

The Peacemakers Program: Effective Violence Prevention for Early Adolescent Youth

by Jeremy P. Shapiro

The problem of youth violence has become so well-known to youth-serving professionals that detailed documentation of the seriousness of the problem no longer seems necessary. In schools, the fear, anger and fighting experienced by many students harms them academically as well as emotionally. The threat of violence distracts many students from their work; it is practically impossible to concentrate on learning when one faces a fight after school. When arguments and threats escalate into violence, the result is disruption of school activities, agitation of other students, disciplinary incidents and, sometimes, suspensions and expulsions which cause further loss of time for learning.

Increased violence rates have been accompanied by efforts at prevention. Security measures such as metal detectors can stop students from bringing weapons to school but do little to address the anger, meanness and fistfights that are the much larger, although less newsworthy, part of the problem. Violence prevention programs that seek to positively influence the everyday psychosocial functioning of young people seem to have more potential as a solution to the problem of youth violence.

Past Prevention Efforts

Violence prevention is easier said than done. Many interventions are delivered year after year with no objective evidence of effectiveness. Most evaluations have produced results that are weak and inconsistent, if not simply discouraging (Earls, 1994).

Age is an important variable in the violence prevention field. The picture for early elementary school students has brightened considerably in the last several years, with positive evaluation results obtained for the *Peacebuilders* program (Embry, Flannery, Vazsoni, Powell, & Atha, 1996) and the *Second Step* intervention (Grossman et al., 1997). Unfortunately, there have been no similarly encouraging evaluation results from programs for older children and adolescents (Larson, 1998) — that is, until very recently.

The Peacemakers Program

Fortunately, the period of adolescence is not “too late” for effective prevention programming, and major reductions of violent behavior can be achieved for older youth. A new program has produced the positive evaluation results that have been elusive with adolescents. In fact, these program effects were not only significant, they were strikingly large on some important dimensions.

The Peacemakers Program is a school-based violence prevention intervention for students in grades 4 through 8. It was provided to 1400 students in the Cleveland Pub-

lic Schools last academic year (1997-98). A rigorous evaluation, with pre- and post-intervention measures and comparison to a control group, found significant, positive change on 6 of the 7 outcome variables we assessed, including knowledge of psychosocial skills and aggression-related interpersonal behavior as reported by both teachers and students. The most dramatic results were achieved in serious violent incidents. *The Peacemakers Program* resulted in a 41% reduction in aggression-related disciplinary incidents and a 67% decrease in suspensions for violent behavior.

Peacemakers was designed as a multimodal program utilizing a variety of activities to accommodate a variety of learning styles. In addition to didactic instruction by teachers and counselors, there are a series of stories written for the program, writing exercises, use of the Socratic method, role-plays and graphically-designed handouts. There is an emphasis on active learning, drawing on personal experience and student input into the class discussions, while at the same time the teacher or counselor makes sure the program’s messages come through.

Program materials consist of a Teacher’s Manual, a Counselor’s Manual and student workbooks, which can be obtained from Applewood Centers, Inc. The manuals are detailed and user-friendly, providing clear directions for implementing the program. Because the psychosocial content of the program is unfamiliar to many teachers, we suggest approximately six hours of training prior to beginning the program. Counselors or psychologists who have experience with aggressive youth do not need special training to implement the interventions delineated in their manual.

Program Content

The core of the program is a 17-session curriculum delivered on the basis of detailed manuals and, optimally, training. The content is as follows:

1. *Understanding Violence and Peacemaking* invites students to think about the goal of a more peaceful community and offers the program as an opportunity to learn skills and options for dealing with conflict situations.
2. *Our Personal Strengths* offers an abstract concept of “strength” that extends beyond the physical type and asks students to share personal strengths that can contribute to violence prevention.
3. *Our Values and Principles* elicits discussion of personal values and offers the Golden Rule as a meta-value that positively affects behavior and outcomes in conflict situations.

4. *Pride, Shame and Self-esteem* is devoted to self-concept issues in conflict and violence, with an emphasis on changing the common view that violence is the most effective way to repair damage to self-esteem after the experience of disrespect.
5. *Feelings in Conflicts, I: Anger Control* includes discussion of students' anger triggers and teaches a structured, 4-step anger management technique.
6. *Feelings in Conflicts, II: Excitement, Power and Fear* addresses the roles of several emotions in violence and identifies positive ways for young people to meet their normal needs for excitement, power and safety.
7. *Avoiding Conflicts, I: People, Places and Behaviors* introduces the idea of violence as a sequential, step-by-step process (analogous to falling dominoes) and teaches ways to prevent this process from getting started.
8. *Avoiding Conflicts, II: Reading Other People* attempts to decrease hostile attributional bias by informing students about the ambiguous nature of many social behaviors and the negative consequences of jumping to conclusions about hostile intentions behind other people's behavior.
9. *Social Problem-solving* teaches a structured, 5-step technique for analyzing interpersonal problems, planning solutions to them and foreseeing the consequences of actions.
10. *Dealing with Conflicts* discusses the central role of conflict in violence, the naturalness of human conflict, and the idea that conflict does not have to lead to violence.
11. *Assertive, Fair Behavior* describes a continuum of conflict response ranging from passive to aggressive, and recommends the midpoint of assertive, fair behavior as a way to stand up for oneself without pushing other people around.
12. *Effective Communication, I: Talking* teaches techniques for assertively expressing oneself in a conflict, including focusing on the other person's behavior instead of personality, and making "I statements."
13. *Effective Communication, II: Listening* introduces the idea that listening is as important as talking in communication and provides behavioral instruction in listening behaviors that make the other person feel heard.
14. *Conflict Resolution, I: Working it Out* provides step-by-step instruction in engaging angry people in collaborative problem-solving, negotiation, compromise and apology.
15. *Conflict Resolution, II: Being a Leader in a Conflict* offers ways to deal with particularly difficult, exasperating or threatening behavior by raising the other person's behavior up to a higher level where collaborative problem-solving can occur.
16. *Knowing When to Walk Away* offers instruction and positive ways to view prevention behaviors at the end of the violence process, when all previous efforts have failed, and walking away is the only non-violent option left.
17. *Friends Don't Let Friends Fight* deals with the issue of peer pressure, first by developing students' ability to resist negative influences and, second, by encouraging careful consideration of one's own functioning as a source of peer pressure, which can be either negative or positive.

Together, these sessions seem to address the main psychosocial factors involved in violent versus interpersonally skillful responses to conflict. The curriculum covers emotions, self-concept issues, cognition, behavior and group dynamics. The sessions offer instruction in proactively avoiding conflicts, responding effectively to conflicts once they have begun, and removing oneself from conflict situations in which the other person's maladaptive behavior makes resolution impossible.

Distinctive Features of the Program

Peacemakers shares much of its content with other violence prevention programs. These common features include work on anger management, social perception, problem-solving, empathy, assertiveness, conflict resolution and peer pressure. Outside of the curriculum, there are important intervention components designed to increase reinforcing attention for positive student behavior and to infuse program content into the everyday school culture. However, *Peacemakers* also includes a number of unique elements not shared by other programs, and these may account for the unusually strong, positive results achieved by the intervention.

Remediation as well as prevention: Along with the prevention component delivered by teachers, *Peacemakers* includes a remediation component for students with serious aggression-related problems. Remediation is delivered by school psychologists, counselors or administrators involved in addressing discipline problems. The Counselor's Manual has the same content as the Teacher's Manual, but the format for implementation is

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quite different. The Counselor's Manual includes guidance on assessing the specific psychosocial factors involved in a student's problems with aggression, so that the sessions directly addressing those factors can be identified. School psychologists and counselors often can not provide all 17 sessions to an individual student, but this is not a problem because the teacher-delivered program will fill in the gaps, and the individual work can focus on the issues most problematic for the student. Because of the coordination between these two aspects of the intervention, students sent to the office for fighting hear the same messages, in the same language, that they hear in class.

