Slide 1

Disruption in the Classroom
Prevention, Response, and Restoration

Slide 2

A Student in Crisis
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Slide 3

- Children who exhibit explosive or noncompliant behavior present a difficult challenge to school personnel and parents.
- The increasing number of students who attend school with behavioral and emotional problems is of growing concern.

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Slide 4

The Teacher’s Challenge

- Teachers who lack the ability to cope with student misbehavior may perceive themselves as unsuccessful.
- Teachers have expressed more anger and helplessness concerning the child they perceived as most disruptive.

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Stoughton, 2007; Spilt & Kooman, 2009

Slide 5

The Teacher’s Challenge

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Slide 6

Training Outline

- Prevalence of childhood mental disorders
- Classroom strategies:
  - Prevention
  - Response
  - Restoration

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Slide 7

Pre-test

1. I am able to identify one solution-focused therapy technique that can be used in my classroom.
2. I can identify at least two early warning signs of a student who may be at risk for suicidal behavior.
3. I am familiar with the A.B.C.’s of crisis response.
4. There is a crisis plan in place in the event of an untimely situation in my classroom.

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Slide 8

Mental Health Needs of Students

- Prevalence
- Common Childhood Mental Disorders
- Cultural Considerations
- Educational Implications

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Slide 9

Prevalence

- Approximately 15 million children and adolescents in the United States have mental health problems.
- Less than 35% receive treatment for these disorders.

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
**Slide 10**

**Medical Trends**

2008 National Health Interview Survey
- Parents of 15% of US students 4-17 y.o. sought help
- 89% of these children were prescribed medication for Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Increase in children receiving stimulant drugs and antidepressants

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

**Slide 11**

**Common Childhood Mental Disorders**
- Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Anxiety
- Depression

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

**Slide 12**

**ADHD**
- ADHD is a neurobiological disorder
- Marked by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity
- Approximately 3% to 7% of the school-age population has ADHD

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

American Psychiatric Association, 2000
Slide 13

ADHD

- In the classroom this may look like:
  - Difficulty organizing tasks and activities
  - Loses things
  - Easily distracted
  - Difficulty remaining seated
  - Blurs out answers before questions are asked
  - Memory difficulties
  - Difficulties with social and adaptive functioning

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Brock, Grove, Searls, & Martinez, 2008;
Sattler, Weyandt, & Willis, 2006

Slide 14

Anxiety

- Worry: repetitive thoughts related to possible threatening outcomes and potential consequences
- Girls twice as likely as boys
- Separation Anxiety Disorder is specific to children

Huberty, 2008
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Slide 15

Anxiety

- In the classroom this may look like:
  - Restlessness
  - Erratic behavior
  - Withdrawal
  - Worry

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Huberty, 2010
Slide 16

- Depression and anxiety frequently occur together
- Anxiety most likely preceded depression
- The ratio of girls to boys is about 2:1 to 3:1
- Rates for girls tend to increase at about 13-15 years old

Huberty, 2008
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Slide 17

- In the classroom this may look like:
  - Shows limited effort
  - Irritability
  - Inappropriate responses to events
  - Concentration problems

Depression

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Huberty, 2008

Slide 18

- Children from impoverished communities are more likely to have behavioral and academic difficulties
- Acute stressors: Exposure to community violence and homelessness
- Chronic stressors: Hunger, insufficient household heat, decrepit living conditions, and worries about the safety of loved ones

The Impact of Poverty

Mendez, 2010; Buckner, Mezzacappa, & Beardslee, 2009
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Slide 19

A Model of Prevention, Response, and Restoration

Classroom Environment

Crisis Response

Restoration

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

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A Model of Prevention, Response, and Restoration

- Classroom Environment
  - Teacher-student relationships and a strength-based classroom
- Crisis Response
  - Response to a child experiencing a crisis
- Restoration
  - Psychological intervention for the student and reintegration of the student into the classroom

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Slide 21

Classroom Environment

- Efficacy of positive teacher-student relationships
- Creating a Safe Place
- Building a strength-based classroom
- Incorporating Solution-focused Brief Therapy techniques in the classroom

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Slide 22

Classroom Environment

- Efficacy of positive teacher-student relationships
  - Development of early competencies linked to the quality of the teacher-child relationship
  - Emotional support and closeness function as protective factors for children with behavior problems

Classroom Environment
Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004; Spilt and Koomen, 2009
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

