instead, they are quick to fram ents, teachers, and peers). It is best to hear options that the student (with your help) can

Discuss Results and Implications of th to a specific plan, they will need assistance tc plan involves some cost to the student. For that Alex was behind in assignments, so he a However, the teacher might have to point o earlier in order to arrive at school sooner a before or possibly after school. Teacher supp reality.

Develop an Implementation Plan. In have limited skills for implementing devel details of the plan, such as specifying tasks should identify some tasks for which they other teachers, talking with the principal, dents are visibly supported—it really is a tc

Develop Criteria for Success and Spec of monitoring plan that includes a regular c for success, the teacher should temper the s phase-out plan should also be establishe program.

When students deal ineffectively with tri only a matter of time before they begin of managing behavior in this phase is to general, these strategies are essentially ac is recognized and dealt with.

Because these strategies are support tines, they must be implemented *before* th the chain of resulting inappropriate beha

e behavior problems. Chapter 10 focuses on
guidelines for use with antisocial students.
port that students who exhibit problem be-
leficits in study skills as well. Colvin (1988)
by Archer and Gleason (1989) to students
l significant gains in their academic perfor-

l District Resources. Schools and school
iavioral consultants, counselors, social work-
pport roles to teachers. It is often particularly
patterns to work with such specialized staff
ggers and develop strategies to solve them. In
ith an opportunity to have some undivided
fects.

Specialists. Students with more severe
pertise beyond that available from school and
oit extreme emotional and behavioral prob-
tract with specialists from community agen-
iatric hospitals, crisis intervention centers,
additional services are obtained from outside
nate them carefully with in-district services

dentify the context in which the predictable
iool staff need to identify the specific triggers
problem behavior. The rest of the plan is
expected or adaptive replacement behaviors

re-correction plan that has a particular focus
antisocial student and others with moderate
eps are: (1) clearly identify the source of the
itions, (3) assist students in evaluating options
nd implications of the choice, (5) develop an
nd who is responsible for each task), and (6)
w dates.

blem. The purpose of this step is to assist
rces of the problem. Questions such as "What
it wrong for you?" and "What started all of

Identify Possible Solutions or Options. Once the triggers are identified, the next step is to list possible options. Sample interview questions would include "What can we do about this?" "Instead of doing that, what else could we do?" and "What changes can we make to avoid this next time?" It is important to stress that you are not looking for definite answers at this step; you are just making a list (brainstorming). The two of you will see which option might work best.

Assist Students in Evaluating Options and Selecting an Option. Here the teacher assists the student in examining the pros and cons of each option. Many antisocial students are reluctant to accept responsibility for their own behavior in the discussion of such options. Instead, they are quick to frame options that involve blaming others (parents, teachers, and peers). It is best to hear them out and then gently persist with the options that the student (with your help) can most directly control.

Discuss Results and Implications of the Choice. Even if students verbally agree to a specific plan, they will need assistance to examine implications of the plan. Usually, a plan involves some cost to the student. For example, the source of the problem may be that Alex was behind in assignments, so he agreed to catch up on the work before school. However, the teacher might have to point out that this will mean he will have to get up earlier in order to arrive at school sooner and will not be able to associate with friends before or possibly after school. Teacher support may be needed in accepting such a harsh reality.

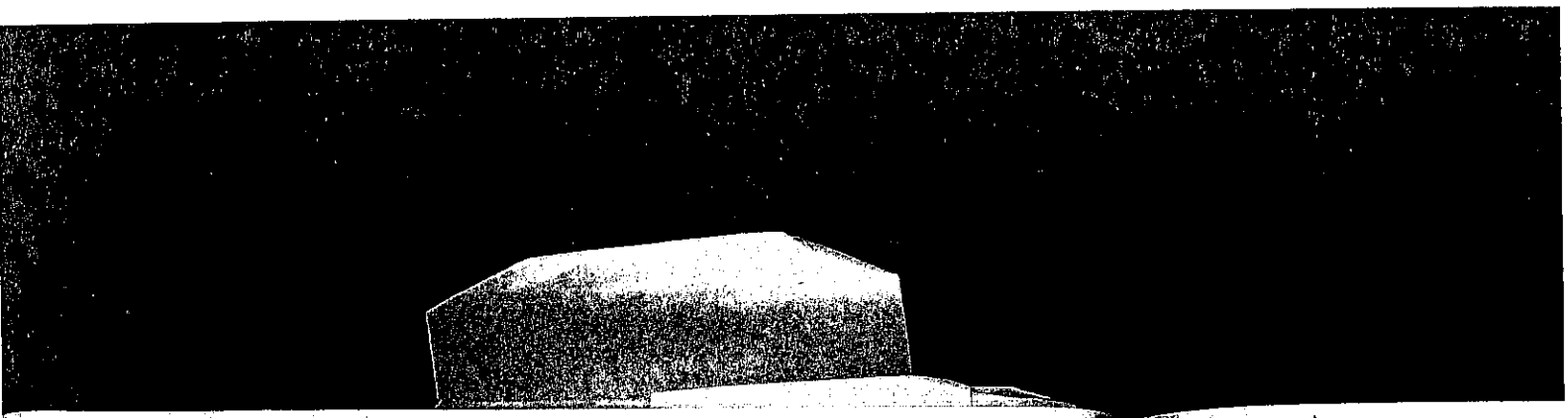
Develop an Implementation Plan. In many cases, students with antisocial behavior have limited skills for implementing developed plans. The teacher should spell out key details of the plan, such as specifying tasks and who is responsible for each task. Teachers should identify some tasks for which they will provide assistance, such as visiting with other teachers, talking with the principal, or talking with the parents. In this way, students are visibly supported—it really is a team plan.

Develop Criteria for Success and Specify Review Date. Students need some kind of monitoring plan that includes a regular contact time with the teacher. In setting criteria for success, the teacher should temper the students' goals, as they usually aim too high. A phase-out plan should also be established so that the student can see an end to the program.

Phase Three: Agitation

When students deal ineffectively with triggers or the conflicts associated with them, it is only a matter of time before they begin to exhibit agitated behavior. The primary goal of managing behavior in this phase is to utilize strategies that calm the student down. In general, these strategies are essentially accommodations in which the student's agitation is recognized and dealt with.

Because these strategies are supportive in nature and exceptions to established routines, they must be implemented *before* the onset of serious behavioral episodes; otherwise, the chain of resulting inappropriate behavior may be reinforced. For example, if Patty is



already throwing a chair around and cursing the teacher, it is too late to use supportive techniques. However, if she is grimacing, tapping a pencil, or having difficulty getting started, supportive techniques to manage agitation could be applied. The issue is *timing*—such techniques should be implemented at the earliest indications of agitation. These techniques are as follows.

Teacher Recognition. Perhaps the most powerful and supportive strategy available in this stage is for teachers to communicate that they understand the student is having problems. Simple comments such as "Are you doing OK?" "Do you think you can get through the period?" and "You are looking a bit upset today" can help students feel supported and may reduce agitation.

Space. Provide the student with an opportunity to have some isolation from the rest of the class (such as a quiet area, a separate desk, or one near the teacher's desk). Expectations need to be established with the class so that students using the quiet area are left alone by others.