Values: *Peacemakers* is unusual among violence prevention programs in that it deals explicitly with the issue of violence-related values. This component was considered necessary because of the close relationship between values and motives; specifically, young people who believe that violence is the most honorable and admirable response to conflict will not be motivated to learn the non-violent conflict management skills offered by programs. Of course, the program includes no religious material. Instruction in values is based on the Golden Rule, which is presented simply as the humanistic idea that other people, as well as ourselves, have real feelings and deserve to be treated with consideration, even when they make us angry.

Use of fiction and writing: The curriculum includes a series of stories with accompanying writing exercises that were written by a children's author specifically for integration into the program. The stories, with characters the same age as the students, illustrate and concretize the issues, skills and attitudes taught by the curriculum. The writing exercises help students apply and practice the skills they are learning. The fiction and writing components also have the practical advantage of including academic work in the program, so that class time spent on violence prevention is not entirely lost to academic instruction. *Peacemakers* can be scheduled as part of the school's Language Arts or English program.

Interactive Multimedia on CD-ROM

There is a new and innovative violence prevention technology that was not part of last year's evaluation of *Peacemakers* but that could easily be added to that program. In collaboration with EDR Corporation, with funding from the National Institute of Mental Health, we developed an interactive, computerized learning activity on CD-ROM that teaches the same attitudes and skills taught by *Peacemakers*. The CD-ROM, called *The Coolien Challenge*, uses video, audio, animation, graphics and music to provide didactic instruction and skill application to a variety of interpersonal situations.

Despite its serious purpose, young people perceive this learning activity as an exciting computer game. In our pilot testing, students were not required to use the CD-ROM and, in fact, could use it only during their free

time. Nonetheless, students lined up to play the game, and observations conducted as part of the study found that 92% of the terminations of game use were involuntary, that is, were caused by the end of free time. In addition, students who obtained high scores on a measure of aggression-related problems spent more time using the CD-ROM than students with low scores, suggesting that the product was especially attractive to youth who needed it the most.

Conclusion

The evaluation of *Peacemakers* indicated that the program achieved a high degree of success at its goal of reducing violence in fourth-through-eighth-grade students, with evaluation results including a 41% decrease in aggression-related disciplinary incidents and a 67% reduction in suspensions for violent behavior.

Although youth violence has become widespread, it does not appear to be an unsolvable problem. Interventions that help youth give serious thought to the issue of violence in their lives and that provide tools for positive behavior change can have a major ameliorative impact on violence. Teachers and school support staff equipped with detailed intervention manuals can provide youth with experiences that change their violence-related emotions, thoughts and actions. Effective violence prevention is a matter of reaching and positively influencing the hearts and minds of our youth.

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- Jeremy P. Shapiro, Ph.D., is Director of the Center for Research, Quality Improvement and Training of Applewood Centers, Inc., 2525 East 22nd Street, Cleveland, OH 44115; (216) 696-5800, ext. 1144; fax (216) 696-6592. This article is reprinted from Communiqué, March 1999.*

Anger Management for Young Children: A Handout for Parents

by Beth M. Levy

Background

Anger is a natural emotion experienced by all living creatures. Animals and humans react and display behaviors when angry, and although humans can also use language to communicate feelings, wants and desires, they often use actions and behaviors instead. Some of these angry feelings and responses are inborn; however, adults also teach children how to respond to emotions. Children learn how to react and handle different feelings from watching parents, friends and teachers around them.

Anger can be a good emotion because it tells us if something is not right, or if we are in danger. Learning how and when to respond to the different feelings of anger is the lesson we need to teach our children. The best way to teach children to handle their anger is by modeling appropriate behaviors, and this is especially important for young children, who are learning how to associate new words with their feelings.

Development

Typically, children direct their aggressive behaviors toward other children more often than toward adults. Children display their anger inappropriately because they do not have good coping strategies. Children do not understand how situations or actions can evoke angry feelings. Something triggers a reaction in the child and they do not know how to respond. Young children are not yet intellectually able to correctly label emotions and to respond in a socially desired manner. They get physical (i.e., pushing, hitting, biting, kicking and screaming) because their language has not yet fully developed and they react with inborn responses.

As children grow, understanding the typical behaviors associated with each developmental (age) stage is helpful to parents. Although these stages do not match every child perfectly, as they do not take into account individual temperament or environmental factors, they can be useful guidelines to follow.

A two-year-old child: Two-year-olds have difficulty making decisions. They want to know everything. "Why?" becomes the two-year-old's ultimate question. During this stage of development there continues to be little, if any, sharing. By two and a half, children start to display intense and often violent emotions. They want everything, especially what they cannot have. Children at this stage express strong feelings for what they desire and will do whatever they need to in order to obtain the desired object.

A three-year-old child: The child at three starts feeling more independent and more comfortable sharing with other children. At the same time, the three-year-old

frequently feels scared in new situations and as a result strives for control again. Their assertiveness is shown through verbal threats, such as: "You are stupid" or "I hate you."

A four-year-old child: At four a child will do anything if provoked. Kicking, spitting and even running away is often seen when the child does not get his way. While they need boundaries, the four-year-old enjoys pushing the limits. Verbal aggressiveness increases with four-year-old children by more name-calling.

A five-year-old child: Five-year-old children want to be "good" and would rather stay with what is comfortable than try new things. Children at this age often exhibit some tantrums and sulking when they become upset.

A six-year-old child: When you are around a six-year-old, you never know what will happen because they rarely make up their mind. The six-year-old is striving for independence and displays an intense need to be first and the best. This causes much anxiety for them. They also want to have everyone's attention. They become verbally and physically aggressive and use such phrases as: "Make me" or "No, I'm not going to do it." By teasing and bullying, the six-year-old can be very loud and bossy.

A seven-year-old child: Seven-year-old children tend to withdraw when things become difficult and to look inward at themselves. They start thinking about the world around them. Worry becomes a major preoccupation, and they show increased concern with what is fair versus what is unfair.

An eight-year-old child: The eight-year-old child is inquisitive — interested in everything that is going on. Friction and jealousy frequently arise among siblings because children at this age still want their mother's attention and will rival with siblings to get it. It is very easy to hurt the feelings of an eight-year-old.

A nine-year-old child: Nine-year-old children do not want to be told what to do by their parents. They resent these directions and often rebel. These children can often be found fighting, complaining, criticizing and ignoring their parents.

What Can I Do as a Parent?

Before you can help your children deal with their anger, you must first explore your own feelings of anger and the way in which you deal with these feelings. Children learn from observing their parents. It is important that parents be aware that their method of dealing with anger is observed and will be imitated and learned by their children. Furthermore, understanding the typical developmental behaviors of children helps parents to

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know which behaviors are not typical and might need looking into. Here are some things to try:

Positive reinforcement: This is a very effective method for teaching children desired behaviors because children strive for attention. Focus on your child's good behaviors, instead of focusing on their bad behaviors. Reward your child often with a small treat or special attention for every short period of time that your child behaves appropriately. Be consistent because your child needs to clearly understand what is expected of him. If you need assistance creating a behavior plan, contact your school psychologist.

Help children understand and express feelings: When voices and tantrums become louder and louder, tell the child that you will wait until they use a calm voice. You may also validate their anger while asking what you can do to help, such as "I see that you are angry, what can I do to help?" Children may not always get what they want, but you are teaching them that their feelings matter. You also teach them that there are more acceptable ways to achieve their desired goal or to obtain a desired object without anger.

