Teaching Conversation and Self-Management Skills to Adolescents with Internalizing Behavior Disorders

Brigham Young University
APBS Boston 2015

K. Richard Young
Tina J. Bohannon
Lynnette Christensen
Andrew A. Griffin
Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD)

Students at risk for or exhibiting:

- Externalizing behaviors
- Internalizing behaviors
- Comorbid
Externalizing Behavior

Behavior problems:
- Outwardly directed
- Behavioral excesses
- Considered inappropriate

(Walker & Severson, 2014)
Examples of Externalizing Behaviors

- Displaying aggression
- Arguing
- Bullying
- Defying the teacher
- Not complying with teacher instructions and school rules
- Disturbing others

(Walker & Severson, 2014)
Typical Outcomes for Externalizing Behaviors

- Results in office referrals
- Interventions in Tier 3 settings
- Interventions are punishment oriented
- Rejection by peers and adults
Internalizing Behaviors

Behavior problems
- Directed inwardly
- Represent problems with self
- Self-imposed
- Involves behavioral deficits
- Patterns of social avoidance

(Walker & Severson, 2014)
Examples of Internalizing Behaviors

- Having low or restricted activity levels
- Not talking with other children
- Being shy, timid, and/or unassertive
- Avoiding or withdrawing from social situations
- Being unresponsive to social initiations by others
- Preferring to spend time alone
- Somatic complaints

(Walker & Severson, 2014)
Typical Outcomes for Internalizing Behaviors

- Less likely to be noticed
- Not referred for discipline or interventions
- Rejection by peers and adults
- Exhibit depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, and/or somatic problems

(Gage, 2013; Lane, et al., 2008)
Problems created by EBD

- Lack of ability to initiate, facilitate, and maintain meaningful relationships
- Poor academic performance
- Lower graduation rates
- Lower post-school success
- Lower post-secondary enrollment
- Increased risk of violent behavior
- Higher arrest rates
“Half of all lifetime cases of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders start by age 14, and three-fourths of disorders start by age 24. In addition, first symptoms typically occur two to four years before progressing to diagnosable disorders.”

(Beardslee, Chien, & Bell, 2011)
Two out five criteria in the definition of Emotional Disturbance are associated with social competence:

- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances
Evidence-Based Interventions

- Social Skill Training
  - Conversation Skills
- Self-Management
  - Self-Monitoring
  - Self-Evaluation
  - Self-Reinforcement
Research Outcomes of Social Skill Interventions

- Effective for students with externalizing and/or internalizing behavior disorders
- Strengthen school attachment
- Improve school climate
- Reduce social aggression
- Encourage students to report threats
Self-Management Interventions

Several meta-analyses examined self-management techniques

- In all, 252 studies were reviewed that documented the effectiveness teaching self-management skills to students with EBD.

These studies showed self-management techniques

- Improve academic outcomes
- Aid acquisition of critical social skills
- Increase on-task behavior
- Improve attitudes

(Durlak, 2011; Mooney et al., 2005; Reid et al., 2005; Smith & Sugai 2000; Pierson & Glaeser, 2005; Wehmeyer, 2003; Peterson, L. D. et al. 1999; Kamps, 1994).
Definition of Self-Management

Self-Management refers to strategies that a student uses to alter his/her behavior, frequently to make it less aversive to others and to replace it with behavior that is more likely to be more productive.

