

POSITIVE APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING PROBLEM BEHAVIORS OF STUDENTS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES



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AbleNet University Webinar
September, 29, 2020 (Webinar-2)

Learning Objectives

- **Problem behaviors interfere with student learning, educational advancement, interactions with peers and adults and school success.**
- **This 2-part webinar series, you will learn how to:**
 - **1) Use proactive strategies to provide a supportive environment so triggering events are removed.**
 - **2) Teach new skills to the student that will replace problem behaviors.**
 - **3) Maximize clear rewards for appropriate behavior.**
- **A number of diverse student-specific scenarios across situations and settings will be depicted to illustrate positive, proactive, and functional behavior intervention strategies.**

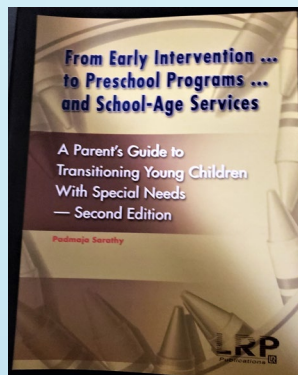
Webinar Series Content

- **Webinar – Part 1**

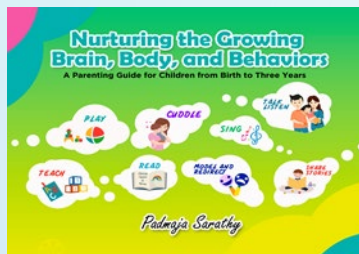
- **Overview of Proactive Practices to address Problem Behaviors**
- **Creating a Supportive Environment for to Reduce Occurrence of Problem Behaviors**
- **Detailed Illustration of Implementation of Personalized Positive Strategies**
- **Reflections and Case Scenarios**

- **Webinar – Part 2**

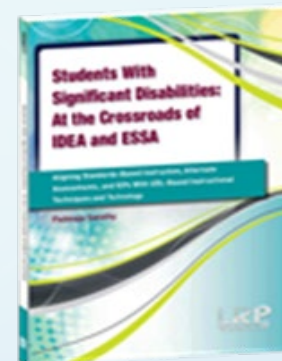
- **Multiple Depictions of Student-specific Problem Behavior Scenarios**
 - **Addressing Transition-related Challenging Behaviors**
 - **Communication Difficulties Leading to Problem Behaviors**
 - **Addressing Self-injurious Behaviors**
 - **Teaching Self-management of Aggressive Behavior**
 - **Meditation on the Soles of the Feet**
- **Helpful Tips**



Early Childhood Transition Guide



Executive Function

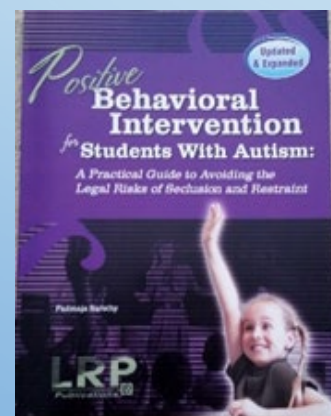


Severe & Multiple Disabilities



Padmaja's Sarathy' Books and Publications

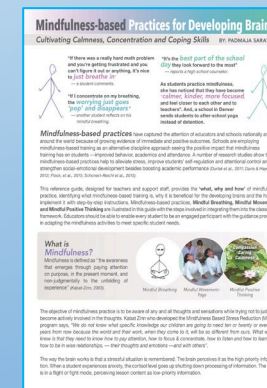
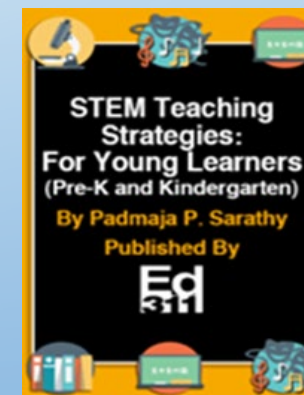
- ❑ **Autism: Support Strategies & Interventions, Autism Seven Steps of Support; Music CD – Transitions**
- ❑ **Behavior Guide (Preventive and Positive Approaches) and Mindfulness Guide**
- ❑ **Early Childhood: Transition; Parenting Guide; Executive Function - Early Years; and STEM Teaching Strategies**
- ❑ **Paraeducator Training Guide and DVD**
- ❑ **Severe and Multiple Disabilities; Significant Disabilities and ESSA**



