

# Session 3J: The De-Escalation Cycle (Elementary Strategies)

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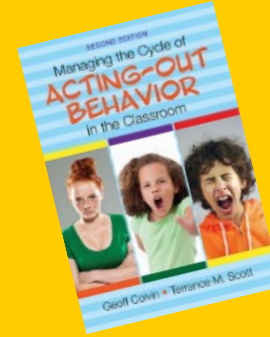


# Today's Outcomes

Review the acting-out cycle.

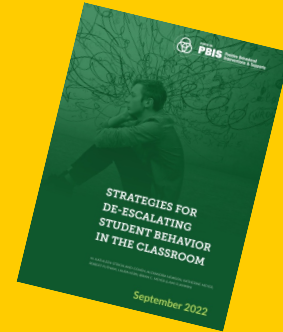
Identify strategies to use in elementary settings that can diffuse escalating behaviors.

## Acknowledgments



Colvin, G., & Scott, T. M. (2015). *Managing the cycle of acting-out behavior in the classroom* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Corwin.

Strickland-Cohen, M. K., Newson, A., Meyer, K., Putnam, R., Kern, L., Meyer, B. C., & Flammini, A. (2022). *Strategies for de-escalating student behavior in the classroom*. Center on PBIS.

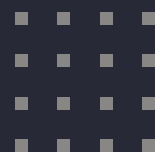


The IRIS Center. (2005, 2022). *Addressing Challenging Behaviors (Part 1): Understanding the Acting-Out Cycle*. Peabody College, Vanderbilt.



# The Acting-Out Cycle

what it is

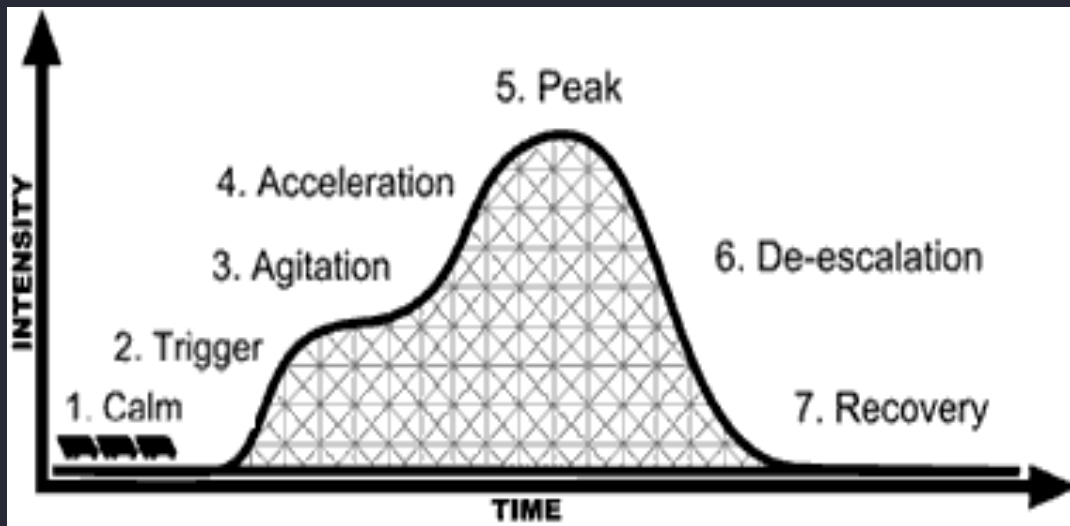


# The Acting-Out Cycle

- 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

	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicate Positive Expectations</li> <li>- Teach skills/routines</li> <li>- Encouragement</li> <li>- Engagement</li> <li>- Active Supervision</li> </ul>	Continuum of Strategies to respond to Unexpected Behavior. Think of function.	Safety Routine Crisis Support Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recovery practices</li> <li>- Regulate/Relate/Reason (use regulation routines; connect; specific praise)</li> <li>- Document; debrief with team</li> </ul>
Routines (that can be utilized) <i>Adult/ Youth</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regulation Routines</li> <li>- Relationship Routines</li> <li>- Self-Awareness Routines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accept Feedback Routine</li> <li>- Regulation Routines (student)</li> <li>- Self-Regulation Routines (adult)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Safety Routine</li> <li>- Crisis Support Routine</li> <li>- Regulation Routine</li> <li>- Self-Regulation Routine (adult)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Re-integration routines</li> </ul>
Systems of Support	Implementation of ETLPs	Implementation of ETLPs; Staff Self-Care	Safety Procedures	Data collection/ documentation; post-event analysis; FBA





