Early-Stage Interventions

Behavior Strategies for Every Teacher

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The Importance *of* Early-Stage Intervention

Every teacher will encounter students in their classroom with challenging behavior. Left unchecked, these behaviors can interfere with a student's learning and place them at risk for ongoing problems at school and in the wider world. Unfortunately, teachers often report feeling unprepared to effectively deal with challenging behavior in the classroom (Westling, 2010). This book offers a set of simple, teacher-friendly interventions to use as a starting place in addressing an individual student's chronic misbehavior.

Who is this book for?

This book is for teachers who have one or more students in their classroom who exhibit chronic challenging behavior (and who doesn't!). Challenging behavior can take many forms. Students may be disruptive, disrespectful, noncompliant, angry, or hostile. They may refuse to cooperate with peers, lack motivation, or appear withdrawn or anxious in the classroom. Misbehavior can be minor (Rafa is often distracted during instruction), moderate (Lisa teases and bullies specific peers), or serious (Josh hits, kicks, and spits at other students and adults).

As a teacher, you are responsible not only for facilitating the academic learning of your students, but also for teaching them how to behave appropriately, motivating them to succeed, and developing the social and emotional skills that will set them up for success in school and beyond. This is a complex task. Fortunately, decades of

research confirm that effective classroom management techniques can take on much of the legwork in directing student behavior and motivation (Epstein, Atkins, Cullinan, Kutash, & Weaver, 2008; Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008). A well-designed classroom management plan will result in most students behaving appropriately most of the time.

Resources: Developing an Effective Classroom Management Plan

If you have more than two or three students who misbehave, we highly recommend that you give thought to modifying your current classroom management plan before diving into the interventions presented in this book. Designing and adjusting your classroom management plan often leads to noticeable improvements in the behavior of all your students. Review Pre-Intervention 1, starting on page 20, for basic guidance to help you identify strengths and weaknesses in the practices you currently use to manage student behavior and motivation. For more comprehensive and detailed help with classroom management planning, see these resources:

- For grades K–8: Sprick, R. S. (2009). *CHAMPS: A proactive and positive approach to classroom management* (2nd ed.). Eugene, OR: Ancora Publishing.
- For grades 9–12: Sprick, R. S. (2013). *Discipline in the secondary classroom: A positive approach to behavior management* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

However, no matter how well you organize your classroom, communicate your behavior expectations, and interact positively with students, you are likely to have one or two students who engage in chronic misbehavior. *Chronic* means that the student's challenging behavior a) has persisted over time (at least a couple of weeks), and b) has been resistant to your general classroom management practices. Being equipped with a set of early-stage intervention strategies can help you efficiently address and remediate chronic patterns of problematic behavior.

Mr. Williams is concerned about Fernando, a student in his fourth-grade class. Fernando is easily distractible and rarely able to concentrate for longer than 5 or 10 minutes on any assignment. Mr. Williams thinks that Fernando's ability is at least average and that he is capable of doing his work but just won't stick with it. When Mr. Williams stands next to Fernando, the boy completes his assignments, and the quality of the work is satisfactory. Over the last few weeks, Mr. Williams has tried giving gentle reminders, praising Fernando for responsible behavior, and having him finish his work during afternoon choice time — but none of these efforts has had an effect on Fernando's behavior. At this point, Fernando's problem behavior has become chronic, and Mr. Williams decides to try an early-stage intervention to see if he can help Fernando turn things around.

What is an early-stage behavior intervention?

Early-stage interventions are simple, planned efforts coordinated by the classroom teacher to address a problematic behavior (or set of behaviors) that is interfering with an individual student's success in school.

Easy to plan and implement, early-stage interventions are designed to be unobtrusive, requiring minimal resources, paperwork, and administration involvement. When a student begins to show signs of chronic misbehavior, you should always try early-stage interventions before initiating more time-intensive or resource-heavy interventions. For most students, these efforts can adequately address problems in the early stages.

Mr. Williams decides to meet with Fernando and his parents to have a Planned Discussion, the first intervention in the early-stage sequence. He thinks that it would be worthwhile to present his concerns to Fernando and his parents and come up with some ideas together about how to help Fernando become more responsible for his work. If no improvement is seen after this initial discussion, they can meet again to consider other options.

