Strategies for Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviors – Working from the Inside Out

Early Learning Series

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STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS – WORKING FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Connector
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The Girl on the Yellow Giraffe

By Ronald Himler
People often say that ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder’, and I say that the most liberating thing about beauty is realizing that you are the beholder. This empowers us to find beauty in places where others have not dared to look, including inside ourselves.

- Salma Hayek
Reflection

Individually reflect on the following statement:

Behavior is in the eye of the beholder.

Stand Up partner meeting:

What resonated for you when you read this quote? What questions surfaced?

How might this statement be useful to keep in mind in the classroom?
Overview
Outcomes

Participants will/will be able to:

• Identify and understand the functions of the three brain states

• Understand the connection between social and emotional skills and executive functions and their relationship to challenging behaviors

• Recognize individual triggers and practice composure, pivoting, and reframing when addressing challenging behaviors
Agenda

• Welcome, Connect, and Overview
• Brain States
• Addressing Challenging Behaviors Through Composure and Reframing
• Closure
Collaborative Norms

- Equity of Voice
- Active Listening
- Respect for All Perspectives
- Safety and Confidentiality
- Self-Monitor Use of Electronics
Brain States
With your table group, consider and brainstorm:

How does it show up in the classroom when children have not yet developed social and emotional skills?
We Teach
• “If a child doesn’t know how to read, we teach.
• If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we teach.
• If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we teach.
• If a child doesn’t know how to drive, we teach.
• If a child doesn’t know how to behave,

we….. ........teach? ........punish?”

“Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?”

Tom Herner (NASDE President) Counterpoint 1998, p.2
Imagine this…
**Brain States: Survival**

**Survival State:** The survival state is activated under stress. It is a reactive state in which self-defense is the primary goal and intention. When activated, it results in some of our most primitive behaviors: Fight flight and/or freeze.

Brain States: Emotional

**Emotional State**: The Emotional State is coming from the Limbic System of the brain. The limbic system consists of several interconnected brain structures (amygdala, hippocampus, etc.) that process memories, activate our emotions and tell us what is worth remembering. If the experience is tagged as threatening, the amygdala serves as the gatekeeper of the emotional state, it becomes activated, and self-defense (not learning) become the goal of the exchange.

Survival and Emotional States

Think of a time that you suspect a child in your classroom has gone into either a survival or emotional state?

Share your thinking with a partner
Brain States: Executive

Executive State: The executive state represents the **optimal integrated learning state**, one of relaxed alertness. The brain state model depicts all the integrated systems that regulate the CEO of the brain due to the regulatory function they serve. When integrated, they allow us to see from others’ points of view, manage our emotions, and access goal achievement and problem-solving skills.

Identifying Teachable Moments

Which State?

Via Pixabay. Creative Commons

Which State?

Via Pixabay. Creative Commons
Reflection on Brain States

Individually Reflect:
Think of a time this year that you found yourself in…

- A survival state?
- An emotional state?
- An executive state?

Partner Share:
What was your experience and how did you know, looking back, that you may have been in that “brain state”? 
Video

Reflection Questions:
1. What sentiments from this video resonated with you?
2. Might you be able to identify a child in your classroom that you believe has established a pattern in the brain where they are *unconsciously responding* or behaving in the classroom?
Addressing Challenging Behaviors Through Composure and Reframing
Composure as a Skill

Composure is self-regulation in action. It is the prerequisite skill adults need before disciplining children.

- Dr. Becky Bailey
Be a S.T.A.R.

COMPOsure

In any situation, we can choose to be a STAR.

Stop, perhaps smile

Take a deep breath

And

Relax

Adapted from Conscious Discipline
Composure Strategies

1. S.T.A.R. and others

2. Tucker Turtle
   http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html

3. Safe Place
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUMc3fWgLEk
Identify Triggers

1. Trigger Thought
2. Activates Old Messages (CD-ROM)
3. False Messages
4. Uncomfortable Sensations
5. Automatic Reactions

Via Google Images, May 2006, Creative Commons
Power of Attention and Assertiveness

What you notice you get more of…
Where is the Attention?

1. Ignatius, why did you hit Jake? Would you like someone to hit you? Hitting hurts. Go turn your card to red. Then come back and be nice.

2. Jenna, what is our rule about fighting? You need to go see the principal right now. Fighting is not allowed in this school. Fighting is bad and wrong.

3. Jose you wanted a marker. You didn’t know the words to use to get it. You may not grab. When you want a marker say, May I borrow your maker, please? Practice saying that now.
# Reframing Using Assertiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triggered/Habitual Response</th>
<th>Assertive Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t touch!</td>
<td>Hold my hand so I can help you touch delicate objects safely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You know better than that.</td>
<td>Say, “Excuse me,” when you bump into others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop. It’s not nice to hit others.</td>
<td>When you want to get her attention, tap her on the shoulder gently like this and say her name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reframing Triggers

FOUR CORNERS

1. Read each statement/situation around the room

2. Go to the statement/situation that is the biggest trigger for you

3. With your group, decide how you could reframe this trigger in order to handle the situation with a new lens and composure.

4. As a group, name one more triggering situation. Record it on Chart Paper. Reframe the situation.
Triggers

DEBRIEF

1. Share the trigger your team chose and how your team reframed the situation to then be able to address it with composure and possibly an assertive statement?

2. Share the trigger you created. What was your reframe?
It is critical to remember that a child who is triggered into an emotional or survival state is like a vacuum that tries to pull us and the other children into the same state. We must consciously choose to upshift our state through composure or we will end up part of the problem instead of the solution.

- Dr. Becky Bailey
THANK YOU!

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