

- Hello everyone, I'm Padmaja Sarathy.

Welcome to this session on setting and student specific personalized interventions and supports for children with ASD.

And by the way, today is truly a very special day because it is 2, 22, '22.

With that, let me go ahead and begin.

Some of you may have participated in this three part series in the first webinar.

We focused on the first one on understanding the characteristics of children with autism spectrum disorder, and how some of those characteristics impact the kind of challenging behaviors or the tantrums that you may see in these children.

This webinar and the next one, we will focus on seven steps of support and blending it with student and context specific environmental, instructional and social supports so that you use these supports to reduce and to decrease the triggers for tantrums.

And you also increase the skill building opportunities because that's what we want children there in school for.

You want to enable them to be learning, to be self-dependent and put on a positive academic, social and behavioral trajectory.

So we are going to be looking at these seven steps of support.

They are based on evidence-based practices and help children make smooth transition.

Finally, in the webinar number three, we will be looking at, in addition to some of the other supports, how do we come up with a safe steps action plan? Working together as a team, as well as including the family and getting them to be a partner.

As usual, I like to know who are joining us today in this webinar.

So let me go ahead and launch my poll.

Are you serving as a general education teacher, special education and administrator, speech pathologist, other support staff, or their parents joining us or any other that I have left out? Please go ahead.

Looks like we have a lotta support staff and some speech pathologists, and in the other categories, something that I have missed out, we do have a lot of people and some special education teachers.

Anyway, together as a team we will make sure that we increase the skill building opportunities and reduce the tantrums.

Okay, lemme share the results and this is what you see.

And I'm going to go ahead and move forward and share information a little bit.

Now that I know we have a diverse group of people joining us, including parents and a lot of other support staff, or administrators, or, you know, persons interested in the topic of autism.

Personally, I am an author of number of books as you can see on this slide.

These are all the books that I have written, and several of them focus exclusively on the topic of autism.

This one here is a mini guide, the one that I'm pointing to.

And then this one here, in 2021, a new edition of this, "Positive Behavioral Intervention for Students With Autism," came out, and I have several behavior related mini guides, like this one, the "P.R.E.V.E.N.T." guide and then a "Mindfulness Guide." And then I have a book that just came out in December of 2021 that is "Serving Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities."

Also for the last 20 plus years, I have worked as a special ed supervisor as well as a consultant in

the last 15 years or so, which has provided me with opportunity to be in person in the classrooms and observe a variety of situation that trigger problem behaviors, and also how educators cope with them or respond to them.

So I'm going to go ahead and begin with some of the issues that we need to be carefully looking at in terms of educator responses.

How do we often respond when there are behavior issues, or when there is a behavior outburst?

Are we being very reactive and does that exacerbate that meltdown is a question we need to be constantly asking.

Sometimes these behaviors, you can begin to see the triggers, and if you use a reflective approach, it may not become a major meltdown, but based on several investigative reports, it looks like in many, many of the classrooms, children are not only spending a lot of time in time out, but that time out itself may be labeled somewhat differently and children may be secluded and isolated for long periods of time and repeatedly.

This is based on a report by Butler.

It is called "How Safe is the Schoolhouse?" And then Richards and Covin, they did a very extensive investigation into Chicago public schools and it came out in the Pro Publica publication.

And based on their reports, children with autism spectrum disorders spent a lot of time in time out, isolation, or they were restrained.

And some of these things, I don't know how they began, but some of the cases that I'm sharing with somehow sound kind of worrisome.

For example, a nine year old with autism was placed in a duffel bag.

That was quite a long time ago, but this was in one of the reports that came out in National Disabilities Rights Network.

Another situation where a child was placed in seclusion isolation for a period of five hours. He was arguing with the staff for being uncooperative, but sometimes we wonder what is it that triggered that kind of problem from the student and why was the student placed for five hours.

This is a Pro Publica public investigation reveal.

They were placed in seclusion almost on a daily basis because they refused to do the fast work. They were swearing or there were even situations like spilling milk and throwing Lego blocks.

