Supporting Students with Developmental Disabilities Within the Framework of PBS

MAKING CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE
RICHMOND, BC
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Students with Developmental Disabilities

- Includes students with diagnoses/labels such as:
  - Autism spectrum disorder
  - Cerebral palsy and other neuromotor disorders
  - Mild, moderate, or severe intellectual disability (e.g., Down syndrome, FASD)
  - Multiple disabilities (“dependent handicapped”)
  - Congenital deafblindness, etc.
- In many instances, school-wide PBS does not include these students (Snell, 2006, Vaughn, 2006)
  - So, is it really school-wide???
  - Why does “all” NOT mean “ALL”?

Common Misconceptions

- Misconception #1: The three tiers describe or label students rather than the level of support adults provide
  - “He’s a red zone kid”; “She’s stuck in the yellow zone”
- Misconception #2: Students with developmental disabilities always require Tier 3 supports
  - Not true! Many (most?) of these students can respond to Tier 1 and 2 supports if they are designed to accommodate their learning needs

Tier 1: What’s the Problem?

- The behaviours associated with abstract concepts (e.g., respect, safe, responsibility) are not likely to be understood by most students – and even less so by students with developmental disabilities!

Tier 1: What’s the Problem?

- The language we use to describe specific behaviours may not be understood by students with developmental disabilities, either!
What's the Problem?

- The strategies we use to teach specific behaviours may not be sufficient for students with developmental disabilities.

Solutions: Tier 1 (Hawken & O'Neill, 2006)

- Incorporate instruction related to Tier 1 expectations into students' IEPs
  - Often, IEPs do NOT include strategies for teaching prosocial alternatives to problem behaviour – which is what Tier 1 is all about!
- Design lesson plans for teaching Tier 1 expectations that include students with developmental disabilities from the outset
  - Universal Design for Learning!
- Provide small group or 1:1 instruction to teach Tier 1 expectations
  - Perhaps, pair students with same-age classmates to support instruction that is inclusive

Solutions: Tier 1 (Hawken & O'Neill, 2006)

- Include symbols for Tier 1 expectations as part of students' visual schedules and/or augmentative communication systems

Solutions: Tier 1 (Hawken & O'Neill, 2006)

- Use contingency maps to teach desired/expected behaviours (and consequences), in contrast to undesired behaviours (and consequences)

Example: Marco – “Be Safe”

Hal: “Be Respectful”

Antonia: “Be Kind”

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Kirk: “Be Responsible”

Solutions: Tier 1
(Hawken & O’Neill, 2006)

- Provide explicit reinforcement for desired behaviours on a richer schedule than that available to other students
- Or, better yet, design a school-wide reinforcement system that will also accommodate the needs of students with developmental disabilities!!!
  - For example, a token economy with flexible criteria for the number of tokens required for back-up reinforcers

- Modify tools used to evaluate SWPBS fidelity to assess the extent to which these students are included in Tier 1 interventions
  - For example, include a requirement for interviews with a certain percentage of students with developmental disabilities, to see if they can identify the school-wide rules

Common Misconceptions

- Misconception #3: Students with developmental disabilities won’t respond to Tier 2 supports
  - AND those who don’t respond to Tier 2 supports need to be in separate schools/programs/classrooms

What’s the Problem?

- Tier 2 intervention are usually designed to be efficient, not individualized
  - Behaviour Education Program/Check-in, Check-out (CICO) system (Crone et al., 2004)

BEP/Check-in Check-out Cycle
(Crone et al., 2004)
CICO Record

Name: ____________________________                             Date: ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safe</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Respectful</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Check In 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 1 2
Before Recess 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 1 2
Before Lunch 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 1 2
After Recess 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 1 2
Check Out 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 1 2

Today’s goal: ____________________________

Today’s total points: _______________________

Be Safe

- Keep hands, feet, and objects to self
- Use kind words and actions
- Follow directions
- Working in class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Recess</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Recess</th>
<th>Class</th>
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Total Points = _____________
Points Possible = 50

Today’s goal: ________________%
Goal ________________%

CICO Home Report

Name: _____________________________
Date: _____________

____ I met my goal today
____ I had a hard day

One thing I did really well today was: ____________________________

Something I will work on tomorrow is: ____________________________

Comments: ____________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature: __________________________________________
Comments: ____________________________

Tier 2: What’s the Problem?