Autism Spectrum Disorders



Behavior Guide



Mindfulness Guide





Questions to Ponder and Reflect on...



- Are we carefully evaluating what are the triggers that lead to challenging behaviors? Are we looking at all of the possibilities?
- Are we reflecting on why a target student is continuing to exhibit problem behaviors?
- Is the approach we are currently using changing the student's behavior positively? Is the student learning new, appropriate skills?

Communication Issues?



Want to Escape?

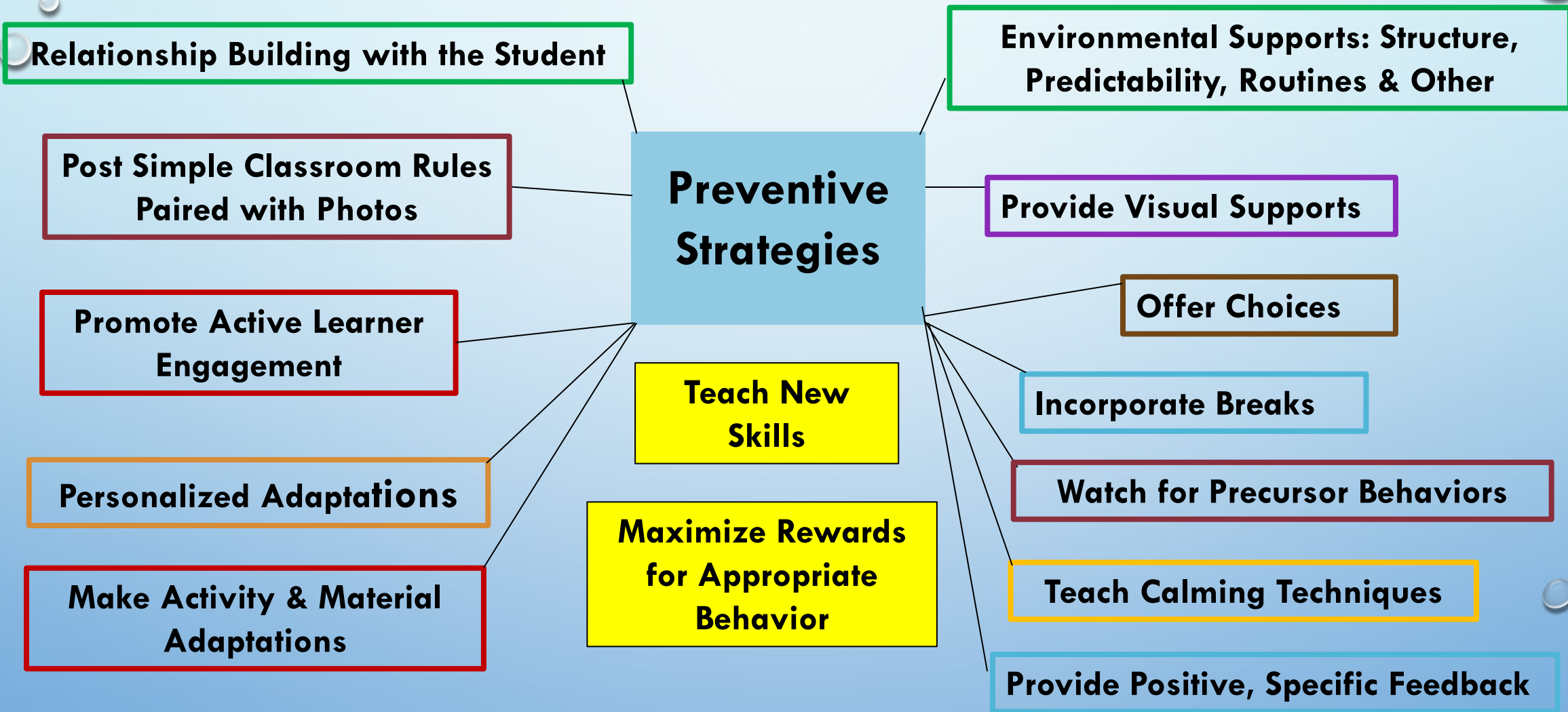
Want Attention?

