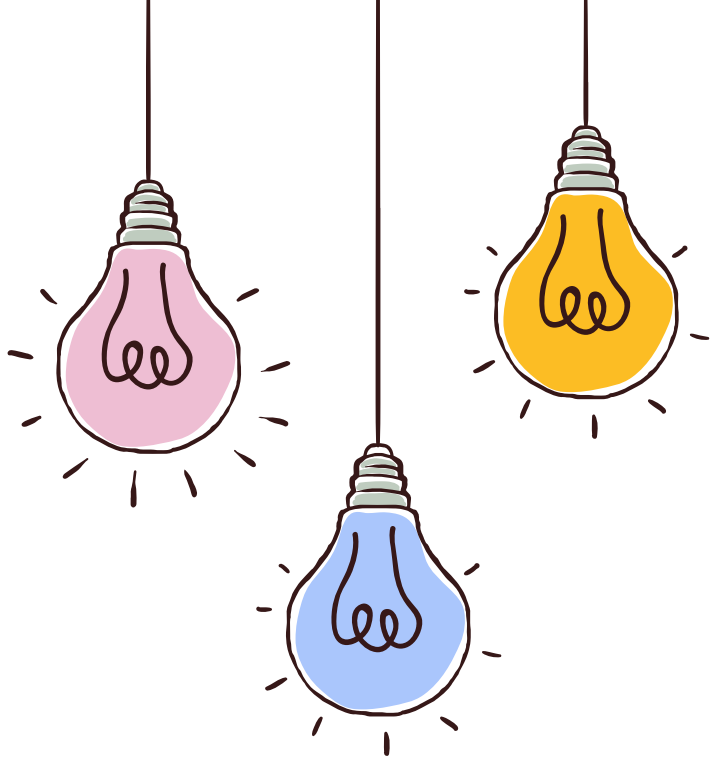




Responses to Behavior

**Grades 3-5
NEW Teachers**

12:40 -1:40 PM

Christy Emig

Consulting Teacher

- 19 years of classroom teaching experience
- Grades 3-6
- Pre-Induction Support and Consulting Teacher for the last 9 years
- Married 30 years, Mom to 25 year old Daughter, and 22 year old son and 1 German Shepard
- Christye@fsusd.org



Learning Intention & Success Criteria

We are learning to respond to disruptive behavior so that all students can learn.

- ❑ I can identify triggers and escalation indicators.
- ❑ I can plan to use de-escalation strategies when a student has a “flipped lid”.

You need a pencil/pen and the [Response to Behavior Toolkit](#).

Continuum of Engagement

ACTIVE-----PASSIVE-----

Self-Reflect: Where might you be right now on this continuum?

DISRUPTING	AVOIDING	WITHDRAWING	PARTICIPATING	INVESTING	DRIVING
Distracting others from learning Creating an unsafe situation	Off task (doing something different from what the teacher wants me to do) Looking for ways to avoid doing work	Not working Unfocused Separate/ by myself	Doing my work by myself or with others Focused and paying attention Responding to questions	Asking questions Knowing what I am learning and why it's important	Setting goals Asking for feedback Checking my work Leading learning
Disengagement			Engagement		

From Disrupting to Avoiding

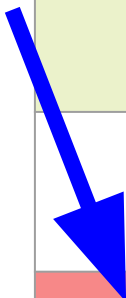
→ The goal is **not** to move from Disrupting to Participating; simply to move out of the **Disrupting** mode.

🛡️ This step is about **safety and climate**. The teacher priority is to create safety for all students and **then** to minimize the disruption.

💡 First, we must understand the behavior.

Continuum of Engagement

ACTIVE-----PASSIVE-----ACTIVE



DISRUPTING	AVOIDING	WITHDRAWING	PARTICIPATING	INVESTING	DRIVING
Distracting others from learning Creating an unsafe situation	Off task (doing something different from what the teacher wants me to do) Looking for ways to avoid doing work	Not working Unfocused Separate/ by myself	Doing my work by myself or with others Focused and paying attention Responding to questions	Asking questions Knowing what I am learning and why it's important	Setting goals Asking for feedback Checking my work Leading learning
Disengagement			Engagement		

Four Critical Concepts to Understanding the Behavior

1. Misbehavior is a symptom.

- Underdeveloped skills
- Lack of coping strategies
- Oversensitivity to stress
- Fight or flight responses
- Lacking basic social skills
- Lacking flexibility
- Struggling with self-regulation of emotions or cognitive processes



Partner Discussion:
What are some
other potential
reasons for
misbehavior?