# Prevention Strategies

Calm Phase








# Teacher Practices



- Teach (tell-show-do-practice-feedback) positive expectations.
  - Teach (tell-show-do-practice-feedback) skills/routines.
  - Provide encouragement – non-contingent to model positive social interactions and build rapport with students; contingent attention to increase on-task behaviors or to reinforce appropriate actions or skills.
  - Provide instructional engagement - integrate high-interest topics, choose culturally relevant material, engage students in collaborative activities, allow students to express opinions on current topics or events.
  - Provide active supervision – move, scan, interact.
  - Use low-intensity strategies to support student engagement: reminders and prompts, choice, encouragement/attention.
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# Routines – Relationship Routines

Create a welcoming and supportive classroom environment:

- Greet and welcome students at the door upon arrival
- Check-in with students and families
- Identify individual student interests and strengths
- Creating space for activities that foster authentic peer relationships



Practice Brief: Cultivating Positive  
Student-Teacher Relationships

# Routines – Self-Awareness & Regulation

## Routines

Audience	What	Example
Students	<p>Teach and regularly practice regulation strategies with all student as part of Tier 1 support. Teaching self-awareness and regulation involves teaching students to first recognize feelings of agitation/dysregulation when they first become upset and then use a practical strategy for returning to a calm state.</p> <p>Initially teach when all students are calm and relaxed, gradually working toward practicing in settings or situations that can lead to dysregulation (e.g., before quizzes and tests).</p>	<p>Regulation strategies can include deep breathing, mindfulness, progressive muscle relaxation, and requesting/taking a break in the classroom.</p> <p>Emotion scales can be used to teach students to rate their feelings/stress/anxiety and prompt coping and relaxation strategies.</p> <p>Resources: <a href="#">Regulate, Relate, Reason</a>; <a href="#">Brain Breaks and Focused Attention Practices</a>; <a href="#">Brain Breaks PPT</a></p>
Adults	<p>Model for students and regularly practice (using think aloud strategies) the regulation routines students are being taught.</p> <p>Connect to your district's social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum, when possible. For self-care, look at learning stress-reduction strategies for staff.</p>	<p>Become aware of your own triggers for dysregulation.</p> <p>Use self-prompting strategies (e.g., visual reminders, timers) to prompt regular use of regulation strategies.</p> <p>Resources: <a href="#">Habits of Effective Classroom Practice</a>; <a href="#">Don't Discipline Hangry: 3 Steps to a Better Classroom</a>; <a href="#">Self-care for Educators</a>; <a href="#">Self-care Breaks PPT</a></p>



Prevention Strategies Worksheet

# Prevention (PBIS Teams)

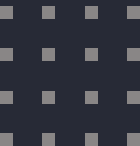
How are you supporting prevention?

- How are you monitoring and supporting staff with the implementation of their PBIS/teacher practices?
- Have you established universal relationship routines that staff should be using? Have you trained on what staff could be using even if not universally?
- Have you established universal self-awareness and regulation routines that staff should be using? Have you trained on what staff could be using even if not universally?



# Escalation Strategies


Trigger(ed) – Agitation – Acceleration Phases





# Teacher Practices – Trigger(ed)



- Identify trigger – observe the student and note of situations that consistently lead to challenging behavior, have a conversation with the student to identify potential triggers.
  - Use strategies to manage school-based triggers (e.g., negative interaction with teacher; argument with a peer; change in daily schedule; high rate of failure on an academic task; confusion about an assignment) – brainstorm & collaborate; adjust classroom environment to limit triggers; reinforce social and emotional skills to help manager triggers; role-play or practice appropriate and expected behaviors in a scenario that commonly triggers behavior; use precorrection before it occurs (non-verbal, verbal & visual reminders, increased opportunities for success); proximity; redirection/refocus through task; provide assistance; temporary alternative location (antiseptic bouncing).
  - Work to address non-school-based triggers (e.g., hunger; lack of sleep; medical problems; stressful home situations; personal conflicts) – brainstorm & collaborate.
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# Teacher Practices – Agitation

- Show empathy/Co-regulating – use supportive language (“I see that you are fidgeting. Are you doing okay today?” “I know this is hard. Take a quick break and I’ll circle back to you in just a minute” “(Student name), you seem upset today. What can I do to help?” “I know this can be frustrating. Grab a quick drink of water, and I can help you when you get back). Develop a nonverbal communication system (write the student a note, place it on desk discretely, student responds to the note).
- Prompt regulation routines – ask the student to complete regulation routines.
- Proximity control – stand near the student when addressing the class, pause near the student to offer praise, circle back to student to provide additional support.
- Help the student with the task.
- Change the student’s environment – different location in the room, give the student a job or to run an errand to another teacher, allow the student to get a drink of water.
- Offer instructional choice – offer small number (2-3) of acceptable options for completing an activity/task.
- Provide additional time.
- Share your perspective – explain how the behavior is perceived in the classroom, offer an idea or come to an agreed upon solution that will help de-escalate the student’s behavior.