And then there was another investigation in Fairfax County Schools in Virginia.

And what they found were that a child was confined to a room almost 100 times in a school year and another one where it resulted in restrained 745 times.

You know, if something didn't work, if the seclusion, if the isolation didn't work after the first few times, it should tell us, I have to think of some other way, a different approach.

I do not know why in these cases it went on and on.

And that was a way, the student left the room, out of sight.

And so you didn't think about it as a way to reflect.

Some of these situation you may not have come across.

But these are based on these various investigative reports.

And on top of that, the Civil Rights Data Collection showed that students with disabilities, they were disproportionately restrained and secluded.

So we wonder what is it that triggers this kind of a punitive response?

What is the thinking behind it?

Are we fully grasping some of the characteristics of these students, and understanding the characteristics, and responding, you know, in a reflective manner?

Are educators tormented by uncontrollable behavior episodes or they thinking that maybe punishment will teach the student a lesson?

That has been an historic tradition or do teachers, because when they face a problem, they react immediately to the situation and not being reflective, and then that situation is solved, and the next day when you come across that, the same thing happens, and so it is repeated.

Or do they think when you use the more flexible and being accommodative to the student, it means it's a poor discipline approach and that's not what we should be following, or do we think when we give alternate choices to the student, somehow we are giving in and we are not in control?

And do we always want to demonstrate that the adults are in control?

And if teachers didn't exercise control, you know, teachers may be thinking, "Oh, oh, it reflects poorly on my classroom management and if somebody, my supervisor, my administrator came in and saw 'Oh, they may come to the conclusion that I am giving in and that I'm not in control,'" is that what is driving some of these responses that we saw earlier?

And the other thing that cannot be ruled out is, when you use timeout, or seclusion, or the student is outta the classroom, it does give a break to the teacher and the teacher can continue with the instruction, does not face the challenging behavior at that time.

And also in a way, it's a escape for the student and the student repeats that behavior again and again, so that he or she can escape the classroom and not be participating.

So are these the things that is driving this punitive approach?

So let us look at what we can do.

We have to think in terms of when we use a kind of a reactive approach and it ends up in a punitive result, what kind of adverse impact it has on the student, on the educator and the school district?

Children do suffer negative impact because they lose their instructional time when they're out of the classroom or when they're restrained.

It affects their academic gain, it affects their functional outcome and because they're away, it doesn't give them the opportunity to socialize with their peers and it also prevents their inclusion opportunity.

And the sad thing is, the same students are repeatedly restrained, secluded, which means they suffer, continue to suffer.

There is also a significant negative impact on the adults, teachers, and para-educators, and some of the others when they're working with these students and there is aggressive behavior from the student, they may suffer physical injuries, then property damage maker, and this may cause more emotional and physical stress to the staff.

And there is also added responsibility because you have to keep documentation of what has happened.

You have to have, you know, some kind of a crisis prevention, crisis management training and follow up, and you may need additional staff to handle these tantrums.

And finally one of the things that does happen when you have situations like the same student is restrained or secluded 100s of times, you also may face legal liability issues, the district may. And they may face lawsuits.

That is financial issue, emotional issue for the staff, and lots and lots more of work.

So we do have to come up with some positive approaches on how we can take preventive action.

As a matter of fact, during the last webinar when we were looking at understanding the characteristics of children with autism, we were looking at, what preventive action can we take ahead of the meltdown? What new skills do we need to teach this student to replace those problem behaviors, and how does the adult use a more reflective approach rather than reactive approach?

Continuing with that same approach, I'm going to share with you both setting and student specific positive intervention, as well as the steps of support that I mentioned earlier.

To begin with, I'm sure most of you are familiar with the antecedent behavior consequence chain.

First, we need to understand what are those situations, or actions, or events that proceed a problem behavior, when does it happen?

And then we have to be able to clearly define what is the student doing at that time?

It is not enough if we just say non-compliant and uncooperative, we have to be able to say, what, is he running out of the classroom, or is he crawling under the desk, or is he being hurtful to another student or the staff?

