

MANAGING AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH CHALLENGING  
BEHAVIORS: AN ASSESSMENT OF PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES  
WITHIN PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation sought to gain an understanding of current practices and perspectives of school based professionals, such as directors and coordinators of special education, regarding managing the challenging behaviors of students in public school systems in New Jersey. An electronic survey asked respondents to consider how challenging behaviors are being addressed in their school settings, current and potential benefits of their efforts, and areas for potential improvement. Trends in survey findings, along with reviews of relevant literature, were used to develop a guide to behavior management programming for New Jersey public school professionals, addressing their reported needs while considering available resources. It is anticipated that school administrators, school psychologists, and others may utilize the information collected from the survey along with the guide to behavior management programming in schools to increase their understanding and knowledge toward designing and implementing consultation and related practices in their relevant contexts. Surveys were distributed to New Jersey directors and coordinators of special education. The majority of survey respondents reported having the necessary resources to implement behavior management efforts across settings, describing the greatest benefits as increasing teachers' abilities to manage the challenging behaviors of students and maintaining students with challenging behaviors in district. Areas of need were identified as determining appropriate professionals to facilitate behavior management programming and ensuring ongoing monitoring for effective outcomes. The guide to behavior management programming for New Jersey public school systems outlines a process for designing and implementing behavior management programs and services by using principles and procedures of

program planning and evaluation. The guide operationally defines critical components and processes of programming, including ideal and acceptable variations of each. This information targets programmatic tasks, such as obtaining a consultant to facilitate programming, defining roles and responsibilities of participants, planning and implementing program activities, instituting ongoing evaluation of efforts, and making data-based decisions to ensure effective outcomes. Future research in the area of behavior management programming across New Jersey public school systems might focus on the guide developed as a result of these dissertation efforts by surveying school based professionals about application, outcomes, and professional opinions regarding utilization.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Abstract

This chapter introduces the concept of school based behavioral consultation, including its origins and subsequent development in educational and behavioral literature as well as its current utilization with students displaying challenging behaviors in school. This chapter also identifies the goals of this dissertation, including how the author's efforts attempt to answer relevant questions about the current utilization of school based behavioral consultation for behavior management purposes within New Jersey public school systems and how the possible benefits of such efforts compare to the resources demanded of them, as per the professional opinions and perspectives of current stakeholders in public school systems across the state of New Jersey. Finally, this chapter introduces the outline of the guide to behavior management programming utilizing behavioral consultation strategies that were developed as a result of the knowledge gained from these dissertation efforts.

### *What This Dissertation is Focused On*

School based behavioral consultation was included as a topic in research literature during the 1970's (Bergan, 1977) after having been initially introduced in 1920 (French, 1990 as cited in Bramlett & Murphy, 1998). Currently, it is an established area of practice within the public school setting. Not only is collaborative consultation described as a useful tool for behavior management that is frequently utilized in schools, it is also described as a best practice for the field of school psychology (Gutkin, 1996; Wilkinson, 2003). Several terms are used in the literature on this subject, including school based consultation, problem solving consultation, psychological consultation, behavioral consultation, eco-behavioral consultation, conjoint behavioral consultation, and school based behavioral consultation. School consultation has been defined by Erchul & Martens (1997) as a cooperative process for providing services in which a specialist works cooperatively with a staff member to improve academic and behavioral outcomes of students. In professional literature on the field, school based behavioral consultation is defined as an indirect approach to increasing the ability of students who are identified as displaying challenging behaviors in the classroom to display adaptive replacement behaviors and ultimately increase their chances of learning successfully (Bramlett & Murphy, 1998; Hughes, 1994). The consultation takes place between the consultant and the consultee, or teacher, with their collaborative efforts ultimately benefiting the identified client, or student. Goals of consultation efforts are two-fold: to remediate the initial problems while also increasing the consultee's ability to independently develop interventions to remediate such problems in the future (Witt & Elliott, 1983). One of the most frequently-cited behavioral consultation models is the four-part model developed by

Bergan (1977) and Kratochwill & Bergan (1990), in which the consultant guides the consultee through problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, and plan evaluation.

While there may be school personnel already on staff, such as the school psychologist, with the knowledge and skills to facilitate school based behavioral consultation services, the increasing application of such services demands resources such as time, money, and physical effort, meaning there may be no available school personnel with the knowledge, skills, and ability to engage in such additional effort. In such cases, school based behavioral consultation services are often utilized vis a vis contracting with an experienced professional consultant based outside of the school district. However, public school systems in New Jersey are developing job descriptions based on the work once contracted of the out-of-district professional to create in-district positions for personnel to provide behavioral consultation to school staff. A review of New Jersey employment positions posted online during the month of April 2008 displayed thirteen job openings for professionals to fill; of these, five were described as behaviorist, two as behavior consultant, two as behavior specialist, one as behavior analyst, and three as Board Certified Behavior Analyst ([www.nj.com](http://www.nj.com)). Professional duties described included consulting with teachers, providing behavioral support, assessing challenging behaviors, and developing behavior intervention programs. Additionally, the current focus of behavioral consultation has grown from working on individual cases and providing specific assistance to working at the school-wide level (Putman, Luiselli, & Jefferson, 2002).

