Reducing the Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools

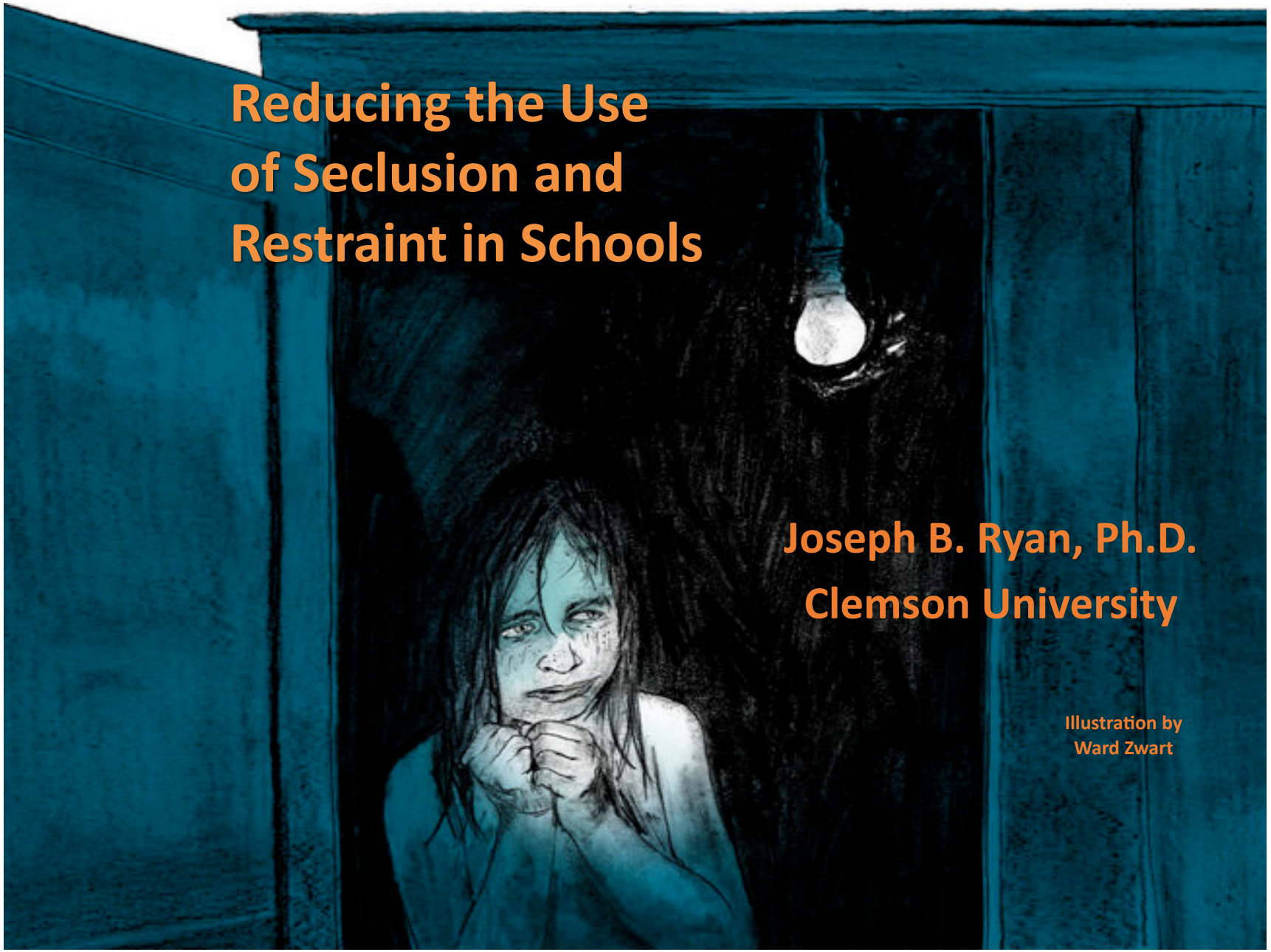

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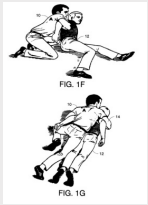
Illustration by
Ward Zwart

- **On any given day when school is in session, kids who "act up" in class are pinned facedown on the floor, locked in dark closets, tied up with straps, bungee cords and duct tape, handcuffed, leg shackled, tasered or otherwise restrained, immobilized or placed in solitary confinement in order to bring them under "control."**

From article by John W. Whitehead, Attorney

***Handcuffs, Leg Shackles and Tasers: The New Face of Punishment in the Public Schools* (January 2015)**

3 Types of Restraint Procedures

Mechanical	Use of any device (tape, tie downs) to limit an individual's body movement.	Limited use in schools; with a few exceptions, not permitted.
Chemical	Use of medication to control behavior or restrict a patient's freedom of movement	Not used by schools; however many students may be on medication in schools.
Physical 	Use of one or more people using their bodies to restrict another's movement.	Can be used given certain criteria are met.