Time. Some students benefit from structured options—for example, to provide alternatives with deadlines, task requirements, and schedules.

Preferred Activities. Allowing students to engage in a preferred activity for a short time may help them focus. It is important to establish clear expectations for how long the students may engage in these activities and to enter the normal routines promptly when asked.

Teacher Proximity. Teacher proximity can help many students relax, especially if they know the teacher is attempting to assist them in addressing their problems. The teacher may stand near the students from time to time and make incidental contact as appropriate. Teachers often underestimate the importance and effectiveness of this strategy; it can be a powerful technique. Unfortunately, many students who act out in the classroom do not have good adult role models. The teacher often becomes their first appropriate role model. Some students, however, prefer isolation or distance from the teacher when they become agitated.

Independent Activities. When students engage in independent activities, they are more likely to become focused on the task and less likely to engage in negative interactions. These tasks should be constructive in nature, and the students should have sufficient skill mastery to engage in the assigned activities without assistance.

Movement Activities. Many students show an increase in their behavioral levels when they are agitated. Activities that require movement are more likely to help them focus than tasks requiring them to sit still at their desks. Examples of movement-oriented activities include errands to the office or other classrooms, helping to distribute materials, and cleaning the chalkboard.

Involve the Student in the Plan if Possible. Because self-management is the ultimate, long-term goal of any intervention program for problem behavior, it is important to actively involve students, when appropriate, in a plan to control agitation. Students

often have strategies to help themselves
or program. There is a greater likelihood
tation if students can participate in devel

Relaxation Activities. Teachers hav
ities are helpful to reduce agitation. T
breathing exercises, and relaxation exerci

Two Possible Problems and Remedie

Because the strategies to reduce agitatio
to calm the student, two possible probl
and the likelihood of the procedures beir

The Question of Fairness. Peers n
getting breaks or privileges. The other st
to the same privileges. One possible rem
to the general expectations presented tc
plained, and then these procedures are
circumstances. Exceptions are decided b
of each student.

Avoidance. Individual students may
"I don't want to do math today, I'm too
be established that allow the student to n
subsided.

Applications

The available strategies for managing acc
of peak behavior or (2) during sustained

Onset of Peak Behavior. In this ap
of-control or peak behavior is highly li
designed to prevent further escalation an

Sustained Acceleration Behavior.
the behaviors characteristic of the accele
hour or more). Although they are unli
indication that the students are going to
are designed to arrest and de-escalate the

Strategies

The basic strategies are the same for b
(2) maintain calmness, respect, and d

the teacher, it is too late to use supportive
ping a pencil, or having difficulty getting
ition could be applied. The issue is *timing*—
he earliest indications of agitation. These

powerful and supportive strategy available
that they understand the student is having
u doing OK?" "Do you think you can get
a bit upset today" can help students feel

tunity to have some isolation from the rest
sk, or one near the teacher's desk). Expecta-
o that students using the quiet area are left

ired options—for example, to provide alter-
d schedules.

to engage in a preferred activity for a short
establish clear expectations for how long the
o enter the normal routines promptly when

can help many students relax, especially if
ist them in addressing their problems. The
ime to time and make incidental contact as
he importance and effectiveness of this strat-
rtunately, many students who act out in the
odels. The teacher often becomes their first
wever, prefer isolation or distance from the

ts engage in independent activities, they are
and less likely to engage in negative interac-
nature, and the students should have sufficient
ities without assistance.

show an increase in their behavioral levels
uire movement are more likely to help them
t their desks. Examples of movement-oriented
her classrooms, helping to distribute materials,

sible. Because self-management is the ulti-
program for problem behavior, it is important
riate, in a plan to control agitation. Students

often have strategies to help themselves reduce agitation and can contribute to the plan or program. There is a greater likelihood of problem ownership and successful implementation if students can participate in development of the plan.

Relaxation Activities. Teachers have reported that various kinds of relaxation activities are helpful to reduce agitation. These activities include the use of audiotapes, breathing exercises, and relaxation exercises.

Two Possible Problems and Remedies

Because the strategies to reduce agitation are essentially accommodations in an attempt to calm the student, two possible problems may arise: the question of fairness to others and the likelihood of the procedures being used for avoidance purposes.

The Question of Fairness. Peers may question why antisocial students should be getting breaks or privileges. The other students resent having to work hard without access to the same privileges. One possible remedy is to introduce these procedures as exceptions to the general expectations presented to the class. The usual class expectations are explained, and then these procedures are described as exceptions to be used in special circumstances. Exceptions are decided by the teacher on the basis of the individual needs of each student.

Avoidance. Individual students may use these procedures to avoid work; for example, "I don't want to do math today, I'm too mad!" To remedy this problem, procedures can be established that allow the student to make up the time later when agitation levels have subsided.

Phase Four: Acceleration

Applications

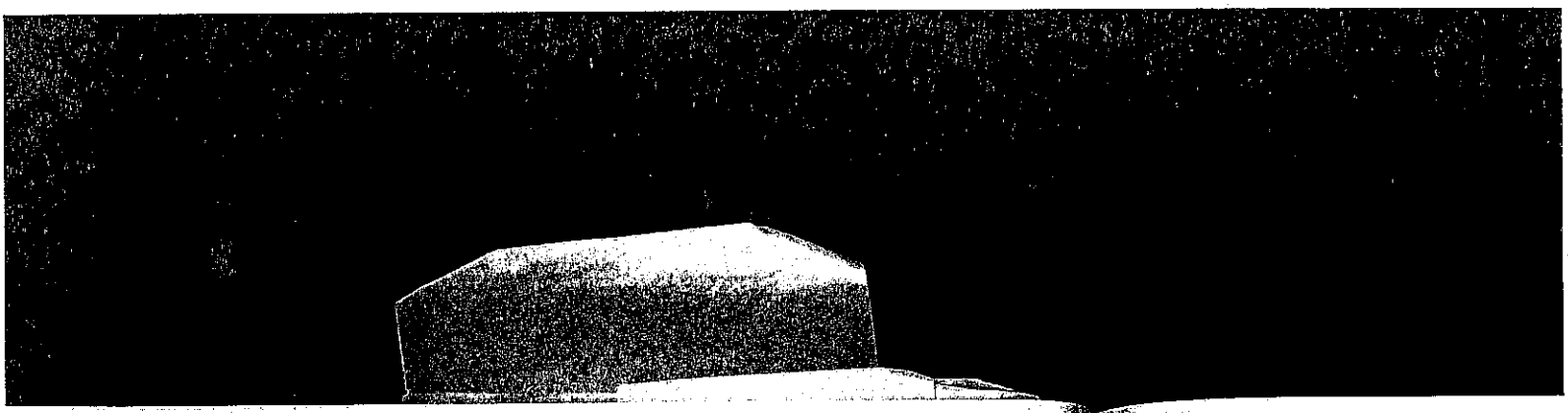
The available strategies for managing acceleration behavior can be applied (1) at the onset of peak behavior or (2) during sustained acceleration behavior.

Onset of Peak Behavior. In this application, students are exhibiting signs that out-of-control or peak behavior is highly likely. The strategies to be used at this time are designed to prevent further escalation and to de-escalate the behavior.