School based behavioral consultation focuses on improving the challenging behaviors of students by replacing the difficult behaviors with appropriate, adaptive behaviors. It appears that consultation services are typically funded from the district's special education budget and are overseen by the district's director or coordinator of special services. Consultation may be considered as working with relevant stakeholders in the school setting, such as members of the child study team, teachers, and various school staff members, including classroom assistants, individual student aides, disciplinarians, and guidance counselors. Recently, as per the author's professional experience, school districts have begun utilizing behavioral consultation services within the regular education setting, with the hopes of decreasing those referrals to special education based on challenging behavior. However, this information has yet to be formally assessed for accuracy or generalization.

An assessment of the utilization of consultation for the purposes of managing the behavior of students in New Jersey public school systems does not appear to have been attempted previously. Also lacking from school based behavioral consultation as a professional field is a standardized process to delivering services, though the problem solving foundation to behavioral consultation seems to lend itself to such in the future. Kratochwill and VanSomeren (1995) found the lack of a standardized process to problem identification, often the first step of behavioral consultation, a barrier to ultimate treatment success. Until such standardization is defined and insisted upon, however, behavior consultants may remain as they are now, namely independent and self-directed, individually responsible for developing a course of action for their consultation services. Based on the author's professional experience, public school districts typically trust in the

ability of the professional consultant to meet the behavioral needs of the district without much more than a general description of services. Consultation services may contain customary practices, such as assessment, intervention development, training, and follow-up services, but the determination of the exact services that will be provided, as well as the timeline along which they will be provided, vary according to the consultant's professional judgment. Behavior management consultation currently lacks standardization in terms of definition of services, timeline of events, and roles and responsibilities of participants. This dissertation attempts to fill that void of information, at least in part, with the development of a guide for public school systems across the state of New Jersey regarding developing and utilizing behavior management programming via a consultative approach.

One critique of behavioral consultation targets the lack of a direct effort to evaluate the consultation process or assess the consultee's ability to act on the decisions made as a result to the collaborative efforts (Witt, 1996). Such critiques acknowledge that the approach to the process of consultation itself, interpersonal in nature, may be as important a determinant of outcomes as the knowledge, skills, and abilities shared and gained. Additionally, this idea focuses on the importance of the consultee not only learning from the consultation process, but also being able to apply the knowledge and skills in the natural setting.

### *Why This Topic is Relevant*

The implications of the findings of this dissertation are relevant to the field of school psychology because of the field's current focus on problem solving and evidence



based practice (Wilkinson, 2005). According to Hosp & Reschly (2002), school psychologists in the Northeast United States are spending 6.6 hours per week, or 16.5% of a 40-hour work week, involved in problem solving consultation and 2.6 hours per week, or 6.5% of a 40-hour work week, on systems and organizational consultation. These findings indicate that school psychologists in the Northeast spend approximately one-quarter of their time providing some type of consultation (Hosp & Reschly, 2002). In New Jersey, school psychologists are involved in the implementation of consultation services in a variety of ways. As child study team members, school psychologists are often the case managers for students earmarked for their challenging behaviors and requiring intervention via consultative services. As professionals trained in assessing the behavior of human beings for intervention, school psychologists may also be the district employees with the most appropriate expertise, therefore assigned with the task as the district's behavior consultant, including assessing and modifying the intervention for use with students.

The results of this dissertation may be useful to school psychologists across the state of New Jersey, as well as to school psychologists in public schools across the nation, due to the information provided about current behavior management efforts and behavioral consultation practices. School psychologists can use the information and guidelines provided in the dissertation's results to help understand the current practices and perspectives of their districts, thereby gaining the knowledge needed to develop and utilize informed behavior management and consultative practices. The information will also be useful for school psychologists receiving consultative services from out-of-district

professionals by providing them with evidence based guidelines regarding what they may expect of such services.

Behavior Management Survey questions were based on a review of relevant literature on behavioral consultation, program planning and evaluation, and other relevant fields of study as well as what is known of the various professional practices currently in place in New Jersey public school systems. Informed consent and recruitment notices were submitted to and approved by the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research. Surveys were distributed electronically to directors and coordinators of special services in public school districts across the state of New Jersey, who were also invited to share the Behavior Management Survey and results with their colleagues. Information collected from distributed surveys was analyzed and developed to define the current perspectives and practices in managing the challenging behaviors of students in New Jersey public schools as well as implications and guidelines for the future of behavior management programming utilizing a consultative approach.

#### *How this Dissertation Covered this Topic*

This dissertation sought to gain an understanding about current circumstances of behavior management and behavioral consultation in New Jersey public school systems. By surveying directors and coordinators of special services across the state of New Jersey, a description of how behavior management efforts currently incorporate behavioral consultation activities was developed. Additionally, how school districts obtain and implement consultation services was organized into a description of current practices, including whether districts contract with out-of-district professional consultants or utilize the expertise of district employees for behavioral consultation services. Current

practices have been segmented into how services are being utilized, such as within special or regular education, for strictly consultative services or including other services (i.e. training, workshops), and whether or not the districts currently report their consultation experiences as fulfilling their original expectations and needs.

