

The De-Escalation Cycle

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Outcomes

- Gain knowledge regarding the De-escalation Cycle
- Practice Debriefing Conversation
- Develop a De-escalation plan with supporting strategies



All Staff want All Students to be successful!
All Students want to successful!



Barriers Blocking Students from Succeeding

- Trauma
- Learning Disability
- Anxiety
- Emotional Challenges
- Sensory Deficits
- Lack Organizational Skills



Facing Fears or Anxiety
without Coping Skills Results in.....



Flight

Fight



Freeze

Behavior is Functional

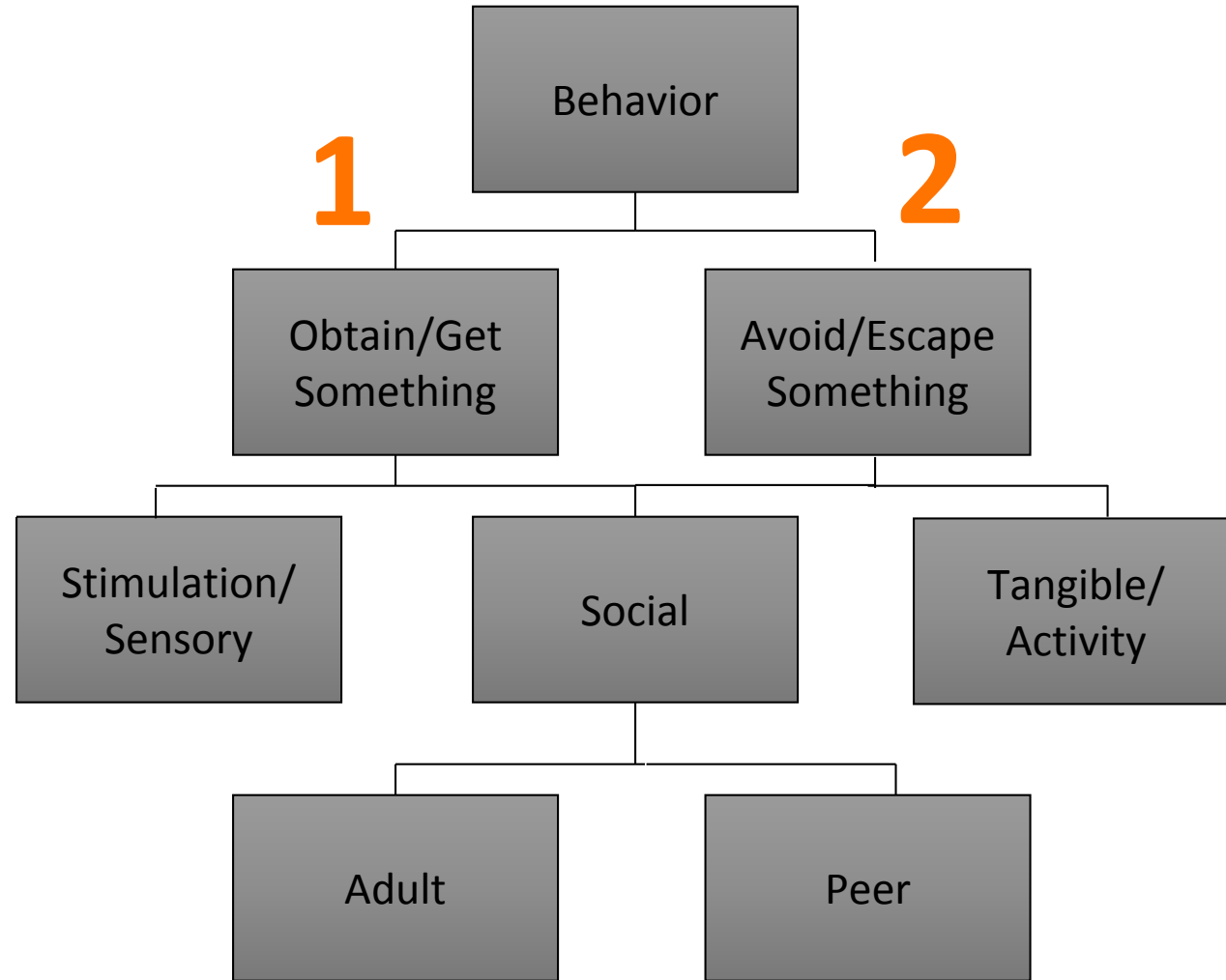
- **Behavior is learned**
- **Behavior is a form of communication**