Sustained Acceleration Behavior. In this situation, students have been exhibiting the behaviors characteristic of the acceleration phase for quite some time (usually half an hour or more). Although they are unlikely to escalate to the next phase, there is no indication that the students are going to settle down or be cooperative. These strategies are designed to arrest and de-escalate the behavior.

Strategies

The basic strategies are the same for both applications: (1) avoid escalating prompts; (2) maintain calmness, respect, and detachment; (3) use crisis-prevention strategies;



(4) complete exit paperwork; (5) restore the environment as appropriate; (6) return to the original activity or the next activity; and (7) debrief.

Avoid Escalating Prompts. School staff may inadvertently exhibit behaviors that are likely to escalate students. These *escalating prompts* include agitated behavior (for example, shouting), cornering the student, power struggles (for example, "getting in the student's face" and stating, "In this school you will . . ."), touching or grabbing the student, nagging, making statements that may discredit the student in front of peers, and arguing.

Maintain Calmness, Respect, and Detachment. When students are approached in order to address the problem behavior in this phase, there is a high probability that the behavior will escalate. The teacher's behavior at this point needs to be extremely controlled and nonjudgmental. Some guidelines for approaching the student in this situation are as follows:

- *Move slowly and deliberately toward the problem situation.* Walk slowly, and avoid rushing or displaying behavior that indicates panic or anxiety.
- *Speak privately.* Take students aside, and talk quietly. Avoid public statements and loud talk.
- *Speak calmly.* Use a flat, controlled voice. Be as matter-of-fact as possible. Do not threaten.
- *Minimize body language.* Be as still as possible. Avoid pointing, staring at, or crowding the students.
- *Keep a reasonable distance.* Do not get too close and *do not* get "in the student's face."
- *Speak respectfully.* Avoid harsh, angry tones. Use the students' names, and speak in a soft, detached, and respectful manner.
- *Establish eye-level position.* If students are sitting, then sit beside them or squat. If students are standing, then stand. Some students react negatively to anyone towering over them in such situations.
- *Be brief.* Use language that is simple and brief. Long-winded statements or nagging will make some students react negatively.
- *Stay with the agenda.* Stay focused on the problem at hand. Do not get sidetracked. Deal with lesser problems later.
- *Withdraw if problem behavior escalates.* Terminate the discussion if the problem behavior escalates, withdraw from the students, and follow school emergency procedures.
- *Avoid power struggles.* Stay with the problem at hand. Do not be drawn into "I won't, you will" types of engagements.
- *Acknowledge cooperation.* If students cooperate, compliment them and be sure to mention their cooperation in a later report or follow-up to the situation.

The bottom line: Use common sense and approach the problem in a calm, detached, unhurried, respectful, and step-by-step manner.

Use Crisis-Prevention Strategies. Cri
rupt the chain of escalating behavior and
students. The three steps in this strategy are
hand, (2) deliver the information to the stud

1. *Establishing a negative consequence beforeha*
ferral, detention, suspension, police call
approved by the proper authorities and e
Explaining the consequence in advanc
students.
2. *Delivering the information.* Information is
   a. Present the expected behavior and the
   for the student to make.
   b. Withdraw from the student, attend
   task.
   c. Allow some time for the student to d

The following are examples of thes

"Michael, you are asked to return to your de
"You have a few seconds to decide." (tir
(withdrawal)

"Girls, you are expected to go to class now c
"You have a few seconds to decide." (t
or engages other students. (withdrawal

Students are likely to exhibit reactive
facial expressions showing discontent, or su
address them later if you think they warrant

If students escalate (for example, throv
assume they are entering the next phase (pe
dures (see Phase Five).

3. *Following through.* The next steps taken
exhibit the expected appropriate behavic
   a. If students choose the expected behav
   tinue with the lesson or activity. Con
   b. If students do not choose the expecte
   behavior), deliver the negative conseq
   choice by saying, "You are telling
   debriefing session later.
   c. If students choose the expected behav
   through with the consequence.

Complete Exit Paperwork. Paperwor
to provide information for the debriefing se

vironment as appropriate; (6) return to the
ebrief.

ay inadvertently exhibit behaviors that are
pts include agitated behavior (for example,
gles (for example, "getting in the student's
. ."), touching or grabbing the student,
t the student in front of peers, and arguing.

hment. When students are approached
is phase, there is a high probability that the
r at this point needs to be extremely con-
or approaching the student in this situation

em situation. Walk slowly, and avoid rushing
: or anxiety.

lk quietly. Avoid public statements and loud

e. Be as matter-of-fact as possible. Do not

ble. Avoid pointing, staring at, or crowding

close and *do not* get "in the student's face."

nes. Use the students' names, and speak in a

e sitting, then sit beside them or squat. If
students react negatively to anyone towering

d brief. Long-winded statements or nagging
y.

ie problem at hand. Do not get sidetracked.

minate the discussion if the problem behavior
nd follow school emergency procedures.

blem at hand. Do not be drawn into "I won't,

perate, compliment them and be sure to men-
or follow-up to the situation.

approach the problem in a calm, detached,
anner.

Use Crisis-Prevention Strategies. *Crisis-prevention strategies* are designed to interrupt the chain of escalating behavior and provide some direction or expectations to students. The three steps in this strategy are (1) establish a negative consequence beforehand, (2) deliver the information to the students, and (3) follow through.

1. *Establishing a negative consequence beforehand.* Negative consequences include office referral, detention, suspension, police call, and parent call. A consequence should be approved by the proper authorities and explained to students before it is implemented. Explaining the consequence in advance helps communicate behavioral limits to students.
2. *Delivering the information.* Information is delivered in the following three steps:
   a. Present the expected behavior and the negative consequence as a choice or decision for the student to make.
   b. Withdraw from the student, attend to other students, or engage in some other task.
   c. Allow some time for the student to decide.

   The following are examples of these strategies:

"Michael, you are asked to return to your desk or I will send for the principal." (decision) "You have a few seconds to decide." (time) The teacher then moves to other students. (withdrawal)