3 Types of Timeout-
Only one of these is Seclusion

Time out: Time away from positive reinforcement.

Inclusion Timeout

- **inside the classroom**

Exclusion Timeout

- **outside the classroom**

Seclusion Timeout

- **Involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving**

Why Have Seclusion & Restraints Garnered So Much Attention Recently?

- **Number of students with serious behavior issues served in regular school settings has increased dramatically.**

- **Ineffective educational programming (e.g., failure to provide appropriate curricular, instructional, and/or behavioral interventions) may exacerbate behavioral difficulties of some students, leading to vicious cycle of antecedents that set the stage for problem behavior.**

- ***Hundreds of cases of alleged abuse and death related to the use seclusion and restraint (GAO, 2009).***

What are the risks and dangers of “restraint” and “seclusion”?

Risks Associated With Seclusion

- **Potential Death or Injury Due to:**
  - ***Lack of supervision***
  - ***Inadequate safety of environment***

- **Procedure is not Therapeutic and Might Actually Escalate Behavior:**
  - **Students consistently perceived timeout procedures as punishment, especially when used as a threat for "bad" behavior (Miller, 1986).**

- **Potential for Abuse**

- **Potential Disparity of Treatment:**
  - **Disproportionate number of African-Americans (67%) separated from class (Vacc & Siegel, 1980).**
  - **General and special education teachers more likely to use punishment and exclusion with Asian-American students (Ishii-Jordan, 2000)**

Risks Associated With Physical Restraint

Death or Physical Injury to Students

Breathing Problems

Positional Asphyxia: Predisposed when in prone (face down) position

Aspiration: Predisposed when in supine (face up) position

Circulation/Cardiac Problems

Blunt Trauma to the Chest:

Cardiac arrhythmia leading to sudden death

Catecholamine Rush:

Escalating agitation creates heart rhythm disturbances

Rhabdomylosis:

Break down in muscle cells due to strenuous exertion

Thrombosis:

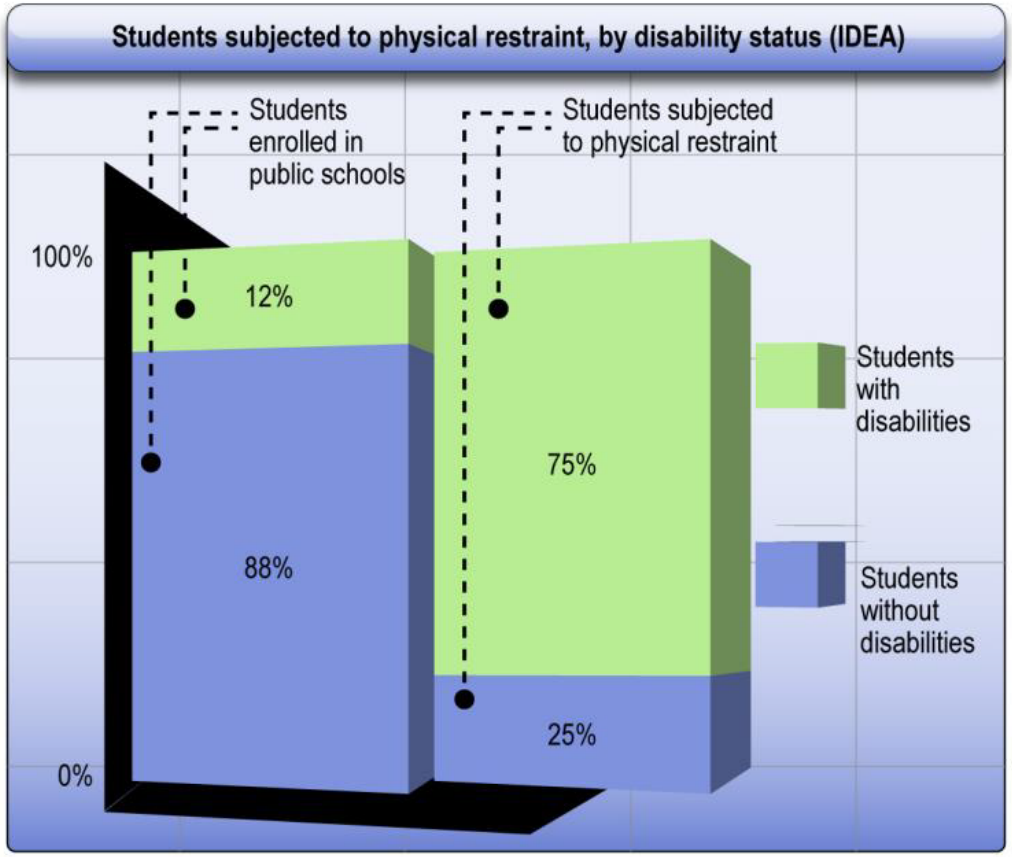
Fatal pulmonary embolism due to being immobile for long periods of time