1. Misbehavior is a symptom.

- Academic frustration
- Attention/connection
- Escape/avoidance
- Sensory overload
- Lack of coping skills
- Difficulty with flexibility
- Lack of basic social skills
- Fear of embarrassment
- Loss of control



Partner Discussion:
Which underlying
need is easiest to
miss when you're in
the moment?

Look beneath the behavior.

Before we respond to what a student is doing, pause and consider what might be happening underneath.

Remember, we are making a hypothesis, not making an assumption. Look at patterns, gather info, and stay curious as to what the misbehavior is a symptom of.



Share out your thoughts and ideas from your partner discussion.

2. Behavior is communication.

- Student actions are purposeful; often an attempt to solve a problem.
- We must stop & “listen” to the message the behavior is conveying.

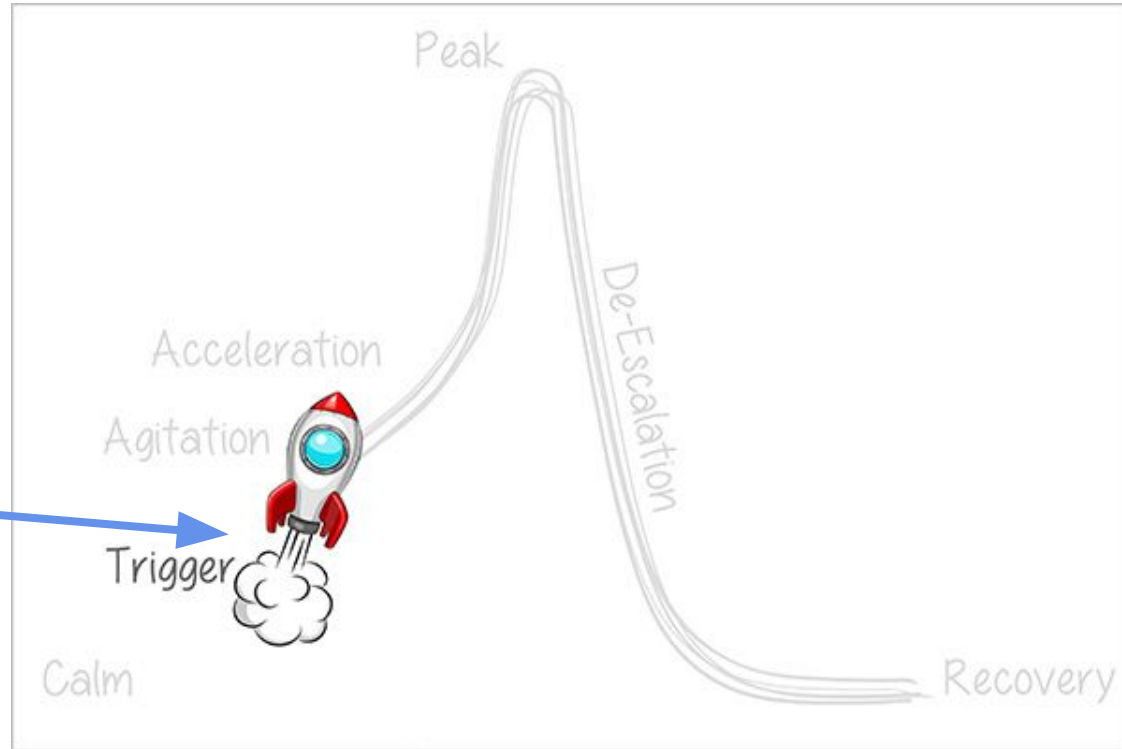


3. Behavior has function.

- Behavior is never random or aimless
- **2 common functions are Escape and Attention**
- Individuals only repeat behavior when they get something out of it (e.g. if a student repeatedly has tantrums and gets to leave the classroom, they have learned that tantrums further their desire to escape)
- Behavior has bookends: environmental variables that occur prior to the unwanted behavior (antecedents) and the response of the teacher & peers. These bookends fuel behavior & allow it to persist.

