Behavior Intervention Plan – Key Components and Outline

Rationale of Plan

This section of the plan should provide a brief and concise explanation of why the plan was developed. If a functional behavior assessment (FBA) was conducted, a reference should be made to the fact that the interventions presented in the plan are based on the findings of the FBA. It is always good practice to emphasize in this section that the overall purpose of the plan is to increase and reinforce appropriate classroom behavior while decreasing behaviors that can interfere with the learning process.

Background Information

A brief background history should be provided. This does not have to be extensive, but be sure to include any significant medical conditions that may exist. This section can also be used to identify any previous behaviors that have been displayed but are not currently being presented by the student. This can alert staff to the potential of other behaviors. For example, if a student has a prior history of elopement, this would be important to mention even though the student is not currently presenting with such behavior. If previous behavior plans were implemented they should be briefly described in this section and the reader should be directed to review those plans to obtain a more detailed history.

Operational Definitions of Primary Target Behaviors to Increase

It is very important to clearly define *functionally equivalent replacement behaviors*. Some of the more common behaviors that are targeted for increase at schools include, but are not limited to:

- Hand Raising
- Work Completion
- Asking for a Break
- Writing Thoughts Down
- Appropriate Sitting at Desk/Table
- Class Attendance
- Appropriate/Timely Transitions to Classes
- Coping Skills
Some behaviors may be more difficult to define such as coping skills. However, remember to include examples and exclusionary factors in your definition. For example, coping skills can be defined as:

“any instance in which the student is faced with a disappointing situation (e.g., loses a game, receives a poor grade, etc.), and uses the breathing techniques or asks for a break. The student will also refrain from any of the targeted behaviors for decrease described below.”

Operational Definitions of Primary Target Behaviors to Decrease

In this section of the BIP all primary interfering behaviors should be identified and CLEARLY defined. In general, there should not be more than three targeted behaviors for decrease (however, there may be exceptions). Some of the more common behaviors that are included in this section are, but are not limited to:

- Physical Aggression
- Verbal Aggression
- Self-Injurious Behaviors
- Elopement
- Calling Out
- Off-Task Behavior
- Non-Compliance

Some behaviors may be very specific (e.g., hitting), while others may be somewhat general and encompass more than one specific behavior (e.g., off-task behavior). In either instance, it is important to define the behavior as clearly as possible and once again include inclusionary and exclusionary factors. For example, when defining off-task behavior one may write:

“Off-task behavior is defined as any instance in which the student is not actively engaged in the activity at hand. Often the student will walk away from the activity and talk to other students instead of engaging in the task at hand. This does NOT include instances in which the student is standing instead of sitting at his desk, but is engaged in the activity.”

Baseline Information for Target Behaviors to Decrease

The baseline for each target behavior should be presented in this section. Clearly identify the frequency, duration, and/or intensity of the behaviors at baseline. This should always be presented in a quantitative manner. It may be easier to use a table format for this section.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calling Out</td>
<td>50% of 1-minute intervals for a 30-minute activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>4 times weekly. A rating of 8 on a 10-point intensity scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elopement</td>
<td>2 times a month. Running out of school building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Functions of Behaviors Targeted for Decrease

It is important to identify the hypothesized function of the behaviors targeted for decrease. Identify both the primary and maintaining functions, if possible. If an FBA was conducted, it is important to include a statement directing the reader to the full FBA report. This section can also be entered into a table format:

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Primary Function</th>
<th>Maintaining Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calling Out</strong></td>
<td>Social Positive (Attention)</td>
<td>Social Positive (Attention)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Automatic Positive (Sensory)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aggression</strong></td>
<td>Social Positive and Negative (Attention and Escape)</td>
<td>Social Positive (Sensory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elopement</strong></td>
<td>Social Negative (Escape)</td>
<td>Social Negative (Escape)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Strengths and Interests (Potential Reinforcers)

It is always important to identify the student’s strengths as well the student’s interests. If a preference assessment or reinforcer assessment was conducted as part of an FBA, briefly describe the results in this section of the BIP. Do not just include “tangible” rewards. Be sure to include topics of interests such as sports, hobbies, musical interests, and other activities that the student finds motivating.