Sensory Issues?



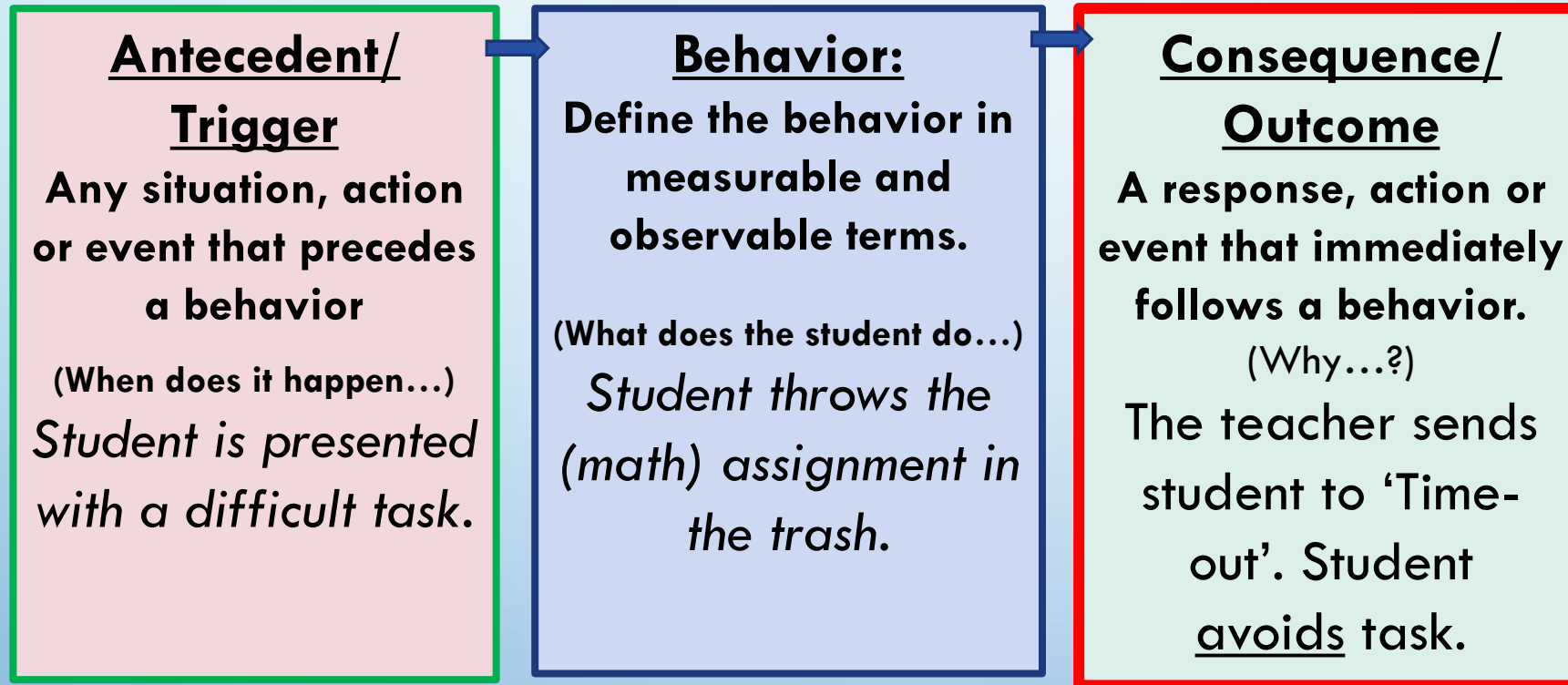
What is the student trying to say through her behaviors?