Functions of Behavior

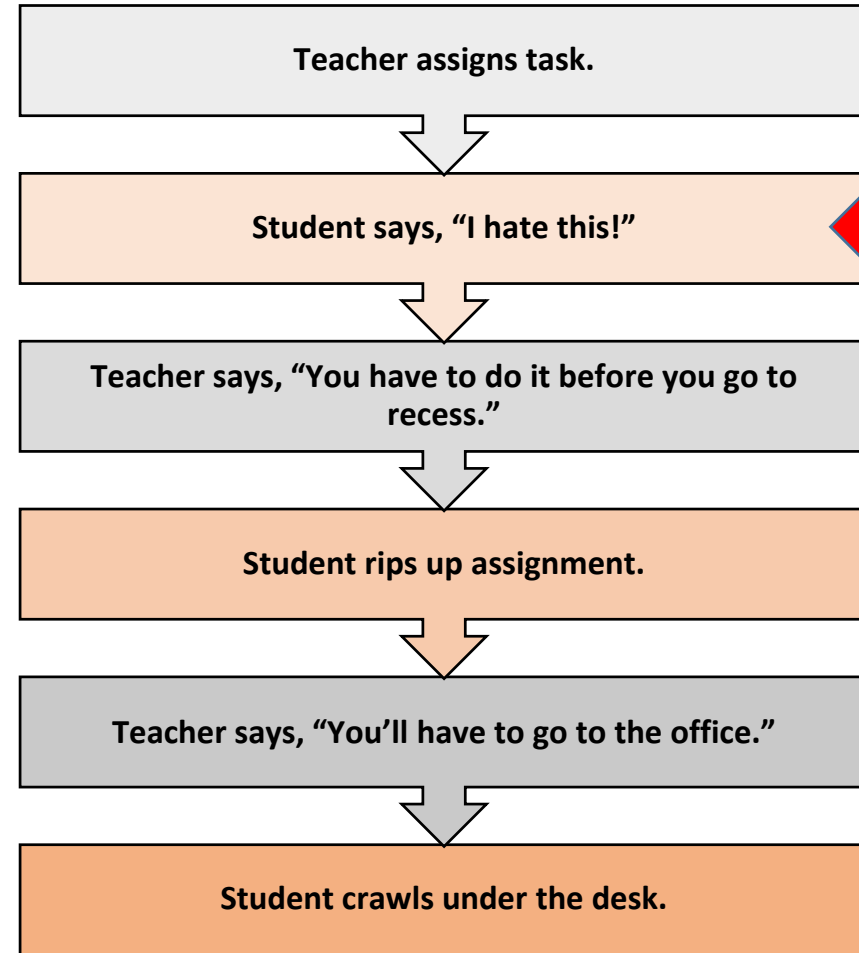
Attention
Attention
Attention

Look at Me



Behaviors Occur in a Chain

*In order to change a behavior
the links need to be identified
and broken.*



Your Approach is Crucial

- Calm(body language & tone)
- Consistent
- Brief
- Immediate
- Respectful(Dignity always intact)




Strategies to Avoid

- Asking “Why” Questions
- Raising your voice
- Sarcasm
- Last wordism
- Humiliation
- Rigid body language
- Coaxing
- Having a tantrum of your own



De-Escalation Plan

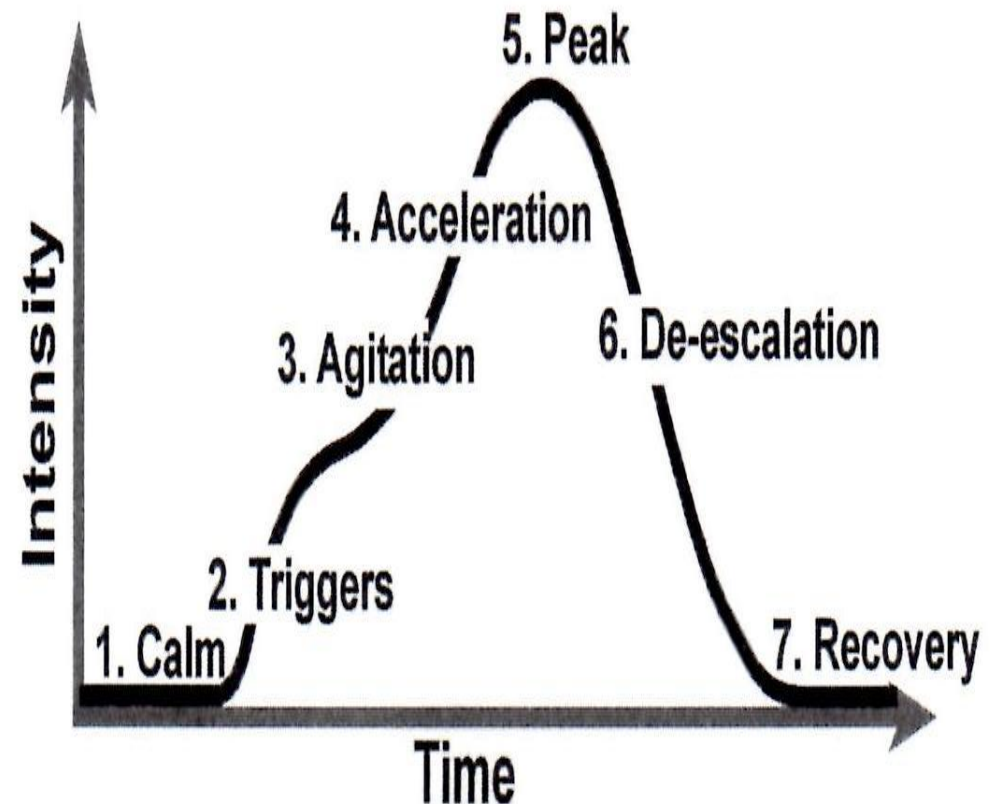
Phases	Description of Behaviors	Supporting Strategies
Calm → <i>Prevention</i>		
Trigger ↗ <i>Prevention</i>		
Agitation ↗ <i>Interruption</i>		
Acceleration ↗ <i>Response</i>		
Peak  <i>Response</i>		



The De-Escalation Cycle

- The De-Escalation cycle is defined in **seven phases**.
- Specific features at each phase should allow staff some **predictability** in planning for students.
- Our **goal** is to **interrupt** the student's cycle and **develop strategies** for responding.

