Responding to Behavioral Outliers in the Classroom

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SQ: Ideation, Activator, Maximizer, Positivity, Woo

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Note: Dangerousness and violence, from a student, faculty or staff member is difficult, if not impossible to accurately predict. This training topic offers evidence-based techniques and theories to provide a foundational understanding and improved awareness of the potential risk. The training or tool should not be seen as a guarantee or offer any assurance that violence will be prevented.
KEY IDEAS FOR
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
3-PRONG APPROACH TO CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

- Have an authentic presence and engaging content.
  Set clear expectations about classroom behavior and help the students to develop individual skills to better manage emotions. Foster a positive and supportive classroom environment.

- Have the knowledge and practical expertise in technical crisis de-escalation skills to address conflicts when they occur.
  Keep calm when challenged by poor student behavior, develop an understanding of skills useful in de-escalating a crisis, and stay solution-focused.

- Stay connected to a larger behavioral intervention training process to better address the underlying causes of disruptive or dangerous behaviors and develop intervention strategies that are multi-disciplinary, collaborative, and on-going.
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Educators who are successful are seen by students as being *authentic, positive and genuine*.\(^1\)

They occupy the room and set an expectation of *mutual respect*.\(^2\)

They like their jobs and create engaging lessons that use technology, group discussion, lecture and reading in balance with students’ differing learning preferences.

They seek to maximize on-task behavior and *show unconditional positive regard*.\(^3\)

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1. Gatongi, 2007; Jones, 1996
3. Crosby, 2015
They seek to create *positive relationships* with students and teach content in a manner that appreciates the developmental, psychological and learning needs of the students.⁴

The material shared is *relevant, meaningful and engaging* to students.⁵

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⁴ Babkie, 2006; Crosby, 2015; McNaughton-Cassil, 2013
⁵ Toppin & Pullens, 2015
✓ Setting of clear expectations for classroom communication, behavioral standards and logistics around seating assignments, questions and managing disagreements.\(^6\)

✓ Expectations should be consistent across the school system that is supported by policy and climate expectations\(^7\) and when students are involved in creating classroom expectations.\(^8\)

✓ This includes anticipating difficulties based on specific topics, past experiences, and an awareness of how outside factors may impact a current classroom experience.\(^9\)

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\(^6\) Babkie, 2006; Brown, 2012; Sorcinelli, 1994; Swick, 1985; Toppin & Pullens, 2015 
\(^7\) Emmer & Stough, 2001; Crosby, 2015 
\(^8\) Meyers, 2003; Sorcinelli, 1994 
\(^9\) Landis, 2008; Simonsen & Myers, 2015
Broken window theory applies,\(^\text{10}\) where educators are encouraged to prevent minor infractions to help create a culture of order and rule. This can prevent more serious infractions from ever occurring.

**Setting expectations and making appropriate referrals** to support offices such as counseling, disability accommodations and academic tutoring and information sharing with parents should be done early and often.\(^\text{11}\)

\(^{10}\) Kelling & Wilson, 1982

\(^{11}\) Ali & Gracey, 2013; Crosby, 2015; Van Brunt & Lewis, 2014
Teach students adequate social skills, character education and social emotional learning programs\textsuperscript{12} to assist them in their interactions, managing their emotions and developing increased impulse control, frustration tolerance and communication skills.\textsuperscript{13}

Students are also taught skills of civil discourse\textsuperscript{14} to help them when discussing difficult and controversial issues.

\textsuperscript{12} Couvillon, Peterson, Ryan, Scheuermann, Stegall, 2010; Crosby, 2015; Demirdag, 2015; Forthun & McCombie, 2011
\textsuperscript{13} Myers, 2003
\textsuperscript{14} Harlap, 2014; Landis, 2008
Effective teachers also use **positive social attention, praise**, and appropriate consequences to help students understand appropriate behaviors\(^\text{15}\) as well as assisting them in monitoring and tracking their own behaviors to better understand and manage them.\(^\text{16}\)

**Psychological and mental health first aid awareness** would also be useful for staff and students to better educate how to react to an emergency event related to a mental health crisis.\(^\text{17}\)

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\(^{15}\) Dufrene, Lestremau & Zoder-Martell, 2014; Marzano, 2007  
\(^{16}\) Gonzalez, 2014  
\(^{17}\) Crosby, 2015; McNaughton-Cassill, 2013; Ryan, Peterson, Tetrault & Hagen, 2007
Skills Training & Positive Group Culture

✓ The community is built around clear expectations and an attitude of mutual respect that considers group dynamics and allows all students to contribute.¹⁸

✓ There is a fostering of civil discourse, shared experiences, empathic listening and individual responsibility.¹⁹

✓ This involves creating a time and place for disagreements and discussion²⁰ as well as promoting cooperation and cooperative learning activities.²¹

