



**PBSIS**

Helping Schools Build Systems of Support

# Using TLC When Responding to Unwanted Behavior

**RUTGERS**  
Robert Wood Johnson  
Medical School

**THE BOGGS CENTER**  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

*In Partnership with the*

**Office of Special Education**

**New Jersey Department of Education**



Funded by IDEA Part B  
2021-2022

# Learning Outcomes

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- Know the three response features of TLC
- Know specific examples of tone, language, and concern practices to use when responding to unwanted behavior
- Be familiar with a sample redirection protocol



Operationalize Expectations

Teach Skills and Habits to Achieve the Expectations

Use Instructional Scaffolds

Preserve Dignity When Responding to Unwanted Behavior & Mistakes

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Systems That Support Sustainable Implementation



# Adult Responses are a Predictor

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- The way we respond in the moment will either defuse or escalate the situation and is a predictor for exclusionary discipline
- By using practices that defuse and re-engage students are more likely to resume the routine's expectations



# The Consequences of Consequences

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- According to Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams (2014) suspensions are the most used disciplinary response to misconduct
- Yet, published evidence suggests suspensions are ineffective and a risk factor for a range of negative school and developmental outcomes (e.g., Raffaele Mendez, 2003; Skiba et al., 2014)



# The Consequences of Consequences

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- Teachers who rely on reactive punitive strategies such as reprimands are more likely to have occurrences of disruptive and noncompliant student behavior (e.g., Pas et al., 2015)
- and Lower rates of engagement and perception of classroom climate (e.g., Mitchell & Bradshaw, 2013)



# The Consequences of Consequences

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- Exclusionary disciplinary is associated with:
  - *Decreases in grades and academic achievement*
  - *Grade retention*
  - *Lower likelihood of school completion*
  - *Lower college admission rates*
  - *Future engagement in juvenile justice*

(e.g., Balfanz, et al., 2015; Costenbader & Markson, 1998; Lacoë & Steinberg, 2019; Marchbanks et al., 2014; Noltemeyer et al., 2015; Rausch & Skiba, 2005; Rumberger & Losen, 2016)

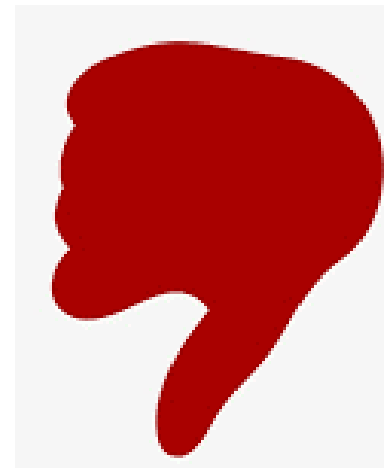


# Redirection Practices are...

**Most effective** when they occur within the context of a relationship and regular prevention practice use



**Least effective** when used as a reactionary or punitive tool and when applied outside of the context of a positive relationship





# Attending to T-L-C to When Responding to Behavior

## Tone-Language-Caring

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- Tone-Language-Concern (T-L-C) refers to a set of strategies for responding to unwanted behavior in the moment
- The goal of implementing T-L-C practices is to provide the student with needed feedback in a way that respects their dignity and helps the student re-engage in the routine



# What is the Student Trying to Tell Me?

- Behavior is communicative and provides us with a clue that something is wrong
- Recognizing behavior as communicative helps re-focus our response to arrive at the most productive solution in the moment

