

Coaching on the Fly in Milieu

Scenario 1: Staff/Teacher Removing a Reinforcer (e.g., taking points/level/pass away)

15 year old Alicia was talking loudly in class. Ms. DeVita told her once to be quiet or she would dock points from Alicia. Alicia did talk again and the points were docked. She is FURIOUS. She comes onto the unit yelling and cursing about what happened, shouting about how unfair/unjust Ms. DeVita's actions were, that it's bull crap, that she is always picking on Alicia. Subjective Units of Distress (SUDS) are 90. She wants you to call Ms. DeVita and fix the problem so she can keep her points.

Scenario 2: Another Kid is Messing with Me

A resident on the unit has just called 14 year old Alvin a "faggot" in the afternoon. Alvin starts getting aggressive, but staff intervenes and get him to his primary counselor. He's pissed beyond belief (SUDS 100). "He's talking crap about me! I ain't letting that asshole disrespect me like that...I'm going to f#@k him up so bad. I'm gonna pop a cap in his head."

PART 1: Deescalating (Just) Enough to Behaviorally Assess Problem

1. OBSERVE the dysfunctional behavior/event.

(e.g., You notice resident is pissed and about to blow).

2. DEESCALATE KID to prepare for coaching

(Kid is screaming)

T: Hold up! Talk to me!

(Kid continues to scream).

T: Wait! Wait! Wait! I want to understand what you're saying here. Just talk to me.

(Kid continues to scream).

T: You're still screaming. I'm trying to get it, but you are still screaming. I can't hear what you're saying when you're yelling (*Contingency Clarification*). Just talk to me (*Instructs*). I want to help (*functional validation*).

(Kid continues to scream).

T: Chill, chill, chill. Just bring it down a bit so I can hear you. I can't help you if I can't figure out what the problem is (*Contingency Clarification*). Something is upsetting you and I want to hear it (*Validation Level 1, Awake*). Dude, I can see you how mad you are. Something obviously happened and I want to hear about it, but you've got to take it down a few notches so I can hear what you're saying.

IF KID DEESCALATES, MOVE TO PART 2. OTHERWISE, MOVE TO STEP 3.

3. INSTRUCT/TEACH kid skill in how to regulate his/her distress NOW

(Kid continues to scream).

(If T knows that kid has skill that he/she can practice in THIS context, then T asks kid what skill he/she can use NOW to bring down SUDS so they can talk and instructs/coaches kid to use it).

T: Listen, what skill can you use right now to bring down your SUDS?

(If kid does NOT have skill or cannot use skills in THIS context to bring down SUDS, T instructs kid in SPECIFIC skills to use to manage current moment of EXTREME distress. Appropriate DBT skills include: TIP and Crisis Survival Strategies).

T: Listen, we've first got to get your distress down so we can talk about what's going on (*Orients*). Let's walk. Walk with me. (T starts walking briskly with kid). (*Skills Acquisition/Strengthening*).

(T and kid continue to do behavioral skill until kid is regulated enough to talk about prompting event.)

ONCE KID IS EMOTIONALLY REGULATED, MOVE TO PART 2: ASSESS PROMPTING EVENT

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1. Assess What Happened

T: So what happened?

2. Back-Pocket Strategies, If Needed:

- **COPE AHEAD – Prepare kid for conversation about prompting event**

T: Look dude. I really, really, really (*Irreverence*) want to have this conversation with you, but I don't want you flipping out on me again (*Self-Involving Self-Disclosure*). Can we agree that you're going to have the conversation – just talking – and you'll keep practicing skills so you don't flip out and we can keep talking (*Commitment*).

- **PULLING ON RELATIONSHIP AND GENERATING HOPE**

(If T has history with kid of working well together and solving difficult problems, then T can pull on this history to generate hope/increase kid's motivation to work on the problem.

T: We have done this before. You and me have gotten through really difficult things and we're going to find a way to get through this too. You've just got to work with me here, yeah? We know each other, right? We're cool, right? We're cool.

PART 3: PROBLEM SOLVE IMMEDIATE CRISIS

SCENARIO 1:

C: She said I was talking in class and now I'm not going to get my level and go on pass this weekend. This is so screwed up.

1. Consultation to the Kid

(T CONSULTS to the kid and does not intervene in the kid's environment).

T: I have no idea if we can get your points back. Let's figure out a way to go talk to her that's not going to get you in more trouble. So do you think you can talk to her without losing it?

C: Can't you just go talk to her?

T: It's not my deal. It's got to be you. But I can coach you...

IF KID SAYS "NO" TO STEP 1, TEACH KID SKILLS TO USE. IF KID SAYS "SCREW IT", MOVE TO STEP2.

2. Teach/Practice Radical Acceptance

C: Screw it! She never changes her mind. She never gives points back.

T: Okay, then I guess what you have to do is practice radical acceptance. If it's done, it's done. You need to figure out a way to make sure it doesn't happen again and that you don't make the situation worse here by throwing fuel on the fire.

PART 3: PROBLEM SOLVE IMMEDIATE CRISIS

SCENARIO 2:

C: He's talking crap about me. They're going to think I'm a punk if I don't do something. I'm gonna bust his head...

1. Contingency Clarification

(T clarifies contingency of dysfunctional behavior).

T: Listen, if you do that, you're going to lose your pass this weekend. I don't want you to lose your pass. Neither do you! You've worked so hard for it.

2. T Discusses Environmental Intervention

(T discusses that he/she will need to do environmental intervention to address this and what specifically it will consist of).

T: I'm going to ask your teachers to be on alert about Xavier calling you names.

3. Coaching on Managing Cue (i.e., Xavier)

T: So what skill are you going to use the next time you see Xavier?

C: I'll tell you what skill I'm going to use. I'm going to f@%k him up. That's what skill I'm going to use.

T: That's not a skill, man! It's not in the manual! (*Irreverence*). Dude, work with me here. What DBT skill?

C: Huh, I don't know.

T: Pull out your skills book, man. What DBT skill? (Alternatively: Come over here and look at the skills poster on the wall over here. What skill?)

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