So we have to be able to do that.

And then what is the consequence?

What happens?

What is the consequence to the student?

What is the consequence to the adult?

Is the student getting attention from the staff whenever he engages in this or whenever she engages in inappropriate behavior, or when the student engages in appropriate behavior, is there a reward?

Is there a reinforcer?

And does the student get to escape the activity which she wants to escape anyway?

So maybe acting up is one way she can be sent to timeout and that's what's causing it.

Let's see how we can transform these challenging moments into skill building opportunities, looking at some student scenarios.

Before that, I would like to have a poll and I see a lot of chat questions.

I will try to answer them.

If it is okay with you, I will wait towards the end to answer some of those questions.

Okay.

In this one, do you routinely observe any of the following problem behaviors?

Do you see that they engage in aggressive behaviors, like pinching and kicking, or they are refusing to complete the work that you have assigned, or difficulty with initiating social contact with the others, or transitioning from one group activity to independent work or the other way around, or any change in routine activity, environment, or person?

It's interesting.

Looks like all of those that I mentioned and listed seems to be about 60%.

So the highest one is change in routine, activities, environment.

And that has been my observation too, and that's what teachers have shared with me and administrators have shared with me.

Yes, that is the one that causes, but some of the others are also some of the behaviors that you routinely observe.

Okay, and I'm gonna stop sharing.

And I'm sure you saw the results, and all of the behaviors that are listed on the slide are about 60%, but the one, the change in routine, activities, environments or personnel, trigger tantrums is one of the highly rated one.

So let me go ahead and share with you some of the ways we can address these problems.

As you all pointed out, changes in routines, activities, and materials, and environments, or personnel do trigger problems because they introduce to that student with autism ambiguity and it reduces the predictability that the student is always expecting.

Any wait time that's too long between two activities, that also triggers problem and transitions as you all pointed out, transitions, arrival, dismissal, going to or coming in from recess.

Because these students with autism, one of their characteristic is they have a need for sameness.

They find it difficult to be flexible in their thinking, and because they lack behavior flexibility, that causes them to react to any change, you know, through tantrums, or in a aggressive behavior, or oppositional behaviors.

They get anxious even though they may have had the same routine every day.

If there is a slight change, they find it very difficult to adjust to that change.

And so behaviors quickly turn into aggressive or oppositional with practically no advanced warning to you.

And so that's what leads to the meltdown and certainly any new personnel, new situation, a new setting that increases their anxiety and stress.

I am reminded of one incident, this was even presented as part of the congressional investigation in 2009.

There was a new substitute teacher and the classroom was not prepared to inform the student in advance that there will be a different person, and the usual teacher will not be there.

And that led to a very serious meltdown.

So when you have new persons or new situation, it is important to prepare the student in advance.

And when you ask the student to stop an activity and start a new activity, that also causes problem.

And one of the things that I will address in the next webinar is how to build, strengthen the student's executive function skills, attention, and also cognitive flexibility, and the ability to filter out distraction and to gain impulse control.

These are all associated with the executive function and many of the children with autism do experience problems with that.

So in thinking in terms of a seven steps for autism support, first and foremost, we wanna make sure that the environment is supportive to the student.

Is there advanced preparation?

Is there alerts for the student if there are changes in the environment and is the environment conducive to help the student to focus and pay attention?

Is the environment helping to reduce that stress and anxiety?

It's something you want to look at.

And then the other thing is the structure, the consistency and the predictability of your routines, as well as the visual support that you use.

Is it consistently being used in all settings?

So that is the structural and visual support is the other support that you wanna make sure you have it available.

And the third important one is the instructional support.

In order for the student to make academic, functional and social gains, you want to provide that support during instruction through task flexibility, making adaptation, reducing the complexity level, and following, applying, implementing universal design for learning principles.

I will illustrate each one of this in greater detail in the forthcoming slides.

And during the next webinar, I will focus on the social support.

How do we build the students' emotional and social competence?