Preventive Strategies To Address Problem Behaviors



Proactive Approach – Understand the Behavior

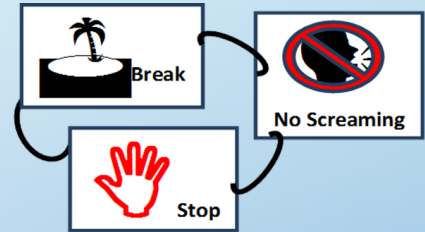
- Gathering data in an Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) format – a first step



Develop a hypothesis based on the behavior data collected – what, when, where and why it happens. the final summary culminates in the FBA data.

Supportive Consequences

- **Use hierarchy of supportive consequences** (Leach & Helf, 2016).
 - **Step 1: Use differential reinforcement** (ignoring and praising a peer)
 - **Step 2: Give a nonverbal reminder** (encouraging tone and with gesture & visual prompts)
 - **Step 3: Provide a verbal reminder** (encouraging verbal prompt)
 - **Step 4: Offer assistance or modify task demand.**
 - **Step 5: Provide a safe space for de-escalation.** (Leach & Helf, 2016)



Designated 'Safe Space'



Visual Boundary

Behavior Scenario -1

A high school student with communication and cognitive difficulties engages in lot of aggressive behaviors; Diagnosed with autism, participates in a significant disabilities program.

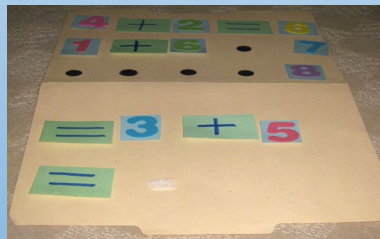
Behaviors: Lunging at the teacher, grabbing the teacher's arm, scratching her hands and stepping on her foot, etc. Also engaged in self-injurious behaviors numerous times slapping himself on the face.

During one-on-one instruction 5 minutes of instruction followed by 5 minutes of break (lying on a large mat)

- **Increase opportunities for the student to communicate to express wants, needs & preferences for activities.**
- **Offer choices for breaktime activity.** (Choice making is empowering, effective intervention in decreasing challenging behavior (Tullis, et al., 2011))
- **Use of pictured rule cue cards to redirect students (Hands to self).**
- **Teach the student how to use and maintain a personal space.**
- **Use fidget toys to manipulate with hands.**
- **Use of Social Narratives to teach appropriate social interactions.**
- **Help student to use calming and breathing techniques to achieve longer term outcomes.**

Behavior Scenario - 1 (Continued)

- Provide positive strokes with encouraging, specific & descriptive comment.
- Some calming and relaxing activities that the staff can try are:
 - Have student stamp words or his name using a stamp and ink pad.
 - Teach student to differentiate and sort pictures of food items from non-food items (Velcroed to the folder) as a folder activity or other similar folder activities
 - Involve student in physical activities to reduce sensory overload (Sitting and rolling on a large gymnastic ball; jumping on a trampoline; walking around the school, etc.).
 - Create a collage with a variety of textured items.