*'I need help'*

*'Something is wrong'*

*'I'm upset about something'*



# Student's Strengths

Gifts & Talents

Support Network

Cultural Identity

Preferences

## Setting Events

Interests

Assets

Institutional

Personal

Challenging  
Task

Refuses to  
Work

Sent to Office



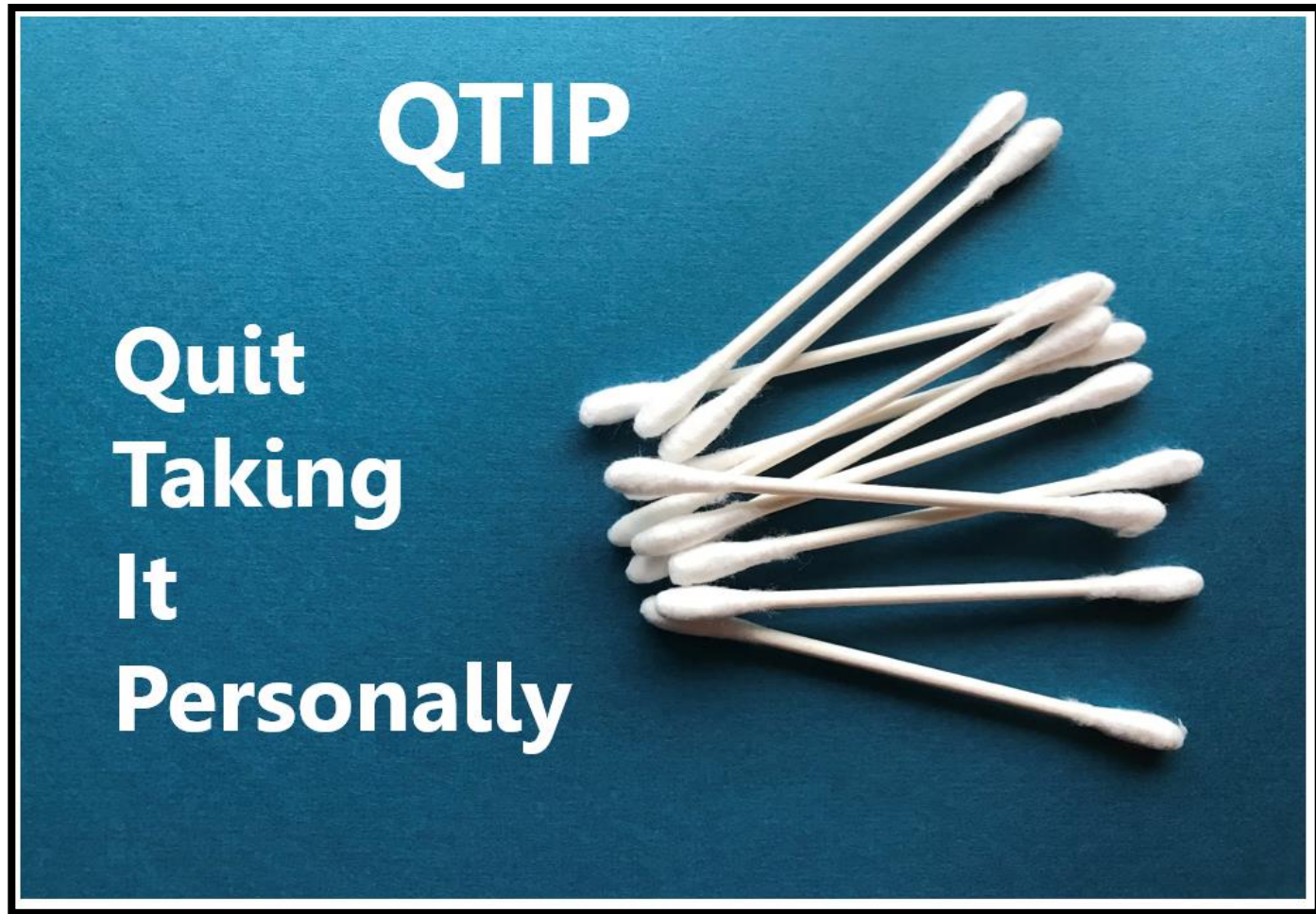
# In the Moment

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1. Remember, it's not personal, lots of factors have led up to this moment
2. What do I need to retain my composure?
3. What is the underlying message I need to listen for? What was the last thing that happened?
4. What can I do in the moment to connect with the student and re-engage them back into the routine?



# Effective Redirections Start Here

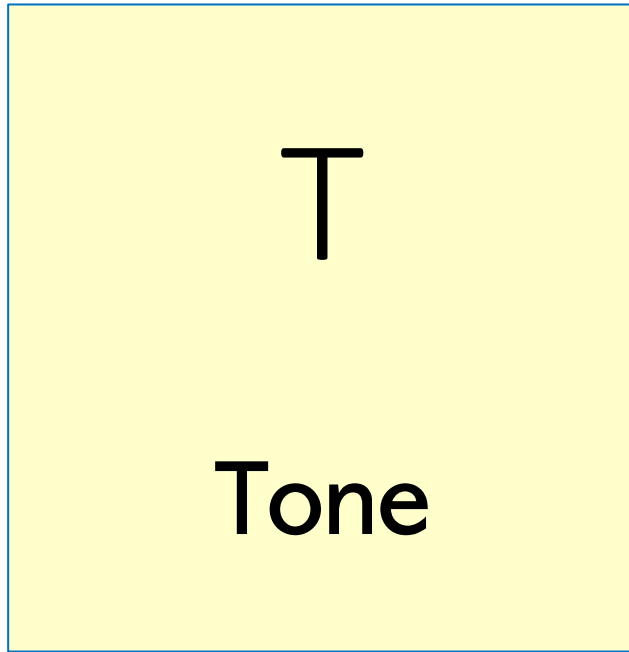


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T-L-C

Tone –Language - Concern





✓ Calm

✓ Neutral

✓ Assertive



L

Language

- ✓ Label emotions and behavior (not the student)
- ✓ Paraphrase and mirror the student's statements
- ✓ Use positively-framed statements that convey a specific action (“I need you to....”)





C

Concern

- ✓ Concern inquiry: ‘Are you ok?’  
‘Do you need help?’
- ✓ Provide coaching to help the student arrive at a solution
  - ✓ Options for how the student can handle the situation
  - ✓ An opportunity to take a break
  - ✓ An opportunity to talk with someone



# Example

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*I hear you saying that you are upset because this is not the decision you were hoping for. Let's plan to talk about this more during advisory this afternoon. Right now, I need you to sit down and begin today's assignment. Is there something I can do or that you need to help you get started?*



# Three Things to **Avoid** in Your Feedback

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1. Using negative adjectives to describe the student's performance
  - Nonexample: *'Your behavior today was atrocious'*
2. Referencing prior problems
  - Nonexample: *'Let's not have a repeat of yesterday's behavior'*
3. Being ambiguous
  - Nonexample: *'Great job'* *'Don't do that again'*



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# Sample Redirection Protocol



# Sample Redirection Protocol

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- **CUE** the expected behavior
- **RESTATE** the expectation to the class
- **NARRATE / PRAISE** students engaging in the expectation ('I see Tyesha with her book open, I see Uju....')
- **SCAN** for a response
- **PRAISE** Cooperation
- If no response, **COACH** the student to a solution



# Sample Redirection Protocol

- **COACH** the student to a solution
  - **ENGAGE** other students in a task, or activity
    - Speak to the student **PRIVATELY**
    - **REVIEW** the expectation
    - **ASK** what they need
    - **OFFER** options or **ASK** the STUDENT to generate options
    - Provide a **PAUSE** for the student to respond
  - **PRAISE** cooperation
- If no response and the behavior is interfering with the routine, refer to your office conduct referral procedures for additional guidance



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# Main Ideas



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- Redirections are most effective when they occur within the context of a relationship and regular use of prevention practices
- Our tone, language, and display of concern are important predictors of a student resuming the routine's expectations
- When redirecting a student, re-cue the expected behavior and use strategies to coach the student to a solution





# References

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