

The Importance of Behavior Intervention

Student misbehavior is one of the leading frustrations of educators. Any major misbehavior that students engage in chronically—insubordination, disruption, disrespect, or refusal to do work—can make even highly skilled teachers feel helpless, frustrated, and angry. This book gives teachers and all educators more tools to correct any and all chronic problems—overt misbehavior, lack of motivation, anger and hostility, and even chronic internalizing behaviors such as shyness, depression, and anxiety. This book is built on the understanding, well founded in the research literature of the last 70 years, that behavior can be changed. Positive and respectful intervention procedures can shape and modify problem behavior to become productive behavior. One important and unavoidable job of educators is to use these procedures to help students learn to be successful students and, eventually, successful and productive citizens.

What Is Behavior Intervention?

Behavior intervention is the term educators have devised for a planned response to a behavior (or set of behaviors) that is interfering with a student's success in school. To go a little deeper, Tilly & Flugum's (1995, p. 485) definition aligns well with the processes and goals of intervention as presented in this book. They define *intervention* as "a planned modification of the environment made for the purpose of altering behavior in a pre-specified way." Three key phrases in this definition call attention to the following features of behavior interventions:

An intervention is *planned* ahead of time, providing an important roadmap for addressing misbehavior by clarifying the specific actions that will take place and the responsibilities of people involved in its implementation.

An intervention seeks to *alter behavior in a pre-specified way*, meaning that it's goal directed, with desired outcomes outlined prior to implementation.

An intervention is focused on *modifying the environment* rather than the individual—identifying those variables that can be changed to encourage appropriate behavior and discourage misbehavior.

The basis for this book is a set of well-researched behavioral principles:

1. **Behavior has a purpose.** Problem behavior exists because it serves some useful purpose for the student (Carr, 1977; O’Neill, Albin, Storey, Horner, & Sprague, 2015). Acknowledging that there is an underlying reason for behavior requires you to ask: What is the student achieving with this misbehavior? A student may be trying to get something, such as attention from teachers or peers, or avoid something, such as an embarrassing or stressful situation. Behavior that seems illogical, mean-spirited, and unproductive from the teacher’s point of view may seem logical, reasonable, and even smart from the student’s perspective, which is made up of past experience and current perceptions. In some situations, misbehavior may be the only behavior in the student’s repertoire that results in the desired outcome. For other students, 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.** Behavior is influenced by the events that happen before (i.e., antecedent and setting events) and the consequences, both positive and negative, that follow (Foster-Johnson & Dunlap, 1993; Iwata, Dorset, Slifer, Bauman, & Richman, 1982). To understand the purpose of behavior, you must first determine the relationship between problem behavior and the environment in which it occurs. By identifying antecedent events that trigger problem behavior and consequences that typically follow it, you can develop a *functional hypothesis*, or a prediction about the purpose, or function, that the problem behavior is serving for the student.
3. **Lasting behavior change is more likely with positive, rather than punitive, techniques.** While a behavior intervention will typically need to specify reactive strategies (e.g., redirection, de-escalation, clearly outlined consequences, crisis management procedures), the goal of intervention is not just the absence of misbehavior. Positive, proactive intervention plans emphasize strategies that prevent problem behavior and explicitly teach and reinforce alternative desired behaviors (Carr et al., 2002). Compared with reactive interventions that rely on punitive consequences alone, proactive interventions are more likely to produce lasting behavior change (Carr, Robinson, & Palumbo, 1990).
4. **No student should 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. To have a positive and lasting impact, interventions must attempt to build up student strengths and expand their skills for replacing problem behavior, rather than simply squelching or containing problem behavior (Kincaid, 1996; Wehmeyer, 1999).
5. **Behavior can be changed through environmental redesign.** All students can learn to exhibit appropriate behavior. By considering how the environment supports misbehavior and doesn’t support more socially appropriate behaviors, you can identify environmental variables to change that will make problem behavior irrelevant (i.e., making access to desired outcomes easier or more frequent so the student no longer needs to use misbehavior), inefficient (i.e., teaching an alternative, more socially appropriate behavior that leads to the outcome previously reached

All behavior interventions must treat students with dignity and respect.

through problem behavior), and/or ineffective (i.e., ensuring that problem behavior is no longer rewarded [Dunlap & Fox, 2011; O’Neill et al., 2015]). By focusing on the environmental factors that contribute to problematic behavior patterns, you can harness educators’ 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.

As vast as the body of research literature regarding behavior change is, its key findings can be encapsulated in five broad categories of environmental variables that have proven effective in changing behavior, especially when used in combination: prevention, teaching, monitoring, encouragement, and correction. To more easily remember the variables, use the acronym STOIC, where each letter in the acronym represents one category.

