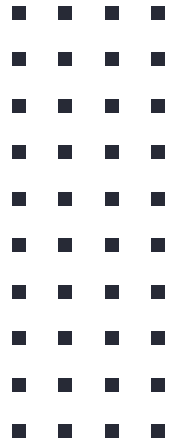# Session 2J:
The De-Escalation Cycle (Overview)

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Adjunct Professor (*Classroom & Behavior Management*)
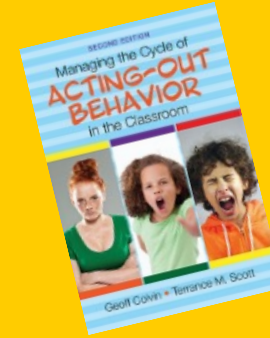
National & State Presenter

E-mail: DRECTOR@FULTON58.ORG

Today's Outcomes

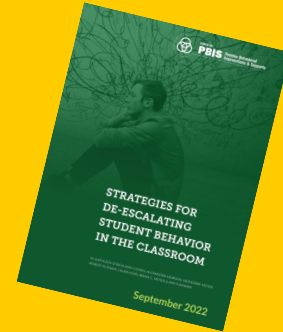Become familiar with the acting-out cycle.

Identify areas within the cycle that can diffuse escalating behaviors.

Assumptions

about what we know and understand

Behavior can be complex and specific to the individual…

- There is NO magic wand
- Prevention is the best approach… but
- Sometimes students will NOT respond to our prevention steps.

Function-Based Thinking…

- Understanding function-based thinking starts at the universal level.
- It needs to drive teacher decision-making, even in challenging situations.
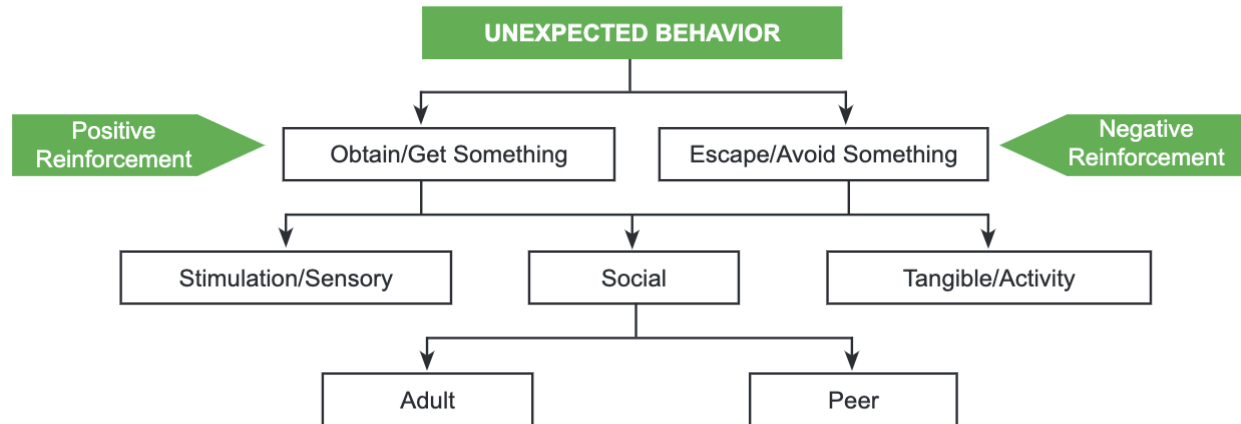
Understanding Trauma…

- Adversity and trauma are defined in the eye of the beholder – adverse experiences can impact a youth's learning.
- Need to understand the impact of fight or flight (hyperarousal) and freeze (hypoarousal).
- There is a need to install a culture of self-regulation (student and staff self-care).

Event
Experience
Effects

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

"Thinking about Thinking"
Higher Reasoning
Executive Function

Prefrontal Cortex
9 Functions of the
Prefrontal Cortex

1. Empathy
2. Insight
3. Response Flexibility
4. Emotion Regulation
5. Body Regulation
6. Morality
7. Intuition
8. Attuned Communication
9. Fear Modulation

Limbic Brain

1. Fight, flight, freeze stress response
2. Thinks, "Am I safe? Do people want me?"
3. Emotions live here

De-escalation embedded within a MTSS Behavioral Framework (MO-SWPBS)...