Food	Non-Food

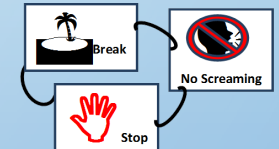


Behavior Scenario -2

*The target student frequently engages in **self-injurious behaviors** – hitting himself repeatedly on his face when working by himself. Occurs mostly when student is engaged in a non-preferred activity – what the student perceives as nonpreferred but not during PE or Recess).*

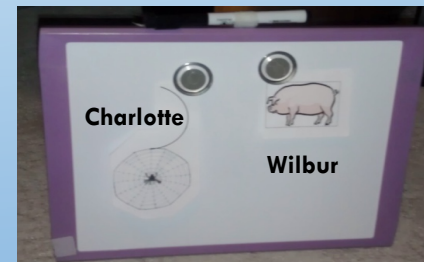
Student (elementary school) has significant disabilities with minimal communication skills.

- **Consistent use of visual supports to reduce communication frustration & self-aggression.**
- **Use pictured rules cue cards** (visuals paired with pictures) to teach the student appropriate behaviors in all settings, in the classroom, gym hallways, etc.
- **Teach replacement behaviors:**
 - **Provide fidget toys to manipulate with hands.**
 - **Teach calming and breathing techniques to achieve longer term outcomes.**
- **Involve the student in small group instruction as much as possible.**
- **Use video modeling**
- **Provide positive strokes whenever the student stops hurting self even momentarily.**



Behavior Scenario -2: Replacement Behaviors



- Examples of replacement behaviors that are motivating and engaging while keeping the students hands busy and to prevent hitting self:
- Provide colorful, sound producing objects to draw attention and distract from SIB
 - Present objects to count (say 1-3 objects and gradually increasing challenge) and drop it in a container.
 - Have student match objects to words (Velcroed) attached to a mini board.
 - Have student throw a specified number of darts on a dart board.
 - Use sound producing objects (balls with sounds).
 - Shake a musical instrument (tambourine, jingle bells).



Some Do's With Student-specific Scenarios

1. Transition between activities causes conflict and leads to student's aggressive behavior – ***pushes teacher, refuses to start next task, insists on listening to music CD***
 - Need for a visual activity schedule to help smooth transition from one class to another
 - First-Then option; Social Narratives; Teach and train on using personal space
2. Tornado drill causes meltdown of 3 students – ***screaming, scratching adult, etc.***
 - Advance preparation and practicing for drills; Use video guidance to prepare for emergency drills; visual aids with sequenced steps of what is going to happen
 - Teach how to identify feelings and express them safely and appropriately
3. Academic task (difficulty with math or writing) causes student ***to crumple & throw the worksheet*** (a repeated occurrence). ***Timeout is the routine consequence.***
 - Adapted material, reduced # of problems, writing frames, visual prompts & supports

Visual and Tactile Supports

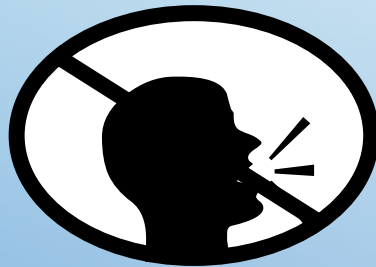
First	Then
Reading (picture) 	Computer (picture) 



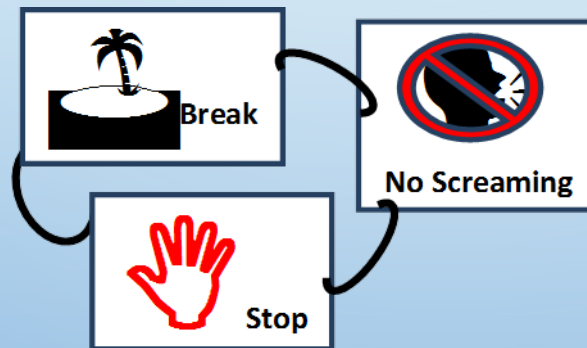
Emotional Literacy



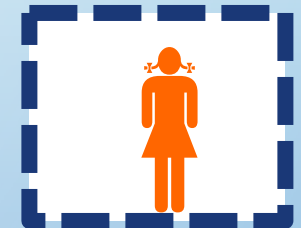
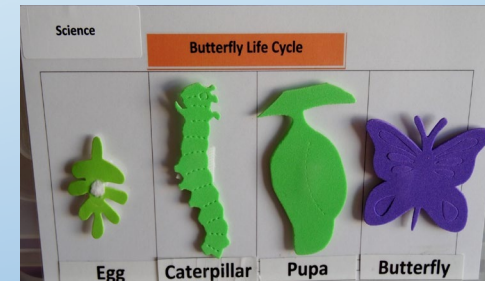
Interactive books with Velcroed items