PREVENTION

Structure for Success: Changing the *structure* of the setting can impact 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 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.

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.

STOIC is a way of thinking about intervention that encompasses the essential ingredients of every successful behavior intervention plan. It is the perfect definition of educators who understand behavior intervention practice: They are relentless in striving to find interventions that will help troubled students, and they continually demonstrate high positive regard for all students. They do not “tolerate” misbehavior, but are endlessly patient in experimenting with different interventions until they find some combination of strategies to help their students become successful.

ABC ANALYSIS

Those with training in behavior analysis will recognize an *Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence* (ABC) analysis of behavior embedded in the STOIC acronym. With ABC analysis, any behavior can be viewed as a function of the antecedents (those stimuli that precede a behavior) and the consequences that naturally follow from the behavior—simply meaning that people learn from their environment.

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.

Individual Intervention Within a Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavior (MTSS-B)

While individualized interventions are necessary, they are much easier to carry out in a school with a well-designed and fully implemented schoolwide behavior plan. Although this book will be helpful to an individual teacher, it works best when implemented schoolwide as part of a *Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavior* (MTSS-B) approach. Multi-tiered systems of support for behavior integrate positive behavior support practices and a response-to-intervention framework:

Positive Behavior Supports

Warger (1999, p. 2) defines positive behavior support as a long-term, long-view process:

Unlike traditional behavioral management, which views the individual as the problem and seeks to “fix” him or her by quickly eliminating the challenging behavior, positive behavioral support and functional analysis view systems, settings, and lack of skill as parts of the “problem” and work to change those. As such, these approaches are characterized as long-term strategies to reduce inappropriate behavior, teach more appropriate behavior, and provide contextual supports necessary for successful outcomes.

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The objective of PBS is to place more time, effort, staff development, and financial resources on proactive, positive, and instructional approaches rather than on reactive and exclusionary approaches (Sprick, Knight, Reinke, Skyles, & Barnes, 2010).

Response to Intervention

Batsche et al. (2005, p. 3) defines response to intervention as:

The practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying child response data to important educational decisions.

Put in simple terms, this means always trying the easiest and cheapest thing first and moving to more intensive intervention only when those easier, cheaper interventions were implemented well but did not help improve the student's behavior.

In sum, MTSS-B merges these simple concepts:

- Prior to using more complicated and costly interventions, you should try the easiest, cheapest, and least time-consuming intervention that has a reasonable chance of success.
- You cannot know that a simple intervention will not work unless you try it and implement it well.

- If a student with a behavior problem is resistant to simple interventions, progressively more detailed and intensive interventions should be attempted until the problem is resolved.
- To be considered, an intervention should have a long track record of success—evidence and research literature documenting its effectiveness in a variety of settings, with varied student populations, and without being coercive or humiliating to the student.

MTSS-B involves changing the system to meet the needs of the student while also helping the student fit successfully into the system. At the broadest level, this means that schools need to become places where students want to be. Creating a safe, positive, and inviting school climate is one important part of successful MTSS-B implementation (Carr et al., 2002; Sprick, Booher, Isaacs, Sprick, & Rich, 2014).

RESOURCE: EFFECTIVE BUILDING- AND DISTRICT-LEVEL POLICIES

Foundations: A Proactive and Positive Behavior Support System 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.

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.

The principles underlying MTSS-B and behavior intervention are simple and based on common sense as well as a sound theoretical foundation and research base.

Changing the Culture

As is often the case when considering a system to support positive behavior, there is good news and bad news.

Good news: The principles underlying MTSS-B and behavior intervention are simple and based on common sense as well as a sound theoretical foundation and research base. They boil down to this: Keep adjusting the variables in a student’s situation until something starts to work. The best behavior managers in schools aren’t necessarily those who know the most, but rather those who don’t give up—those staff members who are relentless in their quest to get the best from their students. These teachers say, “I am going to keep manipulating your environment until I find a way to help you unlock your success.”

Bad news: Although the principles are simple, most schools and teachers are not applying them. Why? The reason is just as simple. Student behavior problems drive teachers

crazy. A lot of emotional baggage comes into play with many teacher-student interactions. Teachers are under tremendous pressure; they are held accountable for their students' academic success or failure. When a student is disruptive, noncompliant, passive, resistant, or exhibiting any other of myriad potential behavior problems, the student poses a direct and immediate threat to the teacher's authority.

In addition, many, if not most, schools operate under a culture of control. It is all too easy for teachers to get into a power struggle with a misbehaving student by trying to *make* the student behave appropriately. It's the human reaction to threatening situations: fight or flight. Teachers can't run screaming from the classroom (as much as they might like to sometimes), so the fight reaction kicks in. If this pattern continues, by the time the teacher asks for assistance or the student's behavior needs rise to the attention of the administrator, school counselor, school psychologist, or other problem-solving professional, the teacher does not want help for the student—rather, the teacher wants someone else to manage the student (think about repeated referrals to the office) or wants the student placed in a different setting. Problem-solving professionals, a role we call *interventionists*, commonly hear, "I've tried everything for this student. He needs to be placed in a special education setting."

