

WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS-for School Support Staff

<http://www.campussafetymagazine.com/article/12-Tips-for-Effective-Special-Needs-Training>

Hello, my name is Heather Miller-Schwarz, and I am going to speak with you today about supporting positive student behavior in the school and training environments. This presentation was prepared for individuals who are employed as support staff in the school or training environments, who may be looking for tips in how to support positive behavior in individuals who have special needs.

Individuals who are exhibiting behaviors on in the school or training environments may be doing so for a variety of reasons. This may be the result of problems at home, issues with peers, health or boredom. As more and more individuals with disabilities are being included with their typical peers in the school and community settings, you may find that some people begin to exhibit behaviors due to characteristic of their particular disabilities. This video will provide an overview of what to expect from your students and clients with disabilities. For more information on these and other disabilities, *please refer to Commonly Required Trainings section in the online classroom of the Infinitec website at www.myinfinitec.org.

Communication Disorders

Many students with disabilities have accompanying communication disorders. This means that they may not be able to put their thoughts and concerns into words that other people can understand. Because of these challenges, students may use their behaviors to communicate instead of their words. You may see yelling, biting, pinching, dropping to the floor, or hitting behaviors, all of which are serving a purpose. This might be because the individual is trying to say something, or it might be because he is getting a personal sensory stimulation by completing this act. For example, he might like the way that it sounds to scream. The best way to determine this is to analyze the behavior and determine its purpose, and typically the person's support team has already generated a behavior plan that can be applied to these situations. Communicating openly with school and training personnel can often help support staff to both understand a person's behavior and intervene appropriately.

Some rules of thumb when working with individuals with communication disorders are:

- Remember; A person who does NOT speak, may still be able to understand, and A person who speaks may still NOT be able to understand. What a person can say and what a person can understand are two different skills and these skills develop separately from one another. Be careful of what you say and how you say it when speaking to all individuals.
- Similarly, What our client or student says may not always be what he means, so take comments, especially when negative, with a grain of salt
- Never speak about the client or student as if she is not there, assume she understands everything.
- Remember to make eye contact even if the individual is not making eye contact with you

- Break down requests into small and clear steps, and do not be too wordy. Extra words can be confusing and are often not necessary.

In addition to individuals that have communication disorders, others receive special services because of disabilities such as...

ADHD

It may appear that people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder do not want to behave appropriately, but this is not true. These individuals have little control over the impulsive actions that occur. This person might have difficulty sitting still, may be impulsive, or might have trouble paying attention to the things that are said to her.

Autism

Autism is a developmental disability, and people with autism often have accompanying communication impairments. These individuals are typically sensitive to sensory information such as touch, sounds or smells. They can be very reliant on routines, and may exhibit temper tantrums, self-injurious behavior or repetitive behaviors such as hand flapping or rocking.

Intellectual impairment

This person may have limits in his ability to do school and training related tasks. He may exhibit behaviors such as crying and tantruming because of difficulties with speaking and communication. This person might have difficulty following directions and may need more time to process verbal information.

Emotional Impairment

This individuals may demonstrate difficulties forming interpersonal relationships and exhibit a variety of inappropriate behaviors, such as cussing, hitting, kicking, spitting, etc. He may have a general mood of unhappiness or depression, low self esteem, and may not react well when given compliments. This student may not have any outward sign of having a disability and yet he is the student that will still require care and prompting.

Traumatic Brain Injury

This person may have had an accident where her brain was injured, resulting in a loss of memory, control and cognitive functioning. Common changes in behaviors after brain injury include restlessness, hitting, swearing, impulsiveness and difficulty following directions. These individuals may not remember the rules from one day to the next, and may have meltdowns if things do not go as they expected.

Physical Impairment

Within this population, the physical capacity to move, coordinate actions, or perform physical activities is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: physical and motor tasks; independent movement; performing basic life functions. These students may require additional care when it comes to nutrition, hygiene,

and transferring. These individuals may also require assistive technology to access their learning and the environment.

