

### **Stages of Behavior Escalation (Colvin & Sugai, 1989)**

| Behavior Stage       | Description of Stage  | Area(s) of Focus for Staff   | Intervention Tips  |
|----------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Calm</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Student is relatively calm and cooperative</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Focus on maintaining a clear, consistent environment and building rapport with the student</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establish 3-5 behavioral expectations</li> <li>➤ Give student feedback using the 4 to 1 ratio (4 positives for every 1 corrective/negative)</li> <li>➤ Teach replacements for interfering behaviors</li> <li>➤ Precorrect problem situations</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Trigger</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Student experiences unresolved conflicts that trigger behavior to escalate</li> <li>➤ May displace anger on “safe target” (aide, teacher, parent)</li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Focus on prevention and redirecting the student’s behavior</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Remove/adjust the trigger (if appropriate)</li> <li>➤ Use behavioral momentum to shape behavior and reinforce small efforts</li> <li>➤ Remind student of rewards (if used)</li> <li>➤ Remind student to use replacement skills</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Agitation</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Student is increasingly unfocused/upset</li> <li>➤ May exhibit avoidance</li> <li>➤ May challenge adult authority</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Focus on reducing student anxiety and increasing predictability in the student’s environment</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use non-confrontational non-verbal behavior</li> <li>➤ Break down directions into smaller steps</li> <li>➤ Use “start”, instead of “stop” directions</li> <li>➤ Provide reasonable options/choices</li> <li>➤ Use “Speak and Retreat” prompting</li> <li>➤ Set clear, reasonable, and enforceable limits</li> </ul> |
| <b>Acceleration</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ With conflict unresolved, this becomes student’s sole focus</li> <li>➤ May become noncompliant</li> <li>➤ May be beginning to lose rational thought</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Focus on maintaining a safe environment for yourself, the student in crisis and any observers</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use short phrases and allow processing time</li> <li>➤ Maintain calmness and detachment</li> <li>➤ Use active listening, reflection and restatement to clarify student’s concerns and show you understand his/her feelings</li> <li>➤ Remember this is <i>not</i> a teachable moment</li> </ul>                     |
| <b>Peak</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Student is out of control and may have temporarily lost ability to think rationally</li> <li>➤ Exhibits severe behavior (screaming, SIBs, aggression)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Focus on crisis intervention procedures to maintain a safe environment for student in crisis, self and observers</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Isolate student by removing the audience</li> <li>➤ Call for help/ staff witness if needed</li> <li>➤ Don’t threaten consequences now; discuss when the student is more rational</li> </ul>   |
| <b>De-Escalation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Having vented, the severity of student’s behavior subsides</li> <li>➤ Drop in energy level of student after a crisis</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Focus on removing excess attention, helping student regain composure and demonstrating cooperation with neutral requests</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Allow Cool-Down time</li> <li>➤ Make sure the student has regained control before proceeding; look for less tense appearance, normal breathing, and willingness to comply with small requests</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Recovery</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students may feel shame, sorrow, fear, or regret</li> <li>➤ May not be able to verbalize feelings/ details of outburst</li> </ul>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Focus on debriefing/ problem solving then transitioning student back to academics</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Debrief <i>before</i> following through with consequences set earlier</li> <li>➤ Problem solve and develop a plan with the student for better future behavior</li> <li>➤ Remember to document the incident/event</li> </ul>   |