4. Behavior **CAN** be changed.

- Break the behavior code: look for patterns (time of day? Activity? People? location?)
- Interventions and plans must be aligned with the function of the behavior
- Consider the time frame: if a student has been demonstrating inappropriate behavior for years and lacks the necessary skills, the change will take longer.
- Teachers can utilize the [FSUSD Behavior Intervention Toolbox](#) to get started



TRY to
intervene
here.

Use your Behavior Toolkit

RESPONSE TO BEHAVIOR TOOLKIT

A quick-reference guide for responding to behavior with calm, connection, and purpose

BEFORE I RESPOND, I THINK...

What do I see or hear?	What might the behavior be communicating?	What response will help right now?
------------------------	---	------------------------------------

When a Student Flips Their Lid



Common Triggers of Crisis Behavior



Lack of attachment

Our brains are hardwired to evaluate tone, facial expressions, and posture. Harsh or dismissive interactions cause the nervous system to sense harm.



Mental health distress

Anxiety and depression, often rooted in traumatic experiences, can trigger crisis responses.



Mismatch of Expectations

Students accustomed to different rules at home may struggle to adapt to school-wide expectations.



Overstimulation

Environmental factors, peers, or technology can overwhelm students, making concentration difficult.

“I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate, or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis is escalated or deescalated, and a person is humanized or dehumanized. If we treat people as they are, we make them worse. If we treat people as they ought to be, we help them become what they are capable of being.”

Haim G Ginott, Teacher and Child: A Book for Parents and Teachers

YOU ARE THE REGU

Partner Discussion:

What might 'adding fuel' look like?

What might 'bringing calm' look like?

When a student is dysregulated, your response matters.

Your calm → can create calm

Your intensity → can increase intensity

Pause. Breathe. Respond—don't react.

Knowing What to Do



An adult's reaction can either **escalate** or **de-escalate** behavior.



Never enter into power struggles.



Use self-regulation strategies to stay calm.

Project calm and empathy rather than anger and frustration.



Goal: Prevent "flipping the lid".

Notice triggers and early warning signs proactively.



Wait until both are calm before correcting or punishing.

Students must accept responsibility, but timing is everything.

Avoid Communication Blockers

Marshall Rosenberg, a psychologist and the author of *Nonviolent Communication*, describes several communication blockers:

- **Judgment** -educators automatically place judgment on the student without understanding their perspective.
- **Comparisons** -expecting a student to have the same perspectives or feelings as other students.
- **Demand** -an educator demands that students treat them a certain way in a situation.
- **Denial of responsibility** -a teacher lacks the ability to take personal responsibility for how their own actions may have affected a situation.

Reflect: Have you ever found yourself using a communication blocker?



**1 BE FLEXIBLE—
CHANGE ACTIVITIES,
RESOURCES, OR DELIVERY**



**2 USE YOUR ATTENTION
& RELATIONSHIP**



**3 SIGNAL, WARN &
RESTATE EXPECTATIONS**



**4 TEACH AND
RETEACH**



**5 CHANGE
THE ENVIRONMENT**



**6 USE POSITIVE
REINFORCEMENT**



**7 PROVIDE CHOICES &
RESPECT INDIVIDUALITY**

Where is your brain?



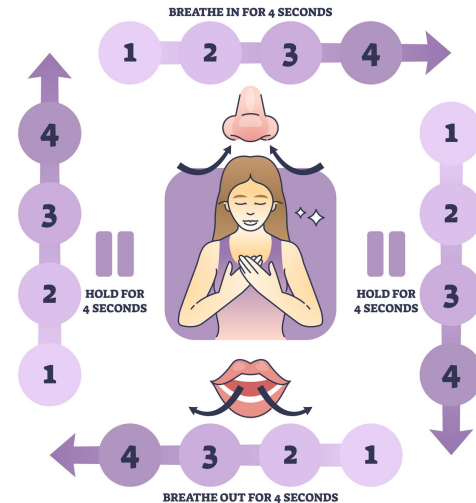
Thinking Brain
Upstairs Brain
Ready to Learn



