

TIME OUT PROTOCOL

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Time Out Protocol

1) Prior to a time out the following steps (strategic ignoring) are employed in response to inappropriate behavior.

A) Ignore the inappropriate behavior and reinforce the student for any other behavior that is appropriate

B) Ignore the inappropriate behavior and reinforce the student for behavior that is incompatible with the unwanted behavior

C) Ignore the student while recognizing other students for demonstrating the target positive behavior

D) Continue ignoring the inappropriate behavior while waiting for the first opportunity to reinforce an approximation of the target positive behavior

2) Time out is used only in selected situations.

A) Ignoring is not possible to accomplish because other students are providing substantial attention and that level of attention is making it too difficult for the target student to change behavior

B) Ignoring along with differential reinforcement is not effective and

a) the behavior is triggering other students, or

b) the behavior is interfering significantly with the other students who are trying to do their work, or

c) the behavior is becoming unsafe to people or property

C) Time out is used as an immediate penalty for a serious behavior violation

3) Time out is not used for problems with work completion and other such instances of noncompliance.

4) The classroom program provides frequent and varying opportunities for recognition.

5) The classroom program provides positive behavior supports to systematically help students who struggle with academics, language and communication, sensory processing, social functioning, emotional problems, etc.

6) Every student has an effective stress management plan and all staff are aware of when to implement that plan.

A) The classroom program provides strategic use of breaks to prevent diminished tolerance, restore tolerance, and recover from a stress reaction.

B) Students are taught diaphragmatic breathing, guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation and meditation, and these interventions are provided proactively, in the form of a coping diet throughout the day.

- C) Students are taught various movements and postures to restore calm and equilibrium and these movement breaks are inserted into the schedule of the day. Other types of movement that help students deal with restlessness are also provided proactively

7) Time out is executed in a planned, predictable, and scripted manner.

- A) Verbal interaction is kept to a minimum
- B) Staff present themselves in a calm and controlled manner
- C) There is no arguing or debating with the student, there are no raised voices or threats, no power struggles.

8) Time out is regularly monitored.

- A) Frequency, duration and intensity are reviewed regularly for each student
- B) A time out log is maintained that monitors (for every student) length of time out, date and time, as well as reason for time out. Additional data is recorded every time there is a problematic time out (e.g., excessive time out length, excessive number of time out episodes in a short period of time, and excessive time out intensity, such as self-abusive behavior, sexual behavior, prolonged screaming, heightened anxiety or panic in the time out space, etc.).
- C) Time out is reviewed for effectiveness on a regular basis (see Time Out Analysis procedure).

9) A continuum of restriction is employed, rather than only providing time out outside the classroom, and students more frequently recover from their inappropriate behavior on the *minimum* end of the continuum.

- Strategic ignoring
- Reduction in recognition/differential recognition
- Temporary restriction of privileges
- Isolation within the classroom
- Isolation outside the classroom
- Isolation outside the classroom in a strictly confined space
- Physical restraint

10) There is a time out area in the classroom and it is apart from the main activity of the room. (free from distraction, out of the way of the main traffic routes in the classroom easy to supervise from across the room), and the area is not used for anything else.

11) The time out period outside the classroom is of short duration, once the tantrum has stopped and the student has become settled enough to appreciate the significance of the experience.

12) Occasional scripted feedback is provided during the time out in the form of verbal and/or visual encouragement based on progress.

13) Students exit time out following a period of increased self-control and when they are ready to achieve a level of calm appropriate for the classroom. Achieving “classroom level calm” is a step separate from the exclusion time out, it is not a requirement to exit the time out, it is not part of the time out.

- A) A relaxation or calming protocol is developed for each student.
- B) A scripted approach is used during this process, similar to what the student practices in the classroom during the relaxation breaks, and this step is separate from problem solving/accepting responsibility step.

14) Problem solving and accepting responsibility is the last step in the process.

- A) Completion of this step does not interfere with ending time out. This step can be completed immediately following time out or at a later point when the opportunity is more therapeutic.
- B) Throughout the problem solving step staff avoid creating student shame and humiliation, power struggles are avoided, and the process does not trigger another emotional reaction.
- C) Students are provided with a very brief summary of what happened. Staff tell about the episode from the points of view of the various people involved.
- D) Students may give their account, if they want, but in the end they are asked to give an account of what happened from the view of the others involved (e.g., the teacher or another involved student) based on the brief summary already provided by the teacher.
- E) A Plan is created from the problem solving process and this includes the progressive return of privileges.

15) Communication between staff and students during an episode promotes de-escalation

- A) Threats are avoided (“If you don’t do — I’m going to —”)
- B) Ultimatums are not employed (you will, or else)
- C) Behavior is described objectively (describing what is happening) in a calm, level voice
- D) Staff help students create choices

- E) Staff provide space, walk away and allow the student time to think
- F) Staff stay focused on the present and what is currently happening
- G) Physical contact with the agitated student is avoided
- H) Staff attempt to keep the encounter as private as possible
- I) Staff employ distraction and attempt to change the scene
- J) During the process of discussing the escalating behavior staff acknowledge the students' feelings and validate those feelings, draw distinction between feelings and behavior, and explain consequences without judgment (no advice)