How do we teach the student to use self-management tools to calm down?

How do we strengthen the student's executive function, impulse control and cognitive flexibility to be able to adjust to different perspectives and different situations.

And finally, the crisis support.

But despite all this, if there is a crisis, how do we make sure we have a team approach and we also include and partner with the family?

But underlying all of these supports, we have to make sure we have a good understanding of the distinctive characteristics of the student with autism spectrum disorder.

So beginning with the environmental support, we have to make sure that physical environment of the classroom is proactive.

Make sure, if you can at all, rearrange the seating to prevent potential problem behaviors.

Seat your competent students that can model good attention, good focus, is not getting distracted, and is able to display good self-regulation.

Seat those competent peers with students who are experiencing behavior issues, students with autism.

And from time to time, if you can have the student work individually and independently using a study carrel, that will also help build the student's attention.

But I'm not saying that the student should not be part of the group, the student should be part of the group but the student should also be provided this option, so that when the student is beginning to show some of these tantrum triggers or fidgety behaviors should have the opportunity to go work in an study carrel so that he or she continues to work but not engaging in a tantrum behavior with the result he or she is not doing anything but being sent to timeout.

And also it is important that the classroom environment is designed to prevent any sensory overload.

So the you arrange the furniture strategically, so that there are not large open spaces.

And this is particularly important when you are working with younger children, so that they are not pacing around the classroom and staying seated.

The other thing I would say is making sure that there is not a lot of clutter around the classroom or there are not too many things all over the wall in every bit of wall space is covered with some kind of display material.

Reducing the sensory overload is extremely important.

So eliminate those auditory and visual distraction.

Only post those things on the wall that is absolutely necessary.

I have been in classroom where there are three different calendars and when you are posting, let's say the vocabulary wall, word wall, use a few words at a time and then replace them every couple of weeks, so that you can reduce it, and it is important, cover up the shelves or cabinets with white paper or white sheet so that you limit that sensory distraction.

And also, it is a good idea to have clear visual boundaries for different defined areas, label them.

And finally, make sure you have a designated calm down space for student to take a calming break.

And this should be a kind of a safe space and not a timeout area that you have in every classroom.

Oh, sorry, what happened? So this is kind of a picture to show clearly defined labeled work areas and then you have classroom rules, but the classroom rules are paired with visuals, and then you have for that student who has a tendency to reach across and touch others or who has a tendency to walk away, there is a kind of a visual boundary around the student.

You can put a masking tape around his desk or if he's part of a group, around the chair that he's sitting in, and then you have a designated work area for him or for her, and a designated space space, and limit the visuals on the wall, and also make sure your visuals are consistently used in all the settings.

And then you have something called the behavior cue cards that the adult carries with in all the setting to remind the student visually of the rules to follow.

And in coping with changes, some of the things that you can do.

Prior warning before the next activity.

And this is one of the tools that you can use, that is, let us say the student is working on the computer and that is a transition from one activity and then the student is using the computer. And I have seen that many many students with autism do spend a great deal of time in front of the computer, and we have to be careful about that because that prevents social skills and that prevents them from engaging with the others in a group activity.

But let us say the student is working on a computer, there should be a clear signal.

Okay, you can start the activity and this is something you can do even if the student is working at a study carrel and has to rejoin the group, okay, go and maybe the student is working on this independent activity or a computer activity for a period of 15 minutes or 10 minutes, go, and then about three minutes before that time is over, he should be reminded either by the adult or with a picture, both adult verbally and with a picture, and maybe the student can learn to set the timer gradually and the student almost done, three minutes before and three minutes are over, and the total time of 15 minutes is over, the stop sign.

So training him or training her to use this kind of a visual would also help.

It is advanced warning before the next activity.

Always pair visual cues with verbal cues, and you can use some kind of a cue cards like this and that cue card's to be carried everywhere.

And the sequenced steps to follow when, you know, there is a fire drill in the school or a tornado drill, you are working individually with that student to follow the sequence steps, and it is important there is some kind of an advanced warning.