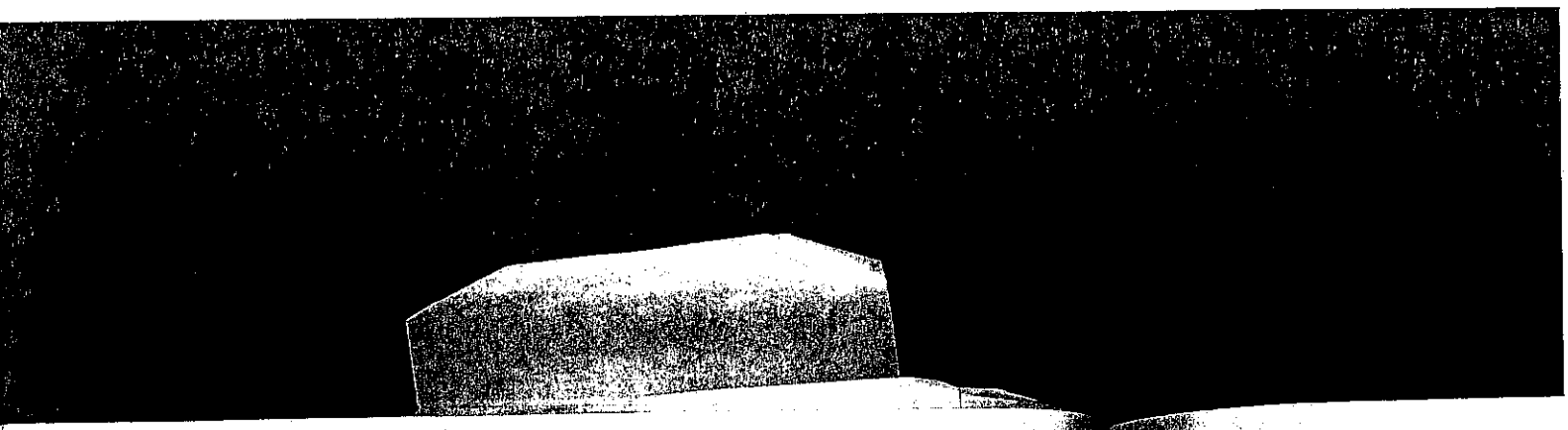
"Girls, you are expected to go to class now or we will be looking at detention." (decision) "You have a few seconds to decide." (time) The teacher steps back and looks toward or engages other students. (withdrawal)

Students are likely to exhibit reactive behavior at this point, such as mumbling, facial expressions showing discontent, or sulking. Ignore these behavioral expressions (or address them later if you think they warrant it).

If students escalate (for example, throw a chair or start screaming and yelling), then assume they are entering the next phase (peak), and implement the corresponding procedures (see Phase Five).

3. *Following through.* The next steps taken by the teacher depend on whether students exhibit the expected appropriate behavior or maintain the problem behavior.
   a. If students choose the expected behavior, acknowledge the choice briefly, and continue with the lesson or activity. Conduct a debriefing session later.
   b. If students do not choose the expected behavior (that is, they maintain the problem behavior), deliver the negative consequence. The teacher may clarify the students' choice by saying, "You are telling me to call the principal." Again, conduct a debriefing session later.
   c. If students choose the expected behavior after the allotted time has elapsed, follow through with the consequence.

Complete Exit Paperwork. Paperwork is necessary to document the behavior and to provide information for the debriefing session. Such information is usually collected in



Name: _____

Date: _____

1. What was your behavior?

_____

_____

2. What was your concern or need?

_____

_____

3. What could you do next time that would be acceptable?

_____

_____

4. What are you expected to do next?

_____

5. Can you do it appropriately? ___ Yes ___ No

_____ Student signature

_____ Teacher

FORM 4.2 Behavior Form

an incident report or office referral describing the behavior and its relevant circumstances. It is also helpful to have the student complete some kind of *behavior form* that can be used in the debriefing session and for problem-solving purposes. Form 4.2 is a sample behavior form.

Restore the Environment as Appropr throwing books and pushing desks over, tl to their original position or clean up wl behavior form, they are more likely to coo

Return to the Original Activity or th completed the form and restored the envir to the normal schedule (unless it is more ap

Debrief. The purpose of the *debriefing* s so they will be better equipped to exhibit atic situation arises. Information from the through the incident by identifying the c alternative behaviors, and a commitment f next time the situation arises.

The debriefing session should be held The problem behavior began there, so the if the teacher conducts the debriefing sess briefing session, the session must be condu better to debrief on the day of the incide returned to class.

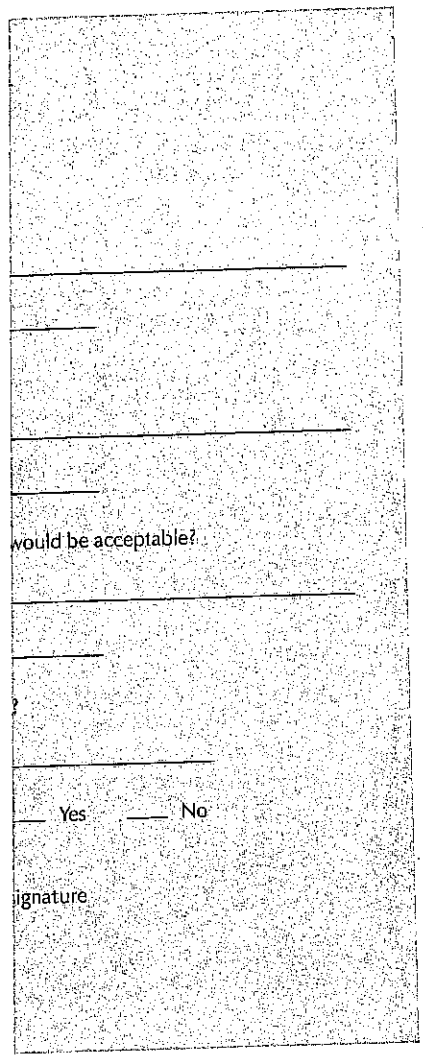
Have set questions to discuss with th

- What was your behavior?
- What was your concern or need?
- What else could you have done that w met your need?
- What will you do next time if this situ

Do not be too concerned if you ina this phase—you will get another chance t

When teachers refer to antisocial or actu that occur in the peak phase. These beh the safety of others. If students get out of c of others can be affected. In such cases, t from the classroom. However, students v to the safety of others if attempts are ma The basic procedures to consider using ar *interventions*, and (3) *long-term interventio* well as follow-up, problem-solving needs and rehearsed with staff, students, and pa

Preparation and Precautions. The control behavior are typically intrusive



ing the behavior and its relevant circumstances. lete some kind of *behavior form* that can be used solving purposes. Form 4.2 is a sample behavior

Restore the Environment as Appropriate. If students engage in behaviors such as throwing books and pushing desks over, they should be required to restore these objects to their original position or clean up what they have done. If students complete the behavior form, they are more likely to cooperate with this restoration step.

Return to the Original Activity or the Next Class Activity. Once students have completed the form and restored the environment as necessary, the next step is to return to the normal schedule (unless it is more appropriate to maintain the student in isolation).

Debrief. The purpose of the *debriefing* session is to problem solve and prepare students so they will be better equipped to exhibit appropriate behavior the next time a problematic situation arises. Information from the behavior form should help the teacher work through the incident by identifying the context of the problem, the problem behavior, alternative behaviors, and a commitment from students to try an alternative behavior the next time the situation arises.

The debriefing session should be held once the student is back in the original setting. The problem behavior began there, so the remedies should be addressed there, especially if the teacher conducts the debriefing session. If another staff member conducts the debriefing session, the session must be conducted after students have returned to class. It is better to debrief on the day of the incident and at least 20 minutes after the student has returned to class.