Behavior Management Survey questions also obtained information about the current needs of New Jersey school systems, including how they view the challenging behavior needs of their students and what additional services, if any, they would like to receive throughout the course of the behavioral consultation process. Finally, information collected from the surveys summarizes what New Jersey public school professionals describe as challenges regarding student behavior and behavioral consultation services. Overall, the Behavior Management Survey assessed perspectives and practices currently being utilized for managing the challenging behaviors of students within public school systems across the state of New Jersey.

Surveys were made up of items regarding the questions and topics proposed above. Survey items were based on a review of the current literature on school based behavioral consultation and related fields of study, such as program planning and evaluation. Surveys were distributed electronically to 598 directors and coordinators of special education services throughout the state of New Jersey, according to contact information obtained from the New Jersey State Department of Education's online directories ([www.state.nj.us/education](http://www.state.nj.us/education)). Distribution of the Behavior Management Survey took place by posting the survey online and mailing and emailing the electronic survey link to targeted respondents.

Directors and coordinators of special services were targeted to complete the Behavior Management Survey and were also invited to distribute the electronic surveys for completion by their colleagues, such as other district personnel involved in managing the challenging behaviors of students. The knowledge and opinions of the directors of special services was considered imperative to obtain a body of information that is accurate and representative of the current state of the behavior management process across the state of New Jersey. The added input from other district personnel involved in behavior management efforts was also considered extremely useful. In appreciation for completing the survey, the resulting analysis of the findings as well as the guidelines for future behavior management programming based on the consultation model were provided to the participating professionals who provided their contact information. Contact information was kept separate from survey responses, thereby maintaining the respondents' anonymity at the level of survey items. Trends in survey findings, along with reviews of relevant literature, were used to develop a guide to behavior management programming for New Jersey public school professionals, addressing their reported needs while considering available resources.

### *Summary*

This dissertation sought to gain an understanding of current practices and perspectives of school based professionals, such as directors and coordinators of special education, regarding managing the challenging behaviors of students in public school systems in New Jersey. An electronic Behavior Management Survey asked respondents to consider how challenging behaviors are being addressed in their school settings,

current and potential benefits of their efforts, and areas for potential improvement. Trends in survey findings, along with reviews of relevant literature, were used to develop a guide to behavior management programming for New Jersey public school professionals, addressing their reported needs while considering available resources. It is anticipated that school administrators, school psychologists, and others may utilize the information collected from the survey along with the guide to behavior management programming in schools to increase their understanding and knowledge toward designing and implementing consultation and related practices in their relevant contexts.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

#### Abstract

This chapter introduces the concept of behavioral, or problem solving, consultation as a valuable intervention for managing the challenging behaviors of students within public school systems. The history of consultation is described, as is its implementation within schools both currently and historically. Various methods and evidence based practice elements utilized during behavior management consultation are discussed as well as implications for future research and applied use. Literature available on the use of electronic surveys as a means of gathering data is also reviewed.

### *Relevant Background of Consultation*

Consultation is defined as one or more people with certain knowledge, skills, and ability working with individuals or groups within a social system on one or more work-related problems (Cherniss, 1976). Behavioral consultation is a problem solving approach founded in the principles of behavior analysis that includes interviews between the consultant and consultee and is focused on the objective evaluation of outcomes (Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990). Erchul & Martens (1997) adapted a definition for work in schools by defining school consultation as a process for providing psychological and educational services in which the consultant works cooperatively with staff members to improve the learning and adjustment of students. Bergan (1977) identified three key people in the consultation process: the consultant, or the person with certain knowledge and skills, the client, or the person/people for whom the consultation process will benefit, and the consultee, or the person who will work with the consultant throughout the process. Martens and Ardoin (2002) note that the relationship between the consultant and the consultee should be voluntary, collaborative, collegial, and confidential, as well as encouraging of the consultee's active involvement in the process. The goals of consultation include the immediate remediation of the problem, to benefit the client, as well as the improvement of the consultee's abilities to independently use the skills learned throughout consultation to independently improve upon future situations (Witt & Elliott, 1983).

There are three predominant models of consultation mentioned throughout the consultation literature, namely the mental health model, the organizational model, and the behavioral, known more recently as the problem solving, consultation model. Across all

three models of consultation, the goals of remediating the current problem, as well as improving the consultee's ability to deal with future problems more effectively, remain the same (Witt & Elliot, 1983). In behavioral consultation, the process is closely related to the outcomes of intervention (Bergan, 1977), meaning that the goals for the consultation drive the actions of the participants throughout the process. Behavioral consultation, as opposed to the other models of consultation, makes particularly efficient use of what has been learned and empirically supported throughout the consultation literature. It is focused on problem solving, where the consultant works with the consultee to identify and analyze the problem, develop and implement interventions, and then evaluate the intervention efforts (Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990). Behavioral consultants are described as providing expertise in a collaborative, problem solving approach. Perhaps because of this fact, behavioral consultation is noted as the preferred model of consultation in education (Bergan, Byrnes, & Kratochwill, 1979; Martens & Ardoin, 2002). Such preference may also be due to its structured process for consultation and intervention as well as its use of the problem solving process, which is empirically supported in behavior analysis (Bergan, Byrnes, & Kratochwill, 1979).