Yellow Zone
Caution area



Feeling Brain
Downstairs Brain
Flipping your lid



CALM DOWN STRATEGIES FOR KIDS & TEENS

www.thepathway2success.com · Clipart by Kate Hadfield



Color or draw



Take deep breaths



Check in with feelings



Write in a journal



Take a walk or exercise



Use positive self-talk



Listen to music



Make a list of choices



Talk to someone



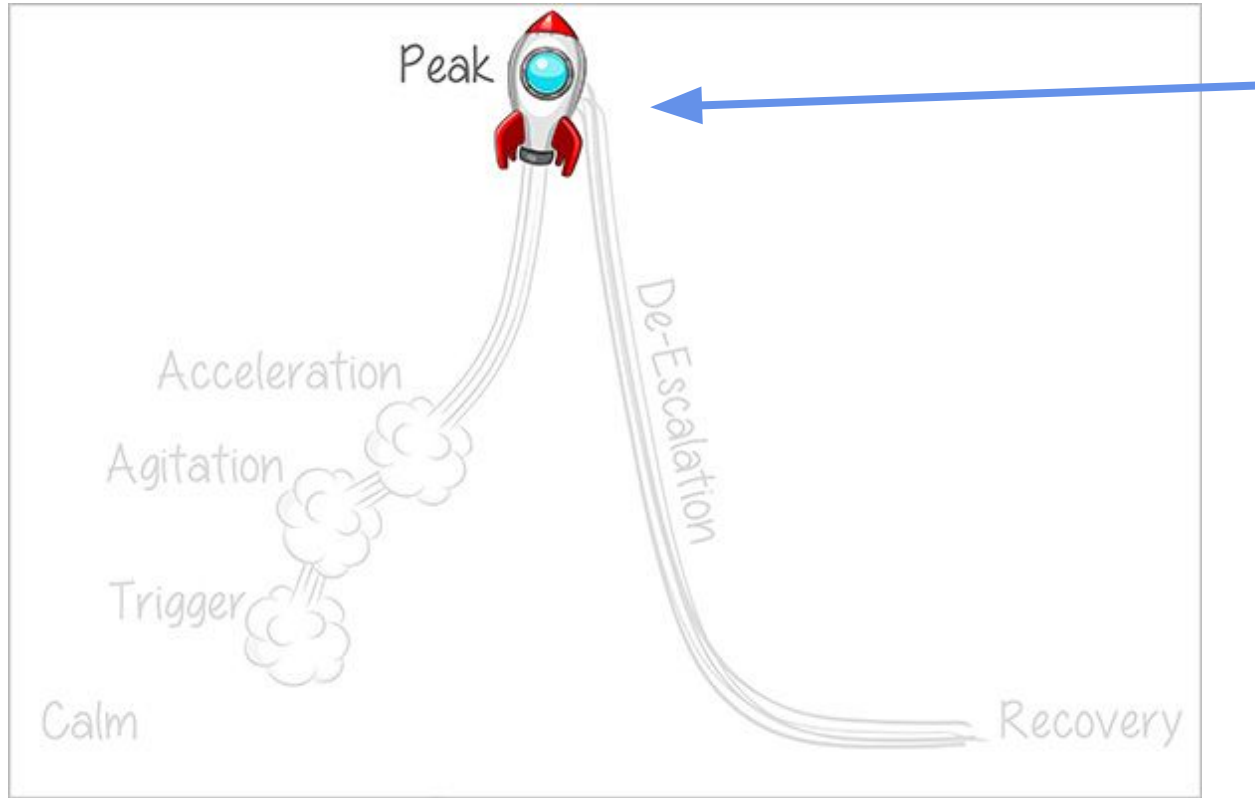
Create art



Read



Practice gratitude



What happens
when a
student is
already at the
peak (the lid is
flipped)?

Remember:

- At this stage, reasoning, consequences, lectures, and problem-solving are usually **ineffective**.
- The teacher's job is to become the student's "borrowed regulator."

Flipped Lid: Plan of Action

- Help the student slow down
- Use simple language
- Acknowledge their feelings
- Breathe!
- Protect dignity

Partner Discussion:
What does this look
like in practice?