Administrators, school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors (when in the role of interventionists) must take this pressure into account when they try to create better behavioral practices in schools. It's not just a matter of sharing all the right information with staff. You also have to proactively change teachers' mindsets about student behavior problems and, in turn, change their behavior by getting them to implement evidence-based behavior management practices, thus reducing the frequency of power struggles, negativity, and frustration. To bring about this cultural change, administrators and members of your behavior leadership team must infuse the following assumptions of MTSS-B into your building's culture of behavior support.

TERMINOLOGY

We use the term *interventionist* throughout this book to mean anyone who is involved in planning an intervention. An interventionist can be a teacher, school counselor, behavioral specialist, special education teacher or consultant, or administrator. All interventionists should be trained in the full range of interventions that your school or district has in place.

1. **All staff have a role in behavior support.** When a student is exhibiting academic or social behavior difficulties, all teachers understand that they must play an active role, in fact a pivotal role, in preventing the development of problems and in problem-solving to support the student's needs. Simply handing the problem off to a different adult or moving the student to a different setting is no longer a viable option—too many students need help.
2. **Behavior is highly malleable, and behavioral skills must be taught.** Starting with the concept that behavior can be changed gives educators great confidence. The best problem-solvers are those who recognize that, despite what a student's behavior looks like right now, it can improve dramatically with the right intervention plan. No matter how difficult or problematic a student's behavior may be, there is some combination of variables that can be changed in such a way that the student will make meaningful progress toward more responsible behavior. If teachers do not understand and operate from the belief that behavior can be changed, they are more likely to view any intervention as doomed to failure (e.g., "That is just the way this student is!"). Behavior is learned and can be changed through careful consideration and manipulation of the environmental factors that may be contributing to problematic behavior patterns. When educators fully understand this concept, they are well on their way to becoming active problem-solvers, not passive problem-admirers.

3. Problem-solving processes should focus on variables that can be changed.

Spending too much time discussing concerns about a student's home life or attributing problematic behavior to static characteristics of a student (e.g., a label of ADHD, a "bad attitude") places blame on the student and can derail teams from fully exploring possible ways the problem can be solved (Walker, 1995). Rather than attributing problem behavior to variables that cannot be easily changed, an effective problem-solving process targets variables within the student's environment that are amenable to change (e.g., modifying the classroom environment to make problem behavior less relevant, teaching and reinforcing appropriate behavior, and altering adult responses to problem behavior so that it no longer leads to a desired outcome for the student).

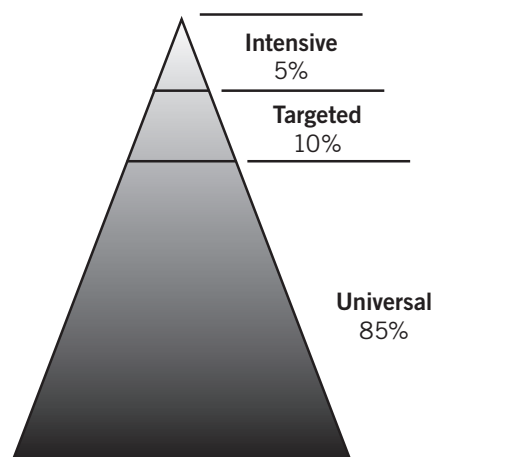
Every adult in the school must become part of the solution, working collaboratively to ensure that no student falls through cracks (or chasms) in the behavior support systems within the school.

Creating a Continuum of Supports

Service delivery is how adults and systems in the school work together to ensure that all students' behavioral and emotional needs are met. Behavior support service delivery includes both the problem-solving strategies used to assess the situation and the resulting intervention plan created from these efforts.

Most educators are familiar with the triangle (Figure A) used by public health (Commission on Chronic Illness, 1957) that has universal prevention and intervention at the bottom, selected or targeted services in the middle, and intensive services at the top.