No Screaming



Rule Cue Cards

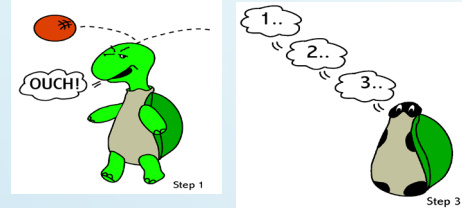


Personal Space

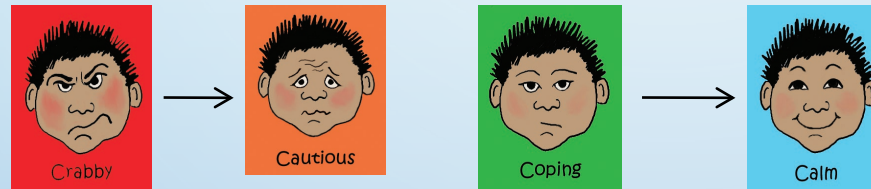
Self-management - Behavior

Helping Children to Learn to Manage Their Behavior

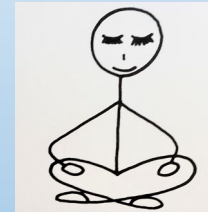
- **Turtle Technique**



- **Calming Cards**



- **Mindfulness-based Procedures and Yoga**



- **Meditation on the Soles of the Feet**



Mindfulness-based Practice – Meditation on the Soles of the Feet

- **Teach mindfulness-based procedures to self-manage anger and physical aggression.**
 1. The procedure involves rapidly shifting the focus of attention from the aggression-triggering event to a neutral place on the body.
 2. The individual is taught that when he gets angry, he needs to stop, focus his mind on a neutral part of the body (hence, soles of feet), calm down, and make a choice of how to react.
 3. Research results show that adolescents with autism can learn and effectively use a mindfulness-based procedure to self-manage their physical aggression over several years (Singh et al., 2011).

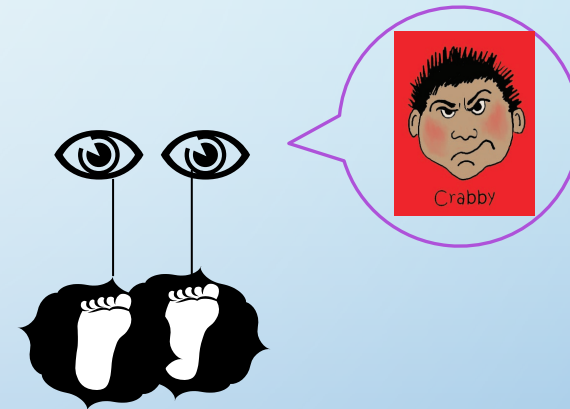


The Main Steps Involved in Soles of the Feet Training

1. Work out the triggers to verbal or physical aggression.
2. Learning to be mindful of the soles of their feet until they are calm.*
3. Walking away from the situation without anger.