De-escalation strategies are maximized when integrated within a school-wide multi-tiered behavioral framework that focuses on creating positive, predictable, and engaging learning environments as Tier 1 preventions strategies like:

- Creating **safe and inclusive environments** where all members of the community (students, educators, and families) belong.
- Developing and explicitly teaching clear **positive behavior expectations** and critical social-emotional behavioral skills (e.g., working in groups, solving disagreements, asking for help).
- Having and explicitly teaching clear and **consistent classroom routines** (e.g., transitions, arrival, and dismissal).
- Providing **engaging academic instruction** that matches students' instructional level and incorporates frequent and varied opportunities to respond simply prevents off-task and disruptive behavior.
- Regularly **acknowledging** prosocial behavior and **redirecting and/or reteaching** when behavioral errors occur.

Classroom PBIS

Maximize Structure — Expectations & Rules — Student Engagement — Acknowledge Appropriate Behavior — Responding to Inappropriate Behavior
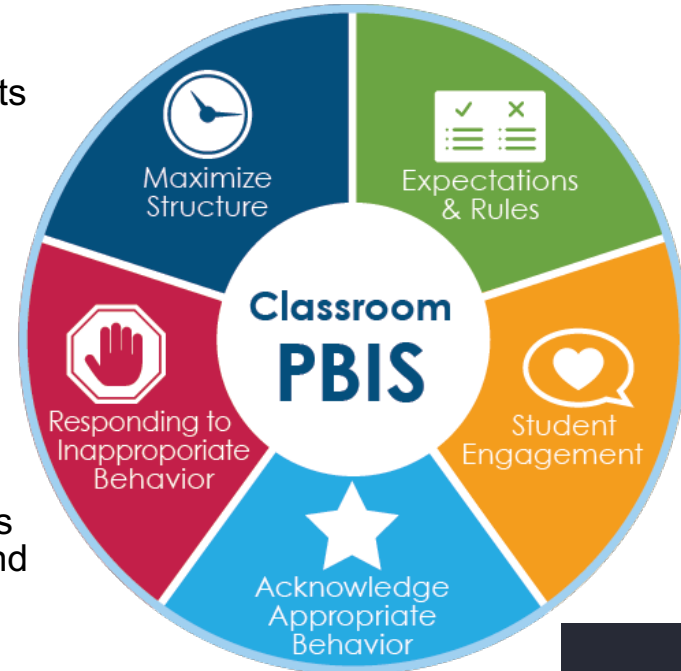
Adults first…

- Student and adult regulation are intricately connected.
- Vulnerable decision points are always present during a cycle of escalation/de-escalation.
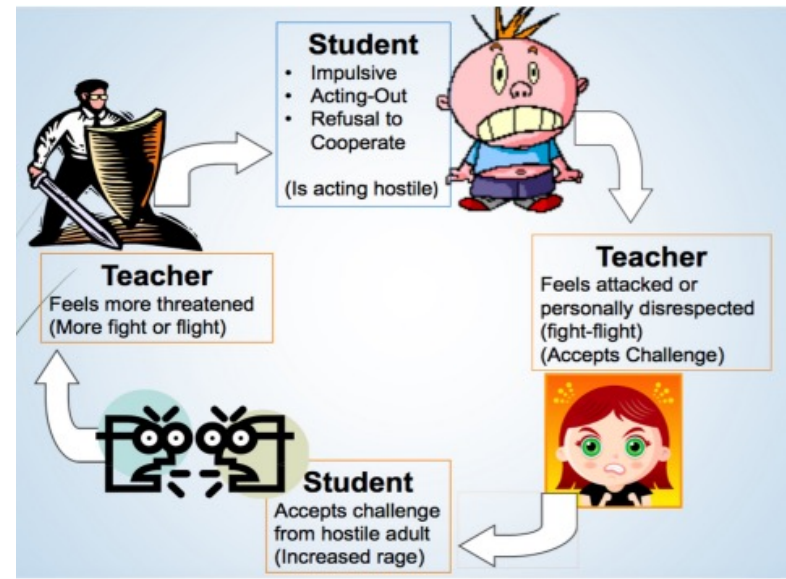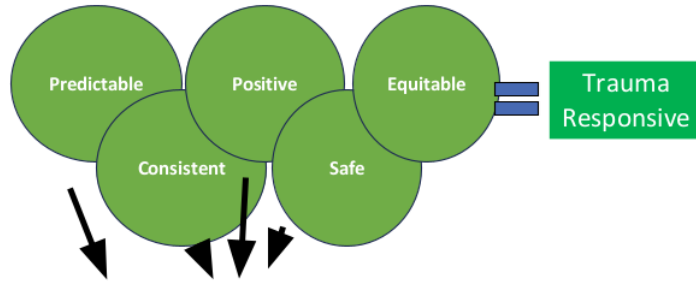