FIGURE I.1   *List of Early-Stage Interventions*

A. Planned Discussion
B. Correction Planning
C. Increasing Positive Interactions
D. Data Collection and Debriefing
E. Goal Setting
F. Building a Supportive Relationship
G. Function-Based Intervention

The early-stage interventions presented in this book (see Figure I-1) are based on the following behavior principles:

1. **Behavior has a purpose.** Challenging behavior exists because it serves some useful purpose for the student (O'Neill, Albin, Storey, Horner, & Sprague, 2015). For example, a student may be trying to get something through misbehavior, such as attention from teachers or peers, or avoid something, such as an embarrassing or stressful situation. For some students, misbehavior may be the only behavior in the student's repertoire that results in the desired outcome. Or misbehavior may just be more efficient or effective than more socially appropriate ways of achieving an outcome. Understanding what motivates problematic behavior is the first key to finding an appropriate approach to intervention.

2. **Behavior is related to the environment in which it occurs.** The events that typically occur before (i.e., triggers or antecedents) and after (i.e., positive or negative consequences) a student engages in challenging behavior predict when and why this behavior is occurring (Foster-Johnson & Dunlap, 1993; Iwata, Dorset, Slifer, Bauman, & Richman, 1982). For example, a student may be more likely to be off-task during writing tasks or misbehave to gain the approval of certain peers who are present. Understanding how different aspects of a student's environment influence chronic misbehavior will allow you to select intervention strategies to address these variables, thus changing the environment to encourage different behaviors.

3. **Lasting behavior change is more likely with positive, rather than punitive, techniques.** Intervention efforts should emphasize positive, proactive strategies that prevent problem behavior from occurring in the first place and explicitly teach and reinforce alternative desired behaviors. Proactive strategies are more likely to produce lasting behavior change than reactive interventions that rely on punitive consequences alone (Carr, Robinson, & Palumbo, 1990).

4. **No student should ever be intentionally or unintentionally humiliated or belittled.** The only absolute rule about behavior management is that belittlement of students has no place in any educational setting—all behavior interventions must treat students with dignity and respect.

5. **Behavior can be changed through environmental redesign.** While you may sometimes feel that you don't have any control over the way a student acts at school or what their home life is like, you do carry a lot of control over the environmental variables in your classroom. Rather than dwelling on what can't be changed, focus on considering how your classroom environment might contribute to problematic behavior patterns. You can then harness your greatest power to motivate students to change their behavior—through structuring for success, teaching expectations, observing and monitoring student behavior, interacting positively, and correcting fluently.

stoic /sto·ic/ adj.

1. Tending to remain unemotional, especially showing an admirable patience and endurance in the face of adversity.

2. Unruffled, calm, and firmly restrained in response to pain or distress.

We use the acronym STOIC to represent these five broad categories of environmental variables that have proven to be effective in changing behavior (see Figure I.2).

Positive interactions and encouragement reinforce desirable behavior, and corrections calmly discourage problem behavior. This increases the likelihood that students will choose to engage in positive behaviors in the future.

The early-stage interventions in this book are based on these STOIC strategies. As you progress through the sequence, you'll notice that earlier interventions provide guidance in adjusting aspects of just one or two categories, whereas later interventions will walk you through the process of integrating strategies from all categories.

FIGURE I.2 *STOIC Strategies*

PREVENTION

Structure for Success: Changing the structure of the setting can affect the events that happen before behavior (i.e., antecedents and setting events). Modifying features of the schedule, physical arrangement of the classroom, instructional procedures, and other structural elements known to trigger a student's problem behavior can eliminate or reduce the impact of these antecedent and setting events on behavior.

TEACHING

Teaching Replacement Behaviors: By teaching expectations, appropriate behaviors, and coping and self-control strategies, you help the student develop or strengthen behaviors that are alternatives to misbehavior. Identify a plan to teach students to function successfully in the structure you have created.

MONITORING

Observe and Monitor: The simple act of active observation goes a long way to curtail problem behavior. Incorporating strategies to increase monitoring, such as continuously circulating throughout the room and scanning during challenging times, can help prevent misbehavior from occurring as well as ensure that you provide appropriate redirections when misbehavior does happen.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Interact Positively: Interacting positively involves two connected efforts: 1) providing frequent positive feedback when the student demonstrates appropriate behavior, such as meeting expectations, using replacement behaviors, and responding appropriately to requests and directions, and 2) building positive, rewarding relationships with students by greeting and showing an interest in them.