I know you are going to say "How can we have for some kind of an emergency, like the fire drill and the tornado drill, an advanced warning?" You can create pictures and hang it on your whiteboard in a corner and that is reminded during normal time when there is no drill or when there is no emergency, you remind the student about that and you prepare the student in advance.

When you go to that picture and show the picture, the student is reminded that there is a fire drill or a tornado drill, and what are the steps to be followed.

And it always paired with pictures, especially when there is some kind of an alarm and there is a loud sound, it is important to not just give verbal direction but also pair it with pictures for students with autism.

The other thing that you can do is to use music when you are making transitions from one setting to the other.

And this is particularly helpful with the younger children who are in preschool or kindergarten, using song as a transition cue, and I will share an example with you if it works later on in one of the slides.

And the songs.

You can have songs which provide guidance and directions musically to assist the children, you know, circle time is over and you can make it into a song, or it's time for recess, it's a thing, or this is time for lunch, or you can use a musical instrument.

This particular one is a stir xylophone and you can play that because it has a kind of a distinctive song for changes.

And this is particularly helpful in the early childhood classrooms, and kindergarten, and maybe even first grade.

Let us look at a scenario.

How advanced preparation is extremely helpful.

Mark is a very high functioning student.

What happened was he loves to read, even though he's just in kindergarten, he was already fluent in being able to read and the furniture in the classroom was rearranged.

And then the bookcase, which is his favorite center, was moved to a different location, and many of the other pieces of furniture naturally was also moved.

Mark got so agitated that when he came to school that morning and when the center was no longer where it was, he started throwing books and blocks, and knocked down the chairs.

And from his perspective his world had changed.

He was confused, didn't know what to expect and he didn't know what was going to happen in the future.

Unfortunately in this particular case, he was sent immediately of course to the office to be disciplined and many other adverse consequences followed for him.

He was sent to a more restrictive, less inclusive setting.

All this could have been avoided through advanced preparation.

If he had been primed for the changes, showing him where the location of the reading center and some of the other furniture in the room is going to be aided with pictures, and he was reminded a week or 10 days in advance every day, Mark, do you know where the new book reading center is going to be?

And then show him the photo and he learns to go and show that, and that would've helped prepare him and all of these adverse consequences that resulted could have been avoided. So visual support.

Besides environmental support, visual support is absolutely essential, and I'm sure a lot of you working with children with autism do use picture supports.

Some of the students may need object support, they may not connect with the picture icons that easily.

You may be able to gradually train the student to use pictures but they may need an object support.

And so decide on the format, train the student to use it, use a mini schedule within the activity, and use the schedule throughout the day in all settings.

And in some situations, like gym, or lunch, recess, also should be provided the schedule, the visual support should be provided and as they complete each of the activities, always pair these with pictures.

And as the activities are completed, train the student to move the activity that is finished to the activities done or activities finished, and then remind the student of what is next.

Gradually train the student to take care of these things independently.

I do have one just to show you an object schedule.

Some students with significant cognitive needs may need an object schedule.

And for the classroom rules, use picture rules.

If you compare your statement about the classroom rule with a picture, that will help them tremendously.

And then in addition to that, you could also pair them with an voice device.

For example, the TalkingBrix from AbleNet.

You can separate them each one of these things, the Brix, and then you can place it next to the picture and you can teach the student what does this say?

Keeping hands to yourself.

And so this is one thing that you can train the student on and pairing the picture, the voice output device and the actual text.

And the other one is a set of rule cue cards for different situations.

All you need is a set of rule cue cards that you carry with you everywhere.

You know, sit in chair or if you have to ask the student to start, or raise your hand when you need a break, or when you want to answer a question, or when you want something.

So just a set of pictured cards that is in a key ring and you take it with you wherever you go, including lunch, and gym, and all that, and recess also.

And the student should be trained to request a break.

And again you can use an assistive technology device or a small device where the student asks for a break.

And by pressing it, if the student is not using words to communicate, this is a way and paired with a picture, it'll connect to the student what is it that he's asking for and to be able to request.