Based on behavior analysis, behavioral consultation focuses on the tenets that behavior is learned, behavior is observable and measurable, behavior is a function of the individual and his or her environment, and the process for intervention includes assessment, intervention, and evaluation (Bergan & Caldwell, 1967). Caplan (1970) introduced the mental health model of consultation, identifying three tiers for intervention, namely primary, secondary, and tertiary. Behavioral consultation translates these tiers to the educational setting by identifying three tiers for focus within the school:



proactive effort towards all students (primary), proactive effort towards some students determined at risk (secondary), and reactive effort towards individual students identified for specific or reactive intervention (tertiary) (Bergan, 1977).

The four steps of the behavioral consultation process are outlined as problem identification, problem analysis, intervention implementation, and evaluation (Bergan, 1977; Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990). The first step includes operationally defining the problem behavior(s) targeted for intervention. This step should be a team effort so that each individual feels actively involved in the consultation process (Martens & Ardoin, 2002). Best practices in school based behavioral consultation suggest that, to be effective, both the consultant and the consultee should be prepared, willing, and proactive throughout the process (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). The definitions of target behaviors should include variables that can be operationally defined, are observable, and lend themselves to data collection, which are key parts of the problem identification stage of behavioral consultation (Bergan, 1977).

In the problem analysis stage, the data collected in each targeted area is analyzed and considered in terms of the functions of the behaviors, choosing adaptive replacement behaviors, and creating appropriate intervention plans (Bergan, 1977). Behavior analysis reminds us that the four maintaining functions of behavior are either obtaining social attention or access to a preferred task or tangible, gaining sensory stimulation, avoiding or escaping a non-preferred task or situation, or avoiding or escaping pain (Iwata, 2009). Also within the problem analysis stage, the roles and responsibilities of key people must be defined, such as who will engage in what activities or actions and by what date or time (Bergan, 1977). By using three tiers of intervention services, students can be identified

for services at the primary (all), secondary (some), and tertiary (individuals) levels (Bergan, 1977). Prevention interventions are often implemented at the primary level, such as a school-wide anti-bullying campaign, while small support groups may be offered at the secondary level for at risk students, and finally individual counseling may be provided at the tertiary level for those students victimized by bullying. The creation of an intervention plan includes setting goals for the decrease of the target behaviors and an increase in the adaptive replacement behaviors (Bergan, Byrnes, & Kratochwill, 1979). These processes and decisions may be particularly important in schools, as adaptive replacement behaviors may affect academics by increasing learning skills, work completion, and the like. Missing data that might be helpful to collect should also be identified at this stage and a plan of action to acquire that necessary information should be determined.

As in any educational assessment process, the behavioral assessment portion of behavior management programming needs to be multidimensional, utilizing multiple sources and multiple methods of data and information collection. Additionally, assessors need to remain aware of cultural issues that may affect a student's behavior, such as the social norms, communication style, and expectations of their cultures (Castillo, Quintana, Zamarripa, 2000). Additionally, Castillo et. al. (2000) remind us that behavioral assessors would do well to understand the norms of the classroom environment, as these may affect students' displays of behavior as well. In terms of providing culturally competent programming for all students, behavioral strategies are described as useful because of how concrete and straight forward they are for students and the fact that behavioral interventions allow for immediate feedback to the learner (Castillo et. al., 2000).

During the intervention stage, efforts to address each targeted area previously identified, defined, and planned for are implemented (Bergan, 1977). The roles and responsibilities of all involved should be clearly defined, along with a timeline of when certain activities are to take place by whom (Bergan, 1977; Maher, 1999). The intervention efforts should be closely monitored to ensure treatment integrity, as verbal trainings or discussions are hardly ever enough to result in competent use of a novel strategy (Reid & Parsons, 2000). As with any intervention, but especially within a school, intervention efforts should be conceptually relevant and appropriate for those who are to benefit from them, ensuring efforts match the needs at each of the three levels of intervention (Martens & Ardoin, 2002). Additionally, relevant stakeholders should understand the reasons behind the interventions and should be able to identify the resources that need to be dedicated in order to achieve targeted outcomes (Maher, 1999).

During the final stage of behavioral consultation, the intervention efforts should be evaluated (Bergan, 1977). This includes the outcome goals of intervention efforts targeted by all participants. By conducting ongoing evaluation efforts, the implementation process allows itself to be improved upon throughout intervention efforts so that the beneficial effects for clients can be optimized in a timely fashion (Maher, 1999). Evaluation data is not only considered after the process is completed, but on an ongoing basis throughout the consultation and implementation efforts (Maher, 1999). Evaluation questions may include looking at how well the intervention was implemented according to its plan, how each person fulfilled his or her roles and responsibilities, and/or how the outcome data compares to the intervention goals targeted at the beginning of the process (Maher, 1999). Based on these findings, the intervention should be

considered in terms of continuing, terminating, or revising future efforts (Bergan, 1977). Evaluation does not have to be a one-time effort made at the end of the process. In fact, with educational law insisting on monitoring a student's response to intervention, ongoing evaluation of behavioral interventions is considered a best practice within behavioral consultation (IDEA, 2004)

### *Use of Behavioral Consultation in Schools & the Role of the School Psychologist*

In the past, the perspective of educators was described as centering around a developmental or psychodynamic model, where behavior was seen as driven from inside the child; yet, only a handful of behavior and learning problems can be traced to identifiable physiological causes and even fewer can be related directly to developmental or psychoanalytic causation (Skinner & Hales, 1992). However, the perceptions of school personnel appear to be changing. With a foundation in the science of behavior analysis, results of behavioral consultation within the educational setting have included a change to focus on utilizing environmental variables to change behaviors. Results of these efforts have included a decrease in referral rates and the generalization of skills taught to teachers across educational settings (Witt & Elliott, 1983). Other beneficial results have included school-wide positive changes in the behavioral expectations and repertoires of all students (Putnam et. al., 2005).

