

Helping students who have experienced crisis situations: behavior issues and acad...

[Psychology](#), [Behaviorism](#)



Abstract

This paper will include a review of literature concerning how to help students who have behavior issues and those who have experienced crisis/traumatic situations with their academics. This paper integrates crisis counseling and education. The literature review will consist of several articles relating to creating functional behavioral assessments, integrated interactive lesson plans, social factors that affect student behavior, encouraging appropriate behavior, and creating positive and effective student-teacher relationships. All of these things are essential in helping students, who have negative behavioral issues, increase their academic performance. This essay also consist of integration of research conducted in other essays from several educational and crisis counseling classes.

Keywords: Motivating Students, Social Factors, Student Behavior, Behavior Intervention Plan, Behavioral Assessments, Student-Teacher Relationships, Encouraging Good Behavior

Helping Students Who Have Experienced Crisis Situations: Behavior Issues and Academics

“ An assertive teacher is one who clearly and firmly communicates her expectations to her students, and is prepared to reinforce her words with appropriate actions. She responds to students in a manner that maximizes her potential to get her own needs to teach met, but in no way violates the best interest of the students” (Canter & Canter, 1989).

Many educators (new educators) do not understand why a student is having behavior problems. Children and most teenagers do not know how to handle situations that may be a crisis to them, or any tough situation. Why? This is because there is a lack of “ life experience” and teaching on how to handle tough situations in and outside of the home. “ Acting out” is at times, their way of responding to certain situations. This is why behavior assessments are conducted; the goal is to find out the actions that is the cause of the behavior and implement an effective intervention plan to help the student. Crisis situations seen and experienced can affect a student academically. Changing up the way a lesson is taught by implementing fun activities and things that interest the student, can help a student in crisis because they are receiving attention; also the fun activity takes their mind of what they are going through for a moment. Adding character education helps as well. Doing these things will help create a learning environment that allows the student to feel safe and comfortable enough to speak openly about their concerns with their teacher (Hinton, 2018).

Many children are exhibiting problem behavior because they do not know how to deal with crisis/traumatic situations and unconsciously show it through their behavior. This may result in a decrease in their academic performance. An effective way to address this is to find the underlying cause of the behavior, create an effective behavior intervention plan, and lesson plans that are interactive and affective to increase academic performance, and motivate the student, and help them cope.

Integrative Approach

The ultimate goal was to find ways to help students who have behavioral and academic issues. The integrative approach is to combine the education discipline with crisis counseling and intervention. Many students who have both behavioral and academic issues do not know how to deal with negative situations. Negative behavior is often a result of crisis and traumatic issues such as family financial crisis, bullying, cultural pressures, death of friends and family members and more. One of the first things teachers will notice is a decline in academic achievement, lack of motivation from the beginning of the school year, and/or decline in motivation throughout the school year. Many of these students are placed in remedial classes or diagnosed with learning disabilities that they do not have because of academic performance. Schools should seek to find out the underlying cause and provide any support the student needs to excel in school. Many of the educational courses were geared around helping students achieve academically and providing emotional support. This essay allowed me to integrate knowledge I have gained from both my educational courses, and my crisis counseling courses.

Literature Review

There are many resources that can provide educators with knowledge to help students who have behavior issues and/or have experienced trauma. These resources include health associations, webinars, seminars, booklets, pamphlets, research articles and more.

Educating Teachers about Childhood Trauma

The national Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) has provided a free tool kit to educators concerning the psychological and behavioral impact of trauma for preschool age children and students in grades kindergarten through the twelfth grade. It also provides fundamental trauma facts and suggestions. These suggestions are strategies educators can take that can be implemented at school to help children who are trauma victims and are in crisis situations. Crisis situations can include socioeconomic factors such as financial crisis.