CORRECTION

Correct Misbehavior Fluently: When misbehavior occurs, it's important for all staff to know how to respond calmly, briefly, consistently, and immediately. Corrections should minimize distraction from the instructional activity and redirect the student to engage in appropriate behavior.

STOIC

Why are early-stage interventions important?

Early-stage interventions are simple and efficient. Early-stage interventions are designed to be a starting place for teachers to intervene when a student exhibits chronic misbehavior. Initial efforts should always involve trying the easiest and cheapest solution first. If the straightforward action of meeting with a student to discuss a concern (as in Planned Discussion) has the potential to improve challenging behavior, this simple, uncomplicated intervention should always be tried first. A short meeting just might go a long way. If it prompts the student to change their behavior, you've saved a lot of time. If more improvement is needed, you can move along the continuum of interventions to try another option that requires more planning or resources to implement.

Consider how the medical model works. Let's say it's flu season and you decide to get a flu shot to reduce your chances of catching the virus. Despite receiving this vaccine and washing your hands as often as possible, you're one of the unlucky ones who become ill. After a period of feeling unwell with little improvement, you make an appointment to see your primary care provider. The primary care provider, following a standard treatment protocol, prescribes an antiviral medication to take for the next several days. You follow this recommendation, but don't find any relief. When you return, the doctor, again consulting the standard treatment protocol, orders a set of blood tests to see if you may have developed complications from the flu. These results suggest that you might have a sinus infection, so your primary care provider prescribes an antibiotic. When these initial treatments don't work, the doctor refers you to radiologist for a chest X-ray to determine whether you have developed pneumonia and then develops a treatment plan based on the results. If you still don't improve, your primary care provider may then refer you to a doctor who specializes in infectious diseases or lung disease.

The point of this example is to show its efficiency. Just as the medical model reserves the most intensive problem-solving and intervention efforts for later stages of a problem, a continuum of behavior interventions starts with the simplest, easiest, and cheapest solutions and moves to more complex, resource-intensive interventions only when earlier efforts are not successful.

To further illustrate this metaphor, the medical model is analogous to a continuum of behavior interventions in the following ways:

- Public health initiatives (e.g., flu vaccines) aim to prevent illness for the majority of the population. Similarly, the majority of school-based behavior problems can be prevented by establishing and reinforcing universal schoolwide policies and procedures and by ensuring that teachers use effective behavior management practices in their classrooms.
- Primary health care providers are the first line of defense when problems arise, carrying out a treatment protocol that moves from trying simple solutions first to those that are more involved. This process is analogous to a teacher (students' primary education providers) implementing a series of early-stage interventions with a student who exhibits chronic misbehavior in the classroom.
- Specialized doctors are called in after the primary provider attempts a series of interventions without success. Just as a primary care provider might request additional testing and expert collaboration, a teacher may need to request assistance from building or district-based specialists, such as a school psychologist, behavior specialist, or problem-solving team, after all early-stage interventions have been attempted but have not adequately addressed a student's behavior problems.

We recommend offering a continuum of interventions to ensure that *all* students learn to function successfully in school and that this success is accomplished in the most efficient manner possible. If your initial effort is effective, you've spent very few of your school's precious, limited resources. In a world in which schools have unlimited resources, you could assign a highly skilled teacher and fully trained school

psychologist to every student who shows any sign of a behavior problem. But this is not the reality in U.S. schools. Even if resources were limitless, this level of intensity isn't necessary to address most challenging behavior that students bring to the classroom. This would be like sending everyone who comes down with the flu to an infectious diseases specialist—a major waste of time and resources for all involved.

Teachers are key to prevention and early intervention. Teachers know a lot about their students and serve a critical role in recognizing and intervening when patterns of problematic behavior become apparent. As mentioned above, a teacher's role is similar to the role of primary care providers: Teachers are responsible for overseeing a student's educational experience and being the first responder when a student shows signs of difficulty at school. On top of this, teachers play an integral part in ensuring that universal and classroom practices are meeting the needs of the majority of their students. They are also key participants in collaborating with specialists and problem-solving needs if an individual student requires more intensive behavior support. Being equipped with a series of early-stage interventions that you can turn to at the first sign of a chronic behavior problem will help you manage this demanding role and allow you to intervene as quickly as possible to help students get back on track. We know that the earliest possible intervention is important for students who show signs of problematic behavior patterns, as these students are at increased risk of developing more severe behavior problems (Stormont, 2002; Walker, et al., 1996). As someone who interacts with students on a daily basis and evaluates their progress across the school year, you are well positioned to recognize when a student is struggling to meet expectations at school. Research backs this up: When teachers receive clear criteria for determining how to identify students who are challenged by the demands of schooling, they do so accurately and reliably (Walker, Small, Severson, Seeley, & Feil, 2014).

