



Developing a Crisis Plan for Children & Youth with Challenging Behaviors

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Webinar Presenters

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What we'll cover...

- Some key features of proactive crisis plans
- What we should know about challenging behaviors before developing a crisis plan
- Questions to ask when considering a child's escalating challenging behaviors
- Considerations of person-centered principles when developing a crisis plan
- Examples of crisis planning

What do we mean by crisis?

- Immediate or escalating safety concerns of a child/youth
- May involve safety risk of child/youth and/or others
- May escalate gradually or be a sudden escalation
- May be difficult to predict or respond to
- May be intermittent or recurring for some children/youth

Crisis is not always defined the same way by each person

Plans That Work (no matter the name)

Different Plan Names

Might be:

- Crisis plan
- Crisis prevention plan
- Crisis management plan
- Safety plan

Plans that work ...

- Actively developed, implemented, reviewed, revised w/child
- Include a designated person to facilitate the review/ updating/ writing of plan
- Person-centered (not agency-centered)

Plan to Meet & Meet to Plan

- Determine who will coordinate/facilitate the plan (written and meetings)
- Determine type of crisis plan & who should participate
 - School-based crisis plan
 - Home-based crisis plan
 - Community-based crisis plan

Be Ready – Come prepared

- Know how you currently view a child's behavior
- Be willing to consider escalating challenging behaviors in new and different ways
- Remember: There are times when a child's behaviors result in a crisis, and this does not reflect failure on the part of the child/youth

What We Know about Challenging Behavior



- gets our attention
- forces us to respond
- gets results

Consequences of Escalating Behavior

At school

- Missed instruction?
- Impacted school performance?
- Difficulty following school discipline policy?
- Suspensions or dismissal from class/school?
- School avoidance?
- Conflict/challenges with other students and/or staff?
- Involvement with school resource officer or police being called? (involuntary service involvement?)

Consequences of Escalating Behavior?

At home & community

- Conflict/challenges with others at home or in community?
- Limited participation in recreational or leisure activities with family, friends or others?
- Risk of involvement with involuntary services / courts (police, juvenile justice, child protection)?
- Other?

What we are looking for: Social & Emotional Learning

How is this child/youth...

- understanding and managing emotions?
- setting & achieving positive goals?
- feeling & showing empathy for others?
- establishing & maintaining positive relationships?
- making responsible decisions?

www.casel.org

WARNING: In times of a child or youth in crisis, the ability to practice their social and emotional skills may be limited/impeded (be patient and understanding!)

The Important First Question

Rather than asking:

*“why **won’t** the student do the preferred behavior?”*

Ask instead:

“Why can’t the student do the preferred behavior?”

Remember:

- Behavior has meaning
- Behavior is an attempt to communicate a need

Other Important Questions to Ask

Is the behavior ...

- in response to something in the environment?
- in response to an unmet need?
- an automatic or involuntary response?
- Influenced by my culture?
- Influenced by my health or disability?
- Due to other life experiences (family, poverty, etc)

Tips for Writing the Crisis Plan

- Deciding on a Template
- Information included in a written crisis plan
- Using Person-Centered principles when developing a crisis plan
- 2 Examples of Crisis Planning

Decide on a Crisis Plan Template

Where can we find sample templates?

- Ask those trained in writing crisis plans to share examples of crisis plans with you, your child and the planning team
- Consider examples of crisis plan templates available online through disability-specific or health-related service-specific websites

Examples of Crisis Plan Information

- Identifying information of child/youth
- Child's preferred name (how to address child when in a crisis)
- Any medical information such as diagnoses, medications, allergies, doctor/s
- What child looks like when not in crisis
- Signs of a crisis / Signs when child is no longer in crisis
- Clear steps that will be taken to help during the crisis
- What to do/not to do when responding to the child in crisis
- Who to contact & when (or sometimes, who not to contact)

Person-Centered Principles:

Can be used for Crisis Planning [1-3]

1. “The people have a clear and shared appreciation of the talents and capacities of the focus person”
 - **In the plan, consider adding a picture, interests and strengths of child, and what child is like when not in crisis**
 - **Consider including a separate page – Student Snapshot**
www.pacer.org/parent/php/php-c160.pdf
2. “People have a common understanding of what the focus person wants”
 - **In the plan, consider how to include information about what the child wants/does not want when in a crisis**
3. “The group involved agree to meet regularly to review activities”