The adult can only help a student become regulated when they are regulated.

Have all students and staff been taught and regularly practice what it means to be regulated?

Its about your systems…

Predictable · Positive · Equitable → **Trauma Responsive**

Consistent · Safe

The school addresses students needs in holistic ways, taking into account their relationships, self-regulation, academic competence, and physical and emotional well-being

www.nctsn.org

The Missouri Model for Trauma-Informed Schools
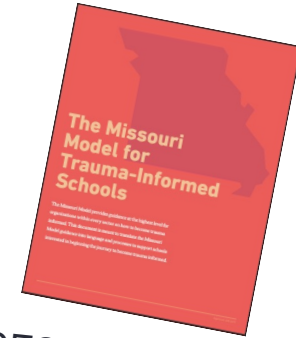
<u>DESE Resource</u>

STAGE 0	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4
Pre-Trauma Aware	Trauma Aware	Trauma Sensitive	Trauma Responsive	Trauma Informed

<u>PBIS National Center</u>
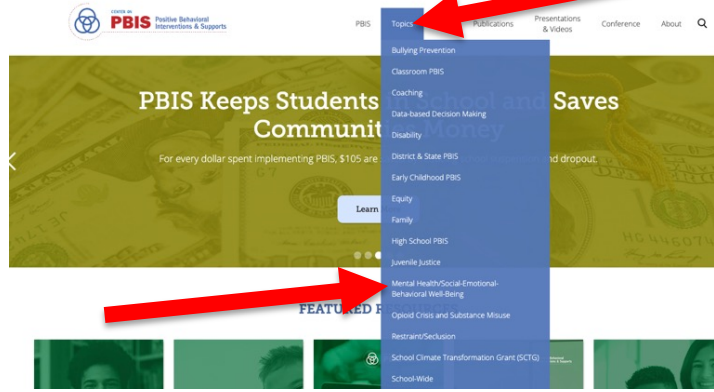
<u>Integrating SEL & PBIS</u>

<u>Integrating TI & PBIS</u>
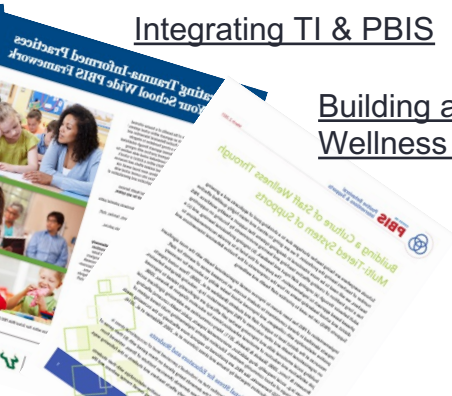
<u>Building a Culture of Staff Wellness Through MTSS</u>

The Acting-Out Cycle

what it is
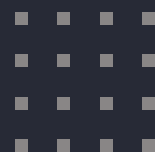
The Acting-Out Cycle

- The acting out cycle is a way to think about patterns of behavior.
- Behavior has a pattern, cycle, or chain of events which is predictable and therefore preventable.
- This conceptual model allows staff to be proactive in breaking the chain as well as match responses to student's function of behavior.
- Getting to students to recognize the chain and respond accordingly will increase effectiveness.