Physical Injury to Students & Staff

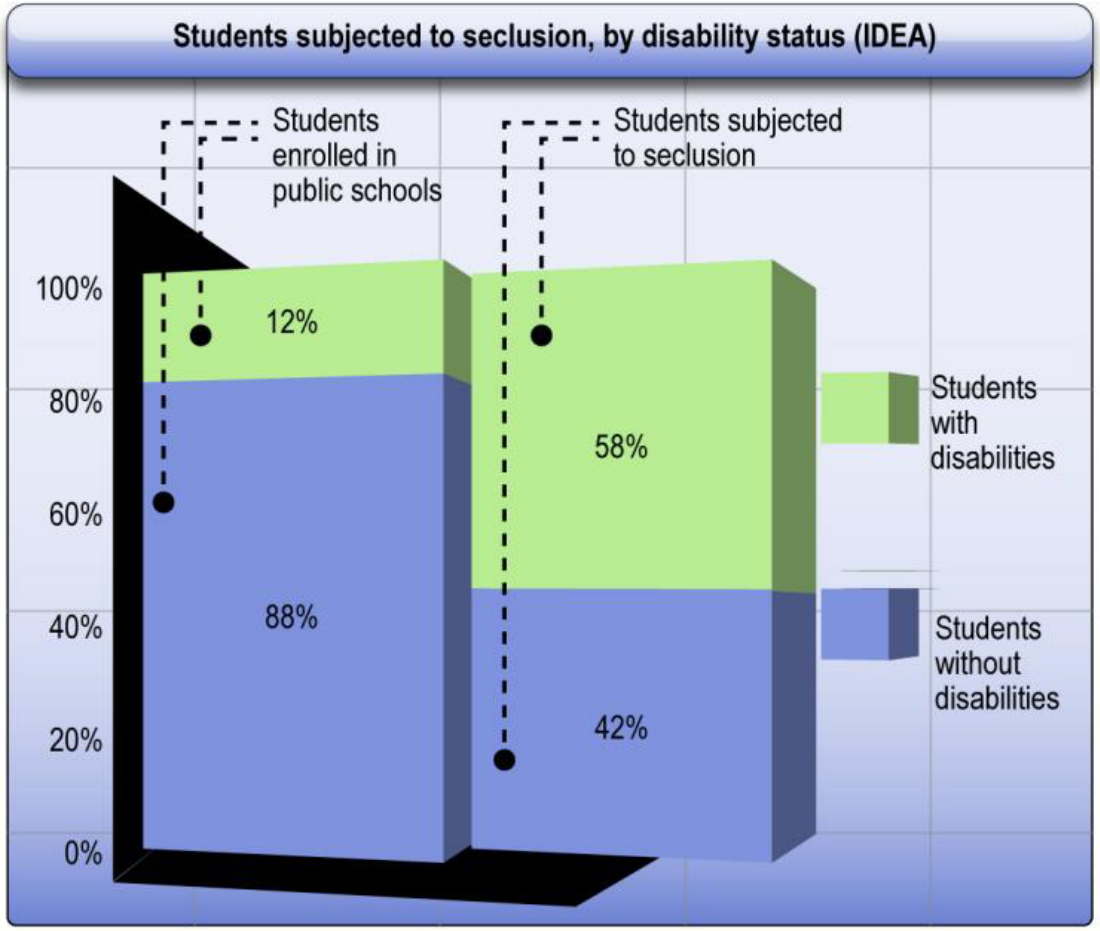
Psychological Trauma for Students & Staff

credit: Photo courtesy of the Howson family

Office of Civil Rights 2014 Report



U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12.



U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12.

U.S. DOE, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12.