¹⁸ Babkie, 2006; Emma & Stough, 2001; Sorcinelli, 1994
¹⁹ Guthrie, 2002
²⁰ Benton, 2007; Landis, 2008
²¹ Crosby, 2015; Couvillon, Peterson, Ryan, Schuermann, Stegall, 2010; Guthrie, 2002
The classroom community should also be built upon a firm foundation of **acknowledging cultural differences**. Cultural competencies, such as avoiding cultural bias that leads to potential assumptions about behaviors, stereotypes, microaggressions and discrimination are important to effective crisis response.\(^{22}\)

Students should be encouraged to be given thorough feedback on their behavior and **opportunities to reflect and communicate** with the class and teacher.\(^{23}\)

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\(^{22}\) Brown, 2012; Crosby, 2015

\(^{23}\) Toppin & Pullens, 2015
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Disruptive

- Misuse of technology in the classroom, such as watching loud videos on a laptop or cell phone ringing repeatedly
- Body odor or passing gas that affects the learning environment
- Use of alcohol or other substances
- Getting up frequently or kicking other students’ desks
- Frequent interruption of teacher while talking and asking of non-relevant, off-topic questions, after told directly to stop
- Repeated crosstalk or carrying on side conversations while the teacher is speaking
- Raising voice at classmates or teacher
- Emotional outbursts or other extreme communications in the waiting room of a school office that significantly affects others
Dangerous

- Physical assault such as pushing, shoving or punching
- Throwing objects or slamming doors
- Storming out of the classroom or office when upset
- Direct communicated threat to teacher, staff or another student such as: “I am going to kick your ass” or “If you say that again, I will end you.”
- Bullying behavior focused on students in the classroom
- Conversations that are designed to upset other students such as descriptions of weapons, killing or death
- Psychotic, delusional or rambling speech
- Objectifying language that depersonalizes the teacher or other students
Classroom management is...

a subtle science and exact art
In the words of a great educational philosopher...

“Do or do not. There is no try.”
Crisis Management

How do you feel today?

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How do you feel?

- Frustrated
- Annoyed
- Rushed
- Angry
- Low energy
- Distracted
- Anxious

- Threatened
- Melancholy
- Confused
- Disoriented
- Unsure
- Full of rage
- Tired
Crisis Management

• Nothing calms more than a sense of confidence...

**equanimity**

(ee kwuh NIM uh tee; ek wuh NIM uh tee) n

composure or evenness of temper, especially under stress

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Breathe in slowly to the count of 1...2...3...4...

Hold your breath to the count of 1...2...

Breathe out slowly to the count of 1...2...3...4...

Hold your breath to the count of 1...2...

www.aggressionmanagement.com
• Talk to the student alone (if safe)
• Talk should be free of time pressure
• Seek to understand, not to judge
• Listen to his/her point of view
• Discuss with neutral tone; no sarcasm
• Build connection; working together
• Find ‘teachable moments’ with students
Crisis Management

• Acknowledge frustration
• Use humor
• Be friendly, yet direct
• Be efficiency-oriented
• Offer a pathway for action
• Empathize and offer alternatives
• Be future-oriented
What kind of connection do you have with the person you are trying to motivate, persuade or deescalate?
What’s happening on top?

What’s going on underneath?
Understand the content (what is being said) and process (how it is being said)

**Spoken:** “This test question isn’t fair! It wasn’t on the study guide and the answers are vague. You need to change my grade!!!”

**Unspoken:** “I’m scared and lost in your class, I study hard but still fall behind”
• Respond to the unspoken message to match the question being asked.
• Too often, we match defenses and anger. Focus on worry, concern and frustration underneath.
• As Covey says, “Seek first to understand and then be understood”
• Have a calm, cool & collected mindset
• Share concerns without judgment & assumptions; neutral, ‘just the facts’
• Listen to student, show respect
• Align with the student toward success
• Avoid sarcasm
• Stay solution focused (what next?)
Motivational Interviewing involves:

- Expressing Empathy
- Developing Discrepancy
- Avoiding Argumentation
- Rolling with Resistance
- Supporting Self-Efficacy
Express Empathy

- Ask exploratory, open-ended questions (think first date)
- Have a burning curiosity for the person
- Avoid judgmental statements
- Stay in the moment, don’t rush to solution
- Accept them where they are with their problems
Develop Discrepancy

- Identify parts of the plan that aren’t working
- Not judgmental, but helping them see the situation accurately
- Look for logical problems in the plan
- Ask clarifying questions to explore
- Present contrary information in the proper way, at the proper time
- “What is it you don’t like about that...”
Avoid Argumentation