Have set questions to discuss with the students, such as:

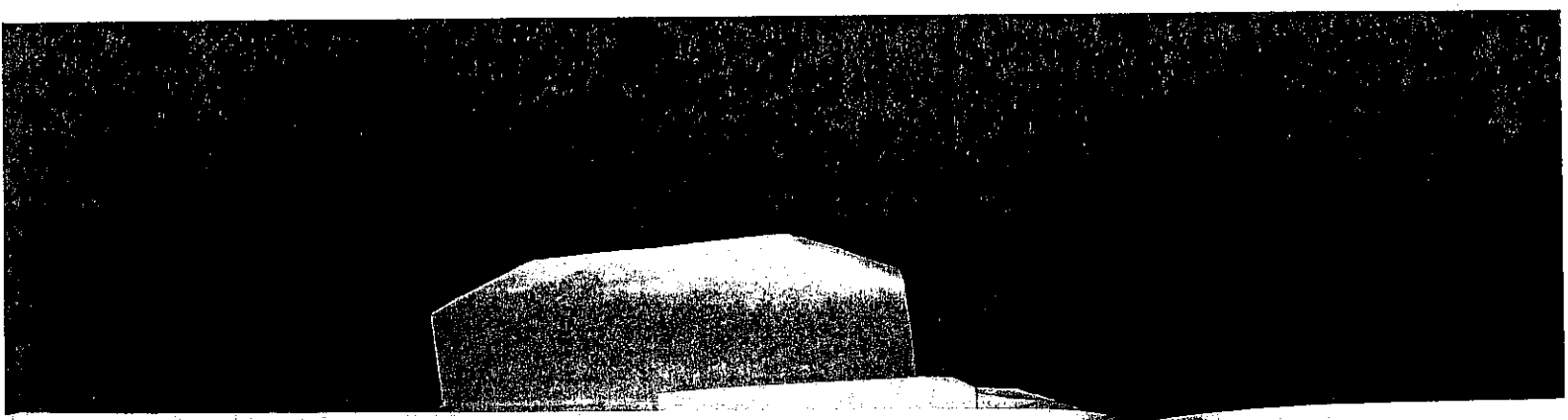
- What was your behavior?
- What was your concern or need?
- What else could you have done that would have been acceptable and that would have met your need?
- What will you do next time if this situation arises?

Do not be too concerned if you inadvertently assist the student to escalate during this phase—you will get another chance to do it right in the near future!

Phase Five: Peak

When teachers refer to antisocial or acting-out behavior, they typically mean behaviors that occur in the peak phase. These behaviors are serious, disruptive, and can threaten the safety of others. If students get out of control, the classroom is disrupted and the safety of others can be affected. In such cases, the teacher usually tries to remove the students from the classroom. However, students who are out of control can pose a serious threat to the safety of others if attempts are made to remove them (especially if force is used). The basic procedures to consider using are: (1) preparation and precautions, (2) *short-term interventions*, and (3) *long-term interventions* (designed to address safety and disruption as well as follow-up, problem-solving needs). These procedures need to be carefully laid out and rehearsed with staff, students, and parents.

Preparation and Precautions. The procedures used to address peak or out-of-control behavior are typically intrusive (especially if force has to be used). It is critical



that a school district or school develop clear procedures for managing student behavior at this point. In most cases, districts and states have guidelines that need to be followed. The following guidelines are recommended:

- Strict criteria should be established for when these procedures are to be used.
- All staff who are likely to use the procedures should be trained to protect all parties. Staff should receive regular review and practice opportunities.
- Two staff members should be involved at the same time.
- Staff need to be designated to monitor the student carefully and to introduce an independent activity as early as possible.
- Careful records need to be kept.
- Parent permission should be obtained. The procedures should be part of school policy and should be in the individual educational plan (IEP) for special-education students who exhibit out-of-control behavior.

Short-Term Interventions. The first step should be to address safety (safety for other students, the involved student, and staff). The *safety procedures* need to be approved, and staff should be familiar with the details of their implementation. The most commonly used safety strategies follow:

- Isolation and removal of other students
- Parent contact
- Police call
- Short-term suspension
- Restraint

Long-Term Interventions. Repeated instances of peak or out-of-control behavior should serve as a red flag that things need to be done differently; that is, that the current plan is failing. Some additional strategies may include the following:

- Plan interventions to address target problem behaviors occurring earlier in the chain.
- Analyze the environment to assess whether escalating prompts are present.
- Assess schoolwork.
- Refer for counseling.
- Refer for evaluation.
- Refer for additional evaluation and services.
- Examine school policy and procedures (if several students are seriously acting out).

Remember: We cannot assume that schools are safe places anymore. School administrators must have clear policies and procedures for managing out-of-control behavior and ensure that all staff (including substitute teachers) receive regular, ongoing training in these procedures.

The students' behavior will eventually
manage peak behavior or simply throug
manage the students' behavior after a s
students; (2) allow some time to cool c
amount of time that produces a final p
the environment; and (6) resume a regu

Isolate the Students. The students
tion and supervision. Typically, a room
nated area attached to the classroom wil

Allow Time to Cool Down. Stu
several reasons: (1) to calm down, (2) to
provide them with a chance to collect th

Engage in Independent Work Tha
purpose of this task is to establish a b
students. The task should be relatively
not be provided if at all possible; other
more problem behavior. A set time, s
product required (such as a page of defi

Complete Exit Paperwork. The s
as the behavior form described earlier.
level of potential cooperation. For exar
the product mentioned in the previou
that they will cooperate with the next
the form or complete it in a shoddy ma
not cooperate when they return to cl
isolation for a longer period. If student
teacher can use the questions as prompt

Restore Environment as Appropri
part of the follow-up should be to res
picking up chairs, rearranging books, a
with the earlier steps, there is a strong

Resume Regular Schedule. At th
tunity to settle down and have coop
filling out the behavior form and restc
to cooperate when they return to class
may have difficulty with activities tha
discussions, and cooperative learning a
activity for students at this point.

ar procedures for managing student behavior at
s have guidelines that need to be followed. The

r when these procedures are to be used.

cedures should be trained to protect all parties.
d practice opportunities.

d at the same time.

itor the student carefully and to introduce an
ole.

l. The procedures should be part of school policy
ational plan (IEP) for special-education students

t step should be to address safety (safety for other
). The *safety procedures* need to be approved, and
: of their implementation. The most commonly

nts

ed instances of peak or out-of-control behavior
ed to be done differently; that is, that the current
es may include the following:

problem behaviors occurring earlier in the chain.

whether escalating prompts are present.

services.

ures (if several students are seriously acting out).

ools are safe places anymore. School administrators
s for managing out-of-control behavior and ensure
achers) receive regular, ongoing training in these

Phase Six: De-Escalation

The students' behavior will eventually subside either as a result of the strategies used to manage peak behavior or simply through exhaustion. The following steps are designed to manage the students' behavior after a serious incident or peak behavior: (1) isolate the students; (2) allow some time to cool down; (3) engage in independent work for a set amount of time that produces a final product; (4) complete exit paperwork; (5) restore the environment; and (6) resume a regular schedule.

Isolate the Students. The students should be placed in a setting that allows for isolation and supervision. Typically, a room or area near the school office or a specially designated area attached to the classroom will suffice.