The behavioral approach is the preferred model of consultation in schools (Martens, 1993). It is operationalized enough to almost allow standardization of the process, including its action steps of the problem solving framework and its problem solving techniques, which are based in behavior analysis (Bergan, Byrnes, &

Kratochwill, 1979; Knoff, 1995). In fact, once exposed to it, teachers report a preference for the behavioral consultation model and consultation is now seen by professionals in the field as a major approach for, and best practice in, providing psychoeducational services to children (Gutkin, 1996; Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). Schools are uniquely positioned to intervene on behaviors, as they have effective resources such as funded staff, community connections, and family involvement (McDougal, Nastasi, & Chafouleas, 2005).

Kratochwill, Elliott, and Callan-Stoiber (2002) suggest that “problem solving consultation” should replace the earlier term “behavioral consultation” because the process does not just use behavioral techniques, but can include a wide range of assessment and intervention technologies from diverse theoretical backgrounds, including instructional and learning principles. Additionally, they suggest that school psychologists may be the perfect professionals to include not only behavioral, but also instructional principles to guide the behavioral consultation process (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). With their training backgrounds in human psychology, particularly regarding child development, education and learning styles, functions and principles of behavior, and interpersonal relationships, school psychologists may possess the best combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities to guide other professionals through the behavioral consultation process in schools.

Behavioral consultation in schools can be focused on a case-centered, or individual, basis, but it can also have the broader target of proactive prevention efforts at the school level (Putnam, Luiselli, & Jefferson, 2002). According to educational law, schools are to document evidence based interventions in place before a suspicion of

disability or referral for special education evaluation may be considered (IDEA, 2004). Such efforts should include empirically supported interventions of a behavioral nature, especially when the referral problem relates to a student's academic or social behavior (IDEA, 2004). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) also mandates that interventions be implemented by a multidisciplinary team and that functional behavior assessments be conducted in response to disciplinary actions for students with, or suspected as having, disabilities. School psychologists may be in an especially good place to make sure behavior assessments and interventions are included where they need to be (Knoster & McCurdy, 2002). School psychologists' placement in schools, along with their professional relationships already established with school personnel, make their professional role group the ideal candidate as behavior consultants within their schools.

Teams may determine that a certain plan should be put in action for a student, but implementation will require monitoring and guidance, as verbal training and discussions are rarely enough to result in staff actually understanding how to perform certain skills in the natural context (Reid & Parsons, 2006). Literature on outcome management separates the ideas of technology, referring to specific techniques, versus performance, as in how staff implements said techniques, stressing a compromise between the learning and planning context with the on-the-job practice and implementation process (Reid & Parsons, 2006). This compromise can be translated to schools utilizing behavior management techniques and interventions by encouraging observation, modeling, and immediate feedback from the expert, or behavior consultant, to service provider, or the teacher (Reid & Parsons, 2006).

Within the context of school psychology service delivery, “working at a systems level” means working on a level that is broader than the individual student to provide a wider scope of services to benefit a larger number of people (Ysseldyke, Burns, Dawson, Kelly, Morrison, Ortiz, Rosenfield, Telzrow, 2006). School psychologists have a unique combination of psychoeducational training, as well as access to the broader ecology of a school, that makes systems level problem solving consultation within schools a viable and effective method of intervention (Shriber & Fenning, 2009). It means collaborating with others, both efficiently and practically, for the good of a greater number of students. In fact, Putnam, Handler, Rey, & MacCarty (2005) recently found that individual student interventions are less efficient and poorly sustained when implemented in the absence of some systemic application. While most research has been focused on “case centered” consultation, where the focus is on individual students, more recent research has begun to look at whole-school or even district-wide interventions (Putnam, Luiselli, & Jefferson, 2002). The area of prevention is an example of work at a systems level by providing three tiers of intervention, with the primary level addressing all students universally, the secondary level providing services to students who are targeted as at risk, and the tertiary level providing services to individual students who are selected for specific intervention (Bergan, 1977; Caplan, 1970). According to the response to intervention (RTI) framework, which is based on Caplan’s medical model, 80-90% of students can be effectively helped by universal interventions at the lowest tier of support, resulting in only 10-15% of students requiring support at the second tier of intervention, and only 1-5% of students requiring individual interventions (Howell, Patton, & Deiotte, 2008). Working at a systems level for a school psychologist may include coordinating the

collaborative efforts of others toward a common goal, adapting evidence based interventions for use in a particular school according to the school's students and their particular needs, and understanding the process of the system through which any intervention or program must flow (Elias et.al., 2003).

