

# Webcast Series: Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Challenging Behavior

## Ten Strategies for Preventing Challenging Behavior after TBI

### TBI Webcast Series

1. The Effects of TBI on Student Behavior
- \*2. Ten Strategies for Preventing Challenging Behavior after TBI
3. Using FBA to Understand Challenging Behavior after TBI
4. Planning Interventions for Challenging Behavior after TBI



# Traumatic Brain Injury Webcast Series

Sponsored by: Wisconsin Department of  
Public Instruction

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# Before Viewing this Webcast...

- Please view the first webcast in this series
  - \* **1. The Effects of TBI on Student Behavior**
  - 2. Ten Strategies for Preventing Challenging Behavior after TBI
  - 3. Using FBA to Plan Interventions after TBI
  - 4. Planning Interventions for Challenging Behavior after TBI
- Please download the following document which can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/tbi.html>
  - Interventions Across Stages of Recovery
- \* All names of students have been changed and identifiable situations altered to protect student confidentiality

# Additional Resources to View

## Level I Traumatic Brain Injury Training Modules

- Module 1: Introduction
- Module 2: Understanding TBI
- Module 3: Returning to School
- Module 4: Planning to Meet the Needs of Students with TBI
- **Module 5: Providing Positive Behavioral Interventions**
- Module 6: Supporting Students with Mild Brain Injury

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/sped/tbi-trg-pres.html>

## TBI and Memory Module Webcast

<http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/tbi-memory.html>

# Overview of Webcast 2

- Why focus on prevention?
- Impact of stages of recovery from TBI on intervention
- Ten prevention strategies to use with students with TBI



# Three Approaches to Managing Challenging Behavior after TBI

1. Focus on antecedents and prevention
  - Consistent with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
  - Add supports for student
2. Contingency Management Procedures
  - Focused on management of consequences
3. Combined prevention and contingency management approach

Feeney & Ylvisaker, 2008

# Why focus on prevention first?

1. Prevention is easier than intervention

2. Frontal lobe damage

- Student may not be able to control behavior

3. Memory impairment

- May make use of consequences of little value

4. Negative, reactive procedures (e.g., punishment)

- Lead to escalation of behavior and impaired relationships

# Stages of Recovery from TBI in Moderate and Severe Injuries

## Early stages

- Student may be confused, tired, irritable, in pain

## Middle stages

- Student may still be confused, impulsive
- May have memory/executive functions difficulties
- Social problems may appear

## Later stages

- Long-term deficits are more apparent

# Prevention of Challenging Behavior after TBI

The following strategies can be effective

The interventions seems simple, but must be carefully thought out

They are best used when they are identified and planned by teams

Consistency is important

# Strategies that Are Critical in Every Stage of Recovery

#1: Positive and Supportive Staff Style

#2: Appropriate Instructional Match

#3: High Rates of Success

# General Proactive Strategies:

## #1 . Positive and Supportive Staff Style

- **Definition:** School staff members are friendly and positive in tone and appearance, use high ratio of positive to negative communication, and avoid “nagging” or repeated negative encounters
- **Example:** Bill’s teachers and educational assistant
  - Maintain a friendly appearance (smiling, relaxed body language), keep their voices at low or moderate levels, and provide a high rate of positive feedback
- **Why** is this an important strategy?
  - Students read the cues of staff members and respond accordingly
  - Staff negativity can provoke disruptive and oppositional behavior

# General Proactive Strategies:

## #2 . Appropriate Instructional Match

- **Definition:** The academic skills taught and expected to be learned match the student's instructional skill level
- **Example:** Therese is in fourth grade, but her reading skills are at the second grade level.
  - Her reading instruction is targeted at her skill level.
- **Why** is this an important strategy?
  - Students become frustrated and act out when they are unable to complete expected work
  - Students with TBI often have a scattered profile of skills. It is critical to understand identify the skills the student has and does not have

# General Proactive Strategies:

## # 3 . High Rates of Success

- **Definition:** A success rate of at least 80-90% in academic activities
- **Example:** Jose is able to complete 18/20 of the problems on a math probe correctly
- **Why** is this an important strategy?
  - After TBI students exhibit variability in performance
  - Students remain engaged when their success rate is high
  - Students get additional practice of previously learned skills
  - More difficult items can be gradually added

# Strategies that Are Especially Useful Earlier in Recovery

#4: Redirection

#5: Classroom  
Routines

#6: Graphic Advance  
Organizers

#7: Naturally Occurring  
Contingencies

# General Proactive Strategies:

## # 4 . Redirection

- **Definition:** Breaking the student's psychological set and re-engaging the student in a way that eliminates the behavior
- **Example:** Latoya is throwing sand in the sand table
  - Redirection: Show Latoya a puppet she likes to distract her and engage her in a positive interaction
- **Why** is this an important strategy?
  - Used when the student is not able to benefit from teaching new skills
  - Often used in early stages of a student's recovery
  - Designed to reduce stress and prevent escalation or behavior