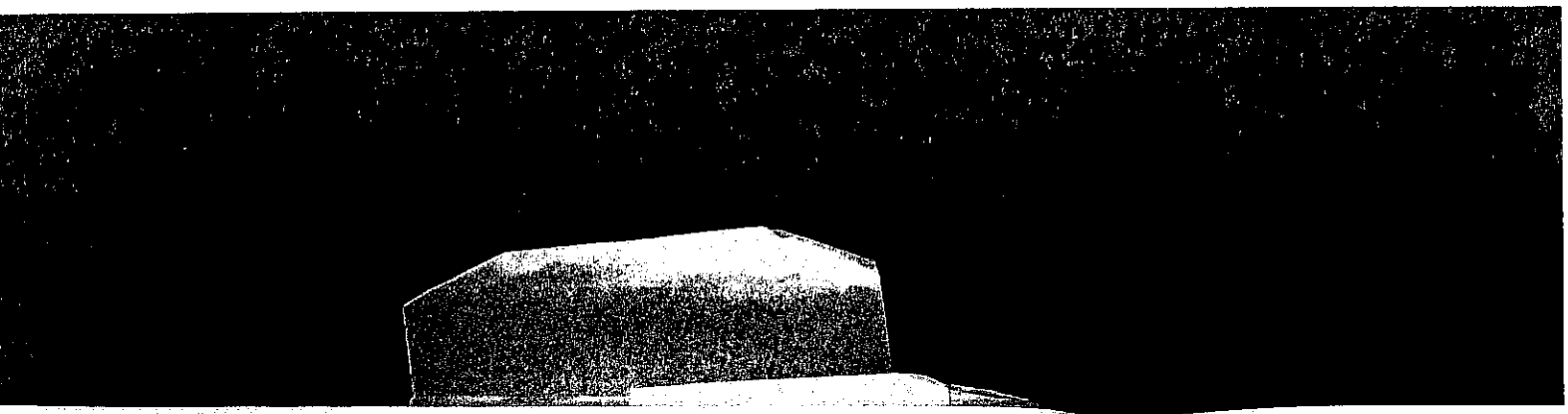
Allow Time to Cool Down. Students need some quiet, uninterrupted time for several reasons: (1) to calm down, (2) to avoid the possibility of further escalation, (3) to provide them with a chance to collect themselves, and (4) to save face.

Engage in Independent Work That Produces a Product for a Set Time. The purpose of this task is to establish a basis for cooperation and provide a focus for the students. The task should be relatively easy and mechanical in nature. Assistance should not be provided if at all possible; otherwise, the teacher-student interactions may prompt more problem behavior. A set time, such as 20 minutes, should be established and a product required (such as a page of definitions or a page of math problems completed).

Complete Exit Paperwork. The students complete any necessary paperwork, such as the behavior form described earlier. This task is also useful in assessing the students' level of potential cooperation. For example, if the students complete the form (as well as the product mentioned in the previous step), the teacher has some basis for concluding that they will cooperate with the next step. However, if the students refuse to complete the form or complete it in a shoddy manner, the teacher can likely conclude that they will not cooperate when they return to class. In this event, the students should remain in isolation for a longer period. If students do not have the skills to complete the form, the teacher can use the questions as prompts to query the student for oral answers.

Restore Environment as Appropriate. If the students disrupted the environment, part of the follow-up should be to restore the setting to its original state (for example, picking up chairs, rearranging books, and cleaning up). Again, if the students cooperated with the earlier steps, there is a strong likelihood of cooperation with this step.

Resume Regular Schedule. At this point, the students have been given the opportunity to settle down and have cooperated with three tasks (completing the product, filling out the behavior form and restoring the environment). As a result, they are likely to cooperate when they return to class. Teachers should keep in mind, though, that they may have difficulty with activities that require interaction with other students, such as discussions, and cooperative learning activities. A solitary, independent task is the easiest activity for students at this point.



Phase Seven: Recovery

In this final phase of the acting-out cycle, the students are back in the normal schedule. The procedures to be used in this phase are: (1) assist the student to focus on the activities at hand; (2) reconstruct the acting-out cycle; and (3) develop problem-solving options.

Provide Strong Focus on Normal Routines. The teacher's immediate goal is to assist the students to reenter ongoing classroom activities and maintain on-task behavior. Prompts and brief verbal reinforcements (such as, praise) should be provided. If the students want to talk about the incident, such as what may have happened or who was at fault, the teacher should simply say, "We will talk about that later. Let's get on with our math now."

Do Not Negotiate About the Consequences for the Serious Behavior. Some antisocial students may have learned that if they cooperate in class, they can negotiate about the consequences for their serious acting-out behavior. Teachers should not reconsider the consequences. The consequences are designed to teach limits, that is, to communicate to the students that their behavior is unacceptable. If the consequences are subsequently renegotiated, then students may get a mixed message that it is acceptable to exhibit peak behavior provided they cooperate after the incident has occurred. Teachers should reinforce cooperation after an incident by using other reinforcers, not by modifying the consequences for the previous serious behavior.

Debrief. Unfortunately, this step is frequently omitted by teachers, perhaps because they are pleased the students are back on track, and they do not want to risk escalating them. However, this step is crucial and should not be omitted because the same circumstances or triggers that prompted the chain of escalating behavior are likely to reappear. Some form of debriefing must be conducted with the students to review the chain of behavior, identify the triggers, and establish some alternative responses (for example, to problem solve with the student). The debriefing session should be conducted sometime after the students have been on-task for at least half an hour.

Strongly Acknowledge Problem-Solving Behaviors. When students make chronic errors in academic subjects, teachers praise them for correct responses. The same should apply to problem behavior. When students appropriately handle a certain situation that previously triggered problem behavior, the teacher should provide strong positive reinforcement.

Communicate Expectation That the Students Can Succeed with Help. Students who exhibit antisocial behavior on a regular basis usually have little confidence that they can be successful in their attempts to change the behavior. Many of them have already been exposed to several behavior plans that did not change their behavior. In this step, the teacher tries to: (1) encourage the student to keep trying and (2) identify how the teacher can help the student succeed; that is, how they can work together on the plan.

Establish a Plan with Specific Steps. The debriefing session should have resulted in an agreement that the students will undertake certain problem-solving activities (essentially to identify the triggers and select an alternative response for each). The teacher should ensure that the plan is sufficiently concrete and that a monitoring and review schedule is established.

Strategies have been presented for managin
the acting-out cycle. We return now to the
3.2) in which a particular student's behavi
for each phase (see Form 4.3). The form ca
exhibits serious antisocial behavior. It can
where teachers develop a plan of action for
session where the parent, with a teacher or c
in the student's home, and (3) as a self-man
identifying their behaviors at each phase an

The following case study is presented

Background. Dominic is a 14-year-old
problem behavior in public schools. His beh
behavior, including threatening and abusin
and hitting other students during recess. Te
upset. He is below average in all subjects ar
single-parent home and presently lives with
was in the care of his grandmother and in
schools, he was referred to a self-contained
mother has steadfastly refused placement o
good child but has his bad moments, "Just
when he lived with his grandmother, but h
cation now. He has been placed in a resourc
classroom for other subjects.

A staff meeting was conducted; the
Dominic's behavior plan (see Form 4.4; the
as Form 3.1).

Acting-out behavior occurring during teacl
seven-phase conceptual model. Specific beh
behavioral chain. Thus, students' place in
mined by their observed behavior. Strateg
for managing student behavior at each phase
is to arrest the behavior at that point in the
the same time, setting the stage for student
iors. The overall emphasis is on identifying
the antisocial students toward appropriate
acting-out cycle of serious behavior.