Help children learn problem solving skills: Role-playing different solutions and teaching problem solving techniques will also be beneficial to your child because you can demonstrate positive, non-violent ways to resolve conflict.

Self talk and relaxation: By school age, positive self talk can help your child to talk himself down from an angry outburst. Self talk statements such as, "I can handle this", "I'm okay, just stay calm", etc., are useful ways to help children control their anger at times when they especially need to remain calm. Teach them relaxation techniques such as: count to 10 before taking action, or taking several deep breaths when faced with difficult or anger-provoking situations. When teaching your child new techniques, keep them developmentally appropriate.

Parents can play a positive role by helping their children deal with anger. Parents who use positive approaches and modeling techniques will enable their children to grow emotionally strong and able to deal with the difficult

situations they will face in the course of everyday life.

Some children inappropriately display anger because they have not yet learned more effective coping strategies. There are other children who may become violently angry or who may display hazardous behaviors that are dangerous to themselves and others. If there is an increase in your child's anger, determine whether any significant changes have occurred which might be upsetting your child. If your child is displaying severely violent or dangerous behaviors, it is strongly recommended that you seek additional assistance from a school psychologist or a pediatrician.

Resources for Parents

Bilodeau, L. (1992). *The anger workbook*. Minneapolis: CompCare Publishers.

Clark, L. (1996). *SOS! Help for parents* (2nd edition). Parents Press.

Eastman, M. (1994). *Taming the dragon in your child: Solutions for breaking the cycle of family anger*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Martin, M. & Waltman-Greenwood, C. (1995). *Solve your child's school-related problems*. New York: HarperPerennial.

McKay, M., Fanning, P., Paleg, K., & Landis, D. (1996). *When anger hurts your kids: A parent's guide*. Oakland, California: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

Severe, S. (1996). *How to behave so your children will, too!* Greentree Publishing.

Resources for Elementary or Preschool Children

Aborn, A. (1994). *Everything I do you blame on me!* King of Prussia, PA: The Center for Applied Psychology, Inc. (Grades K-6).

Faber, A. & Mazlish, E. (1994). *Bobby and the Brockles*. New York: Avon. (Grades 3-5).

Mosher, A. (1994). *Don't rant & rave on Wednesdays!: The children's anger control book*. Kansas City, MO: Landmark Editions. (Grades K-6).

Simon, N. (1974). *I was so mad!* Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Co. (Pre-3).

Beth Levy, NCSP, is a school psychologist in the Bedford Schools in Mt. Kisco, NY. Reprinted from Helping Children at Home and School (NASP, 1998).

NASP Mission Statement

The mission of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is to promote educationally and psychologically healthy environments for all children and youth by implementing research-based, effective programs that prevent problems, enhance independence, and promote optimal learning. This is accomplished through state-of-the-art research and training, advocacy, ongoing program evaluation, and caring professional service.

Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation: A Guide for Educators

by Mary M. Chittooran

Background

Conflict is both natural and inevitable in human relations. It is neither good nor bad in itself, but it is the response to conflict that makes it either a destructive experience or the medium through which problems can be aired and solutions reached. Two common responses to conflict — avoidance/withdrawal and verbal or physical confrontation — are not constructive and usually worsen matters. Another response is communication, which is the most effective way to resolve differences between individuals.

Schools should teach students conflict resolution skills since unresolved conflicts can lead to poor academic performance, low self-esteem and other social-behavioral problems. Typical school-based programs focus on teaching a conflict resolution curricula, skills-based mediation programs, or a combination of the two.

Peer Mediation

One of the most frequently used skills-based approaches to conflict resolution is that of peer mediation. Used to solve serious conflicts that cannot be handled independently by the individuals involved, peer mediation relies on an impartial third party to help students engaged in a conflict to use communication, negotiation and problem-solving skills to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. The mediator does not render a judgement, force a solution, or otherwise influence a decision.

Rationale: Peer mediation is designed to teach students to find alternative ways to resolve conflicts and to encourage them to solve their own problems in a constructive fashion. When peer mediation is effective, it allows students to understand and respect different points of view. Peer mediation teaches problem-solving and decision-making, improves communication and critical thinking skills, increases cooperation and reduces adult intervention in student conflicts. Positive effects have been found in elementary, middle and high schools and with children of varied backgrounds and ability levels.

The Peer Mediator: The peer mediator is usually nominated by peers or teachers and is then selected on the basis of teacher recommendations. The most effective peer mediators have good judgment, enjoy the respect and trust of their peers, display leadership abilities and have good communication skills. They are not necessarily the best-behaved students in their classes, or “straight -A” students. The peer mediator’s role is to monitor the problem-solving process, to be unbiased, to listen empathetically to the disputants, to be respectful to them, to help them work together to solve problems and to keep information confidential. Peer mediators undergo specific training in conflict resolution and mediation, with most sources recommend-

ing between 12 and 20 contact-hours, depending on the age of the student.

Peer Mediation Procedures

Students may request mediation when they are involved in a dispute or they may be referred by teachers, administrators and parents. In any event, participation is voluntary. Once students agree to engage in mediation, the peer mediator assigned to a case arranges a meeting at some neutral setting. Students are asked to sit facing each other, with the peer mediator between them. Other parties are usually not permitted in the room. The following are the six typical steps used in mediation:

1. Open the Session

Students are introduced to each other and to the peer mediator. Ground rules are stated and discussed. Both disputants must agree to respect each other, to be honest, to stay calm, to listen to the other’s point of view, to be willing to cooperate to find a solution and to focus on issues, not the person (no name-calling, blaming, shouting, or interrupting). The peer mediator secures a commitment from both parties to follow all ground rules.

2. Gather Information

Each student is asked, one at a time, for their version of the problem. Mediators may assign each student a specific amount of time during which they may speak uninterrupted. The peer mediator’s role is to use effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills such as eye contact, empathy, restating, summarizing and clarifying to obtain as much relevant information as possible.

3. Focus on Common Interests

The peer mediator then asks questions to determine what each student wants and why they want it. Common interests are identified and stated and form a springboard for further discussion. For example, the students may indicate that they have a common interest in solving the problem as quickly as possible.

4. Create Options

The peer mediator then explains that brainstorming will be used to find solutions to the conflict and describes the rules for brainstorming. Participants try to come up with as many solutions to the problem as possible. However, at this stage, ideas may not be judged, evaluated or criticized, however far-fetched or unworkable they may seem. The peer mediator may write down ideas as they are offered and may ask questions for clarification.

5. Evaluate Options and Choose a Solution

The students then evaluate their list of options with the help of the peer mediator. Their task is then to decide on

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one option that best meets their needs. The peer mediator then summarizes the solution.

6. Generate an Agreement and Seal It

Each student says what they will do to solve the problem. The agreement is written down by the peer mediator. The students sign the document and the peer mediator signs as a witness. The mediator congratulates the students on a successful session and encourages them to shake hands to seal the deal. Students may seek additional mediation if the agreement is not working. Changes in the original agreement must be agreed upon and signed by both students and the peer mediator.

Critical Components

Peer mediation can be a highly successful tool for conflict resolution in the schools. When starting a program, the critical components are:

1. clear, specific goals and procedures
2. an advisory committee of school professionals, parents and community representatives
3. adequate funding and resources
4. community support
5. handbooks and brochures advertising the new program
6. selection and training of program coordinators and peer mediators
7. orientation sessions for staff and students
8. established evaluation criteria
9. careful monitoring procedures

Resources**Organizations**

CHAMPS Peer Leadership, Inc., 14425 N. Scottsdale Rd., Suite 400, Scottsdale, AZ 85254-3449, (602) 991-9110.