FIGURE A *Public Health Triangle*

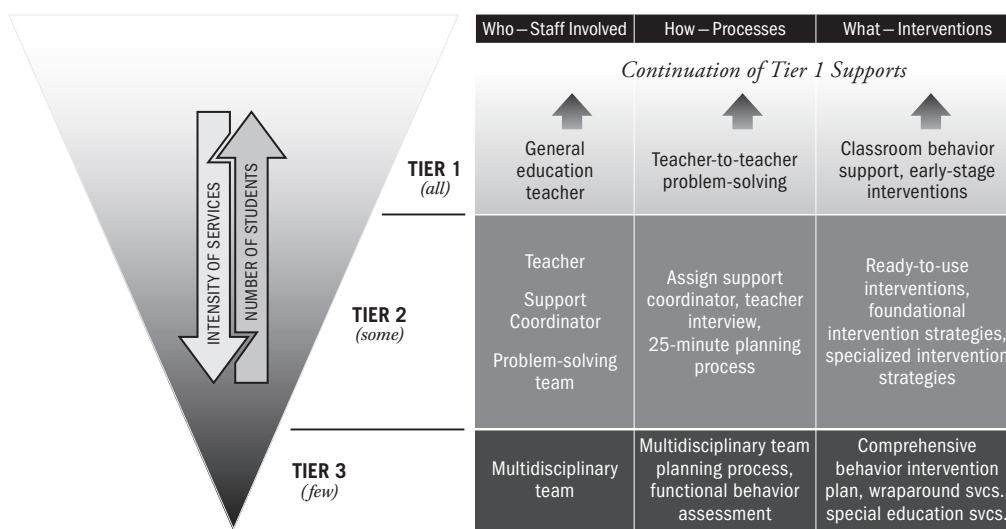


Our model of service delivery turns this triangle upside down (see Figure B on the next page). In our model, universal services move to the top to represent the broadest level of services for the broadest group of students. The purpose behind inverting the triangle is to highlight the importance of spending the most time, energy, and money on universal, Tier 1 interventions, those services applied by all staff members and directed at all students. Students whose needs are not met by the wide net cast at the top of the

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triangle fall into the safety net of the next tiers: targeted (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3). In essence, the MTSS-B model functions like a sifting process. Only the 10%–15% of students who don't benefit from universal efforts need services at other levels.

FIGURE B *Safe & Civil Schools MTSS Model of Service*



Tier 1 includes not only universal policies, but also a layer of effective classroom management practices and a set of early-stage interventions for common behavior problems.

Tier 1: Universal Supports for All Students

Tier 1 supports are designed to prevent problem behavior from occurring. Effective Tier 1 systems should address the behavior of most students (80%–90%) and *reduce the number of students who need more expensive and time-consuming resources at Tiers 2 and 3*. Multi-tiered systems of support can be structured in different ways. In some models, Tier 1 is concerned only with universal prevention efforts. In our model, Tier 1 includes not only universal policies, but also a layer of effective classroom management practices and a set of early-stage interventions for common behavior problems (Sprick, Booher, Isaacs, Sprick, & Rich, 2014).

At Tier 1, the primary interventionist is the teacher. We suggest that all teachers be trained to implement a set of basic interventions before they ask for collaborative assistance. These early-stage interventions are easy and unobtrusive, and require minimal paperwork and administration involvement. They should always be tried before initiating more time-intensive or resource-heavy interventions. For most students, these efforts can adequately address problems in the early stages.

Examples of Tier 1 supports include:

- Use of evidence-based classroom management practices
- Teacher-to-teacher problem-solving
- Prereferral, early-stage, teacher-led interventions, such goal setting or planned discussion with the student

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 (5%–10%). For students who are identified as at-risk through school screening processes, Tier 2 supports offer additional behavior support strategies in addition to the universal supports already in place within the classroom. Tier 2 interventions do not replace Tier 1 interventions; rather, they are supplemental to continuing universal efforts (Brown-Chidsey & Bickford, 2015).

At this level, problem-solving becomes *collaborative*, involving other professionals in addition to the teacher. These professionals might be another teacher, a school counselor, a school psychologist, a school social worker, an assistant principal, or a highly trained behavior specialist. While Tier 2 interventions are planned in conjunction with a building-based interventionist or problem-solving team, they are implemented by typical school personnel, most commonly the classroom teacher or an intervention coordinator.

Tier 2 supports that are put in place within the classroom should require minimal time commitment from classroom teachers and fit within existing classroom routines. In addition, skill sets required for implementing the intervention should already be a part of the teacher's repertoire or be easy to learn (Newcomer, Reeman, & Barrett, 2013). For some group supports, a staff member may be designated to serve as the intervention coordinator to oversee and monitor implementation of an intervention for a group of students.

The process for accessing Tier 2 supports should be efficient to ensure that students are matched with an appropriate intervention within a few days of an identified need. Tier 2 interventions should be continually implemented across the school year so that students can be added to the intervention at any time (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, 2015). Procedures for implementing Tier 2 supports should also be consistent across students but allow minor modifications to increase the effectiveness of the intervention. Significant modifications to or individualization of Tier 2 interventions for a student may be more characteristic of Tier 3 support (Anderson & Borgmeier, 2010).