Precursor Behaviors and Scenarios

This part of the BIP is especially important if the student presents with behaviors that present a potential danger (e.g., aggression, self-injurious behavior, elopement, etc.). Precursor behaviors are behaviors that are presented prior to the main target behavior. These are often identified as part of an FBA. A precursor behavior alerts staff to the possible escalation of behavior, which allows the staff to take action in an attempt to de-escalate the situation. Some examples of precursor behavior can include, but are not limited to:

- Behaviors that indicate agitation such as certain facial expressions/grimaces
- Nervous fidgeting or repetitive behavior
- Heavy breathing
- “Shutting down” or slumping in seat
- Pacing
- Certain statements or phrases
Proactive Interventions

This is perhaps the most critical component of the BIP, as it focuses on reinforcing positive replacement behaviors. This section should ALWAYS include strategies that are functionally relevant and utilize appropriate schedules of reinforcement. Below are some key points in regard to the proactive interventions and some examples:

- All token economy systems, check-in/check-out systems should be described in this section. Be clear as to exactly how the student can earn a token, emphasizing a specific schedule (e.g., “the student will earn a token every 10 minutes in which they refrain from calling out. After the student earns five tokens, he will be given access to a game on the computer”).
- There should always be specific mention to providing the student with positive praise/feedback and “catching the student doing the right thing”. Specific parameters should be identified for delivering the positive feedback. For example, it may be indicated that the student will be provided with positive praise “every time she completes two math problems independently”
- The use of visual supports such as visual schedules and visual cues should be included in this section.
- Any adaptive/alternative technology should be included in this section. For example, the student may be given access to a writing apparatus, or have the option to type on a laptop instead of hand writing.
- Any break systems should be described in this section.
- All access to sensory strategies should be described in this section. For example, the BIP may read, “the student will be allowed to access a stress ball to squeeze during math activities”.

Precursor Interventions

The purpose of the precursor interventions is to de-escalate the situation and circumvent the presentation of problem behaviors. Often times this simply involves providing the student with a systematic reminder or “warning”. This is especially important when a student has the potential to become aggressive or self-injurious. Upon seeing the identified precursor behaviors, the staff member will interject and provide the student with a reminder. For example, if a student starts to pace, the plan may be to simply remind the student that he/she can take a break, or remind the student that he/she are working towards earning all of their tokens.

Sometimes the situation itself is a “precursor”. For example, let’s say a student always becomes agitated when he/she is required to engage in a writing task. If this is a pattern, then the BIP should include precursor strategies to help make the writing experience more successful. For example, perhaps the student simply needs to be reminded that they have the option to type on the laptop as opposed to writing with a pen/pencil.
Reactive Interventions

This component describes exactly what the staff should do if a target behavior occurs. It is critical that these strategies are functionally relevant as well. For example, if a behavior is attention seeking, the reactive section should describe how to effectively ignore the behavior in order to decrease the likelihood that the behavior will occur again in the future (if this is deemed to be a safe option). Sometimes this section will discuss withholding a token or reward if target behavior is presented. However, this section may also include behavior reduction strategies. Some example of behavior reduction strategies are, but are not limited to:

- Time-Out procedures
- Response cost (e.g., token fines)
- Loss of privileges
- Positive Practice/ Overcorrection

*Important Note: Aversive procedures are NEVER permitted to be used as a reactive procedure. This includes any procedures that may cause physical or psychological harm.

Crisis Management Plans

A crisis plan should be identified if the student is displaying behaviors that are potentially dangerous such as aggression, self-injury, and elopement. The crisis plan is NOT a part of the reactive component and should always be written in a separate section or as a completely separate document. The purpose of the crisis plan is to maintain safety, NOT to effectively change a behavior. **ALL STAFF MEMBERS SHOULD REFER TO THEIR SCHOOL’S/DISTRICT’S CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.**

Data Collection and Progress Monitoring

This section of the BIP should explain how the data will be collected to track behaviors. Often times, the type of data collection is contingent upon the frequency and nature of the behaviors. Each behavior should be tracked separately.

Team Signatures

All team members, including the parent, should sign off on the plan to indicate that they have reviewed it and are in agreement with the strategies and procedures.

Disclaimer: The information presented above represents a general guideline as to what should be considered when designing a behavior intervention plan. All state regulations should be adhered to and the practitioner working in the school system should always follow the policy and procedures put forth by their school/district.