

7 Stages of Behavior Escalation

	Stage One: Calm	Stage Two: Trigger	Stage Three: Agitation	Stage Four: Acceleration	Stage Five: Peak	Stage Six: De-escalation	Stage Seven: Recovery
Observations	<p>The youth is relatively calm and cooperative. This is the stage where most interactions occur.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting corrective feedback • Following directives • Setting personal goals • Able to ignore distractions • Accepting affirmations 	<p>During this stage, the youth experiences unresolved conflict that set in motion the behavior escalation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The youth struggles to follow expectations • Frequent corrections by staff in attempts to manage behavior • Interpersonal conflicts on the unit among peers or staff • Low rates of positive reinforcement being used by staff 	<p>The youth is increasingly unfocused and upset.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A youth being off-task and/or • Frequent start/stop on tasks. • A youth not able to sit in group or line up appropriately, • Talking with other peers during designated “silent” times, • Social withdrawal from peers and staff. 	<p>As the issue remains unresolved, the youth focuses more on the conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provocative behavior (Making people angry or excited: deliberately aimed at exciting or annoying people). • High intensity of emotions/ thoughts • Threatening behaviors and gestures 	<p>The youth is out of control and exhibits the most severe behavior. The stage we want the youth to avoid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical aggression • Self-injury • Threatening behaviors and gestures 	<p>Having vented in the peak stage, the youth displays confusion in this phase, but the severity of the peak behavior subsides.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social withdrawal • Denial • Blaming others • Minimization of problem 	<p>Youth displays eagerness to participate in non-engagement activities and feels shame, sorrow, fear, or regret. May or may not be able to verbalize feelings or details of the outburst.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to correct problem • Unwillingness to participate in group activities • Social withdrawal and sleep
Appropriate Interventions	<p>During this stage staff interventions should be focused on non-escalation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for interactions that carry high success rates on the units and in school. • Maintaining and building rapport • Maintaining a clear and consistent environment • Use positive reinforcement and affirmations to shape and reinforce behavior • Teach social skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Problem solving, o Accepting “no” o Relaxation strategies, o Self-management • Communicate positive expectations to youth 	<p>Focus on prevention and redirection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove youth • Increasing opportunities for success • Reinforcing what has been taught previously 	<p>Intervention is focused on reducing anxiety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make structural/environmental modifications for the youth to encourage cooperation, • Provide reasonable options and choices to the youth, • Involve the youth in activities that can promote success and leadership 	<p>Intervention is focused on safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove any possible triggering factors • Follow crisis prevention procedures • Establish and follow through with a bottom line • Remain Professional 	<p>Intervention is focused on safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal Directives • Physical Response, this response should only be used when lesser alternatives have failed or after a determination that such alternatives would be inappropriate or ineffective under the circumstances 	<p>Intervention is focused on removing excess attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t annoy or irritate the youth with fault-finding or continuous urging • Avoid blaming, • Don’t force apology • Emphasize starting anew 	<p>Intervention is focused on re-establishing routines and activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow through with consequences for problem behavior • Positively reinforce any displays of appropriate behavior

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Adopted from Colvin, G. & Sugai, G. (October 31, 2005) *Positive behavior and Support: Understanding and Responding to Escalating Behavior*, Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: University of Oregon & University of Connecticut