Examples of Tier 2 supports include:

- Participation in small group anger management lessons
- Assignment to an adult mentor
- Use of a daily behavior report card

At Tier 2, problem-solving becomes collaborative, involving other professionals in addition to the teacher.

MTSS FRAMEWORK

An MTSS-B framework is never about the process—getting a particular student through a series of interventions until the student reaches the one the teacher wants. Many teachers view interventions as simply a hoop-jumping process they must go through before they can refer a student to a special education program or an alternative placement. This approach is rooted in “not-my-problem” thinking and needs to be part of the cultural change. Effective problem-solving is about making a good-faith effort to find a solution that will help a student behave more responsibly and, accordingly, become a better student. It is always about achieving the intended end result and is never about the steps taken along the way.

Tier 3: Intensive Supports for a Few Students

Intensive Tier 3 supports are reserved for the small group of students (1%–5%) who don't respond to Tier 1 and Tier 2 services or need specialized support. A problem may be considered intensive because of its severity, immediacy, or resistance to other interventions. This level involves a more comprehensive, resource-intensive approach. A much more detailed level of problem-solving is required, and the most highly skilled personnel in the building participate. Problem-solving efforts may involve any or all of the following:

- Observations of the student in multiple settings
- Systematic records review
- Interviews with the student, all staff who work with the student, and family members
- Completion of a comprehensive functional behavior assessment (FBA)
- Coordination with other community or family agencies

Resulting interventions will be individualized and involve multiple components (Crone & Horner, 2003; Eber et al., 2009).

Note that 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.

A problem may be considered intensive (Tier 3) because of its severity, immediacy, or resistance to other interventions.

Examples of Tier 3 supports include:

- An individualized behavior intervention plan based on the results of a comprehensive FBA
- Wraparound coordination of school, family, and community agencies
- Mental health counseling or family therapy

DIFFERENCES AMONG MTSS MODELS

The language used here to describe a three-tier model may not fit the language in your school, district, or state. Our MTSS model is intentionally designed to be applied flexibly across your school's definition of Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 supports, and is independent of a school district's process for referring students to special education programs. This model can operate in parallel to your school or district framework, but we do not suggest any specific point at which a student is referred. We are mainly advocating for a framework for service delivery wherein most energy goes into universal prevention, but there are services that meet individual student needs in a manner that matches the intensity of resources to the intensity of student needs.

The goal of designing effective behavior interventions within a multi-tiered system of support is to meet student needs in the most efficient manner possible. More time- and resource-intensive processes or interventions aren't used unless previous efforts have been unsuccessful or the intensity of the problem warrants a greater level of support. If you treat all students with highly structured, multipersonnel problem analysis and intervention, there will most likely be an implementation delay, and resources that could have been used on a more serious case will have been wasted (Walker & Shinn, 2002). Further, a system that does not try simple, easy-to-implement analysis and intervention first may actually compound a problem and make things worse. For example, if waiting lists for students to get assistance from a school psychologist are long, a minor, easily treated problem may go on for so long that it becomes resistant to a simple intervention. In addition, a student who has deep-seated problems is on the same waiting list. That student's access to a multifaceted analysis and intervention may be delayed as the school psychologist spends time on problems that never needed help from someone with that level of skill and training.