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Classroom Environment

- Efficacy of positive teacher-student relationships
  - Students who feel connected to teachers are more likely to:
    - use those teachers as models
    - accept feedback from them
    - try to meet their behavioral expectations
    - perform better academically

Classroom Environment
Osher et al., 2008
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

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Classroom Environment

- Creating a Safe Place
  - A safe place provides a safe haven
  - Allows students to regain composure
  - Can be used to remove a student experiencing an emotional crisis from the main classroom space

Classroom Environment
Bafumo, 2006; Smallwood, 2003; Dwyer et al., 1998
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Slide 25

Classroom Environment

- Creating a Safe Place
  - Located in a corner of the classroom, behind a partition, or in an alcove
  - Fairly private, comfortable, and accessible for all students

Bailey, 2001

Classroom Environment

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

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Classroom Environment

- Strength-based classroom
  - Identifies a student’s “signature strengths” - strengths that students already possess
  - The teacher tries to change the context from one of failure (problem-focused) to hopefulness (solution-focused)

Cantwell, 2006; Melvin, Korthase, & Marquoit, 2005; Metcalf, 1999

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

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Classroom Environment

- Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) in the Classroom
  - From a solution-focused approach, kids know what would make life better and have some ability to make it happen

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
**Slide 28**

- **Solution-focused Brief Therapy Techniques**
  - **Strength-Based Language:**
    - Highlights what the student is doing that is working.
    - It invites the student to do more of what is already working or to try changes to achieve success.
    - The teacher asks the student, “How did you do that?” or “How have you managed to prevent things from becoming worse?”

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**Slide 29**

- **Solution-focused Brief Therapy Techniques**
  - **Miracle Question:**
    - Helps the student describe small, realistic doable steps they can take as soon as the next day.
    - For example, “If you woke up tomorrow and discovered that a miracle had occurred overnight, what would be different as you went through your day that would tell you things were better for you?”
    - To encourage the student to begin taking action, “How could you begin achieving that on a very small scale, on your own, just for the next week?”

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**Slide 30**

- **Solution-focused Brief Therapy Techniques**
  - **Exceptions:**
    - Something that happens instead of the problem.
    - Often spontaneously and without conscious intention.
    - The question asked to the student is, “What is different about the times when this is less of a problem?”
Solution-focused Brief Therapy Techniques

- **Scaling:**
  - Scaling is useful in helping students to assess their own situations, track their progress, or evaluate how others might rate them on a scale of 1 to 10.
  - "On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the problem is in control to 10, you are in control of the problem; where are you at today?"
  - "Where would you like to be next time and what will you need to do to get there?"

Classroom Environment

- Metcalf, 1999
- Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Establishing a Plan

- Develop a procedure
- Identify which staff members will be involved
- Partner teachers
- Select community outlets
- Include steps for keeping everyone safe

Crisis Response

- Dwyer, et al., 1998; Barbetta, Norona, & Bicard, 2005; Adamson & Peacock, 2007
- Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Activity: Creating a Plan
- The teacher’s responsibility:
  • Who to Call
  • Partner Teacher(s)
  • Evacuation Areas

Crisis Response
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Early Warning Signs
– Students with mental illnesses and severe behavioral difficulties
– May express frustration with severe emotional outbursts or self-injurious behavior
– Be aware of the early warning signs associated with emotional outbursts and violence

Environmental:
• being a victim of violence
• drug and alcohol abuse
• gang affiliation
• access to weapons

Crisis Response
Dwyer et al., 1998
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
**Slide 37**

**Crisis Response**

- **Early Warning Signs**
  - Social:
    - social withdrawal
    - being bullied
    - intolerance of differences

*Dwyer et al., 1998*

**Crisis Response**

-Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010-

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**Slide 38**

**Crisis Response**

- **Early Warning Signs**
  - Emotional:
    - feelings of isolation
    - rejection
    - uncontrolled anger

*Dwyer et al., 1998*

**Crisis Response**

-Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010-

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**Crisis Response**

- **Early Warning Signs**
  - Behavioral:
    - low school interest
    - depictions of violence in writings or drawings
    - bullying others
    - a history of past aggressive or violent behavior
    - a history of discipline problems
    - serious threats of violence

*Dwyer et al., 1998*

**Crisis Response**

-Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010-
Slide 40

Crisis Response

- Imminent Warning Signs
  - Can signal that a student is close to dangerous or severely disruptive behavior
  - Behaviors are much more severe
  - Require an immediate response
  - Safety is the foremost priority
  - Initiate the response plan for a child in crisis