Response to intervention literature demonstrates that when schools utilize behavior support programs that are systemic, defined as embedded policies and procedures, and systematic, defined as procedures and practices that are implemented with fidelity, behavior concerns may decrease (Howell et. al., 2008). However, the quality of the universal supports and interventions provided may ultimately determine whether students' responses to behavioral interventions will succeed or fail to meet desired outcomes (Howell et. al., 2008). Additionally, the universal policies and procedures maintain for all students, meaning that when certain students receive targeted or selected interventions, they still receive the universal interventions provided to all.

School based behavioral consultation has the potential to be preventive in terms of referral to special education (Riley-Tillman & Eckert, 2001). In this regard, Kratochwill, Sladeczek, & Plunge (1995) report referrals for psychoeducational assessments can be reduced by up to 40% when school based behavioral consultation is provided to general education teachers. School psychologists may need to possess a particular set of skills and understanding to effectively navigate systems level consultation and intervention work targeting students in general education. Knoff (1995) points out that the placement of a school psychologist, namely in a school and often in a position of knowledge and influence, is ideal to be an influential professional for this type of work. The training a school psychologist receives includes an understanding of human behavior, which is



imperative when working to bring people together in functioning towards a common goal (Schaughnecy & Ervin, 2006). The planning and coordinating of people and services involved in systems level work is key in outcomes (Elias et.al., 2003). School psychologists may often be the best placed and prepared professionals for such efforts in a school. School psychologists are also trained in how to adapt evidence based interventions to meet the needs of a particular student body, which is a key component of systems level consultation and intervention efforts. The research to practice gap is a salient issue in school based behavioral consultation (LaRue, Weiss, & Ferrailo, 2008). School psychologists may be useful in developing ways to minimize the disconnect between research and implementation by making application in the natural settings of students, such as schools and home, more of a possibility.

School psychologists have an understanding of how the process of implementing a program at the systems level in education takes place (Curtis & Stollar, 2002). School psychologists can bring their knowledge of the components of implementation at the systems level to their schools. The National Association of School Psychologists (2009) has stated that the knowledge and training school psychologists have, combined with their placements as professionals working in schools, results in a context that is primed for school psychologists to engage in this work. In fact, throughout the literature, school psychologists are named as the school personnel often assigned such responsibilities, known as the nontraditional school psychologists who take on roles in which implementing progressive and evidence based interventions are integral parts of their job descriptions (Forman & Burke, 2008; NASP, 2009). By coordinating services across service levels, school psychologists can prevent the intervention, as well as the team of

professionals involved, from becoming disjointed and disorganized, keeping the team working together so that the students receive the support they need (NASP, 2009).

Ensuring treatment integrity during implementation of a program is imperative to achieving desired effects. Research from the National Implementation Research Network states that any issues related to implementation and community readiness should be addressed to ensure effective interventions are implemented accurately (Fixsen et.al, 2005). Elias et.al. (2003) suggest utilizing a strengths-based approach to assessment and program implementation at the systems level, identifying what resources are available along with the history of what has previously worked for a school system. School psychologists working at the systems level will want to practice putting time in up front, as making the effort at the beginning of the process, including activities such as planning, coordinating, creating cohesion amongst people and service programs, and accommodating for changes and setbacks, will work well to build a foundation of community and cooperation upon which systems level collaboration and implementation can take place (Elias et.al., 2003). School psychologists are in the position to recognize and positively reinforce the efforts put into this work, as this collaborative process often brings together various professionals who each contribute individual knowledge and expertise to increase the chances of positive change and desired outcome effects. By playing such an important role in the development and implementation of evidence based models of intervention, school psychologists can lead school teams and encourage the systematic behavioral and mental health support of all students and families (NASP, 2009).

*Current Status & Implementation of Consultation in the Fields of Education & School Psychology*

The current trend in school psychology is moving away from an assessment-based program to a model that includes ecological consultation, problem solving processes, and behavioral interventions (Wilkinson, 2007). According to special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reauthorized in 2004, schools must document the implementation of early intervention services, scientifically based academic and behavioral interventions, as well as pre-referral activities in order to minimize the over identification and unnecessary rates of referrals to special education (Wilkinson, 2005). Additionally, not all students referred for special education are determined eligible, resulting in those who were referred for evaluation based on their behavioral problems may remain in general education settings and teachers may therefore require additional support to address the behavioral needs of these students (Knoster & McCurdy, 2002). Educational law also states that a child must be educated in the least restrictive environment possible, often meaning that general education teachers must acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities to maintain students with challenging behaviors in their classroom, a need that has resulted in an increased utilization of school based consultation services (Gutkin, 1996). A shift within the broad field of education, and more specifically of school psychology, includes moving away from traditional methods of remediation in response to the current focus on problem solving and evidence based practices (Wilkinson, 2005). Consultation, especially during the pre-referral stage, is one of the preferred ways in which schools are ensuring that no child is left behind (Cautilli, Tillman, Axelrod, Dziewolska, & Hineline, 2006). Kratochwill (2008) suggests

that consultation will likely be a major part of the response to intervention (RTI) shift in the fields of education and school psychology.