The first step is to
calm the "hulk
brain."

Co-Regulation: Slow yourself down first! Then help the student slow down:

Not Helpful

- Rapid questioning
- Raised voice
- Emotional reactions
- Matching the students intensity

"Why are you doing this?
Stop! What happened?"

Helpful

- Lower voice volume
- Slow speech rate
- Relax shoulders
- Use fewer words

"You're really upset right now."

"I'm here."

"We'll figure it out."

Students often co-regulate through the nervous systems around them.

Using Simple Language & Choices

A student whose emotions have taken over is not accessing the same level of reasoning, memory, and language processing as when they are regulated. The more words an adult uses, the more likely the student is to:

- Stop listening
- Feel overwhelmed
- Perceive criticism
- Become defensive
- Escalate further

Not Helpful

"You can't act like this every time you lose. Remember what we talked about yesterday? Everyone loses sometimes and that's part of learning..."

"What should you be doing right now?"

Helpful

"Would you like water or a few minutes of quiet?"

"You can try the problem or take a 2-minute break."

What changes about your response when a student is in crisis?

As student dysregulation increases:

Your words

Your volume

Your pace

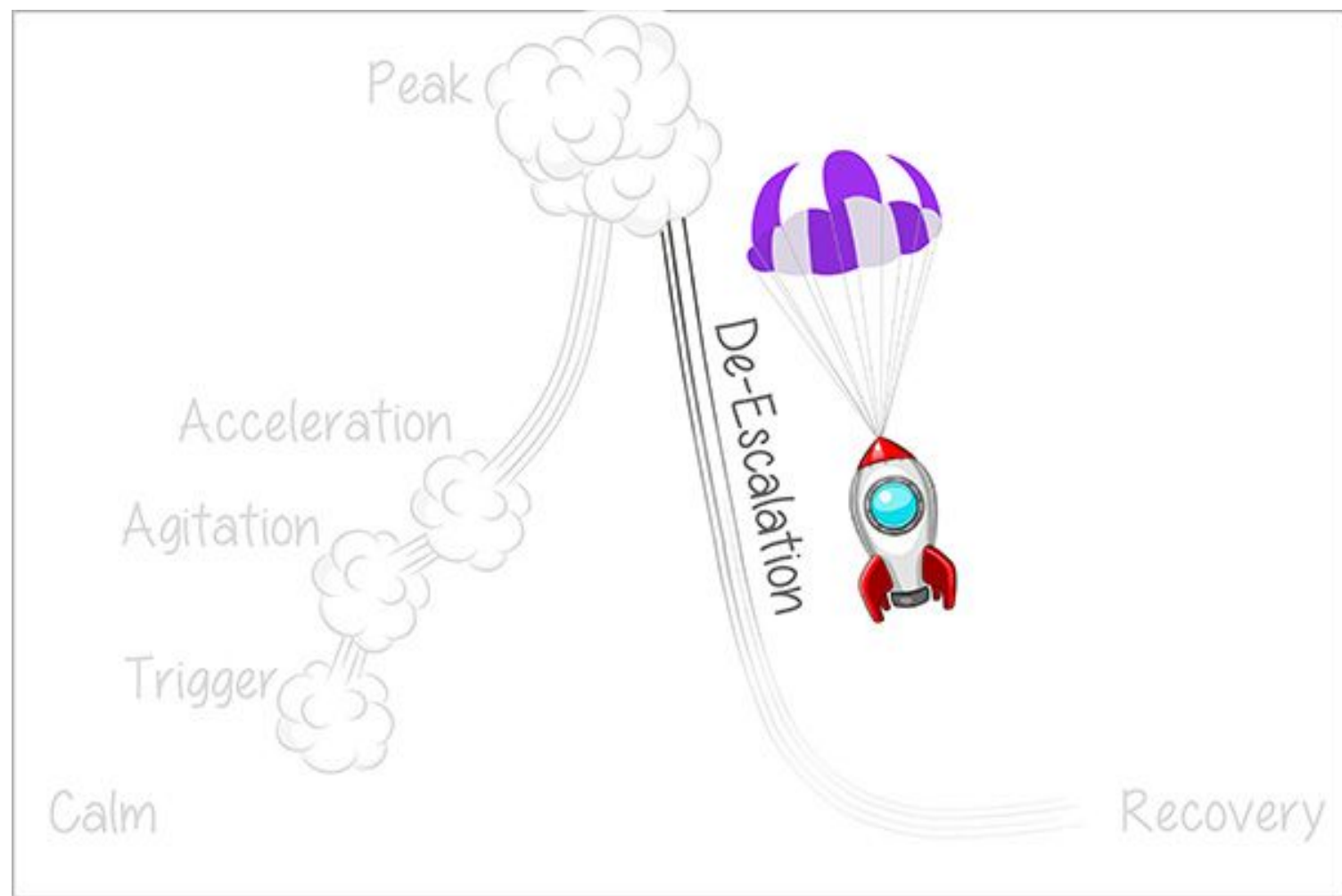
Your demands

Your calm

to de-escalate the situation



Partner Discussion:
What does this look
like in practice?



Avoiding the Power Struggle



Helpful vs Not Helpful - Vote with your Fingers



1 = Likely escalates



2 = Depends



3 = Likely de-escalates

“Why are you doing this? Stop!”

