

# Behavior Management and De-escalation strategies

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2024

# Objectives

- Give you a basic understanding of behaviors and de-escalation strategies
- Give you guidelines to know when to ask for help
- Give you ways to be mindful of yourself during behavior
- Give you tools to keep yourself and others safe this summer when a camper becomes agitated, disruptive, and/or loses control

# Three Main Parts - ABC

## Antecedent

- What happened before

## Behavior

- What is happening now

## Consequence

- What happens after

Most people think when talking about behavior we are only talking about negatives. All of these can be positive, negative or neutral.

# Antecedents

- Can happen right before behavior or way before
- Can be difficult to spot and sometimes impossible to know
- Can appear to be something small
- Examples:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Hunger/dehydration                   | • Losing  |
| • Tired – Not enough sleep             | • Not getting what they want                    |
| • Medication – New, skipping a dose,   | • Perceiving something as unfair                |
| • Sensory Overload – Loud noises, wet, | • Home life – Fighting, taking care of siblings |
| • Sensory deprived – needing more      | • Forgetting/missing something                  |
| • Not being first                      | • Temperature – too hot or cold                 |

# Behavior

- Most behaviors (especially positive and neutral behaviors) are received and dealt with subconsciously and communicate that everything is a-ok
- Problematic behaviors communicate a need that is not being met or something that the camper doesn't have the tools to cope with. There can be times when the camper truly doesn't know what is bothering them.

## • Examples of problematic behaviors are:

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| • Complaining/whining         | • Arguing                                      |
| • Challenging control         | • Peer aggression – pushing, hitting, kicking  |
| • Yelling/swearing            | • Staff aggression – pushing, hitting, kicking |
| • Refusal to follow direction | • Throwing/kicking objects                     |
| • Crying                      | • Walking/running away                         |

# Consequences

- Consequence does not equal punishment
- Examples of consequences to positive behavior:

- They keep playing
- Praise
- They are picked for something – line leader
- Shout out during Think Space
- They can help the coach

- Examples of consequences to negative behavior:

- Talk it out with a counselor and peer
- Get something to eat
- Get water
- Go for a walk
- Sit out, regroup, rejoin
- Try it again

# Consequences Cont.

- Need to be consistent and fair
- Followed through 100% of the time
- Need to be clear
- Praise should be specific
  - Stay away from vague "good job"
  - Try instead
    - I love how you asked so-and-so to join
    - Thanks for helping clean up

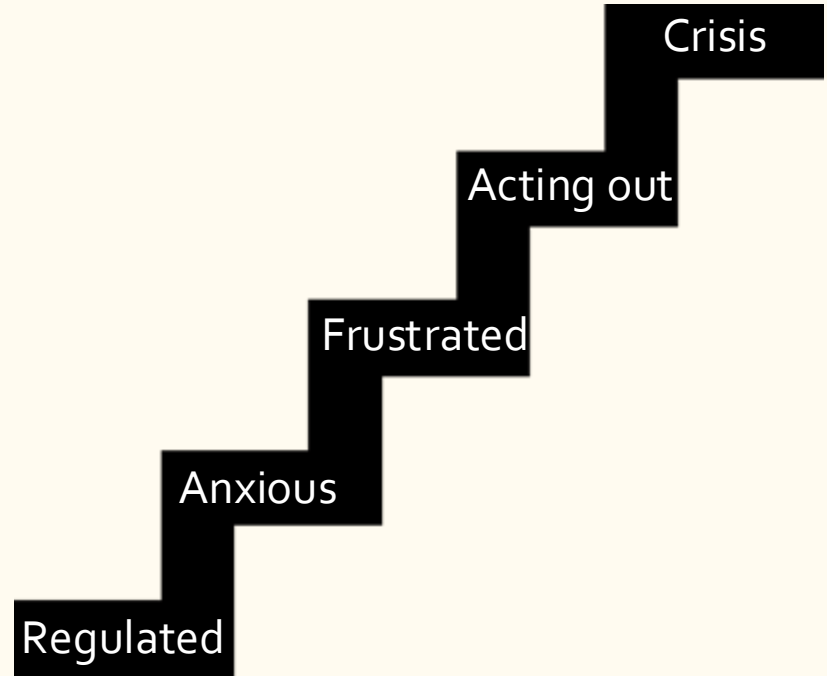
# What does your camper need?

