

Behavior Management

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Introduction

Preface

Behavior management is an oft discussed topic in newspapers, magazines, parenting books, and by parents themselves – along with their friends and advisors. The following delineation of behavior management principles and practices is based in scientific research. People can be led astray by subjective biases, incomplete information and media sensationalism. They may blame a relatively trivial event – say, a music concert – for a deep-seated problem such as drug dependency. They may incorrectly attribute their own problems to a strict upbringing and then try and compensate by raising their children in an overly permissive way.

Approaches vie for attention based on philosophy, and each would proclaim itself more correct. In such a hotly contested area as behavior management, a systematic, scientific approach is the only way to avoid wild swings of emotional reaction that end up repeating the same mistakes. Given scores of contradictory parenting advice, a scientific approach is the only way to sort out true utility. By examining the effect of various parenting styles and practices over decades in hundreds of thousands of families and institutions, the study of what is best and why has already been conducted. Further experimentation by individuals in the absence of such information may lead them down the right or wrong path. Understanding what works, what doesn't, and why is critical developmental knowledge for those who care about the outcomes for their children.

Key Concepts

The concepts of “working memory” and “scaffolding” have been thoroughly covered in the “Staff training best practices” resource, but a very brief discussion follows. These principles are necessary background for understanding the methods described herein.

W o r k i n g m e m o r y

A highly reliable scientific finding is that working memory can only hold about 7 items, plus or minus 2. The variation takes into account individuals with differing ability. This number has naturally found itself in our everyday lives in countless ways – e.g. telephone numbers are seven digits. When popular magazines offer a list that ones needs to remember, it almost always conforms to $7 + / - 2$. Also, try the opposite; try and remember the last top 10 list you heard.

It is important to know the difference between working and long-term memory. To illustrate that I mean working knowledge, try the following exercise. Think (don't write it down) of 10 names and then alphabetize them by the third character. If you chose names of people you know, try doing it again with random names. Now try it with 7 names and the fifth (or last) character. That is working knowledge. You can't do much else with your brain while you're doing that. If you can, it is likely something that is very well practiced.

Long lists of information can certainly be useful for reference. When one reads the 50 ways to improve self-esteem or the 20 immutable laws of parenting, the information in those lists may be important and useful. Referencing those actual lists and concepts can be a worthwhile endeavor. However, one is far more likely to walk away with a general “gist” of the information than specifics to actually use in daily life. If specifics are remembered, it is likely that they number no more than 7. With concerted effort, long lists of information can certainly be remembered, but it is very difficult to use more than 7 bits of information on the fly. When working with behavioral issues, one is using information on the wing.

S c a f f o l d i n g

It's a strange word, so why use it? Because “coaching” is a word with such broad connotations and mixed meanings, psychological scientists came up with another word that had a more precise definition. As you'll see, scaffolding has an intuitive and instructive meaning that clearly delineates what is necessary when one is “coaching.” In a nutshell, scaffolding is coaching by helping as little as possible in a specific way to produce independence on the part of the student.

Think of a scaffold next to a building. In order for the workers (students) to reach a higher level on the building and complete some work, they need the help of the scaffold (coach/mentor). Without the aid of the scaffold, they would be unable to reach the higher level and complete some task.

The central goal is to help *as little as possible* so that the student is learning by *doing* and *thinking*, and not by following directions. The trick is to keep the bike rolling in the right direction, however wobbly, without letting the student actually fall off (actually or emotionally). Help/scaffolding is only interjected when necessary. Although the situational demands would vary when (before, during, or after) and how (verbally, nonverbally, or by taking small breaks from the situation) this is done, help or scaffolding is often provided in the following ways when teaching behavior management skills. Again, please see the staff training best practices resource for a more complete description and more examples.

Behavior Management

The scaffolder's task	How that might look
Defines the activity/task to be accomplished	"Which counseling method do you think would be most effective here?" "Tell me how you see this situation."
Has the student think out loud to try and solve the problem (focus is on recalling knowledge)	"Let's just talk out loud and summarize what is probably happening here." "Okay, good! Now let's think about what we learned about the basic needs children have. Let's try and go deeper than Suzy getting the ball or trying to win. Remember that all behavior is communication." "That sounds good, now what are the steps we should go through when talking with children?"
Supports the student through motivation, praise, and understanding	"This is a hard one and I would struggle to, but you're showing good effort and I know you'll be able to help her."
Modifies the skill to be learned so it is within the student's grasp	"Hmmm. . . she's a tough cookie. . . would it be okay if I tried to get her understand her emotions and responsibility in this situation and then let you take over from there?"

Organization

General behavior management issues

The unsystematic behavior management plan that fails 7 + or - 2 is presented so that the common pitfalls of many organizations' plans could be described.

The 5 approaches to counseling and bases of power are included because quite often parents/counselors/mentors are consciously unaware of the different approaches and their effects. This concise, explicit delineation helps people understand the main methods used on a specific level (5 approaches to counseling) and more theoretical level (bases of power). These hold true in the workplace, close relationships, and in interacting with children. Both outlines help people focus on long-term change instead of short-term ease, compliance, or "effectiveness."

Time-out & natural and logical consequences are frequently used techniques, but unfortunately, also frequently misused techniques. When used properly, they are all useful tools in one's behavior management toolbox, but broader aims need to be kept in mind – see success counselor approach.

Behavior problem levels

Thinking of behavior problems along two or three levels helps counselors/parents/mentors choose an appropriate intervention. In the scheme outlined in this document, behavior is delineated into two levels. Level one behavior is usually mild annoying or interfering behavior that doesn't require a "lecture." For such problems, a list of strategies is outlined. The list is longer than seven so it can serve as reference. For working memory, the counselor should choose 3 – 5 and try and remember and work with those.