Community Board Program, Inc., 1540 Market Street, Suite 490, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 552-1250.

"We must avoid fragmentation in implementing programs. The concepts in preventing and responding to violence must be integrated into effective school reform, including socially and academically supportive instruction and caring, a welcoming atmosphere, and providing good options for recreation and enrichment."

— Howard Adelman, Professor of Psychology,
University of California, Los Angeles

National Institute for Dispute Resolution, National Association for Mediation in Education, 1726 M Street, NW., Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036-4502, (202) 466-4764.

Peace Education Foundation, 1900 Biscayne Boulevard, Miami, FL, 33132-1025, 1-800-749-8838.

Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP). National Center, 163 Third Avenue, P.O. Box 103, New York, NY 10003, (212) 387-0225.

Materials, Programs and Curricula

Crawford, D., & Schrupf, F. (1994). *Creating the peacable school: A comprehensive program for teaching conflict resolution*. Research Press, Inc. Champaign, IL; (217) 323-3273. For grades 3-12.

Johnson, D. & Johnson, R. (1991). *Teaching students to be peacemakers*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company, 7208 Cornelia Drive, Edina, MN 44535; (612) 831-9500.

Kreidler, W. (1984). *Creative conflict resolution: More than 200 activities for keeping peace in the classroom, K-6*. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.

McGarr, M., Rain, B., & Walker, J. (1993). *RAPP (Resolving All Problems Peacefully)*. Ferguson Middle School, Ferguson-Florissant School District, 701 January Avenue, Ferguson, MS 63135.

Safe Schools Resource Guide (1994). North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh. Instructional Services (EDRS Document No. ED 381 718).

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Mary M. Chittoran, Ph.D., is on the faculty of St. Louis Community (MO). Reprinted from *Helping Children at Home and School (NASP, 1998)*.

Functional Behavioral Assessment: Looking Beyond Applied Behavior Analysis

by J. Ron Nelson, Maura L. Roberts,
Michael Bullis, Craig Albers & Barbara Ohland

Over the years, different assessment procedures have been designed and conducted for a variety of educational purposes. Historically, traditional norm-referenced assessments have been used to classify or determine the eligibility of individuals for certain services. While traditional measures provide useful information for these purposes, the data obtained from such assessments often cannot be directly linked to the actual problem behaviors in the classroom and provide little useful information for designing appropriate interventions. One alternative to traditional assessment procedures is the functional assessment (FA) approach. In general, a functional assessment is characterized by the following features: (a) it includes multiple and different types of direct and indirect assessment procedures; (b) it addresses the student's problem within the setting or conditions in which the individual will be placed; (c) it provides information or data necessary to design interventions; and (d) it allows for ongoing assessment of a student's behaviors (Frey, 1984; Halpern & Fuhrer, 1984).

Given these unique characteristics, there is little question why functional assessment or, specifically, functional behavioral assessment (FBA) procedures were included within the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and that they will play an increasing role in the education of students with disabilities. Within the section on discipline, these amendments require that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team consider positive behavioral interventions, strategies and supports if a student with disabilities has behavior problems (Discipline provisions, 1997). Further, the behavior intervention plan must be based on a FBA. Although the amendments do not specify the theoretical foundation on which the term FBA must be based (Nelson, Roberts, Mathur, & Rutherford, in press), many professionals believe that it is linked solely to the field of applied behavior analysis (e.g., National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 1998). Indeed, we believe that school professionals and others should consider a broader category of functional assessments when conducting functional behavioral assessments within school settings. Thus we use the terms functional assessment and functional behavioral assessment (FBA) interchangeably throughout the remainder of the paper.

Problematic Reliance on Applied Behavior Analysis Procedures

Over-reliance on using functional applied behavior analytic (FABA) assessment procedures in adherence to the 1997 IDEA amendments may be problematic for four reasons. The first reason centers on general disagreement in the field of

applied behavior analysis regarding its basic elements. This is especially the case in regards to the use of functional analysis procedures. Functional analysis is one unique and controversial procedure used in the majority of the FABA assessments. The purpose of the functional analysis is to demonstrate the functional relationship between a problem behavior and the maintaining environmental variables through systematic or experimental manipulations (Halle & Spradlin, 1993). While there is widespread acceptance of the use of FABA, techniques and basic elements of these procedures can vary considerably within the field of applied behavior analysis (Wacker & Reichel, 1993).

The second problem in the use of FABA procedures focuses on the limited external validity of research conducted on these procedures in the field of applied behavior analysis. Although a plethora of databased intervention studies have been conducted, overall, research conducted on FABA in the field of applied behavior analysis provides little information about the feasibility, acceptability and effectiveness of these procedures for dealing with many school-based problems. (Nelson et al., in press). Nelson and colleagues, in their review of FABA procedures, found four methodological issues that limited the external validity of such procedures. First, virtually all that is known about the FABA is based on clients with severe or profound mental retardation, most of whom have concomitant medical or genetic conditions. Second, most of what we know about FABA is based primarily on self-injurious behavior. Third, almost all FABAs involve assessments conducted in analog situations rather than natural environments such as classrooms or playgrounds. Finally, most of the investigations were conducted by individuals with advanced training in applied behavior analysis, leaving in doubt whether school-based personnel can implement correctly and appropriately FABAs in public school settings.

The third problem in the use of FABA procedures centers on whether they will be accepted practice in the classroom, regardless of their merits. The lack of FABA research conducted in classroom settings may suggest a deeper philosophical issue regarding educators' beliefs about the nature of behavior and their ability and desire to address students who exhibit challenging behavior (Nelson & Scott, in press). In other words, the question may not be so much whether functional behavior analytic assessment can be validated as whether practitioners are able and willing to engage in such practices.

The final problem in the over-reliance on FABA procedures reflects the fact that a range of fields other than the field of applied behavior analysis have developed and validated functional assessments. It seems imperative that we explore functional assessment procedures used by other disciplines to maximize our knowledge to conduct effective functional behavior assessments related to the 1997 IDEA discipline amendments. This is important because functional

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assessment procedures have captured the interest of professionals in a wide range of fields related to special education including occupational therapy (Veloza, 1993), speech and language pathology (Frattali, 1992), physical therapy (Wickstrom, 1990) and vocational rehabilitation (Halpern & Fuhrer, 1984).

Furthermore, within this broader purview, assessment procedures regarded as functional in nature have been developed with a wide range of populations including those for persons with head injury (Ross, O'Malley, Stein, & Spettell, 1992), deafness (Bullis & Reiman, 1992), visual impairments (Graves, 1990), learning disabilities (McCue, 1989), emotional and behavioral disorders (Bullis, Bull, Johnson, Johnson, 1994), mental retardation (Derby, Wacker, Sasso, & Steege, 1992), psychiatric disability (Cohen & Anthony, 1984) and young children (Lowenthal, 1997). Thus, it is important to look beyond the field of applied behavior analysis to identify how other disciplines related to special education define and use the term "functional assessment" because of the limited nature and application of functional behavior analytic assessment procedures.

Implications for School Psychologists

Looking beyond the field of applied behavior analysis is especially critical to school psychologists because they will play a crucial role in maintaining and expanding the present definition of "psychological services" to meet all the components under the amended law. As one of the most qualified members of the IEP team, school psychologists have the skills and knowledge to manage, design and interpret the results of functional assessment procedures, regardless of discipline. Additionally, they can provide a linkage among the different disciplinary perspectives that are a part of any collaborative problem-solving process within the schools.