Dwyer & Quintero, 1998, Dwyer & Jimerson, 2002

Dwicky & Quintero, 2010

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Crisis Response

- Imminent Warning Signs
  - Serious physical fighting with other students or family members
  - Severe destruction
  - Extreme rage for seemingly minor occurrences
  - Detailed threats of serious violence
  - Possession of a weapon
  - Self-injurious behavior
  - Threats of suicide

Dwyer et al., 1998

Dwicky & Quintero, 2010

Slide 42

Crisis Response

- Responding to Disruptive Behavior
  - Initiate the crisis plan
  - Try to remain calm
  - Ensure the safety of all students and staff members

Dubicky & Quintero, 2010

Loastra, Rodríguez-Redondo, & Sánchez, 2010

Widger, 2007; Merchen, 2010

Dubicky & Quintero, 2010
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Responding to Disruptive Behavior
- Avoid attempting to de-escalate the crisis through physical or threatening means
- Validate the child's feelings
- Reinforcing appropriate behavior or coping strategies
- Just standing in the room may be the best course of action until help arrives

Crisis Response
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Merchen, 2010

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The ABC's of Crisis Response
- Alert Response Staff
- Be Safe!
- Keep Calm
- Don't Interfere
- Evacuate Students (if necessary)
- Validate Feelings until help arrives

Crisis Response
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Slide 45

Responding to Disruptive Behavior
- Contact identified responders
  - school administrators, school psychologists, and partnering teachers
  - quick response from these personnel may lessen the emotional, psychological and physical damage a student in crisis may cause

Crisis Response
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Dwyer et al., 1998
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Responding to Disruptive Behavior
– Ensure safety
– If the student is violent or destructive, the classroom may need to be evacuated
– If the student is not violent, but self-injurious or inconsolable, the student may be moved away from the classroom space

Crisis Response
Dwyer et al., 1998; Dwyer & Jimerson, 2002; Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

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Responding to Disruptive Behavior
– Stay within a safe proximity to the child in crisis until help arrives
– Model composure and facilitate communication
– Speak calmly
– Allow the child to vent
– Validate the child’s feelings

Crisis Response
Widger, 2007; Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

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Responding to Disruptive Behavior
– Do not physically intervene to protect school or personal property
– Do not take items from the student or stand in the student’s way

Crisis Response
Merchen, 2010; West & Kaniok, 2009; Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Slide 49

- Restoration
  - Psychological Intervention: Psychological First Aid
  - Reintegration into the Classroom
  - Changing Behavior Through Positive Behavioral Interventions

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Slide 50

- Restoration
  - Psychological Intervention: Psychological First Aid
    - Restore the classroom environment
    - Let the child know he or she is cared for
    - Calmly discuss the situation with the student upon their return

Brock, 1998; Dwyer et al., 1998; Dwyer & Jimerson, 2002

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

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- Restoration
  - Psychological Intervention: Psychological First Aid
    - Other students may also need to discuss their feelings
    - Students may need guidance on how to act when the child in crisis re-enters the classroom
    - The classroom community can design a plan that makes it easier for the students to cope

Brock, 1998; Ruzek, et al., 2007; Dwyer et al., 1998

Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
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Psychological Intervention: Psychological First Aid
- Listen
- Protect
- Connect

Schreiber, Gurwitch, & Wong, 2006

Restoration
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

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Reintegration into the Classroom
- Re-enter the child who experienced the crisis back into the place where the crisis occurred
- Discuss with the child how their actions affected other students

Restoration
Brock, 1998; Schubert, 2007
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Slide 54

Using SFBT to help the student reintegrate
- Focus on prevention of future incidents
- Help the child realize that change is possible
- Set goals together that will facilitate positive change
- The child can walk away from the conversation feeling hopeful

Restoration
Metcalf, 1999
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Restoration
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010
Using SFBT to help the student reintegrate
- Exceptions
- Strength Based Language
- Miracle Question
- Scaling

Restoration
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Changing Behavior Through Positive Behavioral Interventions
- An FBA may prevent future occurrences of the behavior
- Outside counseling with a community agency
- Students can be taught to monitor their feelings for signs of a meltdown
- They can advocate for their own emotional well-being

Restoration
Smallwood, 2003; Sandoval et al., 2009
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010

Post-test
Dubitsky & Quintero, 2010