Most challenging behavior that occurs in the classroom is mild and responsive to simple intervention efforts. Despite the perception that schools are dangerous places full of aggressive and highly disruptive students, the reality is that the majority of challenging behavior that occurs in the classroom is mild. Teachers tend to report minor off-task behavior, including inattention and distractibility, as the most frequently occurring and problematic challenging behavior (Alter, Walker, & Landers, 2013). However, if left unaddressed, off-task behavior often becomes a gateway misbehavior that leads to more problematic behavior (e.g., when a student is off task, they are more likely to provoke an argument with a peer). The most severe forms of behavior, or *Code Red* situations involving behaviors that are either unsafe or so disruptive that classes cannot continue (e.g., violence, property destruction, sustained confrontational or defiant behavior), often occur in a predictable, escalating cycle when problems of increasing frequency and intensity are left unchecked (Colvin & Scott, 2014). If teachers intervene early to interrupt this cycle and stop it from progressing, most severe expressions of challenging behavior can be prevented.

Early-stage interventions help bridge the gap between general education and special education. Problem behavior is the single most common reason why students are removed from regular classrooms. At first glance, removing every disruptive student from the classroom may seem compelling, but it is not realistic and presents several problems, for the student as well as the school. Teachers work hard to provide effective academic instruction and implement strong classroom management practices. When

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one particular student in the classroom exhibits chronic misbehavior that is resistant to the teacher's general management procedures, some teachers may believe that the student needs to be placed elsewhere—whether that means removing the student from the classroom temporarily (e.g., sending the student to the office, assigning out-of-school suspension) or permanently (e.g., placing the student in a special education setting, or more extremely, expelling the student from school altogether).

First, due to recent legislative actions, both state and federal, and the reality of limited resources in most districts, reassigning a student to an alternative placement is rarely an option. Teachers are being asked to serve more and more students with emotional and behavior disabilities in general education classes than ever before (Wilson, Kim, & Michaels, 2013). This trend is a direct result of the 2004 amendments to the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) that mandate schools to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. The law specifies that students with disabilities should be removed from the regular educational environment only "when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily" (IDEA, 2004, 1412[a][5][A]). Even if removal is warranted, only about 5% of the total school-age population receives special education services under the eligibility category of emotional behavior disorders (EBD; U.S. Department of Education, 2019). With this small portion of students identified as eligible for special education services, general education teachers are very likely to have students in their classrooms who need behavior supports. This means that general education teachers should plan for serving students with and without documented disabilities in their classroom.

Second, the environments that special educators have created are often not appropriate and fail to benefit students with behavior problems. There is a marked lack of data on the effectiveness of pull-out programs and assignment to resource rooms in remediating behavior problems (Zigmond, 2003). On the other hand, numerous studies clearly document the general benefits of inclusion for students with disabilities, including greater access to the general curriculum, higher expectations for learning, and exposure to peer role models for academic, social, and behavior skills (Holahan & Costenbader, 2000; Villa & Thousand, 2016). These benefits extend to typically developing students as well. In a review of the literature, Kalambouka, Farrell, and Dyson (2007) reported that including students with disabilities in the general education classroom has either neutral or positive effects on other students. Some of these positive effects include enhancing academic achievement, self-esteem, and knowledge and attitudes about disabilities among all students (Diamond & Huang, 2005; Straub & Peck, 1994). Because the evidence is inconclusive on whether students with disabilities are likely to do better in one instructional setting than another, but conclusive on the benefits that students gain from participation in inclusive classrooms, it would be inappropriate in the majority of cases to completely remove a student with behavior problems from the general education setting. Instead, with proactive planning and minor adjustments, students with behavior issues can meaningfully participate in the general education curriculum and classroom (Scott, Park, Swain-Bradway & Landers, 2007).