Applicable to students and adults

The Acting-Out Cycle
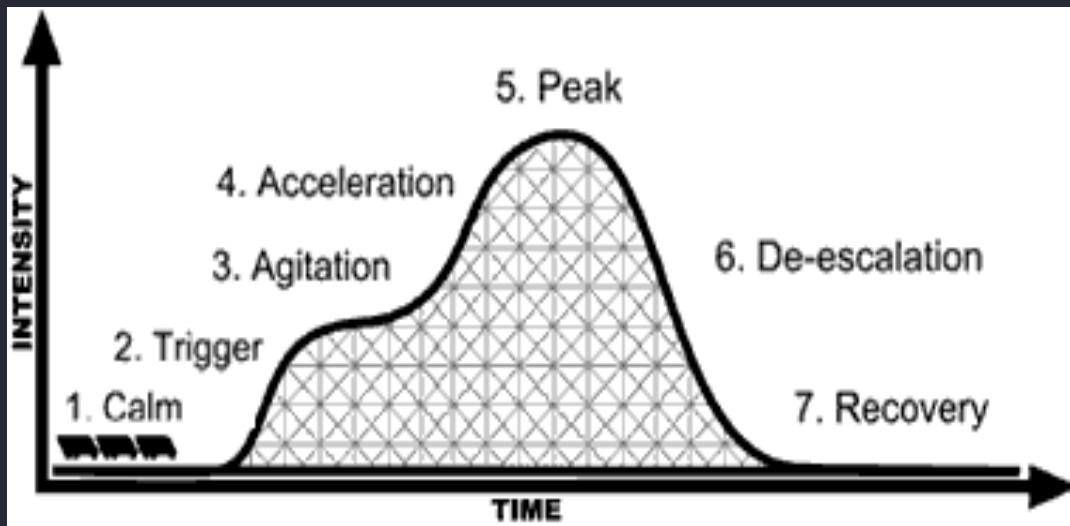
There are 7 phases:
- Calm
- Trigger(ed)
- Agitation
- Acceleration
- Peak (Crisis)
- De-escalation
- Recovery

Regulated

Continuum of Dysregulation

Regulated

Calm/Regulated

Description

- Calm/settled
- Life is coming at us in a rhythmic, easy way
- Help is available if needed
- Feel connected
- Feeling present/in the moment
- Exhibiting appropriate, cooperative behavior
- Responsive to directions

Response

Focus on prevention
- Communicate positive expectations
- Teach social and regulation skills/routines
- Arrange for high rates of academic and social engagement and opportunities to respond
- Use positive reinforcement
- Provide active supervision

Implement ETLPs w/ fidelity

	Prevention
Youth Behavior / Acting-Out Cycle Phase	Calm
The Brain	Regulated
Teacher Practices	- Communicate Positive Expectations - Teach skills/routines - Encouragement - Engagement - Active Supervision
Routines (that can be utilized) *Adult/ Youth*	Regulation Routines Relationship Routines Self-Awareness Routines
Systems of Support	Implementation of ETLPs

Preventing low level behaviors from escalating

Students are regulated, while occasionally engaging in minor challenging behavior.

What teachers can do…
Use the ETLPs

What PBIS Teams can do

Trigger(ed) – Agitation - Acceleration

A trigger is something that move an individual from regulated to dysregulated (possible setting/antecedent events: repeated failure, frequent correction, low rates of positive reinforcement, interpersonal conflicts, timelines).

Triggered

- Grumpy
- Bad mood
- Irritable
- Defensive
- Whining
- Crying

Agitation

- Darting eyes
- Busy hands
- Moving in and out of groups
- Act like they don't know what they want
- Off-task, on-task, off-task
- Staring into space
- Veiled eyes
- Non-conversational language
- Group withdrawal

Acceleration

- Questioning
- Arguing
- Non-compliance
- Refusal to cooperate
- Defiance
- Off-task
- Provocation
- Rule violations
- Whining and crying
- Avoidance and escape
- Threats and intimidation
- Verbal abuse
- Destruction of property

IT'S A CONTINUUM

Key Focus…

- Identify how to intervene **early.**
- Identify **function** to determine response.
- Identify **environmental factors** that can be manipulated.
- Identify **replacement behaviors** that can be taught.

Some of this might occur in the moment, some of it needs to occur in reflection after. The goal is to interrupt the cycle as well as PREVENT the cycle from happening in the future.