The Functional Assessment Approach by Disciplines Related to Special Education

Within the disciplines related to special education, functional assessment methods focus on evaluating the actual skills and capacities of the individual in the natural setting. In other words, multiple assessment instruments are used to determine the individuals' abilities, interests, task performance, general adjustment, social skills and self-determination in relation to the behavioral requirements, possible accommodations and supports available within that setting, rather than primarily focusing on identifying the function of the behavior. (Bullis, Kosko, Waintrup, Kelly & Isaacson, 1994). The diversity of this work in terms of types of disability and professionals is in stark contrast to that conducted in the field of applied behavior analysis. As noted in the first section, applied behavior analysis is not the only field interested in functional assessment.

Although researchers and other professionals have developed functional assessments in just about every area of education (e.g., curriculum-based and authentic assessments), we delimited our look at such procedures utilized by fields related

to special education including occupational therapy (Veloza, 1993), speech and language pathology (Frattali, 1992), physical therapy (Wickstrom, 1990) and vocational rehabilitation (Halpern & Fuhrer, 1984). This is not to say that, for example, curriculum-based assessment procedures would not play a role in the functional assessment process noted in the 1997 amendments to IDEA. Rather, we were interested primarily in looking at the broad conceptualizations of the constructs measured through functional assessments. To this end, we provide an overview of the application of functional assessment results in disciplines related to special education (i.e., occupational therapy, speech and language pathology, physical therapy, and vocational rehabilitation).

Application of assessment results: The primary areas and associated constructs assessed through functional assessment for disciplines related to special education are presented in Table 1. Inspection of Table 1 reveals that functional assessment is designed to look at the individual in a comprehensive manner prior to developing an intervention plan. Such assessments essentially direct researchers and other professionals to go beyond the presenting concern(s) (e.g., vocational functioning) and look at a number of dimensions that might be useful in improving the quality of life for the individual (Lewis, Burke, & Carrillo, 1987). For example, for a child who exhibits severe challenging behavior, poor interpersonal skills or a lack of motivation to perform such skills, these are important issues to address in a behavioral intervention plan. But for a particular child who exhibits severe challenging behavior, impaired memory or attention might be even more critical in determining the outcome of the intervention plan.

The products of a functional assessment are the (a) identification of an individual's strengths and weaknesses in a number of functional areas and (b) identification of environmental demands and support services and practices. The products of these functional assessments are not related to identifying the function of the behavior nor to weakening the maintaining contingency associated with the problem behavior, but rather to determining the interaction between the characteristics of the individual's strengths and weaknesses in relation to functioning within a particular setting.

Table 1.
Primary Area Assessed Through Functional Assessment in Disciplines Related to Special Education¹

Functional Area	Constructs Measured
Behavioral/psychosocial	Family relations; personality; interpersonal relationships; behavioral surpluses and deficits
Communication	Auditory and visual reception; oral and graphic expression
Cognitive	Intelligence; attention; impulsivity; memory; problem solving; auditory, visual, and spatial perception
Physical	Gross mobility; fine motor skills; strength and endurance
Daily living	Self-care; home maintenance; community awareness and use
Vocational	Aptitudes; interest; academic skills; job seeking skills; job maintenance skills
Environment	Environmental demands; available support structures and practices

¹ The functional areas and constructs measured presented are not exhaustive.

Discussion

Although the overall goal of functional assessment procedures (regardless of discipline) is to improve the quality of life for individuals with and without disabilities, we would like to highlight three primary distinctions between such procedures in the field of applied behavior analysis and disciplines related to special education. The first distinction focuses on differences in *goal* of functional assessment procedures. The goal of functional assessment procedures in the field of applied behavior analysis is limited to the identification of important, controllable, causal environmental events which are functionally related to a specified set of target behaviors for an individual. In other words, the goal is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of environmentally-based behavioral treatments. In contrast, the goal of functional assessment procedures in disciplines related to special education appears to be much broader. The goal is not only to identify an individual's strengths and limitations, but also to assess the environmental demands and supports available to him or her.

The second distinction centers on the *assessment procedures*. In the field of applied behavior analysis, the assessment procedures tend to focus primarily on environmental events that may be functionally related to a set of targeted behaviors. Although multiple assessment procedures are used (e.g., interviews, observations and experimental manipulations), their purpose is the same (i.e., identification of establishing operations, antecedent variables and consequence events that control target behaviors). In contrast, the multiple assessment procedures used in disciplines related to special education go beyond the identification of environmental events that are functionally related to a specified set of target behaviors. Varied procedures are used to provide a complete picture of individuals and the environments in which they function. In other words, multiple dimensions of an individual are considered to ensure that all important areas and questions are addressed. Additionally, disciplines related to special education tend to utilize psychometrically sound assessment procedures whereas the field of applied behavior analysis relies on behavioral observations and experimental manipulations.

The third distinction focuses on the *application of the assessment results*. The application of the results of a functional assessment in the field of applied behavior analysis primarily rests on adjustments to environmental conditions. For example, one of the most common approaches is to use a differential reinforcement procedure, which withholds relevant reinforcers following inappropriate behavior and presents them following a desired behavior. In contrast, the results of a functional assessment in disciplines related to special education tend to direct professionals to go beyond the salient presenting concern(s) and consider a number of personal dimensions of individuals and the environments in which they function.

Finally, an issue not discussed in the functional assessment literature centers on the relationship between the results of functional assessment procedures and the availability of effective treatment methods. The success of functional

assessment, regardless of the area of concern, depends as much on the reliability of the assessment instruments and procedures as on the available treatment methods. The information provided through functional assessment provides an empirical basis for identifying which services and interventions are the most effective. The extent to which this information is useful can be directly connected to the effectiveness and efficiency of the treatments. Further, the available services and interventions must not only be palatable to the other professionals but also to the target students and their families. Functional assessment, regardless of the professional field, is a complex topic encompassing a range of heterogeneous issues, constructs and assessment procedures that clearly warrants continued research and review. Readers are encouraged to more fully explore the rich and varied area of research and practice underlying the functional assessment literature.

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Time-Out: Guidelines for Teachers

by Thomas S. Ewing

Overview of Time-out

Time-out is defined as the withdrawal of opportunity to receive positive reinforcement or the loss of access to positive reinforcers for a specified period of time (e.g., 1-3 minutes). The effect is to reduce the future occurrence of the undesired behavior. There are three important features in this definition: (1) the discrepancy between the time-out environment and the normal "time-in" setting; (2) the loss of access to reinforcement contingent upon the undesired behavior; and (3) a resulting decrease in the future probability that the undesired behavior will recur.

Contrary to popular reasoning, time-out is not accomplished by simply moving an individual to a secluded setting. Such a method may accurately describe isolation, but it is by no means the only way in which time-out can be used.

Time-out Strategies

Two important factors for successful time-out include providing contrast to the time-in environment and being consistent in applying the strategies. The following ten steps should help establish an effective model for implementing time-out procedures to reduce undesired behaviors:

Step 1

Be able to precisely define the behavior you would like to decrease or increase. Example: *The child will decrease the number of times he speaks without raising his hand. Or: The child will increase his compliance with teacher given directions.* The definitions need to be as specific as possible.

Step 2

To change the misbehavior, you need to understand why it is being performed. First, observe the child in the setting where the misbehavior occurs. Now look for three things:

- Who pays attention to the misbehavior?
- What type of reinforcement does the child receive for this behavior? (This may include laughing, pointing, looking at, even being yelled at)
- Does the behavior help the child avoid or escape from something he/she may not want to be involved in?

When the child is in the regular or time-in environment, the level of reinforcement can be judged as lean, moderate, or rich. If it is rated as rich, this would mean the child is receiving lots of positive reinforcement (e.g., verbal or physical praise). If the environment is considered lean, the child is receiving very little reinforcement. Moderate would be considered somewhere between lean and rich.