General education teachers are very likely to have students in their classrooms who need behavior supports.

How do early-stage interventions fit into a multi-tiered system of support for behavior (MTSS-B) framework?
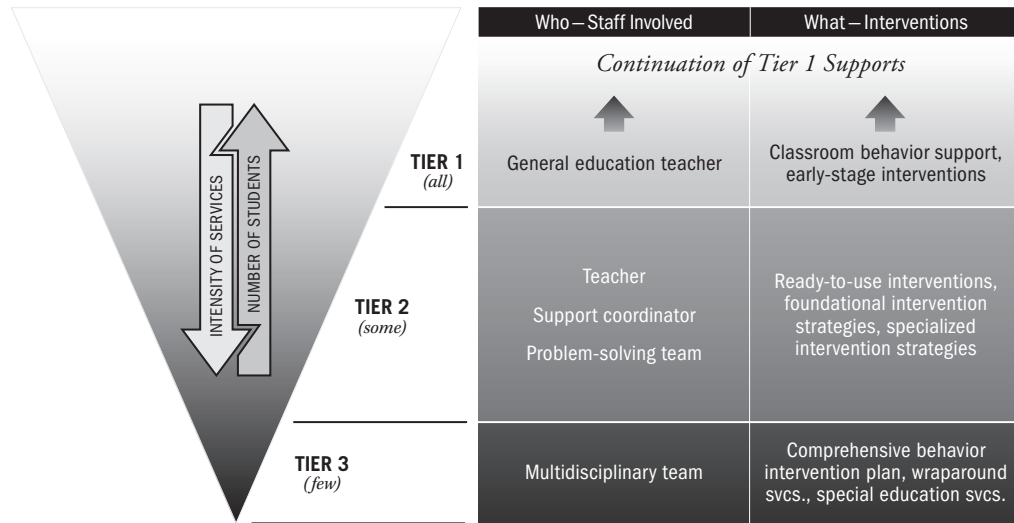
Multi-tiered systems of support offer a framework to help reduce the divide between general and special education, ensure that school resources are matched to students' needs, and leverage the expertise and influence of teachers as first responders when a student shows sign of behavior problems. Although early-stage interventions can be implemented by a single teacher in a single classroom, they are most effective when carried out as one component of a fully implemented schoolwide multi-tiered system of support for behavior (MTSS-B) approach. An MTSS-B framework encompasses a range of problem-solving processes and intervention supports—from low cost and time efficient to high cost and time consuming—so that the intensity of the process matches the intensity of the student's need. MTSS-B merges these basic concepts:

- Always try the easiest, cheapest, and least time-consuming intervention that has a reasonable chance of success before attempting more complicated and costly interventions.
- You cannot know that a simple intervention will not work unless you try it and implement it well.
- If the problem is resistant to simple interventions, try progressively more detailed and intensive interventions until the problem is resolved.
- All interventions should have a long record of success—evidence and research literature documenting its effectiveness in different settings and with different types of students—and involve respectful procedures that do not coerce or humiliate the student.

Most students are served well by a broad framework of universal policies, procedures, and programs that outline a school's expectations for students. But for some students, these universal polices and classroom management structures are not enough, and they have difficulty meeting academic or behavioral expectations. When these students slip through the broad safety net of universal prevention, it is crucial to have in place a second level of netting—a multi-tiered framework that ensures that student needs will be met in the most time- and cost-efficient manner possible. The figure on the next page and text that follows describe how this is achieved within the Safe & Civil Schools MTSS model of service.

Tier 1: Universal Supports for All Students

Tier 1 supports are designed to prevent problem behavior from occurring in the first place. In our model, Tier 1 includes not only universal policies, but also a layer of effective classroom management practices and a set of teacher-led, early-stage interventions for common behavior problems.

FIGURE I.3 *Safe & Civil Schools MTSS Model of Service*

Who — Staff Involved	What — Interventions
Continuation of Tier 1 Supports	
TIER 1 *(all)* — General education teacher	Classroom behavior support, early-stage interventions
TIER 2 *(some)* — Teacher / Support coordinator / Problem-solving team	Ready-to-use interventions, foundational intervention strategies, specialized intervention strategies
TIER 3 *(few)* — Multidisciplinary team	Comprehensive behavior intervention plan, wraparound svcs., special education svcs.