# Teacher Practices – Acceleration



- Remain neutral –don't take it personally (the student is often trying to engage the teacher, often disrespectfully); avoid responding with annoyance or anger; “tap out”.
- Give the student an individual prompt or redirection – remain calm and respectful; avoid reactive or escalating prompts (e.g., arguing with the student, making sarcastic comments “You're not in 1<sup>st</sup> grade anymore” “Maybe you should listen better during class”; getting in the student's face or personal space; touching the student.
- Reminder of regulation routine – use minimal verbal direction to prompt mastered regulation routine – “John, remember our deep breathing strategy”.
- Engage and then walk-away – momentarily shift your focus to a task or another student to allow the student time to process the prompt or redirection, giving time (and space) can prevent a power struggle.
- Reinforce the student for compliance or on-task behavior – if the student complied partially or fully, offer praise; if the student has not complied, continue to address calmly and respectfully. Often, after demonstrating expected behavior, request additional, limited engagement in the desired task/activity (e.g., solve the next problem or read the next sentence/paragraph).




# Teacher Practices – Key Reminders

- It's not about you, it's about the student.
- You can and should respectfully address the acting-out behaviors by...
  - using the student's name when prompting or redirecting.
  - focusing on the **behavior** not the student.
  - speaking to the student discreetly or privately.
  - speaking to the student at eye-level (with appropriate to maintain boundaries and safety).



# Routines

- Accept Feedback Routine – in preparation for this, incorporate into your classroom the social emotional skill of accepting feedback.
  - Regulation Routine - **prompt** skill usage of those routines that students have mastered.
  - Self-Awareness & Regulation Routines – **manage** your own routines.
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# Escalation (PBIS Teams)

How are you supporting teachers in utilizing response strategies and appropriate routines?

- Have you trained, monitored, and provided support to staff with the implementation of their response strategies?
- Have you incorporated a universal feedback acceptance routine that students should use and staff should prompt? Have you trained on what staff could be using even if not universally?
- Are you prompting staff self-care?



# Crisis Strategies

Peak Phase



# Teacher Practices

- **FOLLOW DISTRICT PROTOCOL!!!**

## Routines

- Safety Routine/Crisis Support Routine

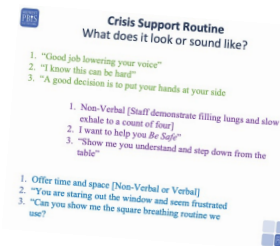
## PBIS Teams

- Support teachers in implementing regulation routines for students and self as well as self-care.

### 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



### 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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# Recovery & Restoration

De-escalation/Recovery Phase




# Teacher Practices

- Provide the student time and space to cool down (away from other students).
- Teacher should resume regular schedule.
- Provide the student with an independent activity – should be instructionally at or below the student's level so the student can experience success; should be active; avoid trigger activities/topics; provide explicit instructions about what is expected and quality of work; modify task demand as needed; if expectations are not met, allow the student more time to comply – reintegrating the student before full cooperation has been achieved may cause the behavior to re-escalate.
- Complete a debriefing for the incident – prompt the student to think through what happened, reflect on what could have gone differently, discuss triggers, a plan of action for future triggers, what the student needs to do to reintegrate into the classroom.
- If applicable, ask the student to restore the environment (e.g., picking up papers thrown on the floor).
- If applicable, debrief with class.



# Routines



- Recovery/debrief routine – resources: student debriefing form with visuals; student debriefing form; teacher debriefing form; staff self-reflection.  
Process principles: reflection (“Can you describe what was happening when you started to get upset? What were you feeling just before you became dysregulated? Can you show me where you were on the feelings scale?”); co-create a plan for how and when to prompt to use self-regulation strategies and provide instruction on regulation skills (“Let’s talk about ways that you can let me or another adult know when you’re feeling upset/nervous/scared and need a quick break” “How would you like for me to prompt you to take a break, use a regulation routine, or ask for help when I notice that you are becoming agitated?”).
  - Re-integration routine – welcome the student, allow the student to take part in regular classroom activities (provide clear expectations and directions, acknowledge the student’s needs, and give positive praise for following expectations), focus on the present (refrain from making comments about behavioral incident or reviewing consequences right away).
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# Recovery & Restoration (PBIS Teams)

How are you supporting teachers in utilizing recovery and restoration strategies/routines?

- Have you trained, monitored, and provided support to staff with the implementation of how to process with a student and reintegrate the student into the class?
- Have you incorporated a universal feedback recovery/debrief and/or re-integration routine that should be used by staff? Have you trained on what staff could be using even if not universally?

# Questions