A recent position statement made public by the National Association of School Psychologists (2009) discusses the importance of using a problem solving, multi-tiered approach to effectively address the specific needs of students. Such a method is evidence based, focuses on prevention, is culturally responsive, and uses a systematic, multi-tiered problem solving and data-based decision-making approach to support (NASP, 2009). School based consultation is viewed as an efficient way to increase and maintain accountability in education and school psychology, which is imperative for the implementation of evidence based interventions, and behavioral consultation is reported to be the preferred framework that practitioners can utilize in addressing such needs (Brinkman, Segool, Pham, & Carlson, 2007).

Evidence based interventions that lend themselves for utilization in the behavioral consultation process include those dealing with the presence or absence of attitudes and skills that are important conditions for learning and success (Forman & Burke, 2008). As of 2003, many school personnel were using behavioral consultation to provide treatment to an increasing number of students with challenging behaviors (Wilkinson, 2003). While school budgets remain concerned with outcomes of services (Forman, 1995), effective results of consultation, such as changes in students' learning, behavior, or both, are possibly more prudent now than ever.

When school personnel are not equipped to handle severe behavioral issues, outside behavior analysts or consultants are often called in (Mueller & Nkosi, 2007; Putnam et. al., 2005). However, school psychologists with such background, knowledge,

or expertise may be the perfect professionals for the job. By utilizing a professional already amongst the school staff, such as the school psychologist, schools are utilizing resources already on hand, thereby increasing efficiency (McDougal, Nastasi, & Chafouleas, 2005). School psychologists who want to engage in such efforts should be well-versed in both behavioral and cognitive behavioral principles, on which the premise of behavioral consultation is based (Forman & Burke, 2008). Behavioral consultation is a process utilized in both special and general education settings and consultation has long been viewed as an important part of the school psychologist's role, function, and profession (Curtis & Meyers, 1988; Kratochwill, Elliot, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). A primary goal of current consultation efforts in schools is getting general education teachers involved and knowledgeable so they might be able to alleviate children's problems within the general education setting, thereby reducing the special education classification of students based on behavior problems alone (Kratochwill, Elliot, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002).

Behavioral, or problem solving, consultation is a method of intervention that crosses the line between general and special education. This allows school psychologists to not only move away from a role group commonly acquainted with special education, but to also function professionally between both general and special educational settings. In fact, its current use, according to literature in the field of education, steers clear of categorizing consultation as a limited method used only with certain populations of students. When used in general education settings, consultation has proven useful in maintaining students with academic, behavioral, and social problems in their general education settings, thereby decreasing the rate of referral up to 40% by increasing teacher

support and ability (Kratochwill, Elliot, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). When less students are being referred for psychoeducational assessments, the results are not only reduced placement of students in special education, but also less time and resources spent by professionals engaged in conducting testing and evaluations. Examiners may therefore be able to use their time more efficiently with those students who truly require such assessments, rather than with students whom may benefit from behaviorally-based efforts and interventions. When used in special education settings, consultation has been shown to decrease the number of students in out-of-district placements based on behavioral referrals (Putnam, Luiselli, & Jefferson, 2002).

With increased demands on outcomes regarding student and school achievement, consultation effectiveness should be determined based upon such (Fuchs et.al., 1992). Effectiveness of consultation may, therefore, be determined by the consultation's influence on the consultee's attitude or behavior or even the attitude, behavior, or academic performance of the student (Fuchs et. al., 1992). Additional emphases in current behavioral consultation efforts in schools include focusing on increased social competencies, not just decreasing challenging behaviors, thereby linking intervention efforts across students' various settings and generalizing intervention effects beyond the original environment (Kratochwill, Eliot, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002).

In 2000, Cherniss revisited the idea of pre-entry issues and reminded us that before the consultation process begins, it is imperative to resolve any conflicts between the consultant and consultee and identify stakeholders with values or interests that are incongruent with the consultation process. Once the consultation process begins, consultants should avoid getting stuck in one area of the process or problem or simply

doing what the consultee has requested if it is not appropriate (Cherniss, 2000).

Additional considerations regarding, and possibly barriers to, successful treatment via school based behavioral or problem solving consultation are reported to include process issues, such as interview techniques, training of the consultant and consultee, acceptability on the part of the consultee, relationship issues, and misidentification of target behaviors (Kratochwill & VanSomeren, 1995). Expertise on the part of the consultant needs to include not only the content of the consultation, defined as the presenting problem and the appropriate interventions, but also the process, which includes the goals and procedures of the consultation (Sheridan, Richards, & Smoot, 2000). Consultees are described as preferring commonsensical language throughout the consultation process, as opposed to technical terminology (Sheridan, Richards, & Smoot, 2000). Additionally, the success, or lack thereof, of the actual intervention can also affect treatment integrity, teacher resistance, and lack of progress monitoring of future consultation efforts (McDougal, Nastasi, & Chafouleas, 2005). When school teams do not adhere to their own consultation procedures, it has been reportedly due to factors such as extensive time demands, being faced with unfamiliar tasks, the procedural complexity of the process, limited intervention resources, and limited administrative support (Doll, Haack, Kosse, Osterloh, Siemers, & Pray, 2005).