More serious transgressions require a change in the way the child thinks and acts. For such behavior problems, level two strategies are appropriate. Level two is divided up into training and prevention models for when a broad reeducation approach is desired to fundamentally change children's thoughts and behavior. Such programs are often unavailable to those working with children and a situation by situation technique (called crisis models) is necessary. Two such models are presented in greater detail.

Further escalation might involve making a contract with the child, parent, and camp and sending the child home.

On parenting styles and practices

The parenting styles information is presented to offer a more broad, but relevant view of behavior management. All the information taken as a whole should reveal a basic underlying theme as to what approach works best with children and why. After presenting this topic several times, certain frequently asked questions keep popping up. Very briefly, those questions and answers are delineated.

NOTE: Absent from this document is any information on how to train people to understand or utilize the techniques and information. For information about how to structure such trainings (as opposed to actual training exercises), please see the staff training resources.

Example of plan that is unsystematic and fails 7 + or – 2

These are all excellent suggestions for dealing with behavior problems. There are at least 5 pages worth of such suggestions that could be added.

7 + / – 2

The problem with this list of guidelines is that it fails the rule of 7 + or – 2. When a problem arises and a counselor / parent / teacher has to deal with it, it is unlikely that the person will be able to recall items on this list.

Try thoroughly reading this list and work hard to remember it, then, in a week, use this information in the next conflict you find yourself in (adult or child). How many items could you remember? How much effort did you have to expend to do so? Did you miss any important ones? Are there items not represented in this list that should also be remembered? How did stress affect your ability to recall and apply this list?

Working memory holds 7 items, plus or minus 2. Such a long list can be used for *reference* and to gain a general sense of philosophy and options, but it can't be *worked* with. Before and after an actual behavior management intervention, this list would be good to *reference*. If the list could be referenced with a mentor for the counselor, that would be even better.

The “Staff training best practices” resource goes over this point in much greater detail.

Systematic

The problem is that these guidelines / suggestions / platitudes do not form a systematic plan. A behavior management plan needs to be applicable to almost all situations. A systematic plan should help the counselor structure the interaction / intervention and cover all the important bases in an appropriate order and manner. Winging it, especially by a novice, usually doesn't yield the best results. The success counselor approach on page 14 is an example of a systematic behavior management plan.

Behavior Management Reviewed

How you react, as well as your attitude toward unwanted behaviors, will have a large impact on their resolution and recurrence. Some goals that should be kept in mind during all episodes of behavior management are:

- To react calmly in “uncalm” situations
- To maintain a positive attitude in negative situations
- To keep behaviors from escalating between levels. (Try to contain them at the lowest level of appearance.)
- To maintain perspective of your own self worth. (You must not take incidents too personally.)
- To defuse situations whenever possible without confrontation.
- To teach the child to learn to control his/her own behavior.

In summary here are some reminders and some points to remember about behavior management interventions:

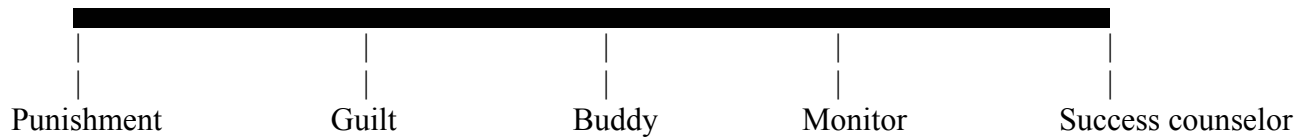
DON'T

- Don't threaten or attempt to scare
- Don't lie or trick
- Don't start “traditions” of predictable consequences
- Don't argue
- Don't reject the child, just the behavior

DO

- Do give yourself time to make good judgments
- Do give the child choices
- Do treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Do use the lowest levels of cueing possible, to teach self control
- Do be consistent and persistent in maintaining behavior standards
- Do teach that behaviors have consequences
- Do use positive reinforcement
- Do use educational interventions
- Do remember that all behavior is communication

The 5 approaches to counseling



All of these approaches are effective, but effective in different ways

Books have tables of contents, papers have outlines, and elements are categorized in the periodic table. The inherent lesson of these examples is that people *learn better* and are *more able to act* on knowledge when they have an organizing scheme. In addition to common sense and personal experience, advances in brain imaging and cognitive assessment bear out this intrinsic principle.

Thus, it is essential for counselors to have an organizing framework when learning about and utilizing behavior management (which includes social skills and emotional intelligence development). Armed with this knowledge, they will be better able to understand their own approach, other methods, and the ideal approach. Use of the word ideal may disturb some people, but the practice that is recommended in this article is espoused by developmental psychologists, counseling psychologists, parent effectiveness trainings, school discipline experts, emotional intelligence gurus, and management sages alike.

After witnessing ten orientations at ten different camps and watching their staff every day over the entire summer, it became clear to me that the predominant approaches of new counselors are punishment, guilt, and the buddy method. Because those approaches are not effective in developing children, an essential part of staff training and development should be to provide a clear framework, rationale, and alternatives.

While reading this article, keep in mind these important points.

- Although people often have a preference for a particular style, they sometimes use other approaches, depending on the situation.
- All of the methods are effective at controlling behavior, but only one is effective in developing prosocial, free children. Although possible, it is unlikely that children will learn necessary lessons, develop character, and increase their moral reasoning from the four undesirable methods of behavior modification.
- The focus will be on children, but the framework holds true for supervisors working with counselors as well.
- Because this is a brief article, the framework and not the furnishings are provided. Further readings are referenced for those who would like to obtain more information on any of the skeletal elements discussed here.