- **Across the nation, 75% of students subjected to physical restraint were students with disabilities.**
  - **Nevada (96%), Florida (95%), and Wyoming (93%) reported the highest percentages of physically retrained students with disabilities by IDEA.**
- **Over 70,000 students subjected to physical restraint**
- **Over 37,000 students subject to seclusion.**
- **Nearly 4,000 IDEA students subject to mechanical restraint**

Restraint and Seclusion Frequently Used for Reasons Other Than Emergencies

Staff Reasons Stated for Using Restraint	*Staff Reports*
1. Noncompliance	48.4%
2. Leaving Assigned Area	19.4%
3. Disrespect	7.3%
4. Property Misuse	7.3%
5. Disrupting Class	6.5%
6. Physical Aggression	***3.2%***
7. Threats	3.2%
8. Horseplay	3.2%
9. Harassment	0.8%

Staff Reasons Stated for Using Seclusion	*Staff Reports*
1. Leaving Assigned Area	32.6%
2. Noncompliance	31.9%
3. Disrupting Class	11.2%
4. Property Misuse	10.1%
5. Disrespect	4.5%
6. Physical Aggression	***2.8%***
7. Harassment	2.4%
8. Threats	2.0%

Source: (Ryan, Peterson, Tetreault & Van der Hagen, 2007).

What are effective alternatives to “restraint” and “seclusion”?

Effective Alternatives to Restraint & Seclusion

Highlight research-supported de-escalation strategies and procedures designed to prevent and de-escalate students' aggressive behavior, including:

1. **Curriculum-Based Strategies**
   * *Second Step*
   * *Peaceable School*

2. **Behavior Support Strategies**
   * *School-wide Positive Behavior Supports*

3. **Relaxation-Based Strategies**
   * *Creating cool down or multisensory rooms*
   * *Teaching relaxation techniques*

4. **Conflict De-escalation strategies**
   * *The Conflict Cycle*
   * *The Acting-Out Cycle*

Curriculum-Based Strategies: *Second Step*

Research-based violence prevention program designed for school-wide use

- K through 8th grade in boxed kits
  - Middle school also addresses substance abuse
- Family involvement and guide
- Classroom implementation
  - Posters
  - DVDs
  - Songs

Curriculum-Based Strategies: *Second Step*- Major Components

1. **Empathy Training**
   - Students learn how to identify feelings, interpret how others feel and show others they care
2. **Problem Solving**
   - Students learn to control impulses, use basic social skills and negotiate with others
3. **Anger Management**
   - Students learn to calm themselves, evaluate their actions and think positively

Curriculum-Based Strategies: *Second Step*- Goals

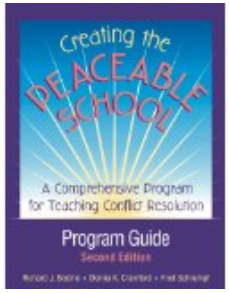
1. **Increase students' ability to:**
   a) Identify others' feelings
   b) Take others' perspectives
   c) Respond empathically to others

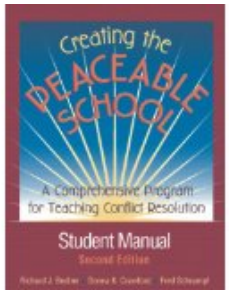
2. **Decrease impulsive and aggressive behavior in students through:**
   a) Recognizing warning signs that fuel anger
   b) Using anger-reduction techniques
   c) Applying a problem-solving strategy to social conflicts
   d) Practicing social skills to deal with potentially violent situations

Curriculum-Based Strategies: *The Peaceable School*

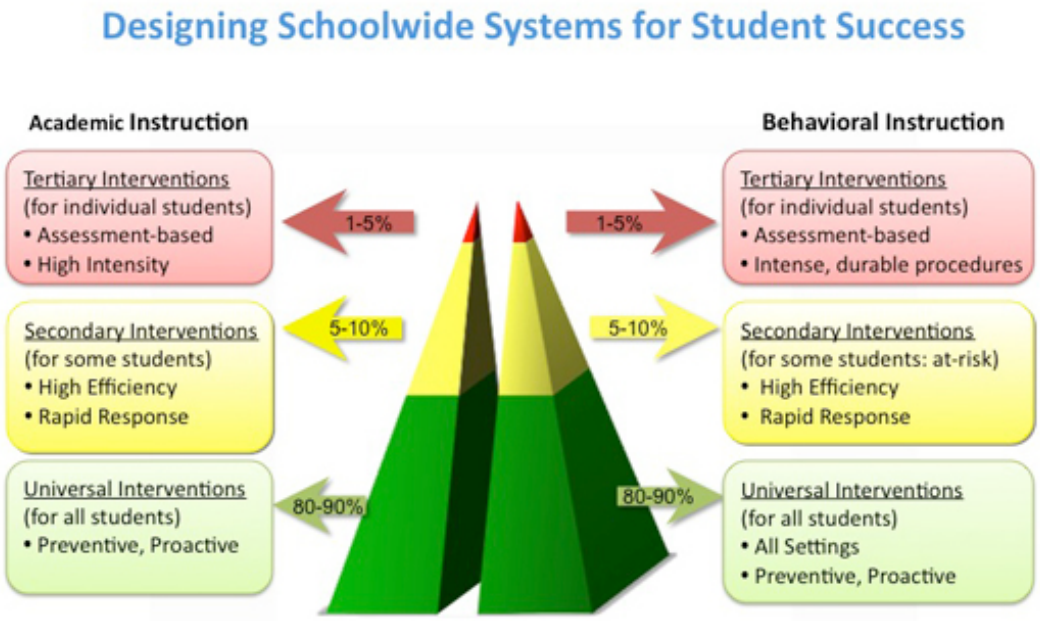
- *Creating the Peaceable School: A Comprehensive Program for Teaching Conflict Resolution*
  - Richard Bodine, Donna Crawford & Fred Schrumpf
  - Based on William Kreidler's *Conflict Resolution*
- **Grades:** Upper elementary and middle school students
- **Goal:** Help students learn to recognize, manage, and resolve conflicts in peaceful, non-coercive ways
- **Activities:** Teaches conflict resolution strategies, including mediation, negotiation, and group problem-solving
- **Implementation in select TN schools:**