Figure 2.1: Phases of Acting-Out Behavior



Taken From: "Managing the Cycle of Acting-Out Behavior In the Classroom" by Geoff Colvin, 2004

Phase 1: Calm

What is it?

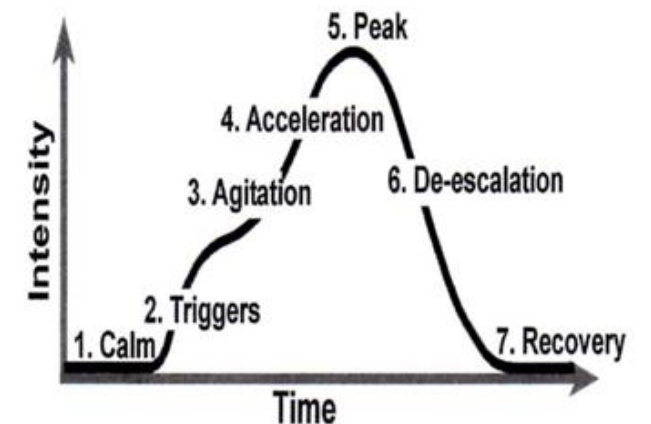
- Students exhibit appropriate, cooperative behavior and are responsive to staff directions.

What does it look like?

- Student is cooperative
 - Sets personal goals
 - Follows directives
 - Accepts praise
 - Accepts corrective feedback
 - Ignores distractions



Figure 2.1: Phases of Acting-Out Behavior



Phase 1: Calm

What should we do?

Intervention is focused on prevention

- Create a positive environment to increase appropriate behavior
- Establish and Teach Classroom Expectations, Rules and Procedures
- Arrange for high rates of successful academic and social engagement(IE. OTR, Offering Choice, Task Difficulty)
- Assess underlying causes of Problem Behavior
 - Examine academic and behavioral learning history
 - Identify triggers and the function
- Teach Social Skills
 - Problem solving
 - Self-management and relaxation strategies

Phase 2: Triggers

What is it?

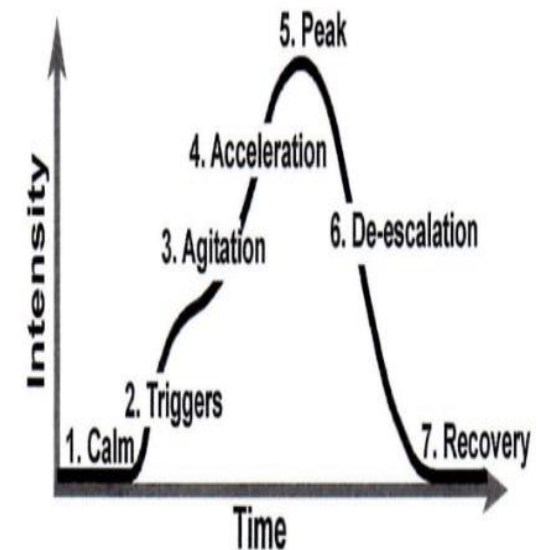
- Triggers are activities, events, or behaviors that provoke anxiety and set off the cycle of problem behavior.

What do triggers look like?

- Student experiences a series of unresolved conflicts
 - Repeated failures
 - Frequent corrections
 - Interpersonal conflict
 - Low rates of positive reinforcement



Figure 2.1: Phases of Acting-Out Behavior



Phase 2: Possible Triggers

School-Based Triggers

- Conflicts
- Changes in routine
- Peer provocations
- Pressure/difficult tasks
- Ineffective problem solving
- Facing errors during instruction
- Facing correction procedures



Non-School Based Triggers

- High needs homes
- Health problems
- Nutrition needs
- Inadequate sleep
- Dual diagnoses
- Substance abuse
- Gangs and deviant peer groups

Phase 2: Triggers

What should we do?

Prior to triggers:

- Pre-correct reminder of expected behavior
- Rehearse/practice expected behaviors
- Teach social skills for managing triggers
- Provide active supervision

If triggers are present:

- Redirect back to calm
- Reinforce Expectations
- Increase opportunities for success
- Reminder of skills for managing triggers
- Consider function of problem behavior for future planning/implementing response

Phase 3: Agitation

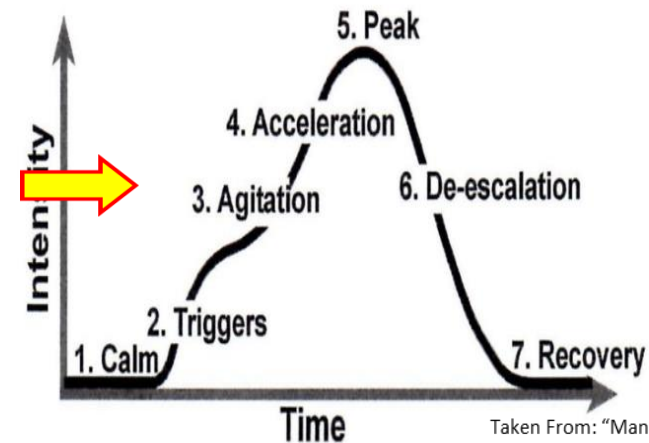
What is it?