P u n i s h m e n t

Anger, criticism, humiliation, and corporal punishment are all included here. Doing pushups, running laps, yelling, and the arbitrary removal of privileges and rewards are common examples. Exasperated staff and those under a time crunch are particularly prone to using this approach. In the short term, it is very effective and fairly easy, however there are serious problems that make this approach inadvisable.

- The child usually learns only that the behavior resulted in punishment, but not how to change it in order to still meet his or her needs and objectives. Children are not walked through the problem-solving process. Compliance instead of conversion is obtained, which means you've got their behavior instead of their hearts and minds.
- Compliance will only happen when there is sufficient strength enforcing it, plus a sufficient number of monitors who are close enough to compel compliance by utilizing their strength/power. When the cat's away, the mice will play.
- Compliance because of anything external is ultimately ineffective. The individual's psychological reaction is usually resistance, secret defiance, or surface compliance so that s/he can retain some sense of control and dignity. Children's focus is often on anger instead of reflecting on what they did. Sometimes they just suffer through it and think about how to avoid getting caught the next time.

- The child may internalize that he or she is a bad person, which degrades self-esteem. While high self-esteem isn't everything, a low to moderate self-esteem is certainly unhealthy.
- Punishment closes the communication door and makes it difficult for people to take responsibility and be honest.

Although in some ways rewards can be thought of as the polar opposite of punishment, they are fundamentally quite similar. They both involve someone with power utilizing external control. Bribes or treats are frequently employed to gain children's compliance, but ultimately they prove to be a form of punishment by reward (Kohn, 1999).

G u i l t

Inducing guilt can take many forms. Silence with a look of disapproval, a sigh, and a slow shaking of the head are nonverbal methods. Common phrases may include "You know better" and "I'm really disappointed in you." The dreaded lecture or moralizing are more verbose methods. Guilt is often deadly effective. It can be more effective than punishment, because the authority preventing the action rests in oneself instead of some external power. In essence, guilt is instilled, internalized punishment. Both the counselor and the camper know which rule or social norm has been violated, as well as what the acceptable behavior is. Guilt is the reference to the rule or norm and the implied or stated fact that the child is bad for not adhering to it. While a child may feel guilty in any case, the choices are to accept that s/he is really bad, to reject the norm and try not to get caught the next time or, ideally, to make some restitution and learn how to behave differently in the future. As with punishment, guilt does not teach the child how to replace the behavior that resulted in guilt, while still having his or her needs and objectives met. A type of internal conversion can be obtained, but it is an unhealthy one.

T h e B u d d y A p p r o a c h

Like S'mores, this is a camp staple. When I was a counselor, this was my favorite tool. The counselor attempts to control children with friendship and humor. "Come on guys!" and "I'm nice to you, you be nice to me!" are common refrains. This method is so popular because it works well on several levels.

- The children will like their counselor. They may even worship him or her.
- Campers will often comply because they like their counselor.
- Blame it on the "Man." Campers know that their counselor must comply with the camp's rules sometimes. Therefore, when those rules force their counselor buddies to be the bad guys, they don't blame them, since "it's just the system." The counselors are still good guys.

As with sugar, there are down sides.

- When authority is blamed, children don't learn to behave because it is the right thing to do. They behave because they must, or be punished. This carries over into adulthood when they comply with the law and government because of the fear of being punished or caught and not because it is the right thing to do. Their compliance is gained and their conversion lost.
- The buddy approach can lead to dependency. After all, behavior should not depend on liking or disliking a person in authority. The ability to develop an internal locus of control is hampered and responsibility is often not taken.
- Eventually, when a counselor just has to come down on the camper, the inevitable blank stare will be asking, "But, aren't you my buddy?"
- Children may also take advantage of the friendship by essentially blackmailing the counselor into allowing them (implicitly or explicitly) to do what they want. Buddy adults occasionally bend or break rules in favor of the kids, teaching them that they can get away with their behavior without the ultimate authority figures finding out.

Adults can be friendly, nice, and chummy with children, but they need to remain adults. When campers need an infrequent, gentle reminder of lessons they've already learned, this approach is often quick and effective when coming from a liked and respected counselor. Even when problems arise that don't "have to" be addressed, counselors should utilize them as teaching tools that can help children solve their problems and deal with their emotions in better ways. On the Kohlberg moral reasoning scale, the buddy style is level 3 on a scale from 1 to 6, with 6 being best. This is not a societally acceptable level.

The Monitor Approach

In essence, this is the use of natural and logical consequences. There are three important distinctions to make when speaking of consequences.

- A *natural* consequence is one that arises as a result of the behavior without any outside intervention. For example, if a child is rough with a toy and it breaks, one hopes that the child learns not to be so rough with his or her toys.
- A *logical* consequence is related to the behavior, but it is imposed by someone with power. For example, if a child wrote graffiti on the wall, s/he must get it off and restore the surface to its original condition.
- *Artificial* consequences are unrelated to the behavior issue/problem. For example, because a child did not make the bed, s/he can't have dessert at dinner. This is not the monitor approach; it is punishment.

Although the monitor approach is effective and offers restitution, there are several significant problems and pitfalls.

- Primarily, children may accept logical consequences, but these usually induce them to offer compliance only, and not their hearts and minds. The monitor approach is a form of coercion, which does not inspire children to make permanent changes in behavior. For that to occur, a conversion is necessary.
- Consequences can be taken too far and turn into punishment.
- Frequently, consequences are left to stand on their own without a mentor offering the child needed guidance. Children need help processing through their behavior and emotions and arriving at better means of achieving their needs and goals. A camper may not be willing to work with the counselor; nevertheless, a little gentle lecture from the standpoint of genuine concern and care is far better than just letting the consequences do the teaching.