That's one thing that will help prevent some of the problem because if the student is beginning to show fidgety behavior, then he should request a break and then a timed break where he goes into the safe space, and then maybe does some counting, or mindfulness, or whatever it is that you have trained your student to do.

And we will look into it a little bit more next time.

So we have another poll here.

And in this situation, a student finds a noisy and crowded environment like a lunchroom or a school assembly overwhelming, and so engages in tantrum behavior.

What preventive action would you typically use to prevent some of these tantrums?

See the student in the quieter area of the lunchroom, or you arrive early and have the student sit in the front of a school assembly, or prepare him with behavior cue cards, or have the student take deep calming breath.

You know, there are a variety of options.

Check all that apply.

I hope you can see the poll.

Yes, indeed.

You see the student in a quieter area of the lunchroom.

I think it's naturally all of you are fully aware how important to prepare the student using a behavior cue cards as you are making the transition from the classroom to the lunchroom, or the assembly, or the gym is extremely important.

It's 100% requirement, you should really do until the student is able to use the cue cards himself or herself.

That's your ultimate goal.

And I'm glad warning the student in advance about timeout only got 15% but that really should not be happening.

Instead alerting the student with the cue cards is a good solution.

And sitting the student, and arriving early and having the student sitting in the front would cause a problem.

And that problem would be if you have to leave because the student is not able to calm down, then you have to move through all of those people.

So you wouldn't want to arrive early and sit in the front.

And calming breath, yes.

Prearranging, you know, just for crisis situation, it is a good idea to have some kind of a plan.

Thank you for all your wonderful answers.

And naturally, the one with the behavior cue cards got the highest number of selections so you are all doing the right thing.

Okay, I'm going to share the results as you can see.

And it is best to avoid as much as possible, warning the student in advance time or an office because that to happen at all.

Okay, thank you.

Now we are moving on to instructional support.

And this is a critical area because if we want our students to make any academic gains, we want to provide that instructional support.

We have to be able to adapt the material we are presenting, making sure that complexity level is adjusted, the task demands are adjusted, and we are applying ability.

This is where we wanna make sure we are using universal design for learning principle.

Increase that student access.

We want the student to be motivated, we want the student to be focusing attention.

You want to get the student to continue with the work.

Stay on task.

For this, we have to adjust the task and gradually we increase the demand.

If we give 20 problems to the student and the student looks at the 20 problems and thinks, "Oh, oh, I'm not gonna be able to do it.

This is too complex," you lost it before you have begun.

So you want to see a lot of engagement.

For that, you want to present the information in a variety of weight.

PowerPoints, role play, mind maps, concept maps.

You want to use physical or concrete objects, you want to use storyboards.

So you are drawing in that student's attention through presenting the information in a variety diversity of formats.

So you have adjusted the task, the complexity level so that the student feels confident through multiple means of engagement.

You have presented the information in multiple formats and then you want to make sure how the student is going to respond.

Offer a variety of ways, pointing, manipulating objects, using voice output device.

Participation too.

There should be a variety of ways for the student to show his action and expression.

That's third principle of UDL.

Reduce the task demand, modify a complex task, break down the task.

And for example, many, many students have difficulty with their writing skills and certainly students with autism may also experience difficulty with writing.

So if you can have them put pictures to fill in sentences and it is a paragraph, it is about the topic, and they can use pictures to complete sentences, pictures paired with text, then that is a way you are reducing the task complexity level.

I don't know if you can see this, but anyway I'm trying to show something and I will also show it in a later slide.

And then you can make further activities where you can do the similar type of things where they are showing their understanding and the knowledge that they have gained using folder activities that are text and picture paired together.

And then you can offer if then option or first then option.

First you complete five problems, then maybe you can listen to music for five minutes or you can work on the computer for three minutes.

It has to be carefully timed and monitored.

And then you come back and do the next five.

Maybe the first five and the last five.

And give the student a choice.

Do you want to do the first five or the second five?