• Actively avoid pairing off against them
• Not possible if your ‘goat is got’ or buttons are pushed
• Avoid having them admit or accept anything
• Instead---use counseling skills
  • Active listening
  • Simple reflection
  • Summary reflection
Roll with Resistance

• Partner with the person and move with them rather than against them
• Don’t take the bait. Make it a game of catching them setting a trap for you
• Identify those times where a person has a plan but the plan won’t work
• New ways of thinking about the problem
Support Self-Efficacy

- Here our goal is to catch them doing well
- Look for a positive frame to their story
- Find ways to encourage hope, optimism, or even self-confidence
...a matter of perspective
Things to do when working with disruptive students

– Listen and align yourself with the individual
– Don’t take it personally
– Address and approach issues individually as well as systemically
– Be futuristic and solution oriented
– Address the behavior, maintain a relationship with the person.
– Know the school conduct process.
– Document incidents to maintain adequate records
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Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)

What is BIT/CARE?
Defining BIT

- BITs and CARE teams are groups of 8-10 staff, educators, counselors and administrators who educate the community about what behaviors of concerns should be reported to the team.

- The team meets weekly to discuss and quantify at-risk student and staff behavior through the use of a evidence-based rubric to better inform interventions and follow-up with the individuals of concern and community.

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Three Phases of BIT/CARE

1. Gather Data
2. Rubric/Analysis
3. Intervention

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Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)

FOUNDATIONS (2-day)

BEST PRACTICES (2-day)

ADVANCED THREAT (2-day)

CASE MANAGEMENT AND INTERVENTION (2-day)

https://nabita.org/news-events/nabita-training-events/
Free Falling
Access to Lethal Means
Affective
- Immediate
- Unplanned

Explosive
- Emotion driven
- Reactive

Low Risk
- Loud Bark
- Easily spotted
Predatory
- Delayed attack over time
- Thoughtful; Practiced
- Fueled by hostile intent

Targeted
- Strategic and Tactical
- Fixed and Focused

High Risk
- Deadly, mass causality
- More difficult to detect
Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)

- **10x** NaBITA Threat Assessment Tool

- **25x** Violence Risk Assessment of the Written Word (VRAW\(^2\))

- **50X** Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment (SIVRA-35)

- **75X** Extremist Risk Intervention Scale (ERIS)
### VRAW² - Violence Risk Assessment of the Written Word

**Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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**Notes:**

- Extreme danger and violence from a student, family, or friend is difficult, if not impossible, to accurately predict. This tool is designed to help in understanding and improving awareness of the potential risks. The tool should not be seen as a guarantee or offer any assurance that violence will be prevented.

**VRAW² - Violence Risk Assessment of the Written Word**

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Factor A: Fixation and Focus
This factor is based on the concept of a specific target being identified in the writing sample. This is a target in real life and the target is identified specifically.

Factor B: Hierarchical Thematic Content
This factor is based on the concept of the writer or protagonist in the story being identified in the writing sample as superior or in an avenging or punishing role.

Factor C: Action and Time Imperative
This factor is concerned with writing content that conveys a sense of impending movement toward action. This may be communicated by mentioning a specific time, location or event such as a grade reporting period, sporting event or the outcome of a discipline action.

Factor D: Pre-Attack Planning
Many who move forward with violent attacks write and plan in detail prior to these attacks. Sometimes, this pre-attack planning is boastful “howling” behavior designed to intimidate others towards compliance.

Factor E: Injustice Collecting
The injustice collector keeps track of his or her past wrongs and are often upset in a manner way beyond what would typically be expected.
VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT OF WRITTEN WORD

FACTOR A: FIXATION AND FOCUS

Sub-factor A.1 Naming of Target: Is the person, place, or system being targeted identified clearly in the writing sample?

Sub-factor A.2 Repetition of the Target: Is the target mentioned more than once? Is the target identified and then repeated multiple times for emphasis?

Sub-factor A.3 Objectification of Target: Is there language that indicates a negative view or dehumanizing of the target?

Sub-factor A.4 Emphasis of Target: Does the writer use capital letters, quotes, color changes, graphics, parenthetical inserts, or emoji to emphasize the target? This becomes more concerning if related to a theme of retaliation, blaming others, or wounded self-image (my life is over).

Sub-factor A.5 Graphic Language: Does the writer describe what s/he wants to do to the target in a graphic or detailed manner?

FACTOR B: HIERARCHICAL THEMATIC CONTENT

Sub-factor B.1 Disempowering Language: Is the person, place, or system being targeted described as a sheep, lemming, cattle, retarded, or something similar?

Sub-factor B.2 Glorified Avenger: Is the writer or protagonist described as an all-powerful figure or someone who is smart, knowledgeable, and able to punish those who have wronged him/her? There may also be a tendency to use the gun or weapon to enhance the attacker’s gender status to prevent him/her as all powerful or superior.