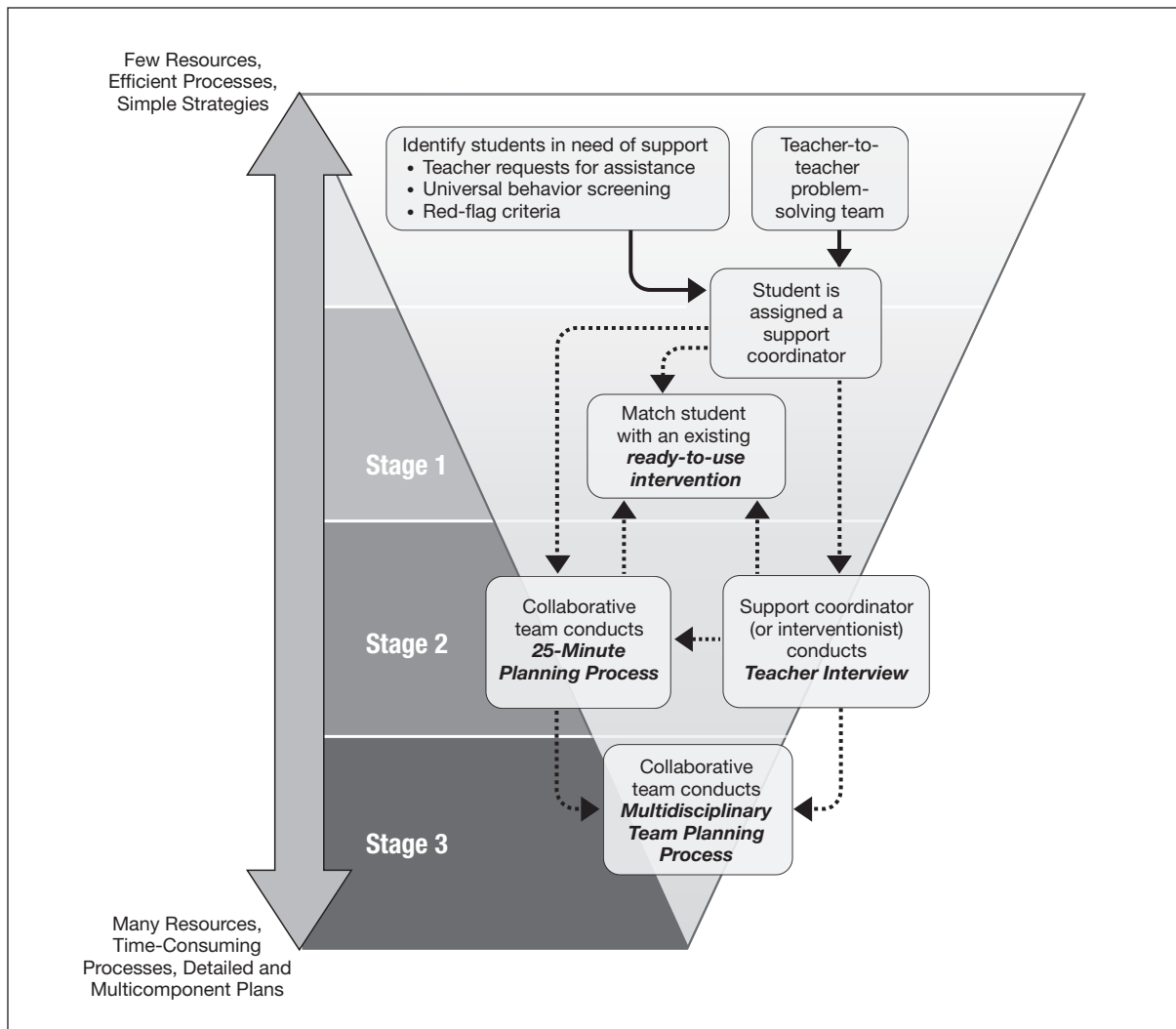
In this third edition, we have attempted to clarify the two major aspects of helping students with chronic or severe behavior challenges within an MTSS-B framework. The first aspect involves the problem-solving processes that will be used to describe and analyze the context of the problem. The second aspect involves the intervention design processes that will guide development of a behavior intervention plan. While these are inter-related, both should match the intensity of the student's need. That is, the more intensive the need, the more intensive the problem-solving process should be, including the number of professionals involved, the time required to analyze the problem and develop a plan, and the quality of data collected and used to develop functional hypotheses about the nature of the problem. Likewise, the intensity of the resulting behavior plan should match the intensity of student need, including the number of professionals involved, the time required of the teacher and others to implement the plan, the quality of data collected to monitor the plan's efficacy, and the quality of processes to monitor implementation fidelity. One of the goals of this resource is to help school personnel create a continuum (from easiest and cheapest to very intensive) of both problem-solving processes and evidence-based behavior intervention plans.

One way to implement supports on a continuum is to follow a structured process to guide problem-solving and intervention design at different stages of a problem. As shown in Figure C (p. 12), we suggest adopting a range of options, moving from the type of problem-solving done by a general education teacher in a few minutes after school to more collaborative and time-consuming problem-solving processes to a full and complete functional behavior assessment guided by the most highly trained behavior analyst available to the district.

The vertical arrow in Figure C points both up and down. The down portion of the arrow is intuitively obvious. If a process and set of interventions are unsuccessful (i.e., the student's problems do not respond to intervention at that level), the problem-solving process will take on a greater degree of structure, as will the intervention strategies that result from that process. However, the arrow also points up, meaning that when a student's difficulties respond positively to the current intervention, a move to less-structured interventions should occur if there is a reasonable chance of continued success when you modify or fade the previously implemented supports.

The goals of MTSS-B are to create a range of collaborative problem-solving structures, establish a continuum of behavior interventions, and identify a variety of personnel who can assist with problem-solving and intervention design.