Behavior is adjusted because of rules and limits imposed and monitored by an authoritative power. Societally, this is the role police have. When children are unwilling to work on their behavior, the monitor approach is the preferable fallback method, but staff should always use the success counselor method (see below) first. Of course, if the counselor starts the monitor approach and the camper decides that s/he would prefer the success counselor method of accepting responsibility and working on self-control, that door should be left open.

The Success Counselor

Okay, so what the heck is the preferred method? Specialists in child and human development understand that self-control through internalized values and morality is both preferable and ultimately more effective than methods which involve external control. *All the other methods described focus on changing behavior and hoping that a change in mind will ensue. The aim of a success counselor is just the opposite: to change campers' minds, which will change their behavior.*

The central premise is that people use behaviors to help them get what they want and need. At their core, those needs are: power/control, affection/love/attention, self-respect/worth/esteem, fun, belonging/connection to others, and safety and survival. All behavior occurs for one of those reasons. All behavior is code telling us which need someone was trying to meet. There is no discipline system that will work well if it is geared toward getting people to do what you want, without also helping them to meet their needs. Deep down, children want the same things we all do, but sometimes they just go about it in ways that they need to learn don't *ultimately* work as well as others.

In essence, the counselor tries to help the child understand the need behind his or her behavior and figure out a more prosocial way to meet that need. Children are walked through the problem-solving process so that they understand how their emotions, needs, and behavior are all linked to the present outcome, as well as a more desirable one. The goal of counselors should not be to solve campers' problems, but rather to give them information and support to create themselves as their own solutions. In other words, we want to teach children to fish instead of just giving them a fish.

In practice, the success counselor uses a Socratic process to help the child analyze his or her behavior. It really isn't a lecture, because the child does the talking, while the success counselor asks pointed, guiding questions. The questions might look something like the following. What happened? How did that make you feel? What did you want? What did you do to get it? How did that work? What were/are some other choices you could have made? What is the best choice? That sounds like a good plan, so let's check back with each other to see how it works, okay? When the child has come this far and accepted their responsibility, a conversation about appropriate restitution usually follows easily.

As Gossen aptly states, “When [campers] understand that the goal of discipline is to strengthen them and to teach them, they will no longer be afraid to face their mistakes. They will begin to view a problem as an opportunity for learning a better way.” When campers take responsibility, they become the ones deciding when freedom is withdrawn and when privileges will be restored. Responsibility = choices = power.

It isn’t possible to fully explain this method in the scope of a short article, but past *Camping Magazine* articles address the “success counselor” approach, as does the latter part of this resource.

C o n c l u s i o n

With a societal and media focus on external control, counselors often come to camp with a view of behavior management that is not in the best interest of either their own or the campers’ development. Providing an understanding of the various approaches is the first step toward enabling staff to “give kids a world of good.” The second, crucial step is for *skilled* supervisors to monitor and train staff “in the trenches” so that they can practice their new tools. Combined with an excellent camp program, children and staff will receive the kind of growth experience that is still exceedingly rare in our society.

Resources

- Boffey, B., & Boffey D. (November-December 1993). Success Counseling. *Camping Magazine*.
- Boffey, B., & Boffey D. (May-June 1994). Success Counseling: How to Handle Discipline Problems. *Camping Magazine*.
- Gossen, D. (1996). *Restitution: Restructuring School Discipline*. New View Publications. ISBN: 0944337368.
- Grayson, R. (2001). *Creating Exceptional Camps: Tools and Resources for Improving the Outcomes of a Camp Experience*. Available through the American Camping Association.
- Kohn, A. (1999). *Punished By Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes*. Houghton Mifflin Co. ISBN: 0618001816

Bases of Power

Coercion

Person A has power over person B because person A can administer some form of punishment to B. Verbal abuse, physical strength, and humiliation are also examples included under coercion.

Reward

Person A has power over person B because A controls rewards that B wants. Candy, bedtime stories, a fun cabin activity, more responsibility, new equipment, transferred power, etc. Leads to compliance, but not conversion. Also, there is a psychological heuristic that if one is compensated for something one would have done anyway, the act is not worth doing in its own right - the over justification effect.

Legitimate

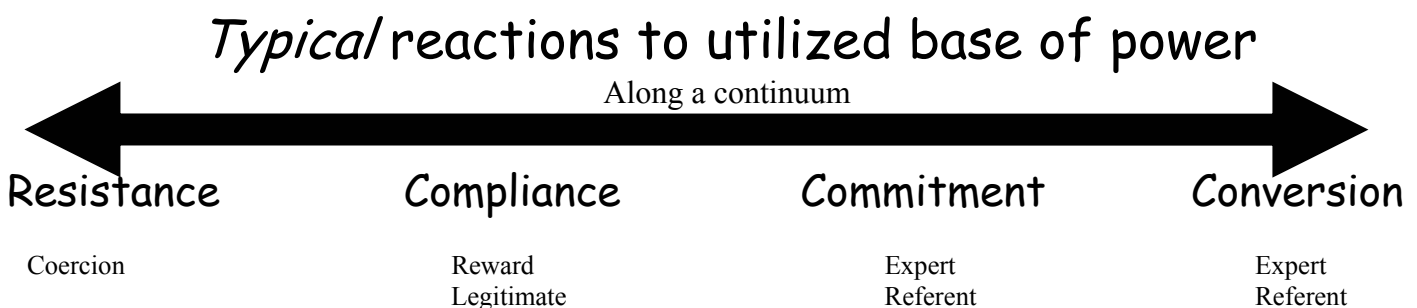
When person B submits to person A because person B feels that A has a right to exert power in a certain domain. Often referred to as authority. Depends only on one's position and not the relationship between people. Derived from culture, social structure, or designated as in a president or director. This is the power being used when you say, "because I said so!" When you don't know a child and you talk or discipline them, this is usually the base that is being used.