Sub-factor B.3 Reality Crossover: For fiction pieces, is there a cross-over between fiction and reality? Additionally, does the writer reference an ideology or historical figure such as Hitler/Nass or previous mass murderer as a role model or someone to emulate or copy?

Sub-factor B.4 Militaristic Language: Does the writer use military language around tactical or strategic attacks on a target?

Sub-factor B.5 Paranoid Content: Does the story structure give a sense of paranoia or worry beyond what would be considered normal?

FACTOR C: ACTION AND TIME IMPERATIVE

Sub-factor C.1 Location of the Attack: Is the location of a potential attack site mentioned in detail?

Sub-factor C.2 Time of the Attack: Is there a time/date given for the attack?

Sub-factor C.3 Weapons and Materials to be Used: Are specific weapons or materials mentioned in the writing that will be used in the attack?

Sub-factor C.4 Overcoming Obstacles: Does the writing sample include examples of obstacles that must be first overcome in order to carry out an attack?

Sub-factor C.5 Conditional Ultimatum: Is there an ultimatum attached to the time and the location of the attack?
Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)

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Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)

1. Direct threat to person/place/system.
2. Has tools, plans, weapons, and/or schematics.
3. Fantasy rehearsal.
4. Action plan or timeframe to attack.
5. Fixated/focused on target.
7. Pattern of negative writing/art.
8. Leakage/warning of potential attack.
9. Suicidal thoughts with plan.
11. Last act behaviors.
12. Confused thoughts/hallucinations.
13. Hardened point of view.
14. No options/hopeless/desperate.
15. Drawn or pulled to action.
16. Recent break-up or stalking.
17. Defensive/overly casual interview.
18. Little remorse or bravado.
19. Weapons access or training.
20. Glorifies/studies violence.
24. History of conflict (authority/work).
25. Extreme poor frustration tolerance.
27. Substance abuse/acting out.
29. Poor access to mental health.
30. Objectification of others.
31. Obsession with person/place.
32. Oppositional thoughts/behaviors.
33. Evaporating social inhibitors.
34. Overwhelmed from loss (e.g., job or class).
35. Drastic behavior change.

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17. Defensive/overly casual interview.
18. Little remorse or bravado.
19. Weapons access or training.
20. Glorifies/studies violence.
24. History of conflict (authority/work).
25. Extreme poor frustration tolerance.
27. Substance abuse/acting out.
28. Serious mental health Issues.
29. If serious MH, poor access to care.
30. Objectification of others.
31. Sense of being owed.
32. Oppositional thoughts/behaviors.
33. Evaporating social inhibitors.
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1. **Firm Foundation**: Experience of environmental and emotional stability.
2. **Safe Spaces**: Experience of social health and connection.
3. **Open Roads**: Access to non-violent outlets.
4. **Otherness**: Development of empathy and inclusivity.
5. **Critical Awareness**: Seeking positive social or individual action.

**PROTECTIVE ELEMENTS**

**RISK ELEMENTS**

1. **Free Falling**: Experience of Bleakness.
2. **Outsider**: Experience of discrimination and societal disengagement.
3. **Roadblocks**: Obstacles to goals.
4. **Hardened Warrior**: Development of hardened point of view and justification for violent action.
5. **Dangerous Belonging**: Seeking reassuring group affiliation with polarizing, extremist ideologies.
MOBLIZATION FACTORS

1. Direct threat.
2. Reactivity.
3. Escalation to action.
4. Catalyst event(s).
5. Suicide.
6. Group Pressure or Rejection
7. Acquisition of lethal means
8. Narrowing on target.
9. Leakage.
10. Fantasy rehearsal and preparation for attack
### BIT and Threat Assessment

#### ATAP (RAGE-V)
- [ATAP website](http://atapworldwide.org/associations/8976/files/documents/RAGE-V.pdf)

#### FactorOne Cawood Assessment and Response Grids
- [FactorOne Cawood website](http://www.amazon.com/Violence-Assessment-Intervention-Practitioners-Handbook/dp/1420071122)

#### MOSAIC (Gavin de Becker)
- [MOSAIC website](https://www.mosaicmethod.com)

#### WAVR-21 (White & Meloy)
- [WAVR-21 website](http://wavr21.com)

#### HCR-20 (Hart)
- [HCR-20 website](http://proactive-resolutions.com/old-site/bookletsmanuals/hcr-20-ver2_eu.html)

#### FAVT (Firestone)
- [FAVT website](http://www4.parinc.com/Products/Product.aspx?ProductID=FAVT)

#### HARE Psychopathy Checklist (Hare)
- [HARE website](http://www.hare.org/scales/pclr.html)
Responding to Behavioral Outliers in the Classroom

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