Trigger(ed) – Agitation – Acceleration Adult Strategies

Triggered
- Consider function to adjust environment/response to increase opportunities for success (modify instructions, task/activity, schedule, seating arrangement)*.
- Reinforce what has been taught
- Increase rates of positive specific feedback
- Pre-correction/ reminders
- Provide choice

*keep to a minimum and normalize changes

Agitation
- Consider function to adjust environment/ response to increase opportunities for success
- Choice
- Redirection
- Co-regulation
- Regulation Routine
- Consider additional adults to support and intervene
- Deflection activity*
- Preferred activity*

*set parameters

Acceleration
- Move slower, deliberately, non-threateningly
- Use brief words
- Reminders of regulation
- Provide space
- Co-regulation with limited words
- Remove unsafe items
- More directive

IT'S A CONTINUUM

Think functionally to inform your responses; think least to most restriction (don't lead with a heavy response when a smaller response could be used first).

What What Triggers You
(it takes two to argue)

What is It?

Efforts by students following an error correction, to avoid or get something. May also be a flight-fight-freeze response.

Why does it work?

These behaviors push the buttons of adults; adults become dysregulated. Adults take the behavior personally. Students learn to keep doing the behaviors when they are successful because it gets them access to their function
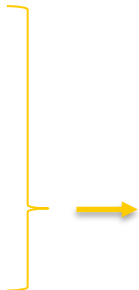
Student Behaviors:

- Badgering
   "please, please, please, please?"
- Intimidation
   temper tantrums, aggression, threats
- Threat
   "I'm going to run away"
- Martyrdom
   "Why do you hate me?"
- Buttering Up
   "You are my favorite teacher"
- Physical
   fighting, property damage

Response Strategies:

- Ignore the "content" of the behavior
   - Do not respond to the tactic
- Prompt original behavior/stay on topic
   - Specific error correction
   - Reminder of regulation routine
   - Offer space and/or time
- As needed, use your own previously practiced self-regulation routine(s)

Always ensure safety when responding to behavior

Behavior Escalation		
Youth Behavior/ Acting-Out Cycle Phase	Tigger(ed) Agitation Acceleration	
The Brain	Regulated to Dysregulated	
Teacher Practices	Continuum of Strategies to respond to Unexpected Behavior. Think of function.	
Routines (that can be utilized) *Adult/ Youth*	- Accept Feedback Routine - Regulation Routines (student) - Self-Regulation Routines (adult)	
Systems of Support	Implementation of ETLPs; Staff Self-Care	
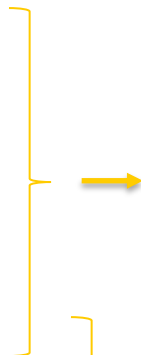
Continuum of Dysregulation

Student displays low level (triggered/agitation) or high level (acceleration) of behavior

What teachers can do…
Rely on continuum of research validated response strategies:
- Redirection strategies
- Choice-making opportunities
- Prompts for mastered regulation routines
- Co-regulation
- Provide space

What PBIS Teams can do

Peak/Crisis

Description

- Highest point of escalation
- Disruption is so serious class cannot continue
- Student is in rage and out of control
- Represents a threat to the safety of self or others (e.g., serious destruction of property, physical attacks, self-abuse, severe tantrums, running away)

Response

- Follow district protocol and guidance!
- Maintain safety
- Call for support
- Use minimal words and demands – avoid addressing consequences
- Stay calm
- Crisis Support Routine

Crisis Support Routine

What is it?

An adult routine to help staff stay regulated, maintain patience, ensure consistent adult implementation, and support students in behavioral crisis/dysregulation to regain self-control.

Midwest PBIS Network 4/1/22

Crisis Support Routine
What does it look or sound like?

1. "Good job lowering your voice"
2. "I know this can be hard"
3. "A good decision is to put your hands at your side"

1. Non-Verbal [Staff demonstrate filling lungs and slow exhale to a count of four]
2. I want to help you *Be Safe*"
3. "Show me you understand and step down from the table"

1. Offer time and space [Non-Verbal or Verbal]
2. "You are staring out the window and seem frustrated
3. "Can you show me the square breathing routine we use?