Chapter 5 contains guidelines and proc
plan. A well-designed and carefully impl
other school staff to proactively deal with

he students are back in the normal schedule. (1) assist the student to focus on the activities ; and (3) develop problem-solving options.

nes. The teacher's immediate goal is to assist ivities and maintain on-task behavior. Prompts se) should be provided. If the students want to ive happened or who was at fault, the teacher ter. Let's get on with our math now."

ences for the Serious Behavior. Some f they cooperate in class, they can negotiate ing-out behavior. Teachers should not recon- are designed to teach limits, that is, to com- ior is unacceptable. If the consequences are ay get a mixed message that it is acceptable to rate after the incident has occurred. Teachers nt by using other reinforcers, not by modify- is behavior.

uently omitted by teachers, perhaps because rack, and they do not want to risk escalating uld not be omitted because the same circum- of escalating behavior are likely to reappear. ed with the students to review the chain of h some alternative responses (for example, to iefing session should be conducted sometime east half an hour.

lving Behaviors. When students make s praise them for correct responses. The same dents appropriately handle a certain situation r, the teacher should provide strong positive

Students Can Succeed with Help. Stu- regular basis usually have little confidence that ange the behavior. Many of them have already did not change their behavior. In this step, the keep trying and (2) identify how the teacher hey can work together on the plan.

The debriefing session should have resulted lertake certain problem-solving activities (es- an alternative response for each). The teacher concrete and that a monitoring and review

SUMMARY FORM AND CASE STUDY

Strategies have been presented for managing behavior during each of the seven phases of the acting-out cycle. We return now to the summary form presented in Chapter 3 (Form 3.2) in which a particular student's behavior and corresponding strategies can be listed for each phase (see Form 4.3). The form can be used as a behavior plan for a student who exhibits serious antisocial behavior. It can be used in three ways: (1) at a staff meeting where teachers develop a plan of action for a particular student, (2) in a parent-training session where the parent, with a teacher or consultant, develops a plan for implementation in the student's home, and (3) as a self-management plan for students who are capable of identifying their behaviors at each phase and corresponding strategies for changing them.

The following case study is presented to illustrate these procedures.

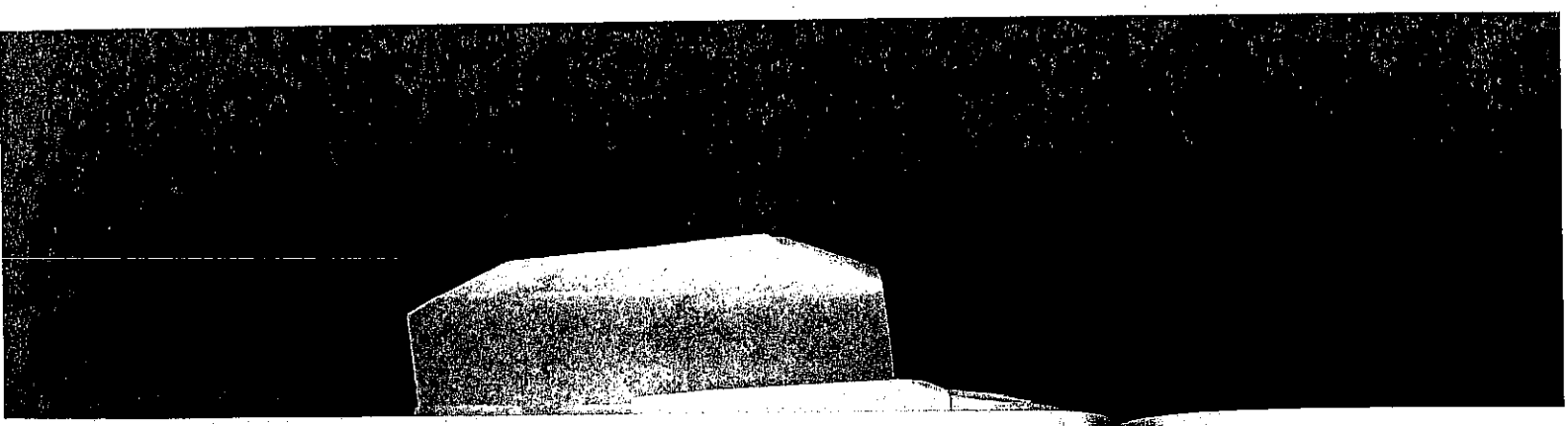
Background. Dominic is a 14-year-old seventh grader who has had a long history of problem behavior in public schools. His behavior file has numerous incidents of antisocial behavior, including threatening and abusing staff, throwing materials around the room, and hitting other students during recess. Teachers say he has a very short fuse and is easily upset. He is below average in all subjects and is of average intelligence. He comes from a single-parent home and presently lives with his mother. For some periods of his life, he was in the care of his grandmother and in foster care. After attending several different schools, he was referred to a self-contained school for behavior-disordered students. His mother has steadfastly refused placement outside his local school. She maintains he is a good child but has his bad moments, "Just like his father." He took medication (Ritalin) when he lived with his grandmother, but his mother maintains he does not need medication now. He has been placed in a resource room for reading and math and in a regular classroom for other subjects.

A staff meeting was conducted; the summary form was completed and became Dominic's behavior plan (see Form 4.4; the assessment portion of this form was presented as Form 3.1).

CONCLUSION

Acting-out behavior occurring during teacher-student interactions can be described by a seven-phase conceptual model. Specific behaviors can be identified for each phase of the behavioral chain. Thus, students' place in the acting-out behavior cycle can be determined by their observed behavior. Strategies and procedures can then be implemented for managing student behavior at each phase in the cycle. The basic intent of the strategies is to arrest the behavior at that point in the chain, thereby preventing escalation and, at the same time, setting the stage for students to engage in appropriate alternative behaviors. The overall emphasis is on identifying the early behaviors in the chain, redirecting the antisocial students toward appropriate behavior, and subsequently preempting the acting-out cycle of serious behavior.

Chapter 5 contains guidelines and procedures for developing a schoolwide discipline plan. A well-designed and carefully implemented discipline plan allows teachers and other school staff to proactively deal with situations that have the potential to trigger



ACTING-OUT BEHAVIOR

Student Name:
Date:
Teacher(s):
Class:

ASSESSMENT	STRATEGIES
Calm	**Calm**
Triggers	**Triggers**
Agitation	**Agitation**
Acceleration	**Acceleration**
Peak	**Peak**
De-Escalation	**De-Escalation**
Recovery	**Recovery**

FORM 4.3 Assessment and Intervention Plan for Acting-Out Behavior

ACTING-OUT BEHAVIOR

Student Name: *Dominic Smith*
Date: *3/4/93*
Teacher(s): *Walt Jones, Andrea*
Class: *7th Grade*

ASSESSMENT

Calm

Likes to help
Displays successful work
Enjoys games
Likes the computer

Triggers

Repeating tasks
Teasing remarks and putdowns from other students
Correcting behavior
Consequences for problem behavior

Agitation

Walks around the room
Scowls at other students
Pouts and mumbles to himself
Does not concentrate on his work