Kratochwill & VanSomers (1995) describe several barriers to behavioral consultation efforts as well as suggestions to overcome them. Interview and relationship issues that may arise due to the lack of standardized practices, thereby leading to negative outcomes regarding treatment integrity during implementation, may be structured to ensure key areas are discussed and agreed upon, such as identification of problem

behaviors (Kratochwill & VanSomersen, 1995). Training issues on the parts of both the consultant and consultee may be improved upon by ensuring consultants gain experience in applied use of theory and consultees gain an understanding of the theory and principles behind consultative efforts via training or inservice workshops (Kratochwill & VanSomersen, 1995). Acceptability issues on the part of the consultee affect outcomes and, therefore, may be alleviated by objective data collection and considering a wide range of intervention options (Kratochwill & VanSomersen, 1995).

Resistance is defined as anything that a consultee does to impede progress throughout the course of consultation and may continue, for example, until consultees experience the beneficial outcomes of the process (Cautilli et. al., 2006). Acceptability on the part of both the teacher and student is necessary in order to maximize the effectiveness of the consultation process (Wilkinson, 1997). Collaboration can be the saving grace in the face of interpersonal barriers within the consultation process. When teachers participate in setting intervention objectives and are informed accordingly, procedural integrity and desirable outcomes are produced (Mautone, Luiselli, & Handlwer, 2006).

Parents are becoming the focus of current consultation efforts in schools, as both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, reauthorized in 2004, and the No Child Left Behind act of 2001 mandate meaningful parent participation in every child's education (IDEA, 2004; Segool, Pham, & Carlson, 2007; Wilkinson, 2005). Conjoint behavioral consultation is a process which includes parents, teachers, and children with a focus on changing the behaviors of both the parents and children (Illsley & Sladeczek, 2001). Parents are reported as the first line of contact when teachers are looking for



support regarding a student's challenging behavior (Alderman & Gimpel, 1996). In fact, research shows that a home-school system intervention, which includes student's parents in the collaboration process, benefits children (Wilkinson, 2005). Therefore, it makes sense that schools might increasingly look to engage parents in the support efforts being put into place for their children at the school level.

Noell and Witt (1996) considered and reevaluated the basic assumptions underlying behavioral consultation, examining each assumption's role throughout the evolution of behavioral approaches to consultation in schools. While behavioral consultation has become a fundamental component of school psychology, its core procedures appear to have remained the same, based on several basic assumptions (Noell & Witt, 1996). Their endurance does not mean that these assumptions are without error, however; they have simply persisted, perhaps because of lacking evidence based competition or alternative ideas (Noell & Witt, 1996). Noell and Witt (1996) suggest that the basic assumptions offer areas of research to strengthen behavioral consultation as a scientific model. The five fundamental assumptions made by the behavioral consultation process are defined as: (1) consultation is a superior use of resources when compared to direct intervention, (2) consultation is most effective when conducted collaboratively, (3) talking to teachers is sufficient to cause them to change their behavior, (4) teachers will generalize problem solving skills developed in consultation to new problem situations with other students, and (5) direct contact between the consultation and client is unnecessary (Noell & Witt, 1996). These assumptions provide areas in which professionals can raise questions and obtain more answers in terms of the accuracy of

such statements and the applicability of such ideas within the current context of educational settings.

Current literature in the field of evidence based interventions explains the research to practice gap experienced when empirically supported interventions are applied in the natural setting. Difficulty may be experienced when trying to utilize a scientifically-based intervention that proved to have successful outcomes in a controlled environment, but does not translate easily to the natural setting. Consumers of behavioral assessment and intervention, based on principles from the research-laden field of behaviorism, may experience such a disconnect (LaRue, Weiss, & Ferrailoli, 2008). Reading about an intervention and actually implementing that intervention in the natural setting, where extraneous variables can neither be controlled nor dismissed, can be experienced as very different things. The issues becomes applicability of evidence based interventions and methods in public school systems (LaRue, Weiss, & Ferrailoli, 2008; Mueller & Nkosi, 2007). Behavioral consultation, however, has not only been proven as applicable, but perhaps some of its most salient features for schools are its flexibility and adaptability regarding implementation of interventions. In fact, Skinner & Hales (1992) remind consultants to be sure that consultees feel free to suggest adaptations of behavioral interventions that will best fit with the consultee's teaching style. By taking into account what the teacher already has in place in his or her classroom, the consultation process is building on what is already established rather than starting from scratch (Robbins & Gutkin, 1994). In fact, such efforts to utilize practices already in place have been shown to increase intervention implementation and treatment integrity after consultation is complete, issues that are frequently problems in establishing

effective consultative practices (Robbins & Gutkin, 1994). Examples of bridging the research to practice gap in school based behavioral consultation include maximizing natural reinforcers, considering a wide range of interventions to choose from, collecting meaningful data that will show consultees what is, or is not, working, and collaboration between the consultant and consultee (Kratochwill & VanSomeren, 1995).

Fixsen et. al. (2005) address the research to practice gap by reviewing the process of implementation, especially in terms of how implementation science is different from intervention science. Implementation is defined as a specified set of activities designed so that a program may be put into practice effectively (Fixsen et. al, 2005). A method of intervention may be evidence based, as are the various practice elements that make up behavioral consultation in schools, but the implementation of those efforts must be well defined and carefully evaluated to result in the intended effect for consumers (Fixsen et. al, 2005). The degrees of activity are identified in terms of paper implementation, including policies and procedures