Expert

Person A gains power because A has knowledge or expertise relevant to B. Usually refers to a narrow area.

Referent

Person B looks up to or admires person A, and, as a result, B follows A largely because of A's personal qualities, characteristics, or reputation. Also called charismatic power. The respect and personal relationship helps the target to open their mind and examine their behavior and the means they are using to achieve a given end.



Effective managers were found to use the bases of power as follows:

54% of the time, they used referent (personality and leadership skills)

28% of the time they used expert

18% of the time they used legitimate, reward (allocate resources), and coercion (hire, fire, & reprimand).

Time-out & Natural and Logical Consequences

Time-out

Benefits

- Child and parent/teacher/counselor can cool-off
- Counselor can take time to think about the behavior problem and form appropriate and creative solutions
- Child learns the skill of knowing when it is appropriate to take a time out and, hopefully, later uses that newfound skill – e.g., requests or takes a time out without having an adult make that decision for the child.

Limitations

- Set time limits become a punishment. Should last until child is ready to talk.
- Often used as a behavior modification crutch or band-aid.
- Child doesn't learn (unless unusually insightful) to modify behavior so s/he can get what s/he wants in a more effective manner. People usually need help processing their behavior with a mentor/counselor (scaffolding). Time outs do not inherently address the emotional component of the problem or means of problem-solving. See success counselor model.

These limitations can be overcome so that time-outs can be an effective tool used sparingly.

Natural and Logical Consequences

Definitions

- A natural consequence is one that arises as a result of the behavior without any outside intervention. For example, if a child is rough with a toy and it breaks, the child hopefully learns not to be so rough with his or her toys.
- A logical consequence is related to the behavior, but is imposed by someone with power. For example, if a child wrote graffiti on the wall, s/he must use sandpaper to get it off and restore the surface to normal.
- Punishment involves consequences that are unrelated to the behavior issue/problem. For example, because a child did not make his bed, he can't have dessert at dinner.

Benefits

- With logical consequences, the child is often offered a choice as to which consequence would be most appropriate. Any amount of control is preferable to no control.
- The consequence is tied directly to the behavior instead of something irrelevant (punishment).
- Children take responsibility for their behavior, although true responsibility comes when the child honestly feels that the consequence is restitution, and not a punishment for the behavior. If the child undergoes the consequence because of external power, learning and development didn't take place.

Limitations

- Consequences can be taken too far and turn into punishments
- Again, if the responsibility is taken because of coercion, legitimate, or expert power, the child will not likely make a permanent change in behavior. This point is critical.
- Frequently, the consequence is left on its own without a mentor offering the child needed guidance. Children need help processing (scaffolding) through their behavior and emotions and arriving at a better means of achieving their needs and goals (success counselor). Consequences do not inherently address the emotional component of the problem or means of problem-solving.

Level One Behavior Problem Strategies

This list fails 7 + or – 2 , but an appropriate strategy is to pick 3 – 5 that would work best with your personality and remember those. This list is intended as a reference or mini-catalog.

Strategy	Description
Humor	Tense situations can be defused with a little humor. Laugh it off or make light of the situation. The point can be communicated, and everyone has a little laugh. Sarcasm and teasing are not so good as they leave a little sting.
Unpredictable response	Something said or done completely out of context or personal style can be very effective. For example, a boring task can be more fun when sung Opera style. Completely changing the topic, acting briefly like a lunatic yourself, and briefly joining in and then quickly ending the game/event can be fun and effective as well.
Purposeful or planned ignoral	Just let it go to allow the silence or lack of response speak for itself. Children often try and play tug-o-war with us. If you just don't even pick up the rope in the first place, that game can't start and the child may just move on or do what was asked. This works well when combined with stating expectations below.
Eye contact	Also known as "The Look." Meet their eyes and let your expression say a thousand words.
Proximity control	Sit between the two kids who can't stop laughing or touching each other. Also, try separating them. Be in their vicinity and appropriate behavior may follow.
Re-direction of behaviors (providing choices)	"Going outside isn't what we are doing right now. You can (a) make a friendship bracelet, (b) read, or (c) write a letter. Which would you like to do?"
Reinforce positive behavior	Catch them being good. "That's great that you made your bed without being asked. Good job!" The trick here is to not hook the child on the praise, because people should act because it is the right thing to do, and not because they want a pat on the back for doing it.
Restate expectations and/or explain the reason for the task / rule / behavior	"We don't run in the house because things might get broken and you might get hurt." Or "Remember, the group agreed that no one should touch other people's things without their permission." State the expectation, reason, and disengage. This method is providing the "Why" or "Because."
Coach and cue	As per a previous conversation, when you touch your nose, scratch your head, or offer some other kind of cue, the child is reminded of the conversation and to stop a behavior, or start one.
State your feelings	Simply state how you feel and why. I feel _____ when you _____ because _____. Follow up with providing choices.
Flow for day, class, activity, . .	Problems can be avoided by structuring the day and environment for success. <i>Behavior is always a function of the person and the situation.</i> For example, having too much dead time or having a lack of clear structure and rules around an activity might be begging for trouble.
Voice volume and tone (not screaming or yelling)	If the situation is problematic, try having your voice tone reflect it in a stern way without yelling or screaming. Often combined with eye contact.