Example Crisis Support Routine

Step 1: Regulate [choose one]:

❑ Praise approximations -or-
   i.e. Praise any component of behavior
❑ Non-Verbal prompt of regulation routine -or-
   Previously taught and practiced
❑ Offer time and space

Step 2: Relate to Student [choose one]:

❑ Sincere words of empathy (brief) -or-
❑ Express concern (brief)
   Focus on overall SW expectations (e.g. Be Safe);
   Limit attention to inappropriate behavior

Step 3: Simple Instruction

❑ One simple instruction to assess regulation
   Focus on what student should do, rather than stop doing

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Peak/Crisis

Big ideas to ponder:

- **FOLLOW DISTRICT SAFETY ROUTINES/PROTOCOLS!!!**
- Utilize a **<u>SIMPLE</u>** Crisis Support Routine for adults to follow (increases consistency in adult response).
- PRACTICE!!!
- Decision rules needed:

    - When is a student considered in crisis/protocols activated?
    - When is a student considered exiting crisis/protocols faded?

	Crisis
Youth Behavior/ Acting-Out Cycle Phase	Peak
The Brain	Dysregulated
Teacher Practices	Safety Routine Crisis Support Routine
Routines (that can be utilized) *Adult/ Youth*	- Safety Routine - Crisis Support Routine - Regulation Routine - Self-Regulation Routine (adult)
Systems of Support	Safety Procedures

Peak/Crisis

Student displays as harm to self or others

What teachers can do…

What PBIS Teams can do

De-Escalation/Recovery (Reconnection)

Description

- "Coming down" and return to regulation
- Social withdrawal
- Shame/Crying
- Remorse
- Denial
- Projection of blame
- Minimization of behavior
- Lethargy/Tiredness

Response

- Be welcoming to students
- Help address immediate needs
- Focus on the present
- Reduce stimuli
- Assign low level tasks (match to cognitive age, not necessarily physical age)
- Reintegrate (restoration strategies); avoid blame; avoid forced apology
- Connection, caring, co-investment
- Re-establish routines – reminders/re-teaching of regulation routine(s)
- Problem-solving
- Debrief, reflection, and planning

Post-Event Analysis & Reflection

Why?

- Requires adults to stand back and examine normal routines and behaviors.
- It's the only way to learn and to implement change.

Strategies

- Debrief with student
- Debrief with staff/team
- Make follow-up plan to prevent future incidents (use data, may involve conducting an FBA)

Teacher Self-Reflection

- What was my state of mind?
- Was I able to stay calm?
- Did I get triggered?
- Did I take the student's behavior personally?

	Recovery & Restoration
Youth Behavior/ Acting-Out Cycle Phase	De-escalation Recovery
The Brain	Dysregulated to Regulated
Teacher Practices	- Recovery practices - Regulate/Relate/Reason (use regulation routines; connect; specific praise) - Document; debrief with team
Routines (that can be utilized) *Adult/ Youth*	- Re-integration routines
Systems of Support	Data collection/ documentation; post-event analysis; FBA

De-escalation & Recovery

Student can regulate and re-integrate into classroom

What teachers can do…

What PBIS Teams can do

	Prevention	Escalation	Crisis	Recovery & Restoration
Youth Behavior/ Acting-Out Cycle Phase	Calm	Tigger(ed) Agitation Acceleration	Peak	De-escalation Recovery
The Brain	Regulated	Regulated to Dysregulated	Dysregulated	Dysregulated to Regulated
Teacher Practices	- Communicate Positive Expectations - Teach skills/routines - Encouragement - Engagement - Active Supervision	Continuum of Strategies to respond to Unexpected Behavior. Think of function.	Safety Routine Crisis Support Routine	- Recovery practices - Regulate/Relate/Reason (use regulation routines; connect; specific praise) - Document; debrief with team
Routines (that can be utilized) *Adult/ Youth*	- Regulation Routines - Relationship Routines - Self-Awareness Routines	- Accept Feedback Routine - Regulation Routines (student) - Self-Regulation Routines (adult)	- Safety Routine - Crisis Support Routine - Regulation Routine - Self-Regulation Routine (adult)	- Re-integration routines
Systems of Support	Implementation of ETLPs	Implementation of ETLPs; Staff Self-Care	Safety Procedures	Data collection/ documentation; post-event analysis; FBA

Questions

Continuing Dialogue:
- 3J: The De-Escalation Cycle – Strategies for Elementary School
- 6H: The De-Escalation Cycle – Strategies for Secondary Schools