

## CRISIS INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

To ensure the maintenance of safe and orderly learning environments in all of the schools, school staffs need to be prepared to intervene when a student is in crisis and is exhibiting out of control behavior. Crisis intervention is a brief segment of time in which staff must intervene with a student and address behavior that may deteriorate to a more violent or disruptive level. Although violent behaviors may be a small percentage of behavior problems, the need for school staff to prevent, respond, and process volatile events is necessary.

The Baltimore County Public Schools offer three specific training courses designed to teach staff members appropriate ways to manage volatile or crisis behaviors when students lose control of themselves.

**The Crisis Prevention Intervention Program** is designed to provide basic skill training in crisis prevention and intervention. The purpose for this training is for the care, welfare, and security of students and staff in the event of a behavioral crisis. The training places an emphasis on early intervention, providing staff with methods and principles to identify a developing behavioral crisis. The following intervention strategies are included in the training:

- Identification of the development of a behavior crisis
- Appropriate staff responses to behaviors in each of the four stages
- Prevention of escalation and provision of appropriate support for students
- Techniques for setting limits
- Techniques to de-escalate power struggles of emotionally volatile students
- Study of personal safety techniques to prevent staff injuries during physical altercations with students
- Practice of personal safety techniques to prevent staff injuries during physical altercations with students
- Therapeutic physical restraint techniques
- Post-crisis therapeutic communication and problem solving strategies

This training is offered by the Department of Professional Development and is coordinated by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. This one credit inservice course is an eight-hour training course.

**The Life Space Crisis Intervention Program** is a verbal intervention-training program with strategies designed for use in crisis situations. The focus is on processing the event during the resolution stage of a crisis. The goal is to process the incident and provide the student with insight into the self-defeating pattern of behavior. New skills are provided in processing the crisis and the student may return to his classroom once he/she is in control of his/her behavior.

Training in **Life Space Crisis Intervention** provides staff training in the following areas:

- Communication skills
- De-escalation skills
- Interviewing skills
- Diagnostic skills
- Identification of student self-defeating behavior patterns
- Skills and knowledge in ways to provide students with insight to their behavior
- Confidence in the ability to assist students in solving behavior problems.

**The Life Space Crisis Intervention** course is offered by the Department of Professional Development and is coordinated by the Office of Special Education. **LSCI** is a five-day training course. Inservice credit is offered.

**The Therapeutic Aggression Control Technique V. 2 Program** teaches staff the verbal and physical intervention skills needed to safely and therapeutically manage a student's aggressive behavior. The following skills are taught in this program:

- How to identify deliberate and purposeful aggression
- How to identify a student who is in an emotional crisis
- How to respond correctly with behavioral correction or emotional counseling
- How to improve awareness of one's personal role in a crisis
- How to identify and break the conflict cycle
- How to use listening and reflective communication skills
- How to implement therapeutic problem solving skills
- How to use safety and defense techniques in a physical altercation
- How to teach physical intervention and use restraint techniques.

The crisis intervention program includes a combination of life space crisis intervention and crisis intervention training. **TACT-2** is a three-day training program. A cadre of trainers in the Office of Special Education offers the training.

Crisis intervention training is recommended for all staff. At least four people in each school should be trained in crisis intervention to ensure the safety of all students and staff in the school.

## COOPERATIVE DISCIPLINE PROGRAM

The *Cooperative Discipline Program* was developed to model a “classroom code of conduct that holds all students accountable and teaches them how to evaluate their own behavior.”

Cooperative Discipline uses three “C’s” as the core of the conduct code. The three “C’s” are: connect, contribute, and feel capable. Cooperative Discipline is designed to influence students so they will make good choices and demonstrate good social skills through encouragement, intervention, and collaboration.

The three “C’s” are strategies that are put in place to prevent misbehavior. Dr. Linda Albert, the writer of the *Cooperative Discipline Program*, defines the three “C’s” as follows:

- Students are taught to feel *capable* by learning it is okay to make mistakes; build confidence; focus on past successes; make learning tangible; and recognize achievement
- Students are taught to feel *connected* by communicating acceptance, demonstrating attention, showing appreciation, stating affirmations, and displaying affection
- Students are taught to *contribute* by encouraging contributions in the classroom, in the school building, in the community, in environmental protection, and by helping other students.

Schools implementing this program develop and implement a code of conduct designed to encourage both student and parental input. The following is an example of a code of conduct:

- I am respectful
- I am responsible
- I am safe
- I am prepared
- I will not prevent the teacher or students from participating in educational endeavors
- I will cooperate with the school community.

Dr. Albert, who was a special educator in the 1970’s charged with improving reading test scores, developed the *Cooperative Discipline Program*. After evaluating the effectiveness of the program, she learned that she was able to get better results by helping the students learn and manage their classes more effectively and this helped to reduce chaos and behavior problems.