If the page has 20 problems, do you want the first five?

The student can feel as though he or she's in control and that will add to the motivation.

Yes, I want to do this.

So provide choice making, offer writing frames, and then "Oh, you finish those first five" or "Finish the second five.

"Oh good, you stopped at three minutes." Provide specific positive feedback and this is a slide that shows different ways you can engage the student through applying universal design for learning, storyboards with graphic organizers, PowerPoint presentation, concrete objects like this when you are presenting information, this is for the student to use a writing frame, assistive technology, responding to a question, making a selection.

These are all variety of ways you can engage the student, involve the student and provide instructional support.

Again, some participation, some students may just respond with a yes or no, that's fine.

You can gradually increase the challenge but you want him to stay on task and be involved.

Give the student a role to play in the lesson and then use a teaching approach.

Many of you may be familiar with the structured teaching approach.

This is for independent work that the student has already mastered.

Let us say the student has mastered how to count and one-to-one correspondence, just sharing a very basic example.

And then maybe the student has a box where he's matching the number with a certain picture of objects.

And the same with let's say the student finds rhyming words.

You have another box for rhyming words or if the student is doing some kind of a writing activity, in other words, he's matching a picture with a certain text and the sentences, and he completes the sentences.

These are all put inside these boxes and the student completes each one.

As she completes it, she moves it to the finished box section.

And then when the whole set of activities are done, this is for independent work, and then the student gets to use maybe the preferred activity, computer, music, or building something, or drawing, whatever it is, the student's preferred activity that is timed the student spends after completing the structured work tasks.

Do watch out for instructional situations that trigger problem behaviors.

Any activity that requires a lot of assistance, watch out, and look, and plan ahead.

If the student finds the directions are not clear, that may trigger problem behaviors.

Any activity that requires a long time to complete may trigger problem behaviors in students with autism.

Except if the activity is something preferred or if the student likes to do nothing, and you provide that opportunity for him or her to do nothing, then that may be fine.

But you do want the student to engage in structured instruction activities.

So watch out, is the activity too difficult, or is it too easy, or is it not preferred?

Then I'm going to gradually make sure the student engages in that activity and various factors play into this.

So do make a careful analysis of this and then plan accordingly.

This is another student.

The student takes off during transitions, he runs around.

So what could you do during transitions between activities? Watch out for any precursor behaviors.

Fidgetiness, swinging legs, clenching feet.

Intervene before the behavior escalates.

Post a stop sign at the door, teach the student to stop, turn around, and sit in chair.

Move the student ahead of time to the next activity.

Offer him a role to play in the activity and making sure that the next activity is engaging for the student.

These are all steps that will prevent and provide a personalized situation.

And make sure you have a visual organizers that point out the different stages and the steps involved in completing the activity.

Make sure you have built-in breaks, I have mentioned this already, but have a visual timer to show when the break will be over and train the student to self-monitor, make sure he or she is not overusing it and stops when the break time is over.

Here is another situation where the student, Taara, she's transitioning from recess and every day it is a bit of a problem because she refuses to leave the playground after recess and clings to the swing or slide wherever she is.

And this is something that I have actually observed in a classroom.

Just like there is other situations that I shared with you, and when the teacher or the para-educator tried to move her away from the equipment, she kicks, hits and throws herself to the ground and it's a great big struggle to get her back.

And quite often the adult gets bruised or scratched in the struggle to get her back.

And then she's put in the timeout when they return to the classroom, and she cries, and the behavior continues day after day.

How should this behavior, this transition tantrum be addressed? What are some options? Let's look at her option.

Sending her to timeout.

Let us teach her some replacement behavior.

Give Taara an advanced warning a few minutes before the other children are lining up, maybe three minutes to line up or two minutes to line up.

Whichever time is best for you.

You can play a musical instrument to signal that all the students are to line up maybe one minute before or 30 seconds before everybody has to line up.

You could also gain Taara's attention by positioning yourself close to her.