INTENSITY OF SERVICES — NUMBER OF STUDENTS

At Tier 1, the primary interventionist is the teacher, who is trained to implement the set of basic early-stage interventions presented in this book before asking for collaborative assistance. These should always be tried before initiating more time-intensive or resource-heavy interventions. For most students, these efforts can adequately address problems in the initial stages.

Tier 2: Targeted Supports for Some Students

Tier 2 supports are designed to reduce current incidents of problem behavior. For students who continue to experience behavior problems despite implementation of Tier 1 supports, Tier 2 interventions are provided to supplement ongoing universal efforts.

At Tier 2, problem-solving and intervention efforts are more collaborative. In addition to the teacher, support coordinators (staff members enlisted to link potentially at-risk students to appropriate resources) and other professionals, such as a school counselor, school psychologist, or behavior specialist, help identify appropriate interventions. Tier 2 interventions are typically planned in conjunction with a building-based interventionist or problem-solving team but are often implemented by the classroom teacher. Tier 2 supports might, for example, have the student participate in bi-weekly small-group anger management lessons, join a mentorship program, or use a daily behavior report card.

Tier 3: Intensive Supports for a Few Students

Tier 3 supports are reserved for the small group of students who don't respond to Tier 1 and Tier 2 services or when the intensity of the problem warrants a greater level of support. A problem may be considered intensive because of its severity, immediacy, or resistance to other interventions.

At Tier 3, a much more comprehensive, resource-intensive approach is required, and the most highly skilled personnel in the building participate. Problem-solving efforts may involve observations of the student in multiple settings, completion of a comprehensive functional behavior assessment (FBA), or coordination with other community or family agencies. Tier 3 interventions are highly individualized and involve multiple components. They might include designing and implementing an individualized behavior intervention plan, mental health counseling or family therapy, or wraparound coordination of school, family, and community agencies.

NOTE: In the case of high-intensity behaviors, such as a threat by a student to self-harm or harm someone else, the situation demands an immediate jump to a Tier 3 level of intensive problem-solving. MTSS-B is not an inflexible set of hoops wherein every situation must progress through Tier 1 and Tier 2 before Tier 3 problem-solving efforts are initiated. Crisis situations must be addressed immediately, without any delay related to referral processes, paperwork considerations, or rigid definitions of tiered services.

Resources: Implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Support

If your school does not have a proactive and positive schoolwide approach, we urge you to involve the whole staff in a continuous effort to implement and sustain such policies. There is no more effective way to reduce the need for individual interventions.

Foundations: A Proactive and Positive Behavior Support System (3rd ed.) provides a broader overview of effective policies at the building and district level that can help ensure that:

- School is a physically and emotionally safe place for students and staff.
- Policies and procedures are clear, reasonable, and equitably enforced.
- Staff actively strive to build relationships with students that inspire them to do their best.

Interventions: Support for Individual Students with Behavior Challenges (3rd ed.) gives educators information about how to create a continuum of problem-solving and intervention supports for students who don't respond to universal efforts — or those students who require the higher levels of support, resources, or expertise characteristic of Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports. This revised edition provides recommendations for efficient schoolwide coordination for delivery of intervention services at the individual student level. It also presents an evidence-based model to guide effective and efficient problem-solving and intervention design for individual students.

Visit ancorapublishing.com for more information on these resources.

As a teacher working within an MTSS-B framework, you are tasked with leading Tier 1 instruction and support. At the classroom level, this means that you are responsible for teaching and reinforcing schoolwide expectations, establishing and enforcing classroom rules, and responding to misbehavior by using effective classroom management practices. For individual students who demonstrate chronic patterns of misbehavior and require more support, your role will involve implementing early-stage interventions, documenting your efforts, monitoring student progress and collecting data, and knowing what steps to take next if early-stage efforts have not adequately addressed the problem.

Book Organization

Section 1: Pre-Intervention for the Classroom Teacher

This section focuses on assessing and adjusting classroom management and academic support. When a student engages in repeated misbehavior in the classroom, it is important to first consider whether the classroom environment or the student's academic skills may be contributing to the problem. Often, what appears to be a behavior problem may have an underlying academic component or may be influenced by the classroom climate or structure.