Remember:

- Manufactured, external rewards are rat psychology. ***They are not child development in any sense.***
- Anytime a consequence is used, you have ceased using the "Success Counselor" method and have resorted to the "Monitor" approach. Recognize that it is ultimately less effective, and less likely to result in significant child development. The Success Counselor is focused on the individual truly accepting restitution. If restitution was not offered without the use of power, success counseling has failed.
- Commands are using "Legitimate" power. Know where you are, and that it isn't development.
- Anything beyond these simple Level One responses falls under the heading of needing to have a conversation. When that happens, a Level Two (Success Counselor) approach always needs to be undertaken, however brief.
- The "Hoover Maneuver" is a favorite of children and adults alike – when they throw you the rope, don't get sucked in to a tug of war

Picking Up the Rope – Don't Do It !

(Beware the "Hoover Maneuver")

"No!"

"You can't make me!"

"But why?!"

"But I don't want to!"

"Yea, right!"

"You and what army?!"

"Ain't no way, no how!"

"Get outta here!"

"That's bullshit"

"Come on, be cool" (invitation to be their buddy)

"Look, this is unreasonable, let's talk about it" (not a sincere request)

Sound effects "Pfft" "ka" "gawh" "awww" "maannnn" "dude!" "geez" "What the . . ."

And then there are the wonderful delay tactics and silence options. Sometimes campers will give YOU the look.

Kids (and even adults at times) will try and throw you a rope so that you can play tug of war with them. They know that something has to be done, and they usually know why. There really isn't any discussion on the matter at hand, for example cleaning their room. However, kids have learned that arguments can sometimes get them out of things, or that they can be fun in some twisted way, or that they can get away with doing less.

So, kids become experts in throwing adults a "rope" and hoping that we will pick it up and start "playing" with them. It has also been called the "Hoover Maneuver" because they try and suck you in.

The only way to win that game is not to play. Don't pick up the rope. Don't get sucked in. Of the above strategies for dealing with behavior quickly, ignoring works well as a first attempt. If they keep slapping you in the face with the rope, don't respond with:

"just please do it"

calling them names

threatening them

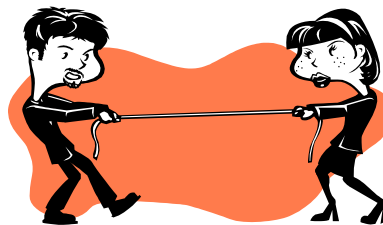
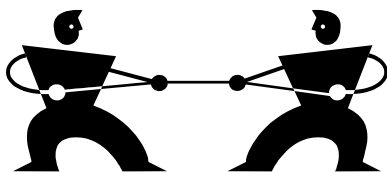
attempting to humiliate them

punishing them

rewarding them

or picking up the rope in some other way.

Instead, use some of the above strategies like humor, eye contact, or perhaps stating your feelings - Level 1 stuff. If all of that fails, then it is appropriate to go through the success counselor steps and have "The Talk." In any case, don't pick up the rope!



Level Two Behavior - Training and Prevention

Note that all of these programs (and the following crisis models) have a similar information-processing / Reality Therapy theme to them. Time and again, these research-proven systems are effective and positive. These two programs are provided to illustrate the commonality in effective behavior management programs. Books have been written about each one, and a greater level of summary would take several pages. Their focus is training and prevention of behavior problems, rather than dealing with a problem or crisis at the time. Dealing with a problem or crisis as it arises is the focus of the next few pages. Again, note the overall similarity in very effective behavior management approaches. These descriptions are just illustrative; glance over them and move on.

ICPS – I Can Problem Solve (Shure and Spivack)

Background

The original name was Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving, but kids in the program turned it into I Can Problem Solve. The former name is more indicative of the program, which was developed through years of research. The premise of the program is that children with behavior problems draw on a limited repertoire of social-behavioral and social-cognitive responses. Thus, such children have a small database to draw from when generating, evaluating, and applying potential solutions. The program has enjoyed enormous success with children of all ages, social classes, and ethnic backgrounds.

The Program

Teachers work with small groups of six to ten children for 20 minutes a day over four months. The program comes with lesson plans for every session. There are two phases. The first teaches ICPS vocabulary, cause-and-effect relationships, encourages listening and paying attention skills, and helps children identify feelings. The second phase includes the concepts of alternative solutions, consequences, and solution-consequence pairs. For middle school children, a component on means-end thinking is also taught.

DECIDE (Kinnier, Krumboltz, and McWhirter)

Background

Problem behavior is usually a result of the inability to deal with emotions properly, the tendency to appraise situations from an egocentric perspective, the perception of limited alternatives, and the lack of systematic decision-making procedures. This is very much an information-processing perspective on problem behavior. The solution is training and practice. The focus of this model is on role-playing and teaching a child to utilize the system themselves, as opposed to crisis intervention, although it would be easily adaptable.

The Program

DECIDE stands for the steps to be taken in a problem situation. These are taught to children and then practiced. The steps are: (1) Define the problem as a goal to be achieved; (2) Examine the total situation including background issues, environmental factors, and thoughts and feelings; (3) Consider alternative means of solving the problem by brainstorming solutions and examining strengths and weaknesses of each possibility; (4) Isolate a plan and consider the consequences in greater detail; (5) Do (create) action steps necessary to implement the plan – breaking it up into smaller more manageable sub-steps; and (6) Evaluate the effects of the solution in terms of actions, thoughts, and feelings – review the whole process and assess if the plan is adequate.