# General Proactive Strategies:

## # 5 . Classroom Routines

- **Definition:** Classroom procedures that are consistent over time
- **Example:** in the morning the teacher uses a routine: Students enter the classroom, put lunches in the lunch bin, get out reading folders, and take folders to their desks
- **Why** is this an important strategy?
  - Students with TBI may be confused and agitated in complex environments
  - Routines help reduce the complexity and make the environment more predictable
  - Often most critical in early stages of recovery and with severe injuries

# General Proactive Strategies: Classroom Routines

- Organizational routines
- Problem-solving routines
  - Model problem-solving language and steps
- Executive system routine: Goal-Plan-Do-Review
  - Brief discussion of goal(s) for the day and the plan
  - Execute the plan and briefly review how it went
  - Example

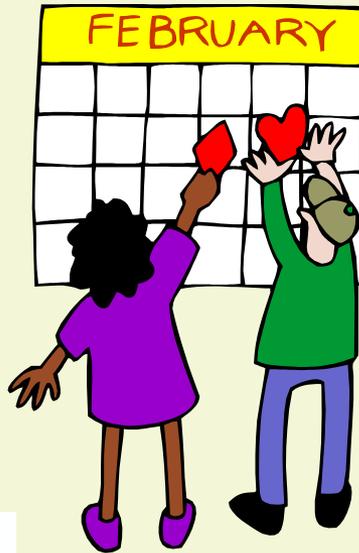
Ylvisaker et al, 1999

# General Proactive Strategies:

## # 6 . Graphic Advance Organizers

- **Definition:** Visual representations (e.g., photos, drawings) of the schedule of activities or steps of a task
- **Example:** Photographs of Terry in the morning routine
  - Entering the classroom, putting his lunch in the lunch bin, getting his reading folder, and taking the folder to his desk
- **Why** is this an important strategy?
  - Students with TBI often have severe memory impairment
  - They may be confused, disoriented, and apprehensive,
  - Students' frustration and irritability decrease with cues to expected behavior
  - Advance organizers help students learn and internalize routines

# Examples of Items on Graphic Organizers



# General Proactive Strategies:

## #7 . Naturally Occurring Contingencies

- **Definition:** Build on the people/events already occurring in the environment to maximize the likelihood of student positive behavior
- **Example:** Harry dislikes social studies
  - His 5<sup>th</sup> grade team assigned him to his favorite teacher for social studies in a class just before recess
- **Why** is this an important strategy?
  - This intervention does not require Harry or his teachers to add an intervention

# Strategies that Are Useful As Expectations for Student Performance Increase

#8: Behavioral Momentum

#9: Behavioral Scripts

#10: Opportunity for  
Choice and Control

# General Proactive Strategies:

## # 8 . Behavioral Momentum

- **Definition:** Student's positive behavior propels him/her toward more positive behavior.
  - The teacher gives the student easily mastered and enjoyable tasks
  - The teacher gradually adds in more difficult or disliked tasks after the student is positively engaged
- **Example:** Toby dislikes writing
  - Teacher engages him with coloring worksheets, then adds a short writing exercise, followed by his favorite game (all pictured on his advance organizer)
- **Why** is this an important strategy?
  - Getting students started on a task is often very difficult
  - Beginning with an undesirable task can lead to disruptive and oppositional behavior

# General Proactive Strategies:

## # 9 . Behavioral Scripts

- **Definition:** Routine sequences of behavior that are repeated in certain situations; may also be verbal scripts that help guide actions
- **Example:** When going to gym class
  - Eric is expected to walk with both hands holding his folder in front of him. He may also verbally guide his behavior by saying, “My hands are on my folder.”
- **Why** is this an important strategy?
  - Behavioral scripts help define expectations. They are proactive in specifying a positive behavior
  - They facilitate practice of positive behavior
  - They provide positive behavioral momentum for the next task

# General Proactive Strategies:

## #10 . Opportunity for Choice and Control

- **Definition:** The student is involved in decision-making about activities by being allowed to make choices or control aspects of the task(s)
- **Example:** Jonah is allowed to
  - Choose between two activities or determine the order of activities
- **Why** is this an important strategy?
  - Students who are given some choice and control are more likely to become and remain engaged
  - Giving some choice and control reduces power struggles
  - Adolescents need some choice and control

# General Proactive Strategies to Prevent Challenging Behavior

- Positive and supportive staff style
- Appropriate instructional match
- High rates of success
- Naturally occurring contingencies
- Redirection
- Classroom routines
- Graphic advance organizers
- Behavioral momentum
- Behavioral scripts
- Opportunities for choice and control

# Prevention Focus Consistent with PBIS

## Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

- Approach is positive
- Expectations are clear
- Primary focus on prevention
- Use of FBA to understand behavior
- Data guide interventions
- Interventions are evidence-based

# Next Webcasts in This Series

1. The Effects of TBI on Student Behavior
2. Ten Strategies for Preventing Challenging Behavior after TBI
- \*3. Using FBA to Understand Challenging Behavior after TBI
  - Understanding Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)
  - Identifying factors that trigger and maintain challenging behavior
- \*4. Planning Interventions for Challenging Behavior after TBI
  - Designing effective interventions to reduce challenging behavior after TBI

# Questions or Comments?

- Address questions or comments to:

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- For references cited in this webcast series, see Webcast #4