She could hold the instrument, and bring it back to the classroom, and have students take 10 slow deep calming breaths, and you can use music to transition.

I don't know if this is going to work because I think I may not have.

So I don't know if you heard it, I hope you heard it.

That is something you can use.

You can make up your own song, you know, end of recess, going to recess.

Any change in transition, you can make up your song, especially in the younger classrooms, first grade, kindergarten, or early childhood classroom.

That would be helpful too.

And if there is a severe meltdown to get some additional help.

And technology support.

One of the most important thing I want to mention in terms of technology support, we have to make sure that it is personalized for the student.

Sometimes we use complex devices that the student is not ready for, and the adult ends up moving the child's hand or finger through the device.

You want to use something that the student is able to access.

So begin with something simple and that is personalized.

Assuming the need for the assistive technology device exists and it's matched to the student's need, some student may be able to, you know, handle more complex devices but not all.

And the other thing is it should be present and used in all settings in order for the student to become familiar with it, and to be comfortable with it, and to access it, to make the request and to communicate.

And then don't give up to soon, persevere, and use it in all the settings as much as possible, so that the student is really taking advantage, and communicating, and responding to questions, and connecting with adults and children using the device.

As we come to a close of this session, I wanna say, "Make sure you provide proactive instructional emotional supports." We will look at some of the other supports, the calming support executive function and crisis plan, all of that.

And also TARA educator support in our next webinar, make sure your daily routine includes some joyful break.

Make sure it has visual schedule, is continuously and consistently used along with built-in breaks.

And then you have highly engaging activities, role play and drama, and interspersed with a little bit of physical movement, so that that physical activity reduces the stress level in your students.

And then we will look at some of the others next time around.

And this webinar, the information I have drawn from these various books and many guides of mine.

And that's the end of the webinar, and I'm extremely grateful to AbleNet University for hosting this webinar, and I'm most thankful to each and every one of you who joined this webinar.

Thank you so much.

And the next webinar will happen on March 29th, and it'll be transforming transition meltdown with some more case examples, and context specific supports, and the rest of the seven support strategies I will share with you.

And then in June, I have a presentation on art experiences with academic and function outcomes for students with significant needs.

And then in October, bolstering family involvement with tools and techniques, so that we advance our learners with significant disabilities.

Now, I know that I'm slightly over time, but I'll be happy to answer any questions that you have.

"It isn't always possible to prepare in advance for changes, how do we?" That is a very good question.

I'm going ahead and answering live.

Yes, it is difficult to plan ahead, but one of the things that you can always have with you is a set of rule cue cards when you are accompanying the student, and that rule cue card can have some pictures that will help the student to let's say take calm breaths or to keep the hands to self.

Some of the pictures will remind the student, that's one thing.

You can also take the assistive technology device with you, again, for the same purpose.

If it is a very serious meltdown, of course, you have to have some kind of a crisis plan for that and get extra help.

But it is possible in most situation to redirect the student.

And if you have been consistently teaching the student replacement behaviors whenever the student has engaged in tantrum behaviors, you watched out the for the triggers.

So watch out for the triggers and what are some typical situation that make the student engage in tantrum behavior, keep note of it.

And the adults who are working with that also have to be alert to that, and then take the appropriate action and teach the student self-management to practice by herself or himself, like breathing, or going and sitting in a little corner or a space where he or she is taking calming breaths.

We will look into that some more.

How do we train the student to engage in self-management in addition to what the adult is doing to support the student.

I hope that was helpful.

With that, I am assuming that's all.

- [Speaker] All right, thank you very much.

- Okay.

Is there any other questions? Lot of people, occupational therapists, physical therapists have joined.

I think I should include them too next time.

Anyway, I'm assuming that's the end and since there are no other questions, that'll be the end of the webinar.

Thank you very much, and thank you, again, to AbleNet, and thank you to all the participants.

- [Speaker] Alright, thank you Padmaja.

For those of you still with us, you will receive an email tomorrow to access the certificate of attendance.

Thank you for attending, and everybody have a great day.

- Thank you.