

Mental Health Promotion in the School Setting ECHO®

Session 2 Notes and Resource Sheet



Maine Pediatric
& Behavioral Health
Partnership



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DIDACTIC PRESENTATION

Building Emotional Resilience

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[Recording](#)

[Presentation Slides](#)

CASE SUMMARY

We explored the complicated case of a non-verbal 13yo female student that has frequent outbursts around transitioning between activities, but also occur at other times for reasons that are not always apparent. Associated with the outbursts are unsafe behaviors, such as grabbing hair/clothing of staff, throwing things, and self-harm by the way of hitting her head/body against the floor.

KEY QUESTION

- How do we help this student transition from one activity to the next activity smoothly?
- How do we help this student self-regulate to communicate her needs and wants and minimize behaviors?

CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

How well does she understand spoken language?

She understands well, she seems to get overwhelmed at times though with conversation going on around her; she picks up on those conversations.

What is the verbal response to her behavior when she is refusing to transition or when she is throwing things?

Not much, she is not listening or hearing anything at that point. She is attention seeking at times and reacts to verbal intervention, so ignoring those reactions is helpful.

What is the family involvement? What is communication with family/home like? Is there a carryover of behavior and or interventions to home?

Family members speak another language in the home. There is a communication book that goes between school and home. The teacher also communicates via email with the parent.

What phase of her PECS use is she in, does she use independently or does she need prompts

Lots of prompting is needed. She has been using the PECS system for a year, that we are aware of.

Do you have any history from her school chart or other schools she attended? Has she had previous evaluations or consultations completed?

She came to this school district at the beginning of last year, October. She did have some previous evaluations but nothing of quality.

Have you noticed any difference in good or bad days based on diet?

Her diet isn't the healthiest, she does eat school lunch and a variety of snacks, but she does have bowel issues and digestive issues which do affect her.

Does she exhibit similar behavior at home?

Yes, we have been told some days at home are bad. She doesn't like to be told No.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS - Family / School / Community

We may not be able to fix all the challenges but focus on school/home connection as a priority. Develop a structured way to engage home regularly to offer consistency with transitions. Work collaboratively on a plan so expectations at school are a mirror of expectations at home. Support home life by offering materials and tools that are used at school. The consistency may help her understand expectations.

Working with the family through their culture and their cultural beliefs will be important to bring them on board. Consider the family's primary language when communicating with them. Arrange for cultural support (a culture broker), or services around this issue for the family in the community. They may need comprehensive, wrap-around services and assistance navigating community systems that they can benefit from.

- Spurwink Shifa <https://spurwink.org/shifame/> program has case managers that are cultural brokers, they also have therapists trained in trauma for immigrants and refugees.
- Maine Parent Federation <https://www.mpf.org/>
- NAMI Maine Family Respite <https://www.namimaine.org/respite> may be a support for some breaks for the family.

If they do not have Mainecare, encourage them to apply and use the program to get a referral for in home supports.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS - Language

The multilingual dynamic could be affecting her receptive or expressive language development, which may be creating a barrier to her understanding. Rebecca Carey, Maine DOE did a workshop recently regarding multilingual learners (ML) who are also identified for special services. This was well accepted by the staff.

[Identifying and Serving Students who are Multilingual Learners with Disabilities: Policy and Resource Guide](#)

Consider having the OT work on communication in school and using ELL principles.

Consider that this student may be a gestalt language processor but possibly with some apraxia of speech hindering her ability to use gestalt language to communicate her needs. If she hums to songs and likes music, this may be a way to get her to develop ways to express her feelings, linking phrases to daily things like "I want some privacy" or "I need to use the bathroom."

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS - Transitions and Behavior

There could be several things driving her behavior, and it sounds like the school is doing what they can to understand and meet her needs. Behavior is her language, so target interventions to specific areas of need based on what she is trying to tell us through her behavior. It may be helpful to know if there are cultural or traumatic events that we need to consider.

- Consider a psychiatric evaluation or behavior assessment.
- Consider a BCBA evaluation to explore the function of her behavior and better understand her behavior/refusals.

Consider pre-teaching in preparing for a transition or break from those preferred activities.

Change transition time to a transition "spot," a calming down place, and maybe include a transition object that goes from activity to activity and through transitions. Use a visual story to introduce this object.

Transition her from a highly preferred activity to a medium preferred activity, rather than transitioning right to a non-preferred activity. This may require a preference assessment to determine what she does like.

Use music and movement through transitions, like picking items up -a bridge of reward during this time. Also use movement to help teach feelings like tummy ache or runny nose.

Limit the timer re-start. Make sure she knows the limit. She is either escaping or delaying to avoid the next activity.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS – Overall Physical Health

Incorporate the school nurse to help learn patterns about the sleep pattern, food preferences, bowel patterns. All of this is important to know and can assist with educating the family.

If there is a school-based health center in the school, that may be another great option to explore the nutrition and allergy issue.

Consider that she is at the age for hormonal changes, this could be impacting her behavior.

PLEASE NOTE: *The recommendations in this document rely on the information provided during the relevant Project ECHO case consultation. Recommendations are provided to assist case presenters make decisions and may not be appropriate in all cases. Project ECHO® case consultations do not create or otherwise establish a provider-patient relationship between any MPBHP clinician and any patient whose case is being presented in a Project ECHO setting.*