Person-Centered Principles:

Can be used for Crisis Planning [4-6]

4. The group include a strong advocate or family member assuring that the interest of the focus person is being met.
5. That the group include a person committed to making connection to the local community
 - **Crisis Plans should include if at all possible a combination of formal and informal supports**
6. This is the beginning of a process that continues throughout a lifetime. Not a product.
 - **Crisis plans should not be shelved/filed and forgotten for a child/youth at risk of escalating challenging behaviors over time**

Progression of Challenging Behaviors

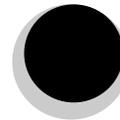
Gabe, Age 8, Grade 3



Will rip paper or fidget with other items at desk when instructed to do an assignment that is non-preferred



Will get out of seat and walk around classroom when prompted to begin an assignment that is non-preferred



Will tip table, chairs or throw objects when instructed to leave class or move to a calm space

Proactive Crisis Planning Example: Gabe, Age 8 – *Before the meeting*

Gabe, Age 8, Grade 3

Current concerns:

- * Aggression

Who met?

- * The IEP team

Was a crisis plan in place?

- * Yes – in the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

Before the meeting...

- Individuals read through the BIP, IEP, and Special Ed. Evaluation (see image to right)

How were behaviors being described (documented)?

What outcomes were described (documented)?



Proactive Crisis Planning Example: *Gabe, Age 8 - After the meeting*

Objective language instead of subjective language to describe escalating behaviors

Will say "no" when ...

May rip up papers or walk around classroom when ...

Will tip tables or throw objects when...

Updated outcomes based on Gabe's strengths

Increasing time with instruction from ... to ...

Increasing time with preferred activities from ... to ...

Increasing reading skills from ... to ...

What will go into Gabe's crisis plan?

Gabe liked the idea of –

- "student snapshot"
- Learning more types of preferred activities that could help him if he feels he "might explode"
- Running a 'drill' of his safety plan to test it out
- More people who could help him when he's frustrated

Progression of Challenging Behaviors

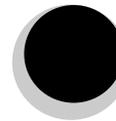
Eve, Age 13, Grade 8



Unable to get out of bed in the morning without parent prompt



Parent prompt not working, and unable to get out of bed unless asleep by 9pm the night before



Unable to fall asleep by 9pm the night before for more than 3 days, and unable to get out of bed to attend school until after 10am

Proactive Crisis Planning Example: Eve, Age 13 – *Before the meeting*

Eve, Age 13, Grade 8

Current school concerns:

- Unable to get to school

Who met?

- School counselor/504 Plan coordinator w/parent, Eve & teachers

Was a crisis plan in place?

- No

Before the meeting...

- Reviewed school records & talked with Eve about her goals and challenges

School Concerns?

What outcome were we looking for?

When anxious about failing, will avoid class or school

Doesn't want to tell when she doesn't understand assignment

Has high expectations

Able to get to school on time

Able to ask for help when struggling

Proactive Crisis Planning Example: *Eve, Age 13 - After the meeting*

Next steps to support

Review upcoming assignments w/counselor regularly

Confirm with teachers which assignments may require modifications

Provide pass for leaving class when assignments are too challenging

What outcome are we looking for?

Able to get to school on time

Eve is able to identify which supports are working/not working when school concerns arise

Able to ask for help when struggling

What will go into Eve's crisis plan?

Eve liked the idea of -

- "student snapshot"
- Being able to call the school counselor from home to report she was going to take steps to get to school
- Having a plan for leaving the classroom in a way that did not draw attention to her

In Summary

- Defining crisis and developing a proactive crisis plan is important for children and youth at risk of escalating behaviors
- Be willing to consider escalating challenging behaviors in new and different ways
- Build crisis plans using person-centered principles

Thank you for attending!

- Please complete evaluation surveys by 11/27/15.
- Certificates of Attendance will be emailed in return the week of 11/30/15.
- Questions? Please contact Renelle Nelson at 952.838.9000 or rnelson@pacer.org