Level Two Behavior - Crisis Models

I ESCAPE

I	=	Isolate the child
E	=	Explore the child's point of view
S	=	Share your perspective
C	=	Connect behavior to feelings
A	=	Alternate behaviors discussed
P	=	Plan developed
E	=	Enter child back into group

Further description

It is important to **isolate** the child so that the social pressures and intensity of the situation are removed. Children will be interested in “saving face” if they are talked to in public. Also, children are rarely able to fully participate in discussion and problem-solving when their emotions are hot from the situation or encounter; removal and calming down are helpful. When **exploring** the child's point of view, it is extremely important to find out the goals or reasons for the behavior. All behaviors occur for a reason. All behavior is code. Children's needs and goals are the central outcome of this step. In **sharing** one's perspective with the child, it is important to point out the sides of the situation and problem that are not evident in the child's thinking. As per emotional intelligence, it is critical to **connect** behavior to feelings; help the child explore what s/he was feeling and how that influences behaviors. Brainstorming solutions is the next step (**alternate** behaviors); this is more effective when the child is the primary person offering solutions. With the counselor's help, the best **plan** is selected and elaborated upon. When the child is **entered** back into the group, other adults are informed of the plan, and, if appropriate, the children might discuss the plan as a whole.

Short term goals

- To establish trust
- To gain awareness of behavior and feelings
- To make a plan to solve the next problem appropriately
- To assume responsibility for actions

Long term goals

- To increase understanding of relationships among behavior, feelings, and others
- To learn successful problem-solving skills
- To improve self-efficacy and self-esteem

Benefits

- Appropriately implemented, the goals are obtainable
- It's easy to remember, which is important in stressful circumstances (working memory drops)

Limitations

- The C should occur at the same time as E and S
- Although easy to remember, it requires a skilled facilitator to utilize it with effectiveness
- Doesn't include the step of checking back with the child to see how the plan worked and perhaps revising it.
- Should explicitly include restitution for damage done to property, people, and feelings.
- Includes little elaboration of children's needs and why they act out – the root causes
- Does not focus on examining the child's background and surrounding environmental influences. Issues outside the behavior problem that brought the child to your attention need to be addressed.
- As a crisis model, it does not focus on improving the child outside of behavior problems that become apparent and/or are problematic to others. Children's strengths should be fostered and their weaknesses addressed even if they aren't evident problems. See Search Institute's 40 developmental assets literature for domains (www.search-institute.org).
- Using a crisis model does not focus on prevention as the primary means of behavior management.

Success Counselor – 2 of 3

Further description

The process is more question driven than the giving of advice or answers. Children need practice weighing their options and finding solutions; they need practice understanding how they feel and how to deal with those feelings. In addition to a sense of responsibility, giving children choices helps them to build self-esteem. A child whose parents constantly limits choice gets the message, “You’re not only small; your desires don’t matter very much.” If this works, the child may grow to be obedient and cooperative, but will have very little sense of him or herself.

The process requires some degree of patience and creativity, so counselors need to be in a reasonably undistracted (if not calm) frame of mind. Bad times are when you’re pressed for time (set a time, institute a stopgap measure) or when you have an audience (isolate yourselves and if another person is involved, give both people equal, but separate, time).

The second step requires empathy on the part of the counselor. Try and enter the child’s shoes and understand what the child was feeling and why the behavior occurred – what needs were being met.

The third step requires that the child’s behavior not “get your goat.” What the child really needs is your help in becoming a more successful problem-solver as well as more emotionally intelligent. For the teacher, lectures, punishment, emotional displays of anger, disgust, or trying to instill guilt or shame won’t achieve those goals.

The fourth and fifth step should be a Socratic (questioning and clarification) process rather than telling. At this point, it’s okay for the child to say s/he has any emotion (feelings in and of themselves usually aren’t bad), *but resulting behaviors are dealt with after the child has calmed down, feels as if you understand his or her feelings, and the relevant feelings have been identified.*

The sixth step is comprised of six sub-steps. Throughout the whole process, feelings are kept in mind, but at this point, ways of addressing or acting upon feelings and behaviors is the focus.

What do you want?

This step is getting at the goal of the behavior that is problematic (see basic needs above). Try and bring the child to a more root understanding of the behavior – s/he didn’t just want the ball, s/he wanted fun. A frequent response may be “I don’t know” or not recognizing multiple needs (fun was a need, but the need for power might have been ignored). Primarily, try and use a Socratic process as it is more effective if the child is thinking than listening. Try asking why are you doing what you are now? What are you trying to get? If necessary, offer some suggestions of what you think it is they want and let them tell you if you are right or not to narrow it down. They may not admit it, or may not know consciously - like attention. When children offer explanations, try and bring them to an understanding of the root need(s).

What are you doing now?

Have them state their current behavior. What did the child do to get what he or she wanted?

Is that working?

Guide them to the idea that it is not an appropriate way to get what they want. It is important that they buy the reasoning and internalize it, or else the behavior may not change much. The child needs to think about this and not be told. Do not be superior or belligerent here. The idea is to be helpful and empowering. This step is as critical as it is difficult to carry out.

Success Counselor – 3 of 3

What are your choices?

If they can't think of another way to get what they want, then offer some suggestions yourself. First, try and be as leading as possible with questions so that you don't have to supply choices. Have them choose one themselves from the available options. It is extremely important that the child weigh different options in terms of outcomes (behaviors and feelings) for him or herself *and others*. If consequences are called for, then try asking the child what s/he would suggest. **Restitution** is an important part of the process. It must come from an internal desire to make the situation right. External power is not education. Expressing your own feelings is appropriate, but it should be done in a non-derogatory manner – communication and understanding should be the goal. It's also appropriate to talk about community or personal values.

Make a plan to implement a choice.

Ask if the solution is fair, will it work, and how will the child *and other people* likely feel.

Appointment to check back.

Make a time to check back with the person and see how they are doing.

Short & long term goals are the same as I ESCAPE

Benefits

- Appropriately implemented, the goals are obtainable
- Details working through feelings
- Includes elaboration of children's needs and why they act out – the root causes. Focuses on getting children what they need as opposed to addressing the problem on a more superficial or tangential level.
- Focus on Socratic processing instead of talking TO the child or telling the child.