Four facts are provided to educators on how trauma can impact students academically. Trauma can impair a student's ability to learn, thus affecting their academic performance. These students are more likely to drop out of school, and have a decreased ability to control their emotions resulting in inconsistent academic performance, lowering their ability to focus in class, become frustrated, exhibit unpredictable and impulsive behavior. Such events and situations can also interfere with their ability to think critically diminishing or hindering their problem-solving skills (NCTSN, 2018).

Suggestions given to educators attempting to maintain classroom normalcy and create a learning environment that allows the student to feel safe in the classroom. The NCTSN also states that educators can give students some control over choices made; having the student choose resources to help them with their assignments is a great way to start giving them some sense of motivation. Educators should set limits for inappropriate behavior, but be able to recognize behaviors that are transient and related to trauma.

Educators should also be ready to refer students to any necessary support that they may need. Assignments can be modified and additional support for organizing and remembering assignments can be provided to help the student as well. (NCTSN, 2018).

Social Factors and Student Behavior

There are many parents, relatives, educators, administrators, and other caregivers that are, and have dealt with children and adolescents who demonstrate behavior that we consider as bad behavior. Often individuals do not seek to find out the root of the reason why the child or adolescent is misbehaving (Hinton, 2015). As mentioned earlier, teachers and administrators also deal with students' behavior issues. Much of this can come from battling with socioeconomic issues, problems they are having socially at school, or they may be having issues with self-confidence. There is an article titled, "Transforming student's Lives with Social and Emotional Learning". The authors of this article state that there is an increase in the demand for what is traditionally called "soft skills". Investment in dealing with emotional skills is a cost effective approach that is not only effective in the workplace, but within education as well; it is an effective approach to increase quality. Focusing on social emotional learning (SEL) will help not only increase student-teacher relationships, but also in peer relationships between students; teachers and parents will see improvements in their students' academics and behavior (Hinton, 2017d; Brackett & Rivers, 2014).

Effective Positive Student-Teacher Relationships

Effective and positive student-teacher relationships can have an enormous positive affect on students who are dealing with crisis/trauma issues that are having an academic decline and exhibiting negative behavioral issues. Here is when educators can take advantage of such situations which can a time to inspire students using their own experiences sharing how they overcame in times of adversity. “ The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires” (William Ward, JustQuotes website, 2017).

Chapter five of “ Children’s Needs III: Development, Prevention, and Intervention”, published by the National Association of School Psychologists states that student-teacher relationships are fundamental to a student’s academic success. Student-Teacher relationships should be the main target of school-based intervention and intervention efforts. The relationships should be “ an intersection of both the students’ and teachers’ beliefs, behaviors, and interactions with each other”. Student-teacher relationships aid in peer-peer relationships with other students. Empirical and theoretical studies have been conducted allowing the creation of programs geared towards promoting student success in order to improve student-teacher relationships (Hinton, 2017a; Bear & Minke, 2006).

Motivating Students

Educators will never know when they will end up with a student who has experienced crisis situations, or are in one. These students can be unmotivated from the start. These students can also loose motivation at any

point in the academic year. An effective learning environment can help students. Motivation can help students deal with negative situations giving them something to look forward to, and helping them feel safe in their learning environment.

The article chosen for this review is titled, " Small and Effective Ways of Motivating Students". All students are not motivated by the same things (needs, values, wants etc.). There are a total of about twenty-one tips listed by the author on how to motivate students. Some of them are as follows: let students participate in learning, help students set achievable goals for themselves, avoid creating intense competition among students, being enthusiastic about the subject, avoid demeaning comments, and reward success (Hinton, 2017c; Lajwanti, 2011).

Results and Recommendations

Schools can implement an alternative initiative for behavior issues and to help students deal with negative experiences that have affected them academically and other ways.

Out of the Box Solutions

An article was published concerning meditative techniques implemented in a school program at Robert W. Coleman Elementary School. This technique is used for students who exhibit disruptive behavior. This technique is used instead of sending students to the principal's office (Gaines, 2016). It has proven to aid in decreasing disruptive behavior, aiding improvement in student(s) academic achievements and having a positive effect on student(s) families (Hinton, 2017d). Students were took these meditative techniques

home and shared them with their families that brought positive changes within their home.