- Sometimes it can be difficult to figure out what a camper is trying to communicate with their behavior
- There are times that a camper will not be able to verbally tell you the problem and/or solution. This can be a lack of communication skill or they don't even know!
- Look for patterns to be able to be proactive in the future. This can be hard to do in the moment so communication with us and your teammates is key!
- Not having their needs met can lead to escalated behaviors



# Staircase of Regulation

- Some kids will go step by step while others will jump steps quickly
- Can go up and down multiple times before reaching the bottom and becoming fully regulated again
- Once regulated campers can easily become dis-regulated and climb the stairs again



# You're Reactions Matter

- Stance
  - Safety Stance for standing, sitting, or kneeling
  - Don't block a camper in a corner, always leave them an out
  - Stay an arm and ½ length away
- What you're communicating
  - What you say and how you say it
  - Body language
- Work as a team
  - The same person should not always be responding to behavior
  - Know when to tag in/out
  - Be mindful of your own frustration level, it's ok to say you need a break
- Never put your hands on a camper

# WHAT you say, HOW you say it, and what your BODY is saying

## WHAT you say:

- Say what you mean and mean what you say
  - Stay away from sarcasm!
- Be clear and concise (the less words the better)
- Focus on desired behavior - avoid "don't"
  - Walk please
  - Indoor voice please
- Answer information seeking questions
- Be respectful

## HOW you say it:

- Tone
  - There are times where it's ok to be firm, however, make sure you're not condescending, or impatient
- Volume
  - Be clear while avoiding yelling
  - Often speaking softer will get a camper's attention better than yelling
- Cadence
  - Try to keep your voice calm

## What your BODY is saying:

- Avoid crossing your arms
- Safety stance
- Be aware of your facial expressions
- Move slowly
- Do not attempt to touch the camper even in a friendly manor.
  - This can be seen as threatening to some even if you don't mean it to be

# Battles for Control

- DON'T PICK UP THE ROPE
- Escalated campers will seek to control the situation
- Be aware and don't fall into a power struggle
- Give controlled choices whenever possible
  - Do you want to sit or stand
  - Do you want to walk with me or so-and-so
  - Do you want the red or the blue
  - Do you want to stomp or clap



# Work as a Team

- Don't take behaviors personally
  - It's very rarely about you
- If you were the one to upset the camper, you're likely not the person who will de-escalate them
- It's ok to say, "I'm not rational" and to tag someone else in
- It shouldn't be the same person dealing with all the behaviors
  - A camper may respond to one person better than others and that's ok

# Strategies to use

## Help

- Ask if you can help – be specific if possible
- Allow processing time
- If request is made and it can be done, do it

## Prompt

- Prompt the camper with a desired behavior
- Allow processing time
- Repeat if necessary

## Wait

- As long as you're in a safe space sometimes you just quietly wait the camper out
- "I'll check on you in a minute to see if you're ready"

# If you come across another counselor working with a dis-regulated camper

- Don't stare at the camper – when there is an audience behaviors tend to get worse
- Ask if they need help or want help called – respect the answer
- Direct other campers away and keep their attention off of the situation as best as you can
- Reassure them the camper is safe and is being helped

# Be proactive

- Warnings
  - We have two more minutes
  - Go over the schedule in the morning
- Breaks
- Incentives
- First/then
  - This can be used for incentives or just to remind campers of what's coming
    - First, we have field - Then, we have snack
- Reminders of expectations
- Reminders of options



# Things to remember:

- It's better to be proactive than reactive
- Behavior is communicating a need and/or deficit of skill
- Never be alone with a camper
- Know when to tag in/out
- Work as a team
- Be mindful of your own actions
- DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY – it's not about you
- DON'T PICK UP THE ROPE