- Characterized by emotional responses (ex: anger, depression, worry, anxiety, and frustration)

What does it look like?

- Student exhibits increase in unfocused behavior
 - Tense Muscles
 - Increase in movement
 - Off-task
 - Out of seat
 - Talking with others
 - Social withdrawal

Figure 2.1: Phases of Acting-Out Behavior



Phase 3: Agitation

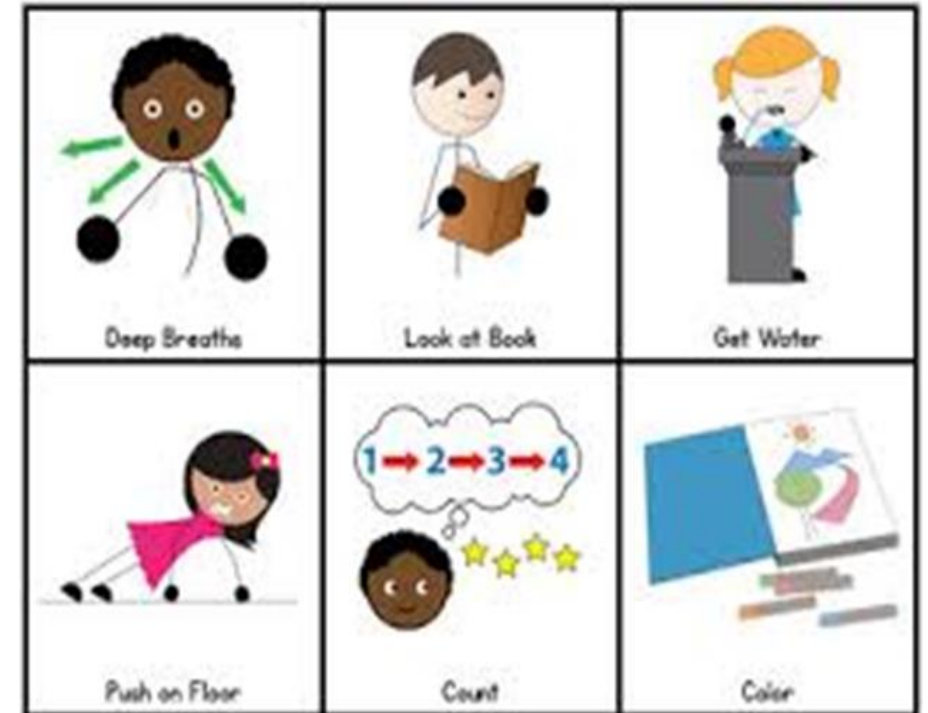
What should we do?

Calming Strategies for Student:

- Meditation apps
- Breathing exercises (Ready, Set, Relax)
- Distraction activity (bouncing ball)
- Sensory Tools
- Chill Out Area

Teacher Actions:

- Proximity
- Empathy
- Assist Student to work on the Task
- Provide Assurances and Additional Time
- Permit Preferred Activities (within set parameters),



Time and Space to Self Regulate

Chill Out Zone Strategies

- Build a Plan
- Journaling
- Thinking Putty
- Wrist Exerciser
- Theraband
- Anger Ball
- Self-Talk Card
- Fidgets for self-regulation

LET YOURSELF
CHILL
OUT

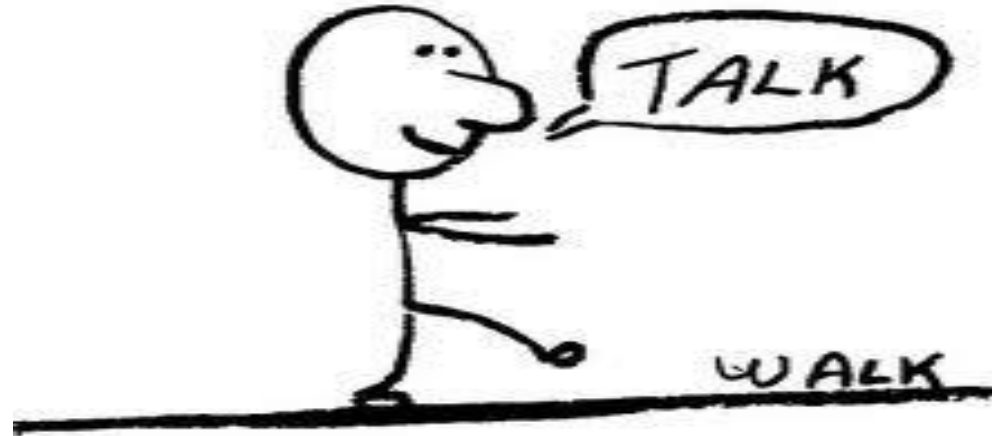


A Change in Scenery

- Break Cards



- Walk and Talk



Phase 4: Acceleration

What is it?

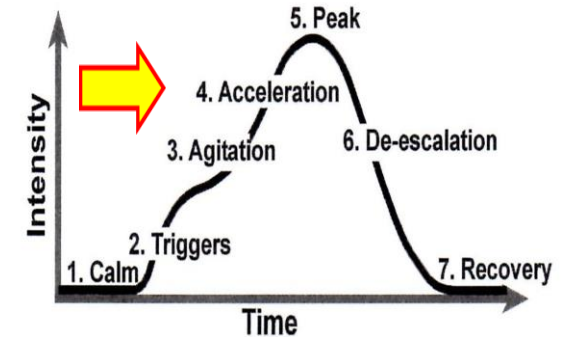
- Escalated behaviors intended to test limits
- Students exhibit engaging behavior that is highly likely to obtain a reaction from another person

**Typically the teacher!

What does it look like?