https://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/jjjournal_2001_6/jj3.html





Behavior Support Strategies: School-Wide Positive Behavior S



Behavior Support Strategies: Common Intervention Strategies

1. Make curricular adaptations
2. Increase predictability and scheduling
3. Increase choice making
4. Teach replacement skills
5. Appreciate positive behaviors
6. Alter environments
7. Change systems

Adapted from the Beach Center on Families and Disability, University of Kansas

Behavior Support Strategies: Common Intervention Strategies

1. **Make Curricular Adaptations**
   - Consider nature of task, including how it is presented/monitored
   - Provide peer support

2. **Increase Predictability and Scheduling**
   - Consider using (and sticking to) schedules
   - Prepare learners for changes and transitions

3. **Increase Choice Making**
   - Assess choice-making skills
   - Identify types of choices available
   - Provide proactive opportunities for choice
   - Honor choices made

4. **Teach Replacement Skills**
   - Use functional assessment results as guide
   - Choose skill that is as effective/efficient as the challenging behavior

Behavior Support Strategies: Common Intervention Strategies

Appreciate positive behaviors

- Develop attitude and behavior to respond to appropriate behavior
- Maintain 5 to 1 ratio of positive statements
- Embed rewards within activities
- Prepare network members to respond appropriately

Alter environments

- Consider room arrangement and traffic patterns
- Accommodate individual learner's environmental needs

Change systems

- Monitor with the goal of continually improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the system

Relaxation-Based Strategies: Create Other Rooms

Cool Down Room

- Spacious area
- Not-locked
- Very little stimuli or creature comforts
- Designed to give students space to calm down and reflect
- Students and staff establish "return to class" criteria

Snoezlen Room

- Multisensory area
- Designed to deliver stimuli to various senses in a calming manner
  - Visual: color, various lighting effects
  - Auditory: sounds or music
  - Olfactory: scents
  - Tactile: textures

Relaxation-Based Strategies: Teach "Anger" Before It Strikes

My Anger At Others

- What is anger?
- How often do you get angry?
- How does your body feel/look when angry?
- What do you do when you are angry?
- What are some strategies you use to calm down?
- Are there rewards for acting positively when angry?

Other People's Anger

- How do you know when other people are angry?
- How do you feel when someone is yelling at you?
- Is it okay for someone to call you names? To hit you?
- What are some things you can do to help a person who is yelling without increasing their anger?

Creative Therapy Associates' *Anger Management Comprehensive Curriculum*
http://www.ctherapy.com/index.asp

Relaxation-Based Strategies: Teach Relaxation Techniques

- **Visualization**
  - Find a quiet space and close your eyes
  - Use mental images to take a visual journey to a peaceful, calming place or situation
  - During visualization, "use" as many senses as you can, including smell, sight, sound and touch
  - For example, I imagine relaxing at the ocean, and "smell" the salt water, "hear" the rhythmic sound of crashing waves, "feel" both the breeze and the hotness of the sun on my body

- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**
  - Slowly tense (5 seconds) and then relax each muscle group (30 seconds) from your neck down to your toes.

- **Autogenic Relaxation**
  - Means "from within"
  - Use visual imagery and body awareness
  - For example, I imagine an ocean, focus on deep, controlled breathing, while "feeling" my body relax from my toes upward.

