

DEFIANT AND CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Use strategies to manage students who exhibit defiant or challenging behaviors.

- Develop a plan to prevent triggers that lead to misbehavior
- Increase positive reinforcement and feedback
- Have planned responses to avoid an emotional reaction
- Avoid immediate responses when in an emotional state
- Recognize improvements in behavior with praise and encouragement
- Encourage defiant students to keep a daily log of successes and accomplishments to track improvement
- Teach students to take responsibility for their behaviors
- Model a firm, fair, and consistent approach when dealing with difficult behaviors
- Refrain from engaging in an argument or power struggle
- Refuse to threaten or plead with students
- Teach students an alternative to aggression (e.g., Stop, Think, Act)
- Acknowledge student's feelings when upset (e.g., "I understand you are upset.")
- Use diffusing statements (e.g., "I can see you are angry. I need you to use words to solve the problem." "Throwing books won't make the problem go away. It only makes it worse." "Rest for a few minutes and then we will talk.")
- Avoid taking behaviors and comments personally
- Use *what* questions and avoid *why* questions (e.g., "What were you doing?" "What should you have been doing?" "What will you do differently?")
- Use a calm manner and positive body language
- Keep a sense of humor
- Hold private conversations away from others
- Eliminate nagging, fussing, demands, and threats from conversation
- Avoid judgmental comments
- Follow a structured process when investigating a situation; actively listen, ask open and clarifying questions, and restate what was said
- Involve the counselor as a support person
- Determine the root cause of the problem (e.g., hunger, illness, family, academic difficulty)
- Share literature that provides positive examples of appropriate behavior or character (e.g., books about bullying, books about honesty, character training videos)
- Involve the student in developing a behavior plan that is meaningful and motivating to the student
- Build strong home and school relationships
- Offer choices (e.g., "You have a choice. You may _____ or _____.")
- Teach students a problem-solving approach to use when confronted with a conflict
- Design activities to help students feel an integral part of the classroom and campus