* The steps:

- Stand or sit with soles of feet flat on the floor.
- Breathe normally.
- Think of something that led to an angry feeling.
- Shift focus to soles of feet and wait until calm. (Singh et al., 2011)



Trauma-Sensitive Practice

- **Adversity and stress in the early years puts the child at risk in the development of cognitive and social-emotional skills and mindsets.**
- **Important to pursue a trauma-informed approach.**
- **An example of an institution* using a comfort versus control philosophy**
 - **The focus is on the individual, emphasizes peaceful conflict resolution.**
 - **Being sensitive to clients “receiving, engaging, sensing, feeling and responding to what someone is trying to communicate... through their actions”**
 - **A culture shift - asked employees to reassure clients (children/adults), ask questions instead of making assumptions, be flexible, let go of the upper hand, and treat others with kindness and respect.**

Craig & Sanders, 2018

**The children served at Grafton Integrated Health Network were males and females aged 6–22 years old with varied levels of intellectual and developmental disabilities. Craig & Sanders, 2018*

Gain Parental Involvement – Behavior Issues

- **Collaborate regularly with families.**
 - An important component of the student's educational programming
 - Various strategies used at school can be applied at home and in the community.
 - Students benefit from the consistency and intensity of strategies enhancing their growth and learning.
- **Share resources with family.**
- **Greater reduction in challenging behaviors occur with teacher-parent paired interventions.**



Do's and Don'ts



Environmental, Instructional or Supports

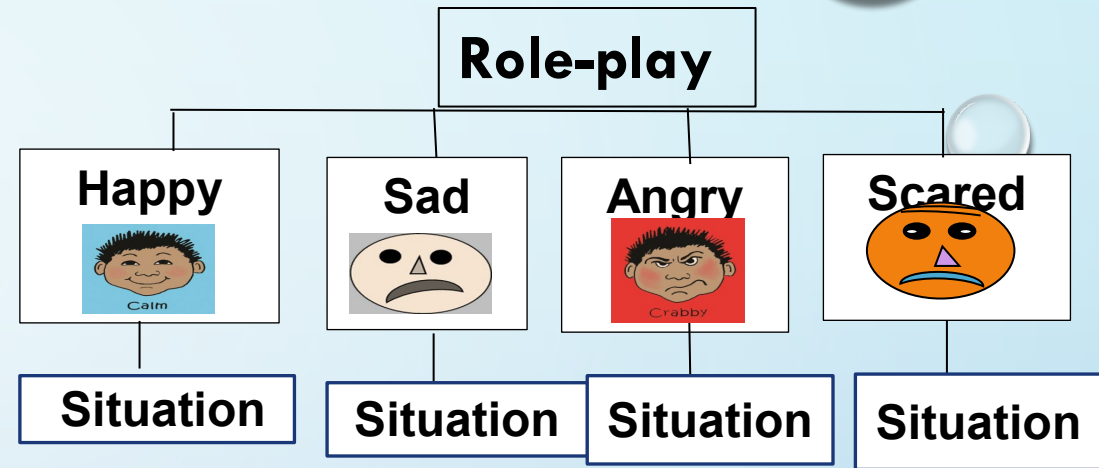
- **Ensure highly engaging and joyful instruction** (Student wants to be there.).
- **Lots of hands-on activities, with a role to play for target student.**
- **Lesson sensory stimulation.**
- **Adapt materials and tasks (visuals, manipulatives, reduced #s, word bank, etc.)**
- **Lots of choice-making opportunities.**
- **Allow for movement (games, role play/drama, etc.) to reduce anxiety & stress.**
- **Arrange for peer support.**
- **Provide communication aids (using AT) to reduce frustration.**



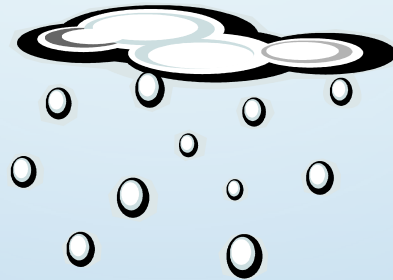
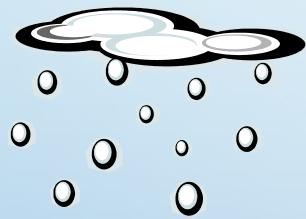
Do's and Don'ts