Pre-Intervention 1: Assessing and Adjusting Classroom Management Support

This chapter on general classroom management strategies is designed to help you improve the behavior of an entire class. If you have more than a few students who engage in chronic misbehavior, refer to this chapter first to decide whether it's best to adjust your general classroom management plan before putting in the effort of designing individualized intervention plans for each of these students.

Pre-Intervention 2: Assessing and Adjusting Academic Support

Behavior problems and academic difficulties often co-occur. As part of your efforts to provide more individualized support, it is important to assess a student's current level of academic performance and determine whether academic deficits may be contributing to problematic behavior patterns. If you are any less than 100% confident that the student is academically proficient, plan to conduct one or more of the assessment strategies presented in this chapter as part of your initial early-stage intervention efforts. Often this informal assessment exposes academic difficulties that have been mild enough to go undetected in the past but have a meaningful influence on a student's behavior problems.

Section 2: Early Interventions for the Classroom Teacher

This section includes seven chapters that provide guidance on how to implement a specific intervention strategy. These strategies are designed to be a starting place in dealing with chronic student misbehavior, and the sequence in which they are presented

is intentional. After ruling out classroom management practices and academic skills deficits as primary causes of a student's misbehavior, it is always best to start with Planned Discussion to ensure that the student and family are aware of your concern. Unless you have a compelling reason not to, plan to progress through the remaining sequence of early-stage interventions in the order they are presented.

Intervention A: Planned Discussion

An intentional, targeted discussion ensures that the student is aware of your perception of the problem and your expectations for what the student should be doing instead. This simple intervention is often a logical starting place and can potentially resolve issues that result when a student doesn't know or understand your behavior expectations. If additional intervention is needed, you will continue to have Planned Discussion meetings with the student to review progress and introduce new efforts.

Intervention B: Correction Planning

Taking the time to plan out how you will respond to each of the student's challenging behaviors will help ensure that your corrections are consistent, fluent, and most likely to discourage and reduce the occurrence of problematic behaviors. This intervention helps you create a structured plan for consistently responding to misbehavior, acknowledging responsible behavior that the student demonstrates, and delivering reminders, or precorrections, to anticipate and prevent misbehavior by "correcting" the behavior before it occurs.

Intervention C: Increasing Positive Interactions

One of the keys to redirecting problematic behavior patterns is to ensure that the student receives far more attention for positive, appropriate behavior than for misbehavior. By focusing more on a student when they engage in positive behavior and less on any undesired behaviors, you communicate high expectations and high positive regard for the student, avoid inadvertently reinforcing attention-seeking behavior, and, in many cases, increase the student's motivation to continue to exhibit positive behavior. This intervention helps you consider ways to increase the number of positive interactions you have with the student and ensure that you are consistently paying more attention to appropriate behavior than to challenging behavior—with the hope that this redirected attention will increase and maintain positive behaviors.

Intervention D: Data Collection and Debriefing

If the first three early-stage interventions do not solve the problem, it is time to use data to drive subsequent intervention design and implementation. Since the student has not responded to the simplest interventions, more resources—in terms of teacher time—are now required. Data collection starts with defining the problem in measurable terms. Then, you will decide how to collect and report data on the problem and how to involve the student and parents in reviewing the data, discussing progress, and becoming "shareholders" in the student's process of improvement. Data Collection and Debriefing alone will often resolve a problem.

Even when it does not, subsequent interventions will make use of the data as the intervention process becomes more objective and analytical.

NOTE: Given that the problem behavior has been resistant to simple intervention, use of objective data is the only way to identify that an intervention may be incrementally successful. Put another way, a student is on average disruptive 10 times an hour, and an intervention plan reduces that behavior by 30% in 2 or 3 weeks. Without data, it would be very easy for you, as a constantly busy teacher, to assume that the intervention is unsuccessful—after all, the student is still disrupting class 7 times an hour. However, collecting a daily frequency count of disruptions and charting that information will allow you to identify that the intervention is succeeding and help you decide to continue the intervention.