- High intensity
- Threatening
- Partial compliance - following directions while doing an unacceptable behavior

Figure 2.1: Phases of Acting-Out Behavior



Phase 4: Acceleration

Behaviors that may be exhibited:

- Questioning and arguing
- Making noises
- Provocation of others
- Failure to follow directions
- Compliance with accompanying inappropriate behavior
- Whining and crying
- Avoids tasks/activities
- Threats and intimidation
- Destruction of property
- Work is partially completed or completed far below the student's usual standard

Phase 4: Acceleration

What should we do?

- Remain calm, it is not personal
- State Expectations
- Move slowly and deliberately toward the problem situation
- Speak privately if possible
- Minimize body language
- Keep a reasonable distance
- Speak respectfully



Phase 5: Peak

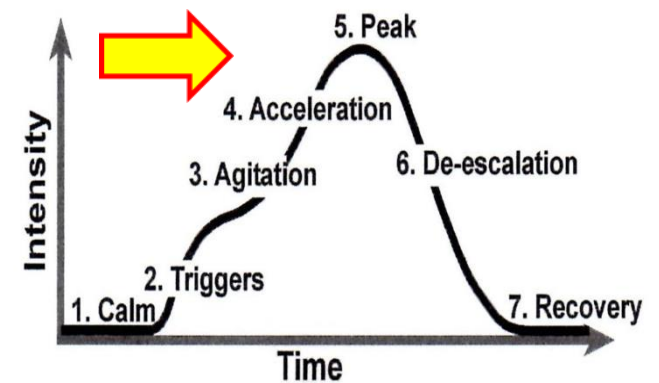
What is it?

- Students with acting-out behavior may be a threat to themselves or others.

What does it look like?

- Student is out of control & displays severe problem behavior:
 - Physical aggression
 - Property destruction
 - Self-injury
 - Escape/social

Figure 2.1: Phases of Acting-Out Behavior



Taken From: "Managing the Cycle of Acting-Out Behavior In the Classroom" by Geoff Colvin, 2004

Phase 5: Peak

What should we do?

Implement Safety Plan

1. Give the Signal to the other students (EX: Bronco)
2. Other students move to designated area
3. Contact the personnel that is designated to assist in implementing the Safety Plan
 - Utilize a code over the intercom
 - Send a responsible child to the office



Phase 6: De-escalation

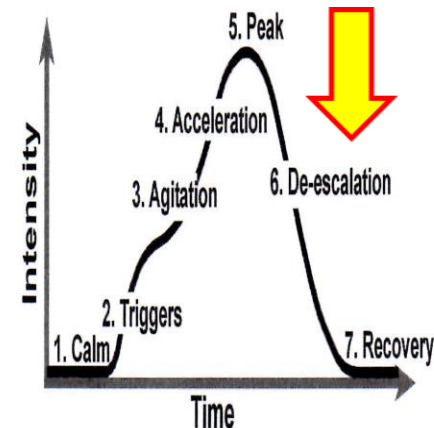
What is it?

- This phase is characterized by student disengagement and reduced acting-out behavior.

What does it look like?

- Student displays confusion
- Severe behavior decreases
- Social withdrawal
- Denial
- Blaming others
- Minimization of problem

Figure 2.1: Phases of Acting-Out Behavior



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Phase 6: De-escalation

What should we do?

- Provide cool down time
- Isolate the student
 - Choose a location
 - Provide adequate supervision
 - Give them a bottle of water
- Assign low level independent task
 - Ex. Bounce a ball
- Determine consequences
 - Restore the environment
 - Retain student at school or send home



Phase 7: Recovery

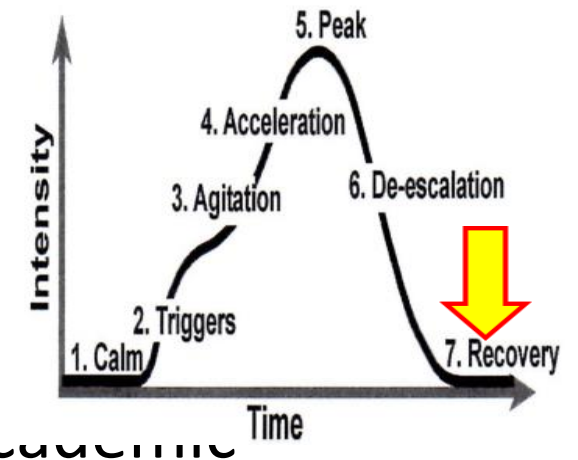
What is it?

- This is a period of regaining the equilibrium of the calm phase.

What does it look like?