FIGURE C Continuum of Problem-Solving Processes and Intervention



Example: Continuum of Behavior Interventions

Schoolwide positive behavior support procedures and classroom management plans

Early-stage interventions

Menu of ready-to-use interventions

- Connections
- Meaningful Work
- Structured Recess

Foundational intervention strategies

- Deliver precorrections and reminders
- Model and practice behavior skills
- Increase behavior-specific praise
- Increase rate of positive interactions
- Correct behavior fluently

Specialized intervention strategies

- Behavioral Contracting
- Structured Reinforcement
- Self-Monitoring and Self-Evaluation
- Behavior Emergency Planning
- Managing Emotional Escalation
- Supporting Students With Internalizing Challenges

Comprehensive wraparound services

- Detailed behavior support planning based on results of a functional behavior assessment
- Coordination of school, family, and community agencies

This book is about designing and implementing layers of problem-solving and intervention efforts to most efficiently meet the needs of all students. As you read these suggestions, analyze the current organization and use of resources within your building and set up a plan for filling in any gaps in service delivery. It is our hope that this book will encourage building-based behavior leadership teams and district-level personnel to examine their current problem-solving processes and the types of interventions staff have been trained to implement. The goal is to determine strengths and areas for improvement in your current service delivery relative to the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of your students.

Book Organization

This book focuses on problem-solving and intervention for students who don't respond to Tier 1 supports—or those students who require the higher levels of support, more resources, and greater expertise that are characteristic of Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports. This book is divided into four sections.

Section 1: Establishing a System for Individualized Intervention

This first section presents information on schoolwide coordination for delivery of intervention services. This section is intended for an audience of administrators and school leaders responsible for building or districtwide behavior support efforts, including members of your school's behavior leadership team. These are the background tasks that must be completed in order to establish a system for individualized intervention. This section provides guidance on how to:

- Develop processes for identifying students in need of additional support (e.g., using red-flag indicators, universal behavior screening, and teacher requests for assistance)
- Create a menu of ready-to-use behavior interventions that will quickly and easily accommodate students identified as needing extra support
- Develop a support coordinator program that enlists staff members to ensure that at-risk students do not fall through the cracks of your system
- Organize interventionists and teams within your school to engage in individual problem-solving and intervention design
- Establish policies and processes for responding to Code Red situations that involve unsafe or severely disruptive behavior, as well as procedures for responding to threats
- Create a staff development plan that helps ensure strong implementation of interventions and problem-solving processes
- Develop a plan to monitor and ensure implementation fidelity of your building's individualized behavior support practices

TERMINOLOGY

More students than ever live in one-parent households, in foster care, with grandparents, and in other circumstances. It is often inaccurate to refer to “the student's parents,” and it is cumbersome to continually refer to “the student's parent(s), grandparent(s), or guardian(s).” Therefore, in most cases the term “student's family” will be used when referring to a student's primary caregivers.

Section 2: Embedding a Problem-Solving Model Into Each Tier of Support

This section of the book describes how to use an evidence-based model to guide effective and efficient problem-solving and intervention design at the individual student level. This section is intended for anyone who will be involved in planning an intervention, which may include school psychologists, school counselors, behavior specialists, and members of existing problem-solving teams, as well as administrators and members of your behavior leadership team. In this book, we advocate for the use of a consistent problem-solving framework for addressing the needs of individual students across all tiers of support. This framework reflects the scientific method of defining and describing a problem, generating possible solutions, and implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of a selected solution.

Applying Tilly's (2008) description of problem-solving within a three-tiered model of support, we provide guidance in using the following five-step model to describe, understand, and solve problems across all tiers of support:

Step 1: Define the problem— *What is the problem?*

Step 2: Analyze the problem— *Why is the problem happening?*

Step 3: Consider possible solutions and select an intervention— *What solutions might improve the problem?*

Step 4: Collect data to monitor progress— *How can we measure whether improvements are occurring?*

Step 5: Evaluate whether supports are working— *Did our plan work to adequately address the problem?*

This section also offers step-by-step instructions for using the following problem-solving processes and associated tools:

- *Teacher Interview*, a time- and resource-efficient tool that guides the teacher and an interventionist through developing a potentially effective initial intervention
- *25-Minute Planning Process*, a process designed to guide a problem-solving team through developing a worthwhile plan of action in less than half an hour
- *Multidisciplinary Team Planning Process*, the most intensive problem-solving process that occurs on the continuum, takes place when initial efforts have proven to be ineffective or more expertise, additional data, and comprehensive intervention supports are required to remedy the problem

Section 3: Designing an Effective Behavior Intervention Plan

The third section discusses the type of intervention plan that will result from problem-solving efforts, regardless of the setting the student is in. That is, who will work with the student, and what interventions will be implemented? This section presents a framework for building behavior interventions and can be used for any stage of a problem. Less severe problems may be addressed within this framework, but strategies used should require fewer resources, staffing, expertise, etc. than strategies used for more severe problems.

Step-by-step directions explain how to build an individual behavior intervention, with guidance on:

We advocate for the use of a consistent problem-solving framework for addressing the needs of individual students across all tiers of support.