Social Emotional Learning Initiative

Educators can explore social emotional learning (SEL). SEL is the process of integrating thinking, feeling, and behavior for one to become aware of themselves and others, aid in decision making, and self-behavior management. There are five components of SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and responsible decision making (Hinton, 2017d; Brackett & Rivers, 2014). There was a recent meta-analysis on programs that focused on social and emotional learning (SEL). The results from this show how promoting social and emotional learning helped improve academic success, student-teacher relationships, and behavior issues (Brackett & Rivers, 2014).

Functional Behavioral Assessment and Intervention

Everything mentioned in this paper, as far as ways to deal with and help students can be part of creating an effective behavior intervention plan.

Angel Fettig and Erin Barton, authors of “ Parent Implementation of Function Based Intervention to Reduce Children’s Challenging Behavior: Literature Review”, reviews literature concerning parent-based functional behavioral assessment interventions. According to the authors, the purpose of an FBA intervention is to identify why a child is demonstrating certain behaviors and the conditions in which these behaviors are likely to occur. Families go through a coaching process in order for an FBA to be effective (Hinton, 2017b; Fettig & Barton, 2014). The goal is to identify the function of

challenging behavior and create an intervention plan. The purpose of a FBA is to gather information that can be used to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of a behavior support plan. When it is complete there are six major outcomes that are achieved. These six outcomes are the following:

1. A description of problem behaviors that include behaviors that occur frequently together is created.
2. Antecedents that predict when the problem behavior will/will not occur are identified.
3. Setting events, times, and situations that predict when the problem behaviors will/will not occur across a full range of daily routines are identified.
4. Consequences that maintain the problem behavior are identified.
5. One or more summary statements that describe specific behaviors are developed.
6. Data is collected from direct observation that support the summary statements.

(Hinton, 2017b; O'Neill, Albin, Storey, Horner, & Sprague, 2015).

Crisis Counseling & Intervention

Educators should be properly trained in crisis intervention and psychological first aid. In doing so, educators can serve as psychological first aid responders. In order to understand this concept, one can think about first responders to emergency medical events.

Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

Further research can be conducted on the effects of education personnel who are certified in crisis counseling and first aid and student academics in dealing with students who have behavioral and academic issues. Further research can also be conducted on the effectiveness of meditative techniques implemented in school programs. This initiative is best served in schools where there are high rates of in/out of school suspension and high drop-out rates. Both of these initiatives have been proven to be effective, but there is more research to be done to obtain “hard” visible results.

Conclusion

To reiterate, many students who exhibit problem behavior are maybe experiencing or may have experienced crisis/traumatic situations. Evidence of this can be a decline in motivation and decreased academic performance. There are many ways educators can help students deal with such situations. Educators can begin by creating a learning environment that allows the student to feel safe and free to discuss problems they are facing. Changing up lesson plans, by making them more diversified and interactive can provide students with time “away from it all” in the classroom. This can increase their motivation to learn and create a positive student-teacher interpersonal relationship, thus resulting in increased academic performance. There is nothing wrong with talking with students and letting them know that their educator is there to help them the best way they can in troubled times. This creates an opportunity for educators to find the underlying event that triggered the behavior. Most of the time it is something that they are experiencing outside of school. A functional

behavioral assessment can be done to assess the student's behavior and come up with a behavioral assessment intervention plan. The student should be involved in the decision-making process of the intervention plan. Other successful techniques such as a meditation and social emotional learning can be implemented into educational programs to decrease in and out of school suspension rates. Many of these students have behavioral issues and low academic performance. Crisis counseling and psychological first aid training will educators well in creating a safe and effective learning environment. Such training will give educators the knowledge and understanding on how to handle students who are trauma victims and not be so quick to pass judgment. One never knows what a student is going through or has experienced. They are not always "cutting up" to get attention.