Step 3

For time-out to be an effective intervention, make sure the time-in environment where the undesired behavior occurs would be rated as rich. This serves two purposes: it motivates the child to desire the time-in setting, and it serves as a severe contrast to the non-enriched time-out environment.

Step 4

Warnings about possible consequences generally are not needed if the desired behavior has been pre-taught. If a warning is given, it should be briefly stated (five words or less) without emotion, one time. Any more than this may result in what is called secondary gain. In other words, talking to the child may reinforce and therefore maintain the behavior you are trying to eliminate.

Step 5

When time-out is to be implemented, you do not need to explain "why" to the child, especially if desired behaviors have previously been explained. In the event that a reason is given, it is necessary to follow the same guidelines as stated in Step 4 above.

Step 6

To reduce the occurrence of undesired behavior, time-out may be implemented at two levels:

- Non-exclusionary time-out. This is where you remove reinforcers from the child. There are two levels of non-exclusionary time-out. They are:
 - (a) *Planned ignoring*: This occurs when social reinforcers — usually attention, physical conduct, or verbal interaction — are removed for a brief period of time (10-60 seconds) contingent upon the occurrence of an undesired behavior.
 - (b) *Removal of reinforcement*: When an undesired behavior occurs, you remove materials the child is interacting with for a period of time (1-3 minutes).
- Exclusionary time-out. This is where you remove the child from the reinforcing conditions. Non-exclusionary time-out is less intrusive and should be tried first. Exclusionary time-out has three levels. Listed from least to most intrusive, they are:
 - (a) *Contingent observation*: Here the child is moved from the time-in environment to another location and still observes ongoing or instructional activities. They may not, however, participate in them. Optimal time limits are 30 to 60 seconds.
 - (b) *Exclusion time-out*: Child is removed totally from the time-in environment. The child does not observe ongoing activities. Examples of exclusion are sitting behind a partition or sitting in a corner. Maximum effective time is up to two minutes.
 - (c) *Isolation time-out*: At this level of time-out the child is isolated from all probable reinforcers by being placed in a different room. Isolation requires a previously defined time duration. Generally five minutes should be the longest a child is isolated.

When preparing to implement a time-out procedure, one factor must be taken into consideration: Time-out will *not* work if the child sees it as an *escape*. Example: The child does not want to work on a math test, so he begins talking very loudly. In turn the teacher places him in time-out. This is rewarding to the child because he has avoided or escaped

from a situation he didn't want to be in.

Step 7

In order to enforce a time-out, an adult should always be present. The child should NOT be the one responsible for determining when they are released. There are four general methods of enforcing time-out:

- "Shaping" involves observing the child in time-out and determining how long she can comply, (or "handle" it), then releasing her just short of her maximum tolerance. For example, if you want the child in time-out for two minutes, but find that after 45 seconds he starts making noise, next time release him after 40 seconds. Then in the future, extend the time in small increments until you reach the desired time.
- "Put back" is just as it sounds — you keep putting the child back (in the event they have left) into the time-out setting until the child has been in time-out for the desired time.
- "Holding" is a method of physical restraint. Because of possible injury to the child or the person holding them, this should only be implemented by persons properly trained to do so.
- "Barrier" involves a room from which the child in time-out cannot leave. Because of space limitations and possible legal or ethical issues, this is rarely used in regular school settings.

Step 8

The maximum duration of any time-out setting should be about five minutes. If there is a significant history of longer time-outs, then up to 15 minutes may be utilized.

Step 9

In deciding when to release a child from time-out, there

are two common philosophies. Either the student must exhibit the desired behavior for a certain length of time, or the student must serve the entire pre-determined time duration.

Step 10

When the time-out is completed and the child is to be released, again minimize secondary gain. Use either a very brief verbal prompt (such as the child's name and the phrase "time-in") or a physical prompt (such as a touch on the shoulder or a flashing of the lights) to release the child.

Remember, the two most important guidelines to success with time-out are 1) provide contrast to the time-in environment and 2) be consistent in implementation.

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Thomas S. Ewing, Ph.D., NCSP is a school psychologist in Bakersfield, CA. Reprinted from Helping Children at Home and School (NASP, 1998).

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J. Ron Nelson, Ph.D., and Maura L. Roberts, Ph.D., are on the School Psychology faculty at Arizona State University where Craig Albers is a student in the School Psychology program and Barbara Ohlund is a Doctoral candidate in Educational Media and Computing; Michael Bullis is on the Special Education and Rehabilitation faculty at the University of Oregon. Request for copies of this manuscript should be addressed to J. Ron Nelson, Ph.D., College of Education, Arizona State University, P.O. Box 872011, Tempe, AZ 85287-2011. This article is reprinted from Communiqué, February 1999.

A Prosocial System for Improving Student Discipline and Responsibility

by Jerry McMullen

Schools are microcosms of society. Serving as a behavior management consultant in the schools requires sensitivity to general social trends. Current trends include reduced amounts of parental supervision, diminished support from community and church, and conflicting or antisocial messages in the media and music. For some students, mixed social messages lead to personal confusion that undermines their ability to succeed academically or socially. Many at-risk students demonstrate a lack of positive direction, an unclear sense of self and free-floating aggression. As might be expected, they encounter difficulty in school, family and community situations. Such students are a worrisome but growing minority. This article describes educators' perceptions of recent trends in student behavior and provides an adaptable three-component prosocial system for addressing behavioral management needs.

Trends in Student Behavior

More than 700 educators attending 31 of the author's behavior management workshops were asked to describe changes in student behavior over the past decade. In order of prevalence, they noted the following top ten changes: (1) less respectful, (2) assume less personal responsibility, (3) less parental involvement and supervision, (4) impatient/impulsive/want instant gratification, (5) home challenges school authority/veracity (e.g., the student is right; school is wrong), (6) more noncompliant/oppositional/defiant, (7) negative attitude, (8) difficulty paying attention, (9) more aggressive, and (10) more inappropriate language. Most respondents work in elementary schools in "good" school districts. The picture is more dire when examining responses from "problematic" schools. Educational systems become increasingly stressed as the percentage of students exhibiting challenging behavior rises. One or two disruptive students per class can hinder the learning environment, especially if disruptive behavior is supported by peers. Effective behavior management approaches are essential to address negative trends and promote safe, productive schools.

When providing behavior management assistance, the following questions must be considered. What are the unique needs of each school? What can be done to meet these specific needs? How can negative trends in student behavior be reversed?

Chester County Prosocial Behavior System

During 1993, after serving as a school psychologist for 20 years, I became a behavior management consultant for Chester County (PA) Intermediate Unit. This position was created through the Statewide Support Initiative (SSI) of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. SSI was initiated in 1989 to provide training and technical assistance in areas including behavior management, instructional support,

assistive devices, early intervention, transition to adult living and inclusion. SSI's goal is to enhance school districts' capacity to provide effective services and programs for all students, including those with disabilities. Districts seek SSI technical assistance from intermediate unit consultants at their discretion.

Examination of varied behavior management approaches led me to the belief that social skills models are well suited to address negative behavior trends. The work of George Batsche, Howard Knoff (Batsche & Knoff, 1995), and Arnold Goldstein (e.g., McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984) provide the foundation for the Chester County Prosocial Behavior System. Techniques for improving school climate from Michele Borba (Borba, 1995) and Carol Allred (Allred, 1984) are incorporated. Refinements have evolved during three years of application in regular and special education programs in 12 school districts, one intermediate unit, several preschool programs and other education and mental health settings.