“Calm down.”

“You’re angry.”

“This isn’t that hard.”

“You’re really upset right now.”

“You were expecting something different.”

Use your Response to Behavior Toolkit

What will be your
Go-To Phrase to
de-escalate?
Write on the line.

MY DE-ESCALATION CHEAT SHEET

WHEN A STUDENT IS ESCALATING,

I WILL REGULATE MYSELF BY...	I WILL USE...	I WILL AVOID...
☐ Lowering my voice ☐ Slowing my speech ☐ Relaxing my body ☐ Pausing before responding	☐ Fewer words ☐ Acknowledgment of feelings ☐ Simple choices ☐ Reassurance ☐ Proximity or space ☐ Dignity-preserving responses	☐ Lecturing ☐ Rapid questioning ☐ Public correction ☐ Power struggles ☐ Threats or consequences in the moment ☐ Matching the student's intensity

MY GO-TO PHRASE

When a student is upset or escalating, I can say:

"

"

Acknowledge Feelings Without Agreeing With Behavior

Not Helpful

"Calm down."

**"You're
overreacting."**

"This isn't that hard."

Helpful

"You're angry."

"That felt unfair."

**"You were expecting
something different."**

Students often escalate when they feel they are misunderstood.

Protect the Student's Dignity

Not Helpful

Public correction

**Public
consequences**

**Public debate/power
struggles**

Helpful

Proximity

**Inviting the student to
move to a quiet space**

**Redirect peer attention
elsewhere**

Many escalations become bigger because they happen in front of peers.

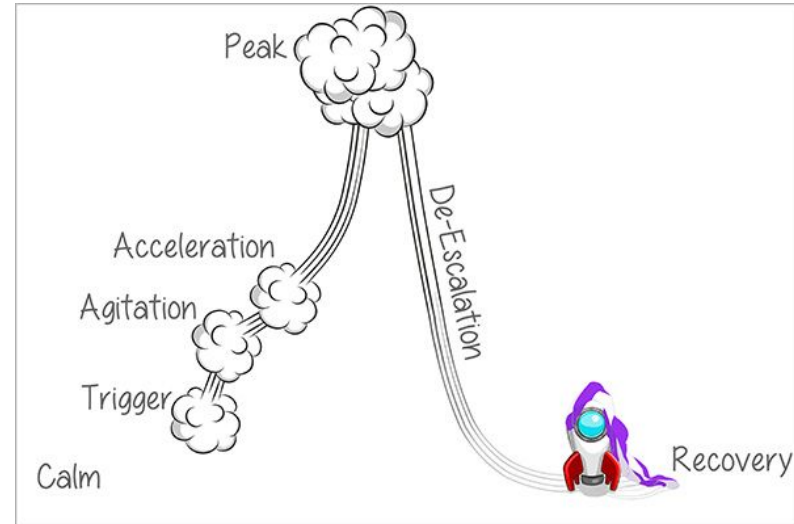
After the Student is Regulated

Now is the time to:

Repair + Reflect + Reteach + Problem-solve

Follow through with appropriate consequences or accountability, when needed.