Acceleration

Argues and will not quit
Defiance, "Make me"
Name calls and threatens students
Raises his voice and shouts

FORM 4.4 Case Study: Antisocial Be

STRATEGIES

Calm

Triggers

Agitation

Acceleration

Peak

De-Escalation

Recovery

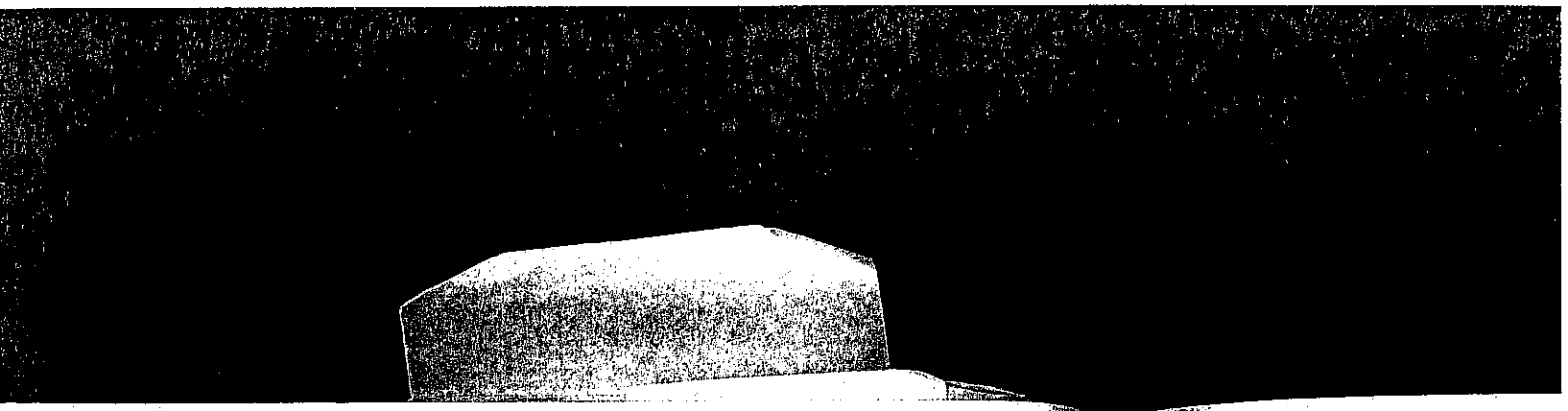
ion Plan for Acting-Out

ACTING-OUT BEHAVIOR

Student Name: *Dominic Smith*
Date: *3/4/93*
Teacher(s): *Walt Jones, Andrea DeForest, Aletia McHenry, Joe Carpenter*
Class: *7th Grade*

ASSESSMENT	STRATEGIES
Calm	**Calm**
Likes to help	*Contract for successful work*
Displays successful work	*Include computer time in contract*
Enjoys games	*Assist with distributing materials*
Likes the computer	
Triggers	**Triggers**
Repeating tasks	*Pre-correction plan for corrections*
Teasing remarks and putdowns from other students	*Coaching on ignoring and not responding to teasing*
Correcting behavior	
Consequences for problem behavior	
Agitation	**Agitation**
Walks around the room	*Option of quiet area*
Scowls at other students	*Use jobs or errands*
Pouts and mumbles to himself	
Does not concentrate on his work	
Acceleration	**Acceleration**
Argues and will not quit	*Teacher to avoid discussion, etc., when he argues*
Defiance, "Make me"	*Not to respond to name calling, shouting, and disruptive behavior immediately, delay response*
Name calls and threatens students	
Raises his voice and shouts	

FORM 4.4 Case Study: Antisocial Behavior



ASSESSMENT	STRATEGIES
Acceleration *(Continued)*	**Acceleration *(Continued)***
	Use three-step crisis prevention procedure if he persists with disruptive behavior for 20 minutes
Peak	**Peak**
Throws objects around the room	*Use code 1 (emergency) to obtain help from office*
Hits other students	*Prompt other students to stay on-task and to stay out of it (if assistant present have assistant take other students to the library or to the designated area)*
Yells and screams	
De-Escalation	**De-Escalation**
Goes very quiet, puts his head down	*Leave alone in isolated area with supervision*
Complains that no one likes him and that it is not fair	*Present a math sheet after 10 minutes of cool-down*
Talks to himself a lot	*Present behavior form*
Likes to fiddle with things	*Exit to classroom and pick up thrown objects*
	Begin classroom activity with independent task if possible
Recovery	**Recovery**
Somewhat subdued	*Provide independent work for a short time*
Likes to work alone	*Debrief*
	Provide strong encouragement

FORM 4.4 *(Continued)*

escalated forms of behavior. Thus, teachers in many instances.

1. Why is it important to develop effecti of acting-out behavior?
2. Why do students with severe antis structure?
3. What is the typical academic profile fo
4. What features of an academic curric academic deficits?
5. How can attention be used to stren behaviors?
6. What is meant by noncontingent atten students with frequent problem behav
7. What are the critical steps in a probler
8. What is the basic approach in managi
9. What are two common problems enc egies and what are possible solutions?
10. What are the basic steps in a nonconfr
11. Why is it important to debrief with a are the main steps in the debriefing pr
12. What are the major steps following a
13. What are the most important steps v following a serious incident?

academic profile
behavior form
classroom structure
crisis-prevention strategies
debriefing
escalating prompts
interrupting the behavior chain

STRATEGIES

Acceleration *(Continued)*

Use three-step crisis prevention procedure if he persists with disruptive behavior for 20 minutes

Peak

Use code 1 (emergency) to obtain help from office

Prompt other students to stay on-task and to stay out of it (if assistant present have assistant take other students to the library or to the designated area)

De-Escalation

Leave alone in isolated area with supervision

Present a math sheet after 10 minutes of cool-down

Present behavior form

Exit to classroom and pick up thrown objects

Begin classroom activity with independent task if possible

Recovery

Provide independent work for a short time

Debrief

Provide strong encouragement

escalated forms of behavior. Thus, teachers are able to avoid these unfortunate episodes in many instances.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to develop effective strategies for intervening early in the chain of acting-out behavior?
2. Why do students with severe antisocial behavior need classroom and school structure?
3. What is the typical academic profile for a student with serious antisocial behavior?
4. What features of an academic curriculum would be beneficial for students with academic deficits?
5. How can attention be used to strengthen target behaviors and weaken problem behaviors?
6. What is meant by noncontingent attention and how can this strategy be used to assist students with frequent problem behavior?
7. What are the critical steps in a problem-solving plan?
8. What is the basic approach in managing student agitation?
9. What are two common problems encountered in using agitation management strategies and what are possible solutions?
10. What are the basic steps in a nonconfrontational crisis-prevention procedure?
11. Why is it important to debrief with a student following a serious incident and what are the main steps in the debriefing process?
12. What are the major steps following a serious behavioral incident?
13. What are the most important steps when a student is back in the regular schedule following a serious incident?

KEY TERMS

academic profile
behavior form
classroom structure
crisis-prevention strategies
debriefing
escalating prompts
interrupting the behavior chain
long-term interventions
pre-correction
providing attention
quality instruction
safety procedures
short-term interventions