The Prosocial Behavior System consists of three components that operate *simultaneously*: (1) analysis of school climate and behavioral expectations; (2) trouble shooting, problem solving and maintenance to address specific areas of concern within schools; and (3) promotion of student discipline and responsibility. This system, which is educative rather than punitive, effectively addresses negative qualitative changes noted above as well as challenging behavior exhibited by individuals. It has proven successful with regular and special education students at preschool through high school levels. Each school adapts the system to meet its needs. When school-level implementation is not possible, modifications can be made for individual classroom use. The following is an overview of the system's three components.

Analysis of School Climate and Behavioral Expectations

The most general aspect of the Prosocial Behavior System requires school personnel to examine the climate and behavioral expectations within their building. School climate is the general social tone and conditions that permeate the school atmosphere. Borba (1995) lists the acquired feelings of security, selfhood, affiliation, mission and competence as the building blocks of self-esteem. These feelings also are essential for students to thrive in school and eventually succeed in work and family settings. Prosocial themes such as respect, cooperation or kindness may be promoted on a school-wide basis through assembly programs, signs and posters, and social reinforcement.

Behavioral expectations are established by delineating behavioral standards, establishing rules to achieve them and enforcing these rules. School personnel must consider if behavioral standards and rules are (a) realistic, (b) well defined, (c) clearly communicated and (d) consistently en-

forced. If problems are noted in standards, rules or enforcement, other components of the Prosocial Behavior System provide means for improvement.

Trouble Shooting, Problem Solving and Maintenance

This component consists of several steps: (1) A committee (often called a prosocial or school climate committee) is formed. A classroom teacher serves as chairperson; an administrator is a member. (2) The committee surveys staff to identify areas of concern (e.g., hallway, cafeteria or bus behavior; in-school suspension; student respect; chronic offenders; positive parental involvement; and staff morale). (3) Concerns are prioritized and improvement strategies are designed. Initially, no more than three areas should be targeted. It is important to focus on a limited number of areas to gain success and, perhaps more important, credibility with staff. (4) Program maintenance is accomplished through committee meetings that assess the effectiveness of improvement strategies, make necessary adjustments or establish different priorities. Committees convene on an as-needed basis, but at least once per month. Forty-five minute meetings prior to school are typical.

The following are examples of trouble shooting and problem solving developed by prosocial committees in Chester County. To demonstrate the system's flexibility, applications at elementary and middle schools are presented.

Example 1: Misbehavior of students entering an elementary school's morning breakfast program. Disputes often start in the neighborhood, then continue on the school bus, during breakfast and into the classroom.

Improvement strategies: (1) Establish rules for entering the building: keep hands and feet to self, walk, stay on the right, use inside voice. (2) Post rules at appropriate entrance points. (3) Place traffic cones in the front hall to assure that students stay to the right. (4) Review rules with the students before they are implemented. (5) Provide students guided practice using proper entry techniques. (6) Require students violating entry rules to exit the building and reenter in an appropriate fashion. (7) Use the following standard verbal prompt for students needing reentry: "Stop. What is the good choice?" The student is given "on-the-spot" guided practice of repeating the four entry rules, exiting the building, then reentering properly. (8) Establish assigned seating for breakfast to assure separation of students typically involved in disputes. (9) Enforce appropriate behavior rules during breakfast. (10) Assure that all staff supervising breakfast steadfastly adhere to this system. (11) Serve breakfast to students delayed for "on-the-spot" practice after all other students have been served.

Example 2: Congestion and student conflicts in a middle school's hallways.

Improvement strategies: (1) Station teachers at the end of hallways between periods to observe halls and lavatories. (2) Post teachers at the end of the hallways to monitor walkways when students pass outside between classes. (3) Exit

sixth-graders through the front school entrance to board buses at the end of the day. This allows them to bypass the congested main corridor. (4) Have students walk on the right; install directional arrows to provide visual aides. (5) Require sixth-graders to get books from their lockers before lunch, place the books in their post-lunch classroom, then return to that room after lunch without revisiting lockers. (6) Provide a public address announcement to students regarding lateness for class. Clearly state rules and expectations for passing between classes. Assure students that hallway and promptness rules will be enforced. (7) Provide a summary on the public address system at the end of the day letting students know their level of hallway success. Use a positive orientation to the degree that positive feedback is realistic. (8) Require students who leave study hall for other destinations (e.g., library or tutoring) during eighth period to return to study hall before dismissal. (9) Give students tardy slips if they are late for class. These slips are sent to the office by the reporting teacher. Students receiving three slips are required to call their parents at home or at work to inform them of their pattern of tardiness. Duration of these calls is limited to two minutes. Parents are informed of this policy in advance.

Promoting Student Discipline and Responsibility

This component of the Prosocial Behavior System incorporates methods developed by Batsche and Knoff (1995) and Goldstein (Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw & Klein, 1980; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1990, 1984). These methods allow staff to address student behavior in a way that promotes responsible decision making and, when necessary, teaches social skills that are lacking.

Behavioral psychology suggests that internal language is a key to self-control. Batsche and Knoff's five-step response sequence provides language to help students control impulses and make constructive choices. Initially, this language is externally impressed by teachers and visual icons. Through modeling, application and reinforcement, students internalize this language and use it to exercise self-control and social responsibility. The following is a list of the five steps and a rationale for each:

- 1. Stop and Think.** Teachers say, "Stop and think" to students behaving inappropriately. This prompt interrupts negative and impulsive behavior. It also aids self-control as students internalize and apply it themselves. For teachers, "Stop and think" is a calm, rational, consistent response to challenging behavior. It reduces the tendency to yell and/or respond emotionally to students.
- 2. Good Choice or Bad Choice.** After interrupting inappropriate behavior with "stop and think," teachers ask, "Are you going to make a good choice or a bad choice?" This question places responsibility for decisions squarely upon students. It is made clear that consequences are derived from choices made by students. Power struggles and win or lose situations generated by

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student defiance are defused. This step is the key to assuring that students understand that they are responsible for their behavior and subsequent consequences. It is imperative that meaningful consequences accompany students' behavioral choices.

3. **Choices or Steps.** This part of the sequence varies according to need. Some students are helped to explore alternative choices. In other cases, students with social skill deficits are taught specific steps of social skills essential for school and interpersonal success. These steps are concrete and specific. For example, possible steps for *listening* are: (1) Feet on the floor. (2) Bottom on the chair. (3) Hands folded. (4) Eyes on the speaker. (5) Mouth closed. Goldstein's *Skillstreaming* books (Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw, & Klein, 1980; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984; McGinnis & Goldstein, 1990) offer steps for teaching social skills to promote classroom survival, establish friendships, deal with feelings, use alternatives to aggression and cope with stress. (The role of *Skillstreaming* in the Prosocial Behavior System is discussed below.)
4. **Just do it!** Teachers say, "Just do it!" This activates students who opt for good behavioral choices and reduces verbiage. This message is not used for students who make bad choices; these students experience consequences associated with their choice.
5. **How did I do?** This step is used for self-monitoring and self-evaluation. Students reflect upon the results of their choices and consider behavioral alternatives when needed. This step can be accomplished informally through verbal review with teachers and/or peers or formally through the use of self-rating forms.

The Role of Skillstreaming

Skillstreaming offers an effective method of teaching social skills; however, it is *not* an essential part of the Prosocial Behavior System. Most of our teachers and schools resist taking time from academic instruction to model and role play social skills. Schools are much more inclined to work with school climate, trouble shooting and problem solving, and consistent language (i.e., "Stop and think." "Good choice or bad choice?") than implement *Skillstreaming*. Schools are made aware of *Skillstreaming*, and many adapt aspects of this approach to their needs. Examples of adaptations include:

- (a) Schools readily teach the skill of listening. Student listening is activated by a "Give me five" (for the five steps of listening) prompt followed by the teacher counting backwards from five to one. The entire class is to be in the listening position by the time the teacher says, "One." This prompt, created by Francie McMullen, quickly orients students. Group incentives may be awarded to reinforce compliance. After this procedure has been taught, teachers find that even young children can gain their classmates' attention with directions such as, "Give me five" or "I need listening."