- How to clearly define target behaviors and goals in objective, measurable terms
- How to develop a plan for collecting data, monitoring student progress, and determining the effectiveness of the intervention plan
- How to create a plan for monitoring and ensuring fidelity of the intervention plan

In addition, this section introduces a list of *foundational intervention strategies* from five categories:

- *Antecedent strategies* to address events and conditions (e.g., times, places, people, activities) that occur before the student's misbehavior
- *Teaching strategies* that provide the student with positive replacement behaviors for misbehavior
- *Positive consequence strategies* that outline rewards and responses from staff that are intended encourage appropriate behavior and discourage misbehavior
- *Corrective consequence strategies* that are designed to increase the consistency and efficacy of corrective consequences that are implemented when misbehavior occurs.
- *Interactional strategies* that are designed to provide students with a high rate of positive interactions and help them feel connected to school.

These foundational intervention strategies form the basis of any intervention plan. For minor problems, you might need to include strategies from only one or two categories. For more severe or chronic problems, you'll likely need to address all categories in your intervention plan.

Foundational intervention strategies form the basis of any intervention plan.

Section 4: Specialized Intervention Strategies

The final section of the book contains six chapters that describe procedures for planning and implementing *specialized intervention strategies*. These intervention strategies are a powerful group of tools that may be more time intensive to plan and more time consuming to implement. They expand on the foundational intervention strategies presented in Section 3. Specialized intervention strategies will apply only to certain types of situations or intervention goals.

The following specialized intervention strategies are included in this section:

- *Behavioral Contracting*. Behavioral Contracting is a collaborative method of defining behavioral expectations, setting goals, specifying rewards, and clarifying consequences in writing. Developed through negotiation with the student, behavioral contracting can increase student motivation and investment in changing behavior.
- *Structured Reinforcement*. A Structured Reinforcement system motivates students to break deeply ingrained cycles of inappropriate behavior by offering external rewards for behavior improvements. When problems have been resistant to change or when a student needs additional encouragement to demonstrate desired behavior, a structured system for rewarding increased positive behavior or decreased rates of inappropriate behavior can provide an extra boost of motivation and help make success a reality for a student.
- *Self-Monitoring and Self-Evaluation*. Self-Monitoring and Self-Evaluation helps students become more aware, responsible, and in control of their own behavior. In

self-monitoring, the student observes and records the occurrence or nonoccurrence of certain behaviors. *Self-evaluation* is a modified form of self-monitoring in which the student evaluates and records the quality of some aspect of a behavior. Both strategies are designed to help students better understand their own behavior and use this information to change behavior over time.

- *Behavior Emergency Planning.* A Behavior Emergency Plan skips over preventive strategies and moves directly to specifying the protocol for responding immediately to behaviors that have escalated into a Code Red situation. It is appropriate when the student has exhibited one or more Code Red behaviors in the past or misbehavior has escalated or the possibility of a Code Red situation is likely. Code Red situations involve behaviors that are either so dangerous or so disruptive that classes cannot continue. These include behaviors such as:
 - Overt aggressive behavior toward others (e.g., kicking, hitting, fighting)
 - Threats of targeted violence toward others
 - Brandishing items that could be used as weapons
 - Carrying weapons
 - Self-injurious behavior
 - Vandalism or property destruction
 - Sexual assault
 - Clear signs of using controlled substances (drugs and alcohol)
 - Running away from school property
 - Sustained confrontational or defiant behavior resulting in refusal to follow immediate, reasonable adult directions
- *Managing Emotional Escalation.* Managing Emotional Escalation is designed to help defuse and resolve any behaviors that are the result of emotional escalation. This strategy can help prevent and control escalated behaviors, such as tantrums, volatile or explosive behavior, and sustained disruptions. It is applicable when misbehavior tends to escalate as the student becomes more agitated or the teacher and student engage in frequent power struggles. It can also be used as a long-term intervention for students whose chronic disruptive or dangerous behavior warrants a Behavior Emergency Plan.
- *Supporting Students with Internalizing Challenges.* This chapter is designed to assist students with symptoms associated with depression and anxiety. This chapter provides an overview of the nature of internalizing problems and includes detailed descriptions of strategies, considerations for using them effectively, and troubleshooting when students need more assistance.

School resources are directed to the students who need the most intensive interventions and will benefit from them the most.

In some cases, a general education teacher with responsibilities for teaching many children may find these interventions more involved or complicated than is possible or realistic to implement without some assistance. Specialized intervention strategies are well worth knowing and understanding, but the assumption is that intervention design and implementation will be a collaborative endeavor among teams of school professionals. In this way, school resources are directed to the students who need the most intensive interventions and will benefit from them the most.