Social-Emotional and Behavior Supports

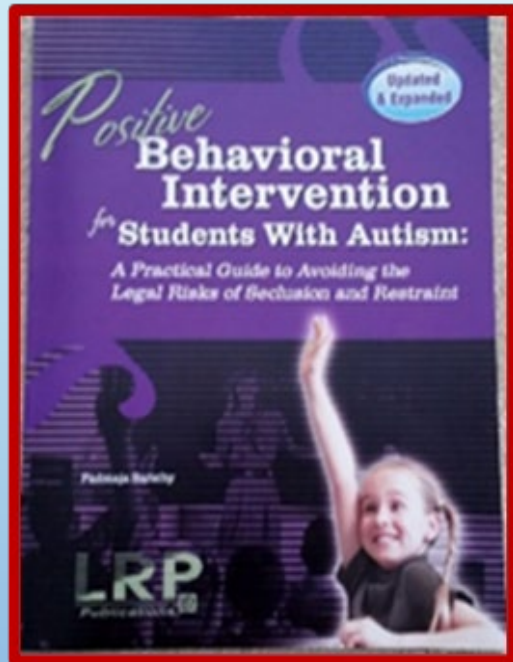
- Try to understand what the student is saying.
- Teach social skills (strengthen emotional literacy).
 - Teach how to identify, label emotions and manage them.
 - Empathize – they are dealing with feelings but not able to communicate /cope.
- Use video modeling to teach social skills.
- Define expectations clearly.
- Help student to make a better choice the next time.
- Provide encouragement with descriptive, specific feedback.
- Redirect instead of reacting with a punishment-based approach .



Raise your words, not your voice!
It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder! (Rumi)



Books and Mini-Guides Linked to this Webinar



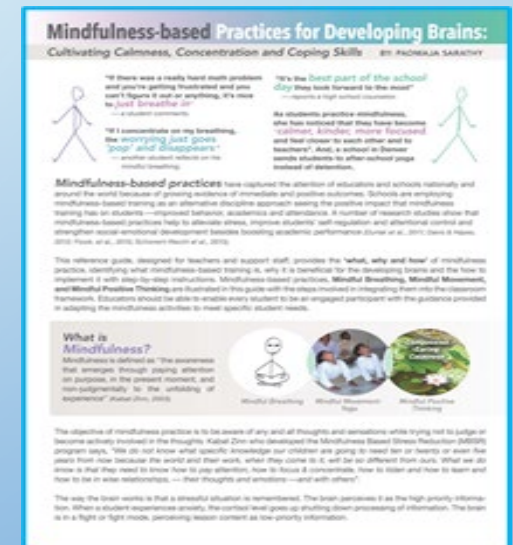
Autism Book focusing on Behavior Strategies

Autism Mini-Guide with 7 Steps of Support



Behavior Mini-Guide

Mindfulness Mini-Guide to Cultivate Calmness



Resources

- **Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (www.pbis.org).**
- **Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (www.vanderbilt.edu/CSEFEL)**
- **Craig, J.H., Sanders, K.L. Evaluation of A Program Model for Minimizing restraint and Seclusion. *Adv Neurodevelopmental Disorder* 2, 344–352 (2018).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/S41252-018-0076-2>**
- **Sarathy, P. (2015). *Autism Spectrum Disorders: Seven Steps of Support*. Naples, FL: National Professional Resources, Inc.**
- **Sarathy, P. & Lipsett, A.B. (2019). *P.R.E.V.E.N.T. Problem Behaviors: Seven Contemplative Discipline Steps*. Education 311, Austin: TX.**
- **Sarathy, P. (2020). *Mindfulness-Based Practices for Developing Brains: Cultivating Calmness, Concentration and COPING Skills* (2020). Education 311, Austin: TX. (www.ed311.com).**

Thank You Everyone.

**A special thanks to AbleNet University
for hosting the webinar**

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The next webinar will be on October 7th

**Promoting Access, Engagement and Learning Success
for Students with Severe Disabilities**