Adapted from the Mayo Clinic's Health Information on Stress Management:
http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/relaxation-technique/SR00007/NSECTIONGROUP=2

Life Space Crisis Intervention (LCSI)

Life Space Intervention- Talking with Children in Crisis **(Wood & Long, 1991)**

Goals:

1. Respecting children
2. Allowing the children to form trusting relationships with adults,
3. Acquiring social skills
4. Taking responsibility for one's self
5. Acknowledging self-defeating behaviors (Long & Fecsar, 2010)

•Six different specific interventions in the LSCI process

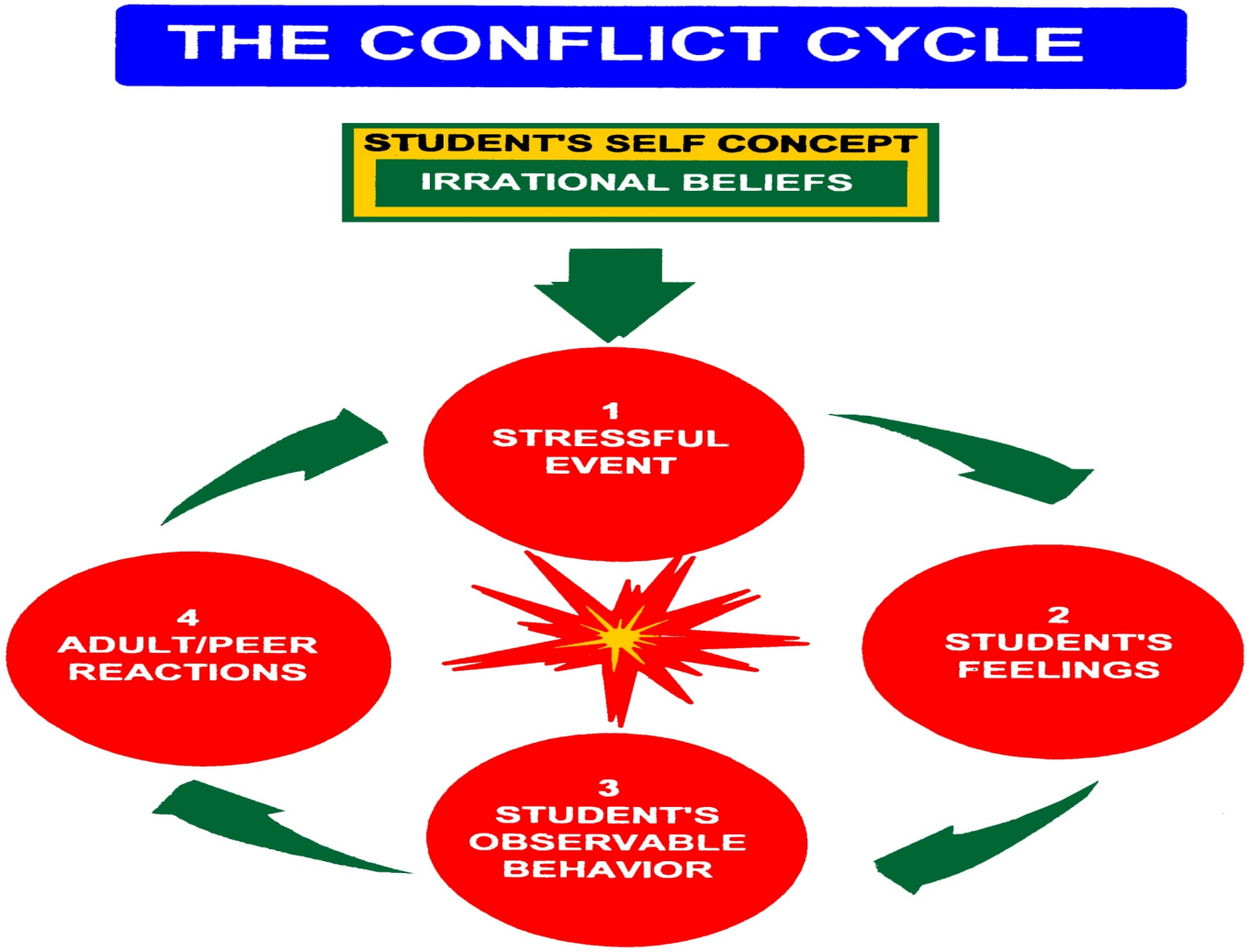
- Reality rub
- Red flag
- Symptom estrangement
- Massaging numb values
- New tools
- Manipulation of body boundaries

Conflict De-escalation Strategies

1. **Know The Cycles**
   - The Conflict Cycle
   - The Acting-Out Cycle

2. **Know How to Intervene**

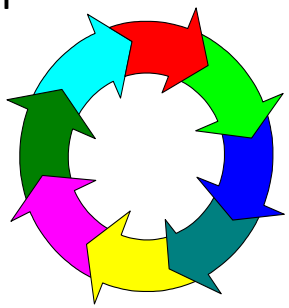
THE CONFLICT CYCLE



Intervening in a Crisis

Every crisis can be analyzed into a series of Conflict Cycles, each of which provides four different points for intervening in a crisis:

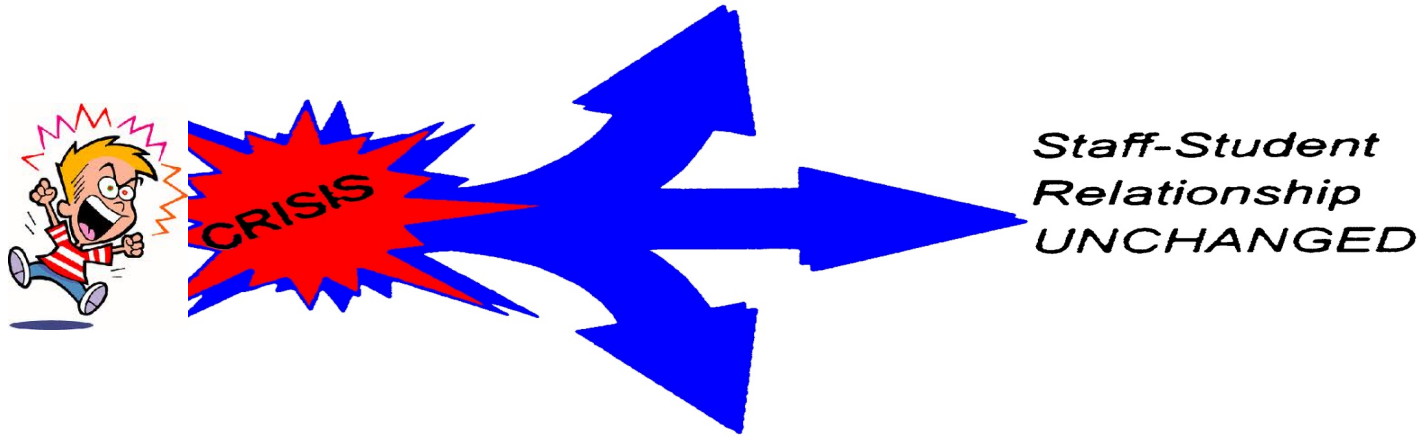
- Modify the stress
- Alleviating the student's distressed feelings
- Changing the student's behavior
- Changing the behavior of others