Limitations

- Although the nested processes are conceptually related, it is difficult to remember all the steps and keep them in order – especially under stressful circumstances.
- It requires a skilled facilitator to utilize it with effectiveness. Teachers need to have the process modeled and be coached (scaffolded) (a) under real conditions (b) with problematic children (c) with diverse situations and problems (d) by experts. See the “Staff training best practices” resource for important information regarding this point.
- Does not focus on examining the child's background and surrounding environmental influences. Issues outside the behavior problem that brought the child to your attention need to be addressed.
- As a crisis model, it does not focus on improving the child outside of behavior problems that become apparent and/or are problematic to others. Children's strengths should be fostered and their weaknesses addressed even if they aren't evident problems. See Search Institute's 40 developmental assets literature for domains (www.search-institute.org).
- Using a crisis model does not focus on prevention as the primary means of behavior management.

Parenting Styles

Review of the styles

This delineation is not complete, but it is a useful typology. There are sub-styles and other dimensions, but the four-factor approach is very useful and valid. Note that the descriptions are more crisp and prototypical than everyday life for the sake of exposition. The predictive nature of the styles with valued child outcomes is very good, although they are only generally true – not always so.

Like the emotion-coaching styles (see the emotional intelligence resource), people are not all one style, all the time. If the situation calls for it, people can and should be more authoritarian. Also, people slip up every now and then. So, a given person's style should be viewed as their predominant style. To draw an analogy, leadership has many of the same qualities – it is situation dependant as well as person specific. Nonetheless, authoritative parenting is the generally the far-superior style. Finally, styles utilized do change over time depending on the demands of the child as s/he matures as well as parents learning more effective parenting styles and becoming more proficient at them.

Authoritarian

- ❖ Extremely restrictive and controlling. Value respect for authority and strict obedience to their commands. Rely on coercive techniques, such as threats or physical punishment, rather than on reasoning or explanation, to regulate their children's actions. Less nurturant.
- ❖ Lack of social responsibility and independence. Children were unhappy and boys were aggressive, while girls were dependent. Less advanced moral reasoning and less prosocial behavior. Low self-esteem, poorer adjustment to starting school. Poorer peer relations. Lower school achievement in adolescence.

Permissive

- ❖ Set few limits and made few demands for mature behavior from their children. Children were permitted to make their own decisions about many routine activities such as tv viewing, bedtime, and mealtimes. Moderately nurturant or cool and uninvolved.
- ❖ Low on self-control and self-reliance. Lack of social responsibility and independence.

Uninvolved

- ❖ Uncommitted to their parental role and emotionally detached from their children. Give greater priority to their own needs and preferences than to the child's. Uninterested in events at school, unfamiliar with playmates, and infrequent conversations with children.
- ❖ Lower self-esteem, heightened aggression, and lower control over impulsive behavior. In adolescence, maladjustment, lower creativity, and greater alcohol consumption. This style is rare, but it is the worst one in terms of children's general social, emotional, and personal health.

Authoritative

- ❖ Expected children to behave in a mature (for age) fashion, but tended to use rewards (not bribery) more than punishments to achieve their ends. They communicated their expectations clearly and provided explanations to help their children understand the reasons for their requests. They listened to their children and encouraged dialogue. They were supportive and warm. When parents make demands for mature behavior from their children, they make explicit the responsibilities individuals have toward one another when they live in social groups. Children comply (conversion) more with explanations than commands. When parents take into account the child's responses and show affection, he is likely to acquire a sense of control over his actions and derive the sense that he has worth.
- ❖ Friendly with peers, cooperative with adults, independent, energetic, and achievement oriented. Self-control. More prosocial behaviors, fewer behaviors such as substance abuse, greater academic achievement, and higher self-confidence. Healthy sense of autonomy and self-reliance.

How do the emotional intelligence parenting styles relate to these?

Permissive = Laissez-faire

Authoritarian = Dismissing or Disapproving

Uninvolved = Dismissing or Disapproving

Authoritative = Emotion-coaching

Issues Surrounding Parenting Practices and Styles

Following are some responses to frequently asked questions by students/teachers/counselors.

Aggression

Hostile (with emotion) and instrumental (with end in mind, not emotion)

- Spanking
- Washing mouth out with soap

What does it teach? What do kids learn?

- Violence is an appropriate way to solve a problem
- Violence is an appropriate way to communicate emotion

Emotional aggression

- Inducing guilt
- Yelling or screaming

Punishment

- Child usually doesn't *learn* what to do to meet his or her needs and objectives instead of the behavior that resulted in punishment.
- Psychological reaction is usually resistance / secret defiance / or surface compliance.
- Changes children's behavior, but not their hearts and minds. Compliance instead of conversion.

Democracy is fine, but . . .

- Young children don't have logical and abstract thought
- An egocentric child can run amuck with this
- Wisdom and maturity come with age
- Some rules are non-negotiable
However, children are far more likely to abide by rules they understand, agree with, and help set (control)

“But, I got spanked and I'm fine.”

- All outcomes are multidetermined. To take a single cause and relate it to positive and negative outcomes is unwarranted.
- Smoking is bad, nonetheless, some people manage to smoke and not die of lung cancer or emphysema; that doesn't mean that smoking isn't bad. Their genes or other variables compensated for the damaging influence.
- It is true that one can be a healthy adult and also have been spanked or punished as a child. In a healthy environment of true love and support, a little aggression and punishment are unlikely to do any lasting damage, but they are also unlikely to lead to beneficial outcomes.
- Hostile aggression is particularly damaging and difficult to overcome though.

The best approach to parenting

- Success counseling approach
- Emotion-coaching parenting style (see that resource)
- Authoritative parenting style