- (b) Teachers dealing with severe behavior problems are more inclined to teach social skills. Some Chester County Intermediate Unit classes for severely emotionally disturbed students spent as much as five weeks teaching the skill of ignoring. Mastery of this skill was essential to reduce interpersonal conflict and volatility triggered by name calling and teasing. Other social skills were not taught to these students until progress with *ignoring* was evident.

- (c) Some schools use commercial or school-made videos, orientation programs and assemblies to model key social skills. Prosocial assemblies are creative and fun for staff, students and parents. North Coventry Elementary's faculty sang and danced to Aretha Franklin's *Respect*. A teacher in a bear costume moderated an assembly on the "bear necessities" for getting along with others in Beaumont Elementary School. Stetson Middle School sends eighth graders to each feeder elementary school to provide assembly programs for fifth graders who will arrive in the fall. Student role plays demonstrate prosocial concepts and problem-solving techniques.

- (d) Several middle and high schools have changed the name and nature of their in-school suspension to OS (Organized Study) and R & R (Respect and Responsibility). Students in these settings complete problem analysis logs, view social skills videos and review skills needed to be successful in class. The emphasis is on prosocial skill development rather than punishment. One school allows students to select "time away" in OS when a short cool-down interval is needed. Although formal data is not yet available, reports indicate that these prosocial rooms are much more effective than traditional in-school suspension.

Staff Training

The Prosocial Behavior System is introduced to schools through inservice programs lasting three to six hours. When possible, all building staff attend. Scheduling sometimes requires separate training sessions for faculty and support staffs. Participants are given the opportunity to volunteer for the Prosocial Committee at the conclusion of inservice presentations. The trainer may attend several Prosocial Committee meetings to facilitate prioritization of concerns and development of improvement strategies during the initial phase of trouble shooting and problem solving.

Parent Training

Schools adopting the Prosocial Behavior System include some form of parent training. This typically involves working with the PTO or site-based management team. Parents are kept informed via school newsletters or other written communication. School climate projects involve parents when appropriate. Stetson Middle School emphasizes parent-teacher alliance in students' academic and social-skill development by referring to parents as the "night-time faculty."

Student Involvement

Some schools enlist student committees to outline concerns and improvement strategies with guidance from a faculty advisor. Input from student committees is considered in conjunction with teacher input. There is a high degree of congruence regarding both concerns and improvement strategies when student and faculty opinions are compared. Stetson Middle School was an innovator in this area. Their student committee was nominated by staff. Faculty from each grade level selected ten student representatives: two academic leaders, two social leaders, two extracurricular leaders, two students prone to getting in trouble (but responsible enough to participate) and two "nice" kids. Recommendations from faculty and students tend to be implemented with less resistance than those mandated by administration.

Outcome Data

Schools implementing the Prosocial Behavior System consistently report improvements in school climate and student discipline. Listed below are measured outcomes obtained by several Chester County schools.

Beaver Creek Elementary
(Downingtown Area School District)
 (Prosocial Behavior System implemented at the beginning of the 1995-96 school year.)

School Year	Suspensions (Sept thru March)	Suspensions (Sept thru June)
1992-93	7	Unavailable
1993-94	6	Unavailable
1994-95	19	33
1995-96	0	1

Stetson Middle School
(West Chester Area School District)
 (Prosocial Behavior System implemented at the beginning of the 1994-95 school year.)

School Year	Suspensions	Fighting and Physical Assaults
1993-94	813	78
1994-95	443	54
1995-96	411	28

North Coventry Elementary, 4th — 5th grade
(Owen J. Roberts School District)
 (Prosocial Behavior System implemented during November 1995.)

Month (1995-96)	Discipline Referrals
September	13
October	14
November	6
December	2
January	3
February	4

Conclusion

Student behavior has changed over the past decade. Educators report noticeable increases in student disrespect, irresponsibility, impulsivity and noncompliance. Students with the most pronounced behavioral problems often lack positive social principles for guiding their behavior. Some manifest unstable aggressive tendencies directed at themselves or others. To effectively deal with school discipline, behavior management approaches must address challenges posed by current negative behavioral trends as well as individual acts of misbehavior. There are no easy answers. Chances for success are improved when effective models of prevention and intervention are designed, adapted to the needs of schools, and shared with others.

The Prosocial Behavior System used in Chester County enhances school climate and improves student discipline though the development of prosocial skills. The system is educative, not punitive; furthermore, it is versatile. It has proven effective with regular and special needs students at preschool through high school levels. In addition to its application in schools, the system has been adapted for parent training and use in mental health settings.

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- Jerry McMullen, Ph.D., is a school psychologist and behavior management consultant in Chester County, PA. This article is reprinted from Communiqué, October 1996.*

Resolution on Children, Guns, and Other Weapons

The Executive Board of the National Association of School Psychologists recognizes that guns and other weapons can — and, unfortunately, often do — hurt children. Guns and other weapons injure and kill thousands of children in the United States each year, through acts of violence and accidents and when the guns and other weapons are used by children and adults. Guns and other weapons may result in psychological harm to children when their family members or friends are injured and killed. The increasing presence of guns and other weapons in schools and communities may create a threatening, hostile, and fearful climate which adversely affects children's psychological development and school learning.

Therefore, the Executive Board of the National Association of School Psychologists resolves to:

- a. Support public policies on gun control which effectively address the potential physical and psychological harm that guns may cause for children;
- b. Promote the development of policies and practices within schools and communities which effectively address the potential physical and psychological harm that guns and other weapons may cause for children;
- c. Assist policy makers, community leaders, parents, educators, school psychologists, and others with creating safe environments for children and protecting the physical and psychological well-being of children; and
- d. Work collaboratively with other professional and advocacy groups in the implementation of the practices described in this resolution.

Adopted by NASP Executive Board, 1994

Resources

Curricula

Goldstein, A., Palumbo, J., Striepling, S. & Voutsinas, A. (1995). *Break it up: A teachers' guide to managing student aggression*. Champaign, IL: Research Press: (217) 352-3273. Video available.

Kreldier, W. J. (1994). *Conflict resolution in the middle school. A curriculum and teaching guide*. Boston: Boston Area Educators for Social Responsibilities: (617) 492-8820. (Companion curriculum for elementary students also available — *Creative conflict resolution: Over 200 activities for keeping peace in the classroom*.)

McGinnis, E. & Goldstein, A. (1997). *Skillstreaming the elementary school child: New strategies and perspectives for teaching prosocial skills*. Research Press: (217) 352-3273. Also available from NASP Publications at (301) 657-0270.

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Web

NASP's National Mental Health and Education Center for Children and Families — www.naspweb.org/center

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practices, improving services for children and youth with emotional and behavioral problems — www.air-dc.org/cecp/cecp.html

Council for Exceptional Children — www.cec.sped.org

Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services — www.uncg.edu/edu/ericcass

Families and Advocates Partnership for Education, information on IDEA '97 — www.fape.org

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health — www.ffcmh.org

IDEA Practices Site, information for parents, pupil services personnel and school administrators on implementing IDEA '97 — www.ideapractices.org

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities — nichcy.org

NASP's Safe School Resources — www.naspweb.org/center/safe_schools/safeschools.htm

Partnership Against Violence, The PAVNET Resources Page — www.pavnet.org

U.S. Department of Education Safe and Drug Free Schools Program — www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS

U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services — www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS

U.S. Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Safe Schools/Healthy Schools Initiative — www.samhsa.gov/sfsc0421.htm