Several Baltimore County Public Schools are using the cooperative discipline program as a component of their positive behavior management and parent involvement plan.

Linda Albert, Ph.D., developed the *Cooperative Discipline Program* for children in grades kindergarten through 12. The website for Cooperative Discipline can be found by using a search engine, (i.e., Yahoo or Google) then typing in cooperative discipline. A wide range of teaching and training materials available on cooperative discipline may be purchased through American Guidance Services at 1-800-328-2560, 7:00 AM-5:00 PM CST, Monday through Friday.

## TOOLS FOR TEACHING PROGRAM

*The Tools for Teaching Program* is a positive behavior program developed by Dr. Fred Jones as an approach to teaching discipline. This program's focus is on behavior modification and behavior management within the classroom. Strategies are provided for teachers on positive ways to deal with "brat, goof-off, and talking back" disruptive classroom behaviors.

The approach in this program is a no-nonsense, realistic approach that stresses the importance of fun in learning for students and fun in teaching for teachers. Group work, group dynamics, group communication, group processing, and group problem-solving activities are emphasized in this behavior program. This program describes ways teachers may produce classroom environments that motivate students to learn, to participate in the learning processes, so that students will be encouraged to complete all assignments and not "goof off." It also describes for teachers ways to become effective classroom managers, natural teachers, and skillful disciplinarians and motivators for students.

The results of extensive research with teachers in helping to determine what makes natural teachers who are motivators, skillful disciplinarians, and effective classroom managers, found that natural teachers show students that they mean business in their classrooms. Dr. Jones was hoping to find in his research that there was a magic bullet used by natural students to keep them focused on learning activities while behaving appropriately in class, but what he learned was that there is no terminology, no scope or sequence of skills, nor task analysis that is used by natural teachers to teach discipline and manage the classrooms effectively. Natural teachers depend on the building of positive relationships to motivate students to do what is expected.

*The Tools for Teaching Program* encourages parent/family involvement.

Dr. Fred Jones has published several books and programs that may be used in developing and implementing positive behavior plans. His website is [www.fredjones.com](http://www.fredjones.com) and activities from his books may be downloaded. The cost of his textbooks and training materials vary in price and his workshops range from \$300 per session plus his travel expenses.

## POSITIVE DISCIPLINE PROGRAM

The Positive Discipline Program offers strategies for school-age children using the philosophies of Alfred Adler and Rudolph Dreikurs. These strategies follow the doctrine that all persons are created equally, thereby having equal rights to dignity and respect. The methods of positive discipline, referred to as PD, are non-punitive and non-permissive. They are considered kind, because kindness “shows respect for the child and the adult,” and firm, “because firmness shows respect for what needs to be done.”

Positive discipline protocols must meet the following three criteria for discipline that teaches empowerment:

- Is it respectful?
- Is it effective long term?
- Does it help children develop valuable life skills for good character?

*Positive Discipline in the Classroom* explains how to implement the three criteria for effective and empowering discipline. The goals are to meet students’ basic needs, to avoid violence, and promote school success. Teachers and mental health professionals can gain understanding of what motivates misbehavior, and how to encourage change through effective classroom meetings.

A 1994 study focused on positive parenting skills to vulnerable families, and another study reviewed outcome measures on 10,000 students in which the success rates were very high by schools implementing these strategies proposed by the Positive Discipline Program. Much of the focus of the program’s lessons on classroom meetings is on life skills in achieving success in the classroom, work, home, the community, and other relationships in which a respectful and non-punitive means of teaching self-discipline, responsibility, cooperation and problem-solving skills are in place.

There are several schools that incorporate Positive Discipline techniques into their positive behavior plan on a daily basis.

*Positive Discipline in the Classroom* has a website listed as [www.positivediscipline.com](http://www.positivediscipline.com). The office may be reached at 1-800-456-7770 or by email [workshops@empoweringpeople.com](mailto:workshops@empoweringpeople.com). The fee for a two-day workshop is approximately \$250 with a 10 percent discount for early registration.

## STOP AND THINK PROGRAM

*The Stop and Think Program* is a social skills program that can be used with preschool and elementary school students. Parents, teachers, and mental health professionals may use it. The focus of *The Stop and Think Program* is to help children with their problem-solving skills to develop and reinforce good decision-making skills. It offers cognitive insights for students at their own levels. The social skills charts, included in the program, offer words to be used at each grade level. It's a monotonic increasing scale with respect to language and maturity. For example, in kindergarten, the teacher might say, "ears listening." In first grade, the teacher might request that the students get into their "good listening position." In second grade or third grade, the teacher might say, "listen to the direction," and so on for the eyes that are looking and the head that is thinking.

