

COPING WITH BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS ON THE SCHOOL BUS

Transporting students has become increasingly challenging over the years. There are more students who do not follow rules nor respond to traditional limit setting and consequences. Coping With Behavior Problems On The School Bus provides transportation personnel with an understanding of the roots of disruptive behavior and provides them with some alternative intervention strategies to address inappropriate behaviors.

- CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS ON THE SCHOOL BUS

In this section, drivers/monitor share behaviors that they are faced with on the bus. Staff are encouraged to bring actual bus conduct reports to the workshop to make discussions relevant and realistic. Throughout the workshop, we use these examples to practice new approaches.

- WHY ARE THEY ACTING LIKE THIS?: THE NATURE OF BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

Many staff members are confused when confronted by inappropriate behavior and may believe that the child is simply choosing to behave "badly". In this segment, staff are provided with information which explains some of the reasons why students behave inappropriately. Understanding the reason why a child is behaving inappropriately helps the staff members retain their objectivity and increases their ability to make rational, logical intervention decisions. Typical behavior patterns of: "normal" students at different developmental levels, emotionally disturbed students*, and students who are acting out versus acting up are covered. Staff learn that many times children do not chose to act inappropriately, but rather, can't control or manage their behavior/emotions without outside intervention.

[*For personnel who specifically transport students with emotional disturbance, this segment can be expanded to provide staff with in depth coverage of the characteristic behaviors of Disruptive Behavior Disorders (ADHD, Oppositional, Conduct), Mood Disorders (Mania, Depression), and Personality Disorders (Odd/Eccentric; Dramatic/Emotional; Anxious/Fearful). Staff begin to recognize the need for a "prescriptive" approach as they see that interventions that work with some types of students do not work with others.]

- THE CONFLICT CYCLE

This section explores the cyclical nature of conflict; demonstrating how the way the student perceives, thinks, and feels is manifested in behavior, evokes a response from an adult/peer, and begins a cycle of escalation. Beginning with

examining visible and invisible stressors which impact student behavior on the bus, staff then look at the difference between acting up and acting out behaviors. They learn that the students behavior frequently generates in observers similar emotions and behaviors. For example, aggressive behavior evokes counter-aggressive behavior. Staff learn what they can do to interrupt this cycle and begin a verbal de-escalation process.

- ENVIRONMENTAL AND VERBAL INTERVENTIONS

In this segment staff learn to take into consideration environmental factors which can proactively minimize the possibility of behavioral problems (ie. seating arrangements, personal possessions). Participants also learn and practice effective verbal intervention strategies aimed at preventing or de-escalating crisis situations. Some of the techniques covered include: Benign Verbal Confrontation, Involvement In An Interest Relationship, Interpretation & Positive Reframing, Direct Appeal, and Reinforcement of Behavioral Models.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

"Very informative about the different kids on the bus. All bus drivers need this."

Peggy Prober, Bus Monitor, North Rose-Wolcott CSD

"Many of the characteristics of the EH student are present in the "normal" children I transport. I found myself tuning in much better to a few of the problem children I transport and would like to see the workshops continue. Our districts need to be aware that we need to know more than just how to drive a bus! All support staff can benefit from this program."

Leslie Ford, Bus Driver, Wayne Central school District

"Very helpful. It taught me how to talk to the kids and find out what is wrong without yelling."

Chris Clark, Bus Monitor, Lyons Central school District

"Should be required workshop for all drivers."

Kathy Hoffman, Driver, Wayne Central School District

"Informative, very realistic, and dealt with specific problems rather than generalizing."

Tammy Holton, Bus Monitor, Palmyra-Macedon CSD

"Fantastic! Realistic examples, class participation, helpful videos and examples and we were able to discuss personal areas of concern."

Mary Alward, Bus Driver, Williamson CSD

"The skills are ones that teacher preparation classes don't discuss directly and should!"

Linda VanVoorhis, High School Teacher of Emotionally Handicapped, Wayne Finger Lakes BOCES