Other Health Impaired

Some students exhibit such chronic health problems, that they may experience frequent distractibility, fatigue, decreased strength and alertness. This individual may need any number of modifications including an inhaler, injectable medicines, or other medical supplies when symptoms of their illnesses arise.

Specific Learning Disability

This is a general term for an disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language. It may appear that this child is not complying with commands because she has difficulty processing what has been said to her. This child may have difficulty expressing herself, may not listen or may remember things in a different order than she was told.

Visual Impairment or Blindness

This person may have limited vision or may not be able to see at all. He may use a cane to help him to get around in school or community, or he may have a person or dog with him as a companion. Individuals who are blind may attempt to lie down on the floor during transport because this feels safe to them. This person would benefit from having a tactile map when en route so he can follow along.

Hearing Impairment or Deafness

This person may have limited hearing or may not be able to hear at all. She may use sign language or assistive technology to communicate if unable to do so using speech. She may have tantrums because of frustration if she is not able to communicate with others or if she does not understand what the others are saying. It is often helpful to ask the educational or training team for a list of signs that can be used with this person to increase understanding.

Tips when working with individuals with special needs:

When managing the behavior of individuals with disabilities, you can apply the same techniques that you would use with any other person. Here are some tips:

1. Work with the school or training support staff to secure a behavior plan relevant to your environment.
2. Communicate with the parents and support team about behavior and communication supports for these individuals
3. Work with the support team to create visual representations of the rules and display around your environment, or create additional personal rule sheets to be posted near or given to each person.
4. A behavioral chart or something as simple as a loop of paper to make a chain for every day that the rules are followed will go a long way in helping the person to comply with expectations.
5. Some people need movement, so have some self-stimulatory activities or objects available that they can fidget with to keep hands busy.
6. Speak clearly and slowly and give one command at a time to ensure understanding.

7. Understand that it may take a few minutes for a person to tell you what he is thinking. Stop and wait to allow this person the time he needs to formulate his sentences.
8. Give participants extra time to comply, a delay in cooperation may be due to a slower processing time or a physical disability.
9. Make students aware of changes before they occur, for example, if there is a necessary change to the route, let them know in advance)
10. If the person uses an alternative form of communication, such as sign language or augmentative communication, ask the school or home for a printout of common signs or a list of communication that this person commonly uses. This is also known as a communication or gesture dictionary.

www.behaviordocor.org

Confidentiality

You as a bus driver should be given access to personal information about your students. You might be told of specific disabilities, behaviors, or experiences of your riders. It is important to know that all of the information given about particular students is confidential and should not be discussed with others. Do not talk about particular students with friends, other drivers, or other students. Do not tell stories about your bus, and if you need to discuss a student with a member of his team, be sure to do it behind closed doors.

http://www.isbe.net/funding/html/student_transport.htm

http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/special_needs_transport.pdf

<http://www.loveandlogic.com/t-enforceable.aspx>

https://www.paper-clip.com/Media/GenComProductCatalog/Behavior_Management_Binder_Samples.pdf

<http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/b2b/ssts/school-bus-guide.pdf>

<http://www.faptflorida.org/60thConfPresentations/Steps%20to%20Better%20Bus%20Behavior.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uGhbB93vjE>

http://www.nsc.org/news_resources/Resources/Documents/School_Bus_Safety_Rules.pdf

<http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/revision07/schoolwide/schoolexamples/Transportation/PBS%20for%20Bus%20Drivers%20Book.pdf>

<https://www.pbis.org/school>

Riffel, L. Positive Behavior Supports for Bus Drivers. Retrieved from [http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/revision07/schoolwide/schoolexamples/Transportation/PBS for Bus Drivers Book.pdf](http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/revision07/schoolwide/schoolexamples/Transportation/PBS%20for%20Bus%20Drivers%20Book.pdf)

Gillham, C. (2012). *Behavior Management on the School Bus*. Little Falls, NJ: The Federal News Services.