The grade the teacher is teaching relates to the skills and the "lesson plan" involved, although they are all parallel to one another. The basic steps are as follows:

Step 1: Calmly ask the student to "stop and think"

Step 2: Remind the student, "do you want to make a good choice or a bad choice"

Step 3: Ask the student, "what are your choices or steps"

Step 4: Instruct the student, "do it or show me the good choice"

Step 5: Tell the student, "good job or you should be proud of yourself"

Each of these five steps correlates to a small drawing that may serve as a cue or reinforcement of that step.

*The Stop and Think Program* can be found in catalogs or on the web. The programs come in drawing format, board games, and text. The famous symbol of this program is a bright red stop sign with the words STOP AND THINK written in white inside the stop sign. The Internet site for *The Stop and Think Program* offers concrete examples of the specific wording to be used with various grade levels.

## **SKILL STREAMING PROGRAM**

*The Skill Streaming Program* is a social training program available in three parts, based on the ages of students: one for pre-school; one for elementary; and one for middle or high school. This program is available in text or audiotapes. This social skills program is based on the work of Goldstein and McGinnis and is being used in classrooms, as well as in offices and therapy rooms.

The four skills in *The Skill Streaming Program* involve modeling a behavior, role-playing the behavior, offering instruction, and homework that offers feedback including a self-evaluation. Students are placed in small groups and asked to think of social situations that may be causing them some stress or distress. They are given the tools to practice speaking with others such as greetings, starting small talk, starting conversations, maintaining conversations, and checking to see if the other person is indeed listening. There are a total of 50 skills that are discussed and role-played in various scenarios, all-relating to school topics, including some conversations that would take place outside of the classroom. The student will have opportunities to practice or role-play with other students in the group. Homework may be assigned to test what was practiced in a real situation outside the school. It is important for students to realize that what may seem wonderful in the small group is not seen the same in the real world.

*The Skill Streaming Program* offers social skills for anger-management, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and stressful situations. There are also self-evaluative tools for the students and the trainers. This program may be found on the web or ordered from the Childsworld, Childsplay catalog. Prices range from \$50 for a single item to \$1,100 for the set.

## SECOND STEP PROGRAM

*The Second Step Program* is a social skills training program that focuses on several skills for pre-school children through high school age adolescents, in a multi-sensory format. The skills to be taught in this program include empathy, impulse control, anger management, and problem solving. The grade levels that can use this program effectively in daily lesson plans are pre-K through grade 9. The format of the program for pre-K through grade 5 includes black and white photo-lesson cards, classroom videos, puppets, songs, and classroom posters. For students in middle school or high school levels, the lessons are scripted with overhead transparencies, classroom videos, and reproducible activity sheets. There are administrator guides and teacher guides in each grade set of learning activities.

This program has won several awards nationally for bullying prevention, child abuse prevention, and violence prevention. The Committee for Children, a nonprofit organization located in Seattle, Washington, developed *The Second Step Program* in 1997. Various research studies show the lessening of aggressive play, bullying, and impulsive, violent behavior when schools and caregivers use this comprehensive positive behavior program. It has been reported that this is a “user-friendly” program because all the work for the instructor is chronologically listed on the back of each card with a complete lesson plan. In the lessons, children become involved in discussions relating to impulsive behavior and controlling those impulses.

*The Second Step Program* is being used in several Baltimore County Public Schools with much success.

*The Second Step Program* can be found on the Internet under the website, [www.secondstep.org](http://www.secondstep.org). The Committee for Children offers workshops and consultative services. This organization may be reached at 1-800-634-4449, extension 200. Program correlation and implementation brochures are provided without cost. The program cost ranges from \$139 to \$1,000, depending on the grade level of the students or the parent-training program.

## SELF-ESTEEM AND LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

The *Self-Esteem and Life Skills Program (SEALS)* is a very comprehensive and user-friendly social skills program for students of all ages. This program covers multiple issues that should be discussed in the teaching of social skills. Lessons include the following topics: coping skills, expressive therapy, fear, goal setting, grief, humor, interpersonal skills, leisure skills, relationships, self-awareness, self-esteem, spirituality, stress management, support systems, recovery, independent living, and making changes.

Card games are also included in the program. Students can play cards to enhance the development of positive social skills. The workbook included in the program is very easy to use and a multi-sensory approach is taken in problem solving activities. There is an “I” statement activity wherein students are taught to think of others and not just of themselves. A “home life” activity is also included in the workbook wherein students are expected to develop a list of positive and negative aspects of home life. All of the students’ responses fit inside the structure of a house and the structure will not be correct until students place the correct responses into the house.

Each activity is designed to build upon other activities to help students develop goal-setting strategies, good character, and recognize the importance of using a step-by-step approach to problem solving in positive ways.

The *SEALS Program* can be found on the Internet at the following web address: <http://wellness-resources-com>. The program can be purchased from Wellness Productions at 1-800-669-9208. Wellness Productions is a part of the Guidance Channel, which advertises in the *Childsworld* and *Childsplay Magazine*. Prices of different parts of the program range from \$15.00 for a set of cards to \$100.00 for games and workbooks.