Intervention E: Goal Setting

The process of setting goals encourages students to think about what they hope to accomplish in the future and how they can take steps to achieve their aspirations. This intervention provides guidance on how to frame changing problematic behavior as a positive goal to strive toward and something a student is capable of achieving. By teaching goal-setting strategies as skills, you not only help students change their current behavior patterns, but also set them on a path for developing more agency over their future aspirations and successes. If you are conducting these interventions in sequence, the goals you and the student establish should be based on the data you began collecting by implementing Intervention D: Data Collection and Debriefing

Intervention F: Building a Supportive Relationship

Expanding on your plan for Increasing Positive Interactions, this intervention helps you identify ways to build a more positive, stronger, and supportive relationship with the student. This intervention guides you through the process of developing a plan to offer support and motivation during activities or situations that are challenging for the student, acknowledging and building on student strengths as part of your interactions, and using intermittent celebrations to motivate and reinforce the student for improvements in behavior.

Intervention G: Function-Based Intervention

Last in the sequence of early-stage interventions, this is the most resource-intensive intervention that might reasonably be implemented by a classroom teacher without requesting outside assistance. As the final early-stage intervention, this effort is the last to try before moving to more intensive, collaborative problem-solving and intervention efforts. This intervention provides guidance on how to analyze the purpose, or *function*, of a student's misbehavior and make a hypothesis: Why might this behavior be occurring? From this working hypothesis, you will design a support plan that incorporates each of the five variables of classroom management over which you have control—in other words, all components of the STOIC

framework (Structure, Teach, Observe, Interact, Correct). The STOIC framework encourages you to think about function as comprehensively as possible. For example, if the function of a student's misbehavior is attention seeking, the intervention plan would address that function within each of the STOIC variables—exploring structural changes, teaching expected behavior, closely observing and monitoring, stepping up efforts to interact positively with the student, and revising procedures for correcting fluently.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Trauma–Sensitive Practices discusses how to provide support for students who have experienced trauma. As research suggests that between half and two-thirds of all school-aged children have experienced some type of trauma, schools are in an important position to help facilitate recovery. The recommendations provided in this appendix are designed to help you maintain a trauma-sensitive approach with your students.

Appendix B: Relaxation and Stress Management provides teachers with strategies for stress management and relaxation. Teaching can be an exhausting profession, even before you start dealing with student misbehavior, so this appendix is designed to help you reduce stress, manage feelings of frustrations or burnout, and improve your ability to interact productively with students.

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You can download and print full-size versions of all materials labeled "Reproducible" that appear in this book. (Go to download.ancorapublishing.com and enter access code 978-1-59909-106-8.). The reproducibles are provided for your own use in quickly and easily implementing the pre-interventions and early-stage interventions described in this book. In many cases, the reproducibles are set up as fillable PDF forms, so you can fill them out on a computer or tablet and save for use in the future.

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Developing a District- or Building-Level Protocol for Early-Stage Intervention

Teachers shouldn't be expected to manage challenging student behavior on their own. When students require more individualized behavior support, it is much easier to carry out this extra support in a school with a well-designed and fully implemented schoolwide behavior plan, which should include professional development for teachers in how to intervene early to address patterns of chronic misbehavior at the individual student level.

At the district or building level, we recommend training all teachers in how to implement the set of early-stage interventions presented in this book. We also recommend establishing a protocol that calls on teachers to attempt and document these basic interventions first before requesting assistance or initiating more intensive supports. If all teachers are trained in the pre-intervention and early-stage intervention procedures presented in this book, a common language

and practice will emerge in your school or district about what teachers should do first when they notice a student's chronic behavior problem. Training everyone in your school or district in these procedures establishes the expectation that teachers should implement pre-intervention and early-stage interventions prior to asking for assistance from a counselor, psychologist, or problem-solving team. Only when a student's behavior difficulties are not responsive to these early-stage interventions should the teacher ask for assistance from a specialist or problem-solving team. The teacher will then be asked, "Do you have any data on the problem?" and "What interventions have you already implemented?" The collaborative process will begin with an examination or the data and a discussion about the efficacy, or lack thereof, of previous intervention efforts. The data that the teacher has collected will serve as baseline data for all subsequent interventions. Then the specialist or problem-solving team can work with the teacher in choosing, designing, and implementing a set of intervention strategies that require more planning, expertise, or resources.

This protocol of beginning with pre-intervention steps (assessing management practices at the classwide level and assessing academic skills at the individual student level), moving to the sequence of early-stage interventions if needed, and then finally moving into collaborative problem-solving and intervention design when earlier strategies have failed, is the basis for an MTSS process for behavior. The structure of this book is designed to facilitate efficient problem-solving and can serve as a basis for staff development for a school or district's implementation of MTSS-B at the universal level.

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