(Young, West, Smith, & Morgan 1991)
Benefits of Self-Management

- Students modify their own behaviors
- Student controls part of their behavior program
- Can be successful for students with or without disabilities
- Can be used with social and academic behaviors, attendance, etc.
- Can be used across diverse settings
- Easy to implement
Versatility of Self-Management

Self-management procedures may be used separately or in combinations to manage one’s behavior:

- Self-awareness
- Self-monitoring
- Self-evaluation
- Self-instruction
- Self-reinforcement
Importance of Self-Management

- Key to social competence
- Integral part of school success and future accomplishment in life
- Helps in the acquisition and maintenance of positive social behavior
- Promotes generalization of behavior from teaching environments to other environments
Advantages of Self-Management

- Can be used as a secondary or tertiary intervention
- Adaptable to a variety of settings and behaviors
- Feasible to implement
- Effective
Purpose of the Study

- Improve the conversational skills of three high school students with internalizing symptoms
- Examine the effectiveness of social skills training in the acquisition of conversation skills and the use of self-evaluation in assisting students in generalizing the skills to other settings
Methods
Participants

Special Education Participants

Exhibited the following internalizing behaviors:

- Shyness
- Social withdrawal
- Loneliness
- Depression

Resulting in poor and infrequent peer conversations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Time in Special Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td>Two periods per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Emotional Behavioral Disorders</td>
<td>All day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td>Two periods per day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants (continued)

Peer Conversants

- 3 regular education students
- Selected by their teacher from speech or debate classes as good conversationalists
- Excused from class for 10 minutes a day to participate in assessments
- Trained to make no initiations, maintain eye contact, and limit responses to $\leq 20$ seconds
Instructional Setting

- Small classroom
- Equipped with 4 chairs and a table arranged in a semi-circle
- Special education teacher provided social skills instruction
Assessment Setting

Instructional setting modified for assessment

- Video equipment added to the room
- 1 peer conversant with one special education student
- Teacher prompts beginning of a 5 minute conversation
- Teacher turns on video equipment
- Teacher leaves room
Generalization Setting

- Classroom with 16 desks and two tables with chairs at back of room
- After academic instruction students received 10 minutes of free time
- No peer conversants were present, only classmates
- Students could study or read at their desks or visit with their peers at the tables in the back of the room
Procedures

Dependent Variable

- Percent of intervals engaged in appropriate conversation
- Defined as interaction skills
  - Eye contact
  - Appropriate volume
  - Appropriate distance
  - Not interrupting
Procedures

Conversation skills defined as:
- Starting a conversation
- Dealing with unresponsiveness
- Keeping the conversation going
- Ending the conversation
Procedures

Independent Variables

- Positive Reinforcement
- Conversation Skills Instruction
- Self-Evaluation
Data Collection

Behavioral Observation

❖ 3 Observers - practiced until 80% reliable
❖ 10-second interval recording
❖ Inter-observer agreement: 97% (range 88%-100%)

❖ 2 Settings
❖ Daily contrived session (instructional setting with videotape)
❖ Generalization setting
Experimental Design

Multiple Baseline Across Participants.

- After stable baseline responding is achieved, the independent variable is applied to one of the participants while baseline conditions remain in effect for the other participants.

- After meaningful change is noted in the behavior of the first participant, the independent variable is applied in a sequential fashion to the other participants.

- Experimental control is demonstrated when, and only when, the independent variable is applied.
Results
The image depicts a study on the percent of time displaying appropriate behavior across different conditions for three participants: Sam, Ashley, and Jake. The conditions include Baseline, Reinf. (Reinforcement), Social Skills Training, and Self-Evaluation. The graphs show the percentage of time spent on appropriate behavior across various sessions and conditions.
Generalization Setting

Percent of Time Displaying Appropriate Behavior

Sessions

Sam

Baseline
Reinf.
Social Skills Training
Self-Evaluation
5-Month Follow-up

Ashley

Baseline
Reinf.
Social Skills Training
Self-Evaluation
5-Month Follow-up

Jake

Baseline
Reinf.
Social Skills Training
Self-Evaluation
5-Month Follow-up
Discussion
For Further Information Contact:

K. Richard Young
richard_young@byu.edu

Lynnette Christensen
lynnette_christensen@byu.edu
**Additional Readings**

**EBD-Externalizing**


**EBD-General**


**Additional Readings (Cont.)**

**EBD-General (cont.)**


Additional Readings (Cont.)

EBD General (cont.)


EBD-Internalizing


Self-Management