- The student is likely to be relatively subdued.
- May attempt to correct problem
- Unwillingness to participate in group activities
- Social withdrawal and/or sleep
- Student may display eagerness to engage in non-academic activities

Figure 2.1: Phases of Acting-Out Behavior

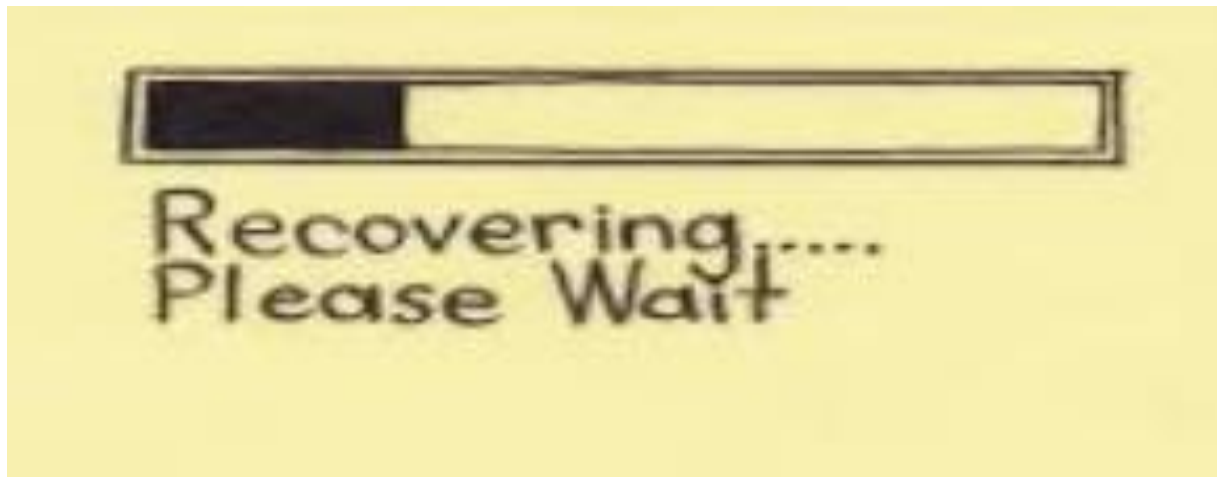


Phase 7: Recovery



What should we do?

- Positively reinforce any displays of appropriate behavior.
- Intervention is focused on re-establishing routine activities.
- Debrief (*after student has been calm at least 20 minutes*)



The Purpose of Debriefing

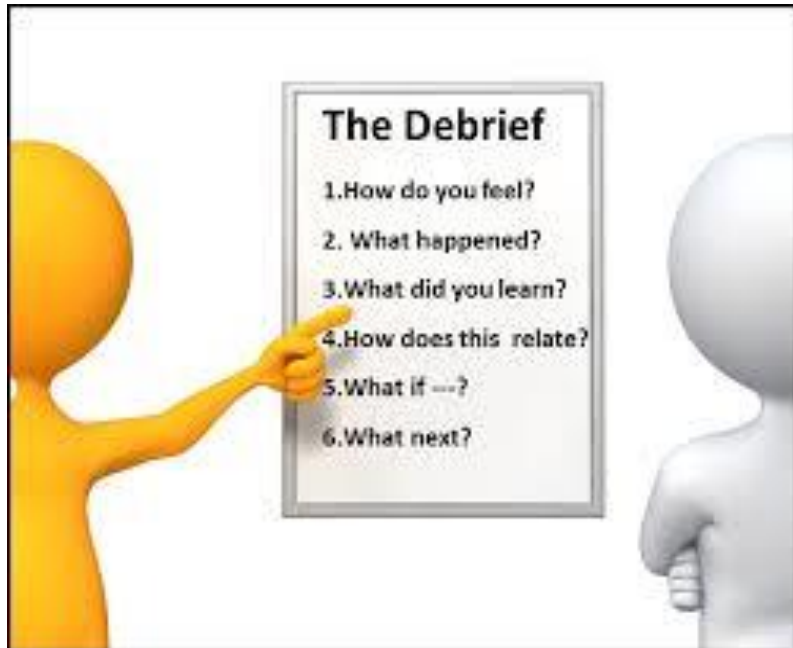
Purpose of debrief is to facilitate transition back to program and to effectively problem solve, not further negative consequence

- **Acknowledge** Feelings
- **Identify** the sequence of events
- **Help** the student gain **self-awareness** and **insight** into their **self destructive patterns**.
- **Pinpoint** decision making moments during the sequence of events
- **Evaluate** the decisions
- **Identify** acceptable decision **options** for **future** situations.
- **Practice** New Skill

Debriefing

The purpose of debriefing is to...

- *Facilitate transition back to the classroom*
- *Effectively problem solve*



The Process:

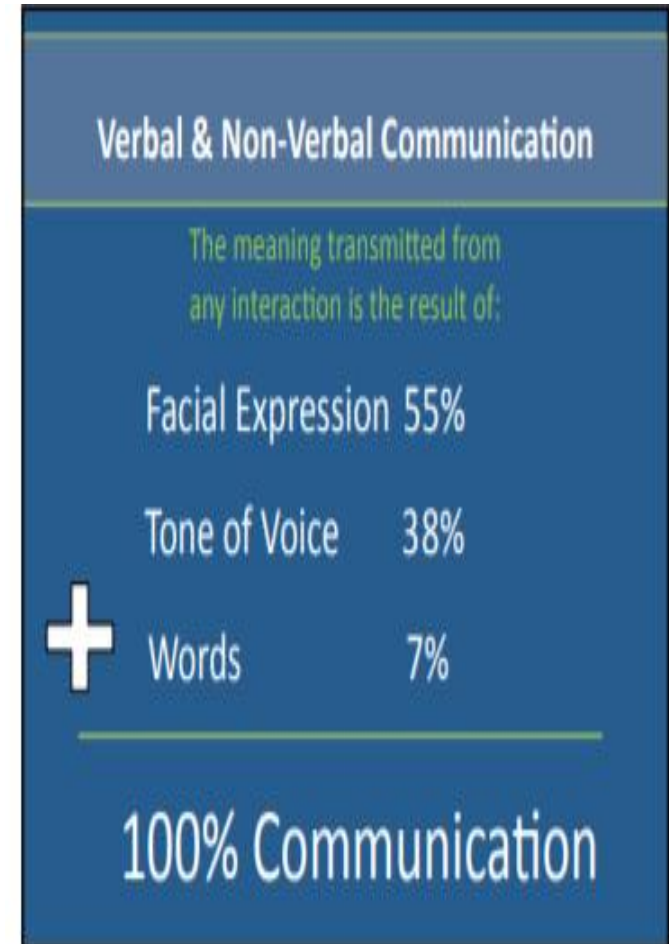
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- **Evaluate** the decisions
- **Identify** acceptable decision **options** for **future** situations.
- **Practice** New Skill

Debriefing Conversation



The Adult Behaviors during the Conversation

- The Right Mindset -positive and accepting
- Be Fully Present - listen
- Use Affirming Statements
- Check for Understanding - restate what you heard
- Use Non-judgmental Statements and Actions
- Be in Rapport with the student



Debriefing Conversation

1. Start by acknowledging their feelings about the situation
2. State the observable
3. Work back, keep asking questions
4. Let the student talk. Clarify and summarize
5. Help the student understand the pattern
6. Problem solve. Allow student to voice choices rather than the adult solving the problem for the student.
7. Review plan, practice and follow-up



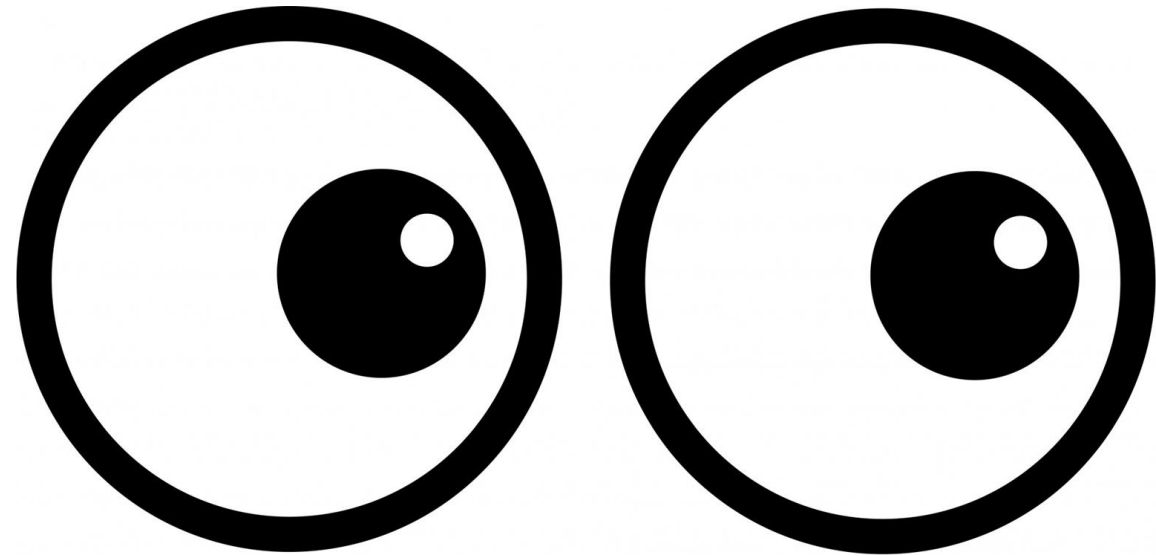
1. Acknowledge Feelings

- You appear to be ...
- I am not sure why you are upset.
- I would like to understand.

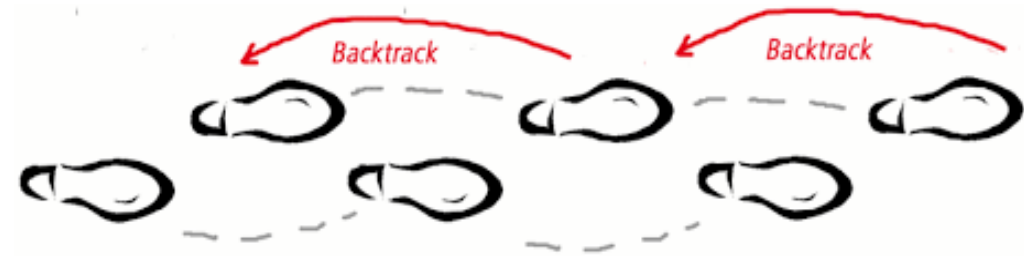


2. State the Observable

- Let's start by telling me what happened.
- I saw or the teacher tells mehappened
- I see you are.....



