Realigning Student and Teacher Perceptions of School Rules: A Behavior Management Strategy for Students with Challenging Behaviors

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Disruptive students are at risk of failing, and they impede other students’ ability to learn (DuPaul, McGoey, Eckert, & Van Brakle, 2001).

Many teaching programs fail to equip teachers with basic classroom behavior management (Maag, 2002).

School social workers can work with teachers individually or on a team to help equip teachers with methods of positive classroom reinforcement and behavior management (Maag, 2002).

(Thompson & Webber, 2010)
Teachers commonly use disciplinary methods like detention or expulsion, even though these measures are ineffective in stopping disruptive behavior (Maag, 2002).

Schoolwide positive behavior support (SWPBS) framework
- A practical approach to addressing classroom behavior in a proactive and positive manner
- Develops schoolwide systematic strategies to teach and reinforce prosocial decision making among students (Sugai & Horner, 2008)

(Thompson & Webber, 2010)
Method

• Sampled 10 students at a public day school for children with disabilities in a Midwestern rural area
  – Average age 12
  – Three 6th graders, four 7th graders, three 8th graders
  – 3 white, 7 African American
  – 2 female, 8 male

• Students’ teachers (n=4) completed rapid assessments of students’ behavior at half-hour increments throughout the school day for an 18-week baseline phase and an 18-week intervention phase

(Thompson & Webber, 2010)
• Self-management Training and Regulation Strategy\(^1\) (STARS) is a cognitive behavioral intervention designed to provide students, teachers, and school social workers with a pathway to realign student and teacher perceptions of school and classroom norms.

• Classroom behavior rules were displayed throughout the school building:
  1. Do your work
  2. Keep body parts to self
  3. Be considerate of others
  4. Follow directions
  5. Be on time in assigned areas

• Social worker, teachers, and students met weekly to discuss their perceptions of behavioral achievements
  – Using a solution-focused approach, the student identified one or two behavior goals for the following week

\(^1\) Formerly known as (and referred to in the manuscript as) the Student and Teacher Agreement Realignment Strategy (Thompson & Webber, 2010)
• All students demonstrated patterns of improvements in percentage of appropriate behavior

• Behavioral patterns were more stable during the intervention phase

• STARS produced clinically meaningful outcomes
  – Improved student and teacher relations
  – Increased time dedicated to academic work
  – Fewer behavioral problems
  – Significant reduction in teacher-generated office referrals

• 9 of the 10 students displayed statistically significant improvements
  – 40% experienced statistically significant change in their intervention-phase means (their intervention averages increased at least 2 standard deviations above their respective baseline averages)

(Thompson & Webber, 2010)
Implications for Practice

• STARS answers the call for an effective school-based intervention for students with chronic behavior problems
  – Resulted in both clinically and statistically significant improvements in behavior
  – The STARS data-keeping method is easy, which reduces teachers’ time and effort
  – STARS can be used to assist students in mastering self-management techniques, which foster internalization instead of relying on external consequences

(Thompson & Webber, 2010)
For More Information

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See also:


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