Nick Long

Three Possible Outcomes of a Crisis

Staff-Student Relationship IMPROVED



Staff-Student Relationship UNCHANGED

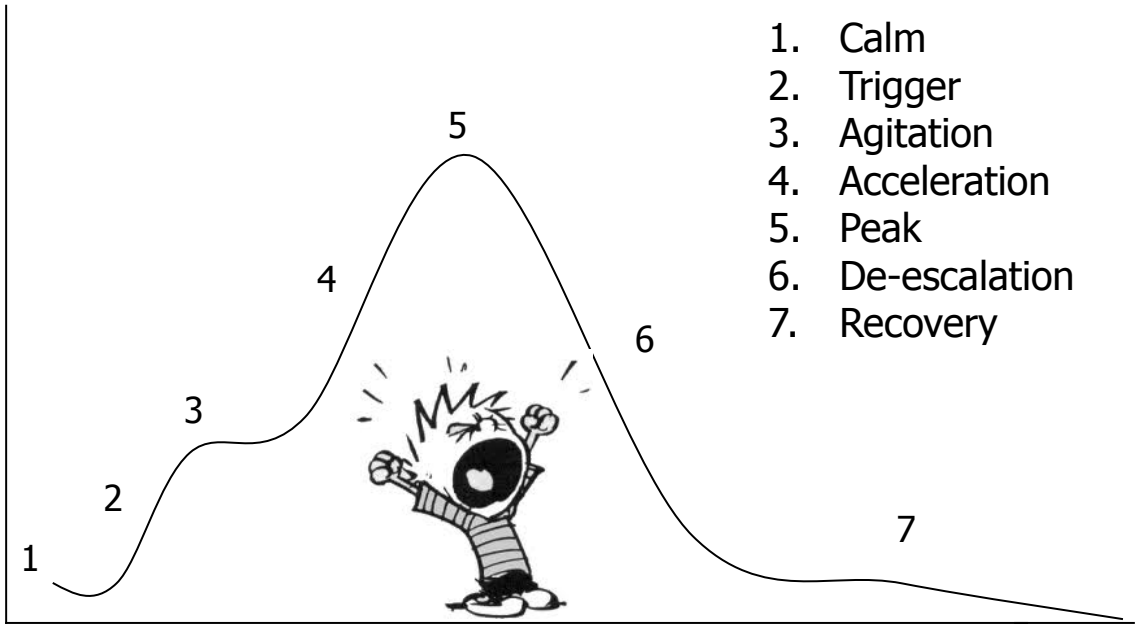
Staff-Student Relationship DAMAGED

Conflict De-escalation Strategies: Variables That Affect Compliance

- Provide a single detailed request
  - Do not use a question format
- Get up close and look them in the eyes
  - Do not violate their personal space
- Use a quiet and business-like voice
  - Do not show your anger, even if you are
- Make your request twice at most
  - Do not argue, bargain, or coerce
- Reinforce compliance
  - Do not rub compliance in the student's face

4. Conflict De-escalationStrategies:

The Acting-Out Cycle



Colvin, G. (2004). Managing the cycle of acting-out behavior in the classroom. Eugene, OR: Behavior Associates.

Student Stage	Student Stage
1. Calm	1. Reinforce appropriate behaviors
2. Trigger	2. Notice What Precipitates the Problem
3. Agitation	3. “Listen” to the Problem
4. Acceleration	4. Clearly Set Limits
5. Peak	5. Allow the Child to Vent; Remove Audience (Think Safety First!)
6. De-escalation	6. Take a Deep Breath (Allow student time to calm down)
7. Recovery	7. Problem Solve with Student(s) & Any Staff

Student is Cooperative

- On-task
- Follows rules & expectations
- Responsive to praise
- Socially appropriate

Teacher Response in Calm Phase

- Provide classroom structure
- Provide quality instruction
- Manage attention
- Teach & reward appropriate behaviors

*Phase 1 CALM

Phase 2 TRIGGER

Student Experiences Unresolved Problems

- School Based Triggers
  - Conflicts
  - Denial of something needed
  - Changes in routine
  - Provocations
  - Pressure
  - Interruptions
  - Ineffective problem solving
  - Academic errors
  - Corrections

Teacher Response in Trigger Phase

- Use pre-correction
- Provide access to formal programs or services
  - e.g., free school meals, counseling services
- Address non-school based triggers
  - e.g., bullied on way to school

Phase 3 AGITATION

Student is Unfocused or Non-directed

- Increase in Behaviors
  - Eyes dart
  - Busy hands
  - Off-task
  - Stares into space
  - Withdraws from group

Teacher Response in Agitation Phase

- Teacher empathy
- Provide space
- Provide options
- Preferred activities
- Teacher proximity
- Independent activities
- Movement activities (as appropriate)
- Relaxation techniques
- Pre-arranged signal

Phase 4
ACCELERATION

Student Behavior is Directed & Engaging

- Student Experiences Questioning & arguing
- Non-compliance, defiance
- Off-task
- Provoking other students / teacher
- Compliance with accompanying inappropriate behaviors
- Whining & crying
- Avoidance & escape behaviors
- Threats & intimidation
- Verbal abuse

Teacher Response in Acceleration Phase

- Avoid escalation responses
- Re-direct & maintain on-task behavior
- Emphasize student choices & responsibilities
- Utilize non-confrontational limit setting procedures
- Administer consequences
- Debrief & problem solve
- Track results

Student is Out of Control & Creating Safety Concerns

- Serious destruction of property
- Assault
- Self-abuse
- Severe tantrums
- Hyperventilation
- Screaming / running / violence

Teacher Response in Acceleration Phase

- Move slowly & deliberately
- Keep reasonable distance
- Minimize threatening body language
- Speak as little as possible but use simple language and be calm & respectful
- Acknowledge cooperation
- Withdraw if problems escalate
- Give student space
- Do not communicate "urgency to gain control"

Phase 5 PEAK

Student Displays Confused Behaviors

- Confusion
- Reconciliation
- Withdrawal
- Denial
- Blaming others
- Sleeping
- Responsive to directions
- Responsive to manipulative or mechanical tasks
- Avoidance of discussion (unless there is opportunity to blame others)

Teacher Response in De-escalation Phase

- Monitor for health & safety of all involved
- Monitor student for re-escalation of behavior
- Allow time & space
- Provide opportunity for non-judgmental discussion
- Provide easy/concrete tasks
- Determine appropriate time to debrief with student & staff

Phase 6 DE-ESCALATION

Student displays Eagerness for Busy Work & Reluctance to Discuss Situation

- Eagerness for independent work or study
- Subdued in group
- Subdued in class discussion
- Defensive
- Avoidance of debriefing

Teacher Response in Recovery Phase

- Assist student return to normal activities & Phase 1: Calm
- Return self to a calm emotional state

Phase 7 RECOVERY

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