3. Work Backwards....

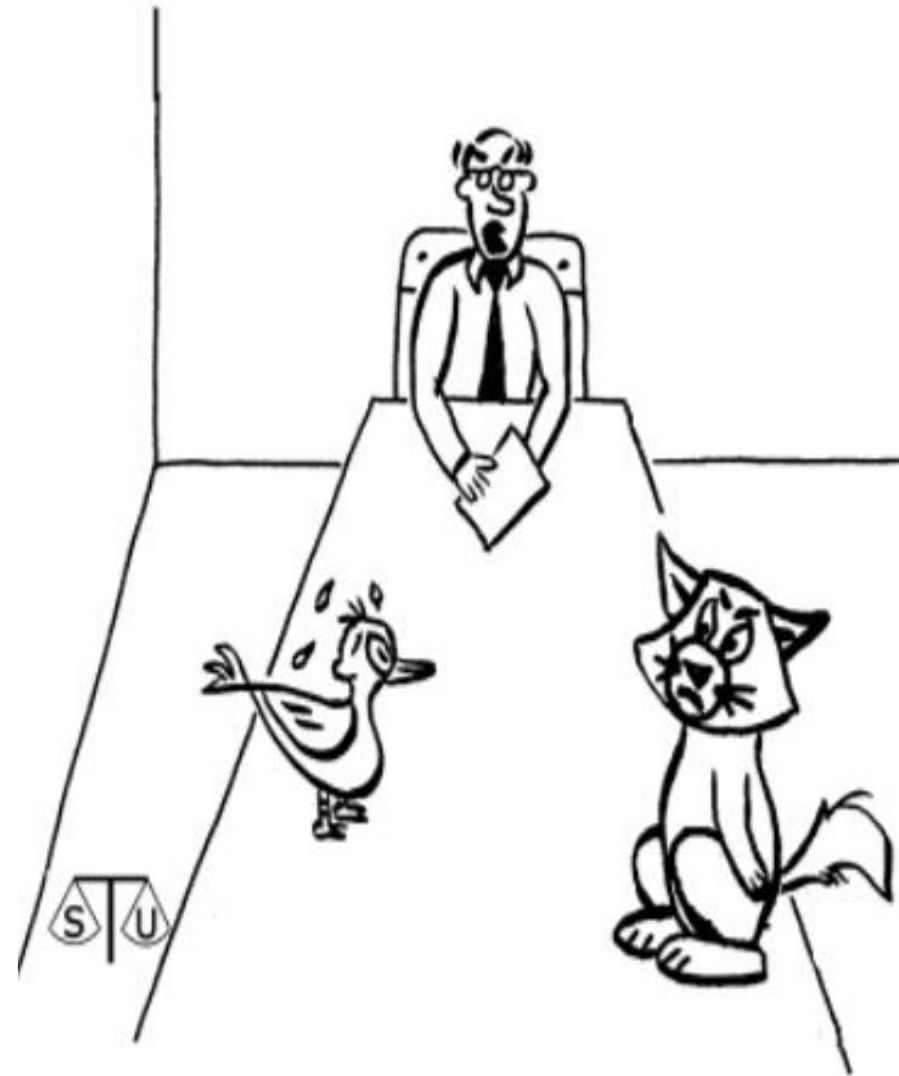


- Why do you think the person responded that way?
- What Happened? (Where? When? Target? Duration ? Intensity? Frequency?)
- What thoughts were going through your mind? (What were you saying to yourself?)
- What did you feel? How strong were those feelings on a scale from 1-10?)
- What did you do? (How did you show your feelings?)
- How did others react?
- What happened before that? and before that? and before that?

4. Let the Student Talk Clarify and Summarize

- What I hear you saying is.....
- You were thinking.....
- So when this happened you felt.....

Sometimes students need someone else to come up with the words to describe their feelings.



Please clarify item 14:
"Have Mr. Birdie over **for dinner.**"

5. Help the student understand the pattern

- At one point did things get off track?
- How did others react? How do you think they were feeling? What do you think others were thinking?
- Did the end result of the situation make things better or worse for you?

Restate the pattern from the beginning

6. Problem Solve

Allow student to voice choices rather than adult solve the problem

- What other choices did you have at each stage of the problem?
- Identify triggers?
- How did you respond?
- Have you thought of another way you might handle it?
- What new behavior might be helpful to learn?
- When will you practice the new behavior?
- Can you do it when you begin to become upset?



7. Review plan and follow-up

- What supports might you need?
- What new behavior might be helpful to learn?
- When will you practice the new behavior?
- Can you do it when you begin to become upset?
- Decide on a plan, review the plan to ensure clear understanding.
(Role play and practice)
- Set a date to check in with them on how the plan is working.



Demonstration Scenario

Suzy has a difficult home situation and feels that Kelly is her only friend.

During clean up, Kelly shouts, “where are my tickets?”

Suzy yells back, “I don’t know anything about your tickets”.

The teacher intervenes and asks what is going on.

Kelly had Cardinal tickets and had shown them to Suzy, now they were nowhere to be found.


The teacher helped Kelly look in her book bag and pockets.

Then the teacher asked Suzy to empty her pockets and search her belongings.

Suzy started yelling she was no thief, called Kelly a “dumbass” and showed her where the tickets were - stuck in her book.

While the rest of the class was dismissed, Suzy was asked to stay behind to debrief.

De-Escalation Plan

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Acceleration ↗ <i>Response</i>		
Peak  <i>Response</i>		

Final Thoughts

“It is always important to remember that “if you inadvertently assist the student to escalate, do not be concerned; you will get another chance to do it right the next time around.

~Colvin, 1989



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