Consider documenting the students triggers, patterns, consequences, and timestamp your notes.



Scenario Activity

- With your partner, read through the scenario.
- Identify potential triggers.
- Identify adult behaviors that may have increased escalation.
- Identify adult behaviors that may have helped.
- Discuss what the adult could have done differently.



Read It. Decode It. Respond to It. Activity

With your partner, read through a scenario.
Complete Activity Prompts on back of notes.

#1 Identify

#2 Decide

#3 Respond

#4 Explain

#5 Rehearse

Then switch roles or scenarios



Scenario #1- Emma During Math

Potential Triggers

- Academic frustration
- Fear of failure
- Previous experiences struggling in math
- Feeling overwhelmed by the task
- Embarrassment when attention is drawn to her lack of progress

Teacher Behaviors That May Have Increased Escalation

- Multiple reminders to start working
- Focusing on task compliance before emotional regulation
- Continued prompting after signs of distress appeared

Teacher Behaviors That May Have Helped

- Offering help
- Monitoring her progress
- Providing a calming corner

Scenario #2- Mark on the playground

Potential Triggers

- High-energy transition from classroom to recess
- Difficulty with impulse control and self-regulation
- Sensory excitement and stimulation on the playground
- Feeling singled out or publicly corrected
- Perceived loss of control when threatened with consequences

Teacher Behaviors That May Have Increased Escalation

- Public correction in front of peers
- Repeated verbal warnings
- Threatening punishment ("you won't be allowed to use the slide," "you'll be sent to the principal")
- Continuing to approach and pursue him after he ran

Teacher Behaviors That May Have Helped

- Clear expectations
- Calm tone of voice
- Adult supervision and concern for safety

Scenario #3- Javier during group work

Potential Triggers

- Feeling unheard or dismissed by peers
- Social rejection
- Difficulty with flexibility and compromise
- Public disagreement
- Loss of status within the group

Teacher Behaviors That May Have Increased Escalation

- Addressing the conflict publicly
- Asking him to leave the room immediately after emotions intensified
- Focusing on compliance before connection

Teacher Behaviors That May Have Helped

- Encouraging respectful collaboration
- Monitoring the group interaction

Scenario #4- Maya during presentations

Potential Triggers

- Performance anxiety
- Fear of embarrassment
- Peer judgment
- Public speaking demands
- Feeling trapped or pressured

Teacher Behaviors That May Have Increased Escalation

- Insisting she present immediately
- Emphasizing expectations over emotional state
- Continuing demands after visible signs of anxiety

Teacher Behaviors That May Have Helped

- Offering encouragement
- Maintaining classroom expectations

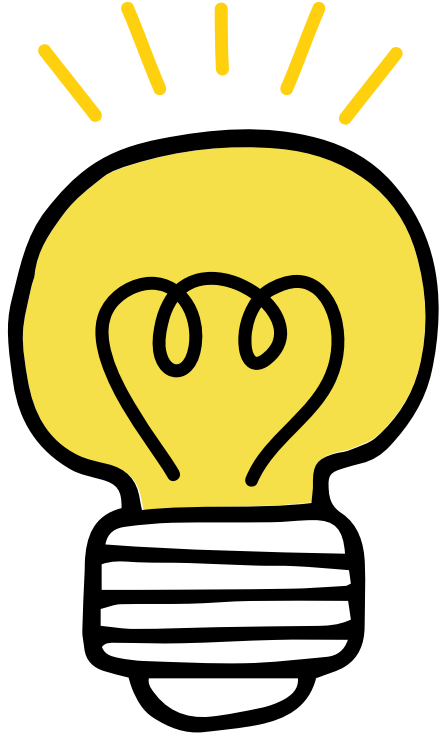
Learning Intention & Success Criteria

We are learning to respond to disruptive behavior so that all students can learn.

- ❑ I can identify triggers and escalation indicators.
- ❑ I can plan to use de-escalation strategies when a student has a “flipped lid”.

Self-Assess: What's your level of confidence on the success criteria above?





THANK YOU!

Break 1:40-1:50 pm

Debrief 1:50-3 pm