- Expectations may not be clear
- Rating system may not be understood by students with developmental disabilities
- Check-in intervals may not be frequent enough
- Reinforcement at the end of the period/class/day may be too delayed

Solutions: Tier 2

(Hawken & O’Neill, 2006)

- Individualize!
  - Use pictures or symbols to clarify expectations
  - Use symbols, color codes (red, yellow, green), or other concrete markers for the rating system
  - Check in more often during a lesson/period
  - Provide explicit reinforcement for specific Tier 2 behaviours and/or at the end of each lesson/period, not just at the end of the day
  - Reduce the number of “points” students need to accumulate to earn reinforcement

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Problem: CICO systems are designed for students whose problem behaviour is primarily attention-motivated (McIntosh, Campbell, Carter, & Dickey, 2009)

- Setting Events
  - Unknown

- Triggering Antecedents
  - A range of situations (in class, given work, on playground)

- Problem Behavior
  - Talk out, out of seat, tease, make noise, etc.

- Maintaining Consequences
  - Obtain peer or adult attention

BUT: Often, problem behaviour of students with developmental disabilities is escape-motivated!

Common Misconceptions

- Misconception #4: In students with developmental disabilities, it is possible to tell the function of a problem behaviour by what the behaviour looks like
  - “Melt-down” = attention
  - Tantrum = “sensory”

- NOT TRUE!
- Topography ≠ function, for anyone!

Common Misconceptions

- Misconception #5: Effective Tier 3 supports can be delivered without a thorough functional behaviour assessment (FBA)
  - SO not true!
  - SO DEEPLY not true!

Functional Behavior Assessment

- Need to understand all components of the behavioural dynamics:

  Person

  Setting Event  Antecedent  Behavior  Consequence(s)

Solutions: Tier 2

(Hawken & O’Neill, 2006)

- Conduct a brief functional behaviour assessment prior to instituting Tier 2 supports to determine if the primary function is attention
  - Functional Assessment Checklist for Teachers and Staff (FACTS; March et al., 2000; http://www.pbis.org/common.pbisresources/tools/EfficientFBA_FACTS.pdf)
  - Questions About Behavioral Function (QABF; Paclosvkyj, Matson, Rush, Smalls, & Vollmer, 2000; http://www.disabilityconsultants.org/QABF.php)
- If the primary function is not attention, adapt CICO accordingly
  - For example, if the function is escape, consider reinforcing appropriate behaviour with opportunities to earn a reduced workload, breaks from work, etc.

Functional Behavior Assessment

- More than just A-B-C charts!
- Need a comprehensive approach
- FBA should be both contextual and routine-based!!!!
  - Problem behaviour in one place/situation is not necessarily the same as problem behaviour is another!
Tier 3 Supports

• The goal of PBS is to make problem behaviors irrelevant, inefficient, and/or ineffective, by using information from the FBA to develop effective behavior support plans.
• Tier 3 support plans should include AT LEAST one strategy aimed at each of the following:
  ○ Changing or neutralizing the setting event(s)
  ○ Changing or eliminating the antecedent(s)
  ○ Teaching the person appropriate behavior(s) that serve the same function as the problem behavior
  ○ Changing the consequence for the problem behavior
  ○ Reinforcing new, appropriate behavior

Tier 3 Supports

• The fact is that we know at least as much (if not more!) about how to design and implement Tier 3 behaviour supports for students with developmental disabilities as for other students!
• Evidence-based practices:
  ○ Environmental enrichment/design
  ○ Curricular adaptations and modifications
  ○ Visual schedules and other visual supports
  ○ Teaching functionally alternative behaviours (communication, social skills, etc.)
  ○ Differential reinforcement
  ○ Etc.

BUT...

• Again: Don’t assume that it will be necessary to start at Tier 3 for these students!
• They are -- or SHOULD BE! -- as much a part of the school community as other students in the school.

Eyes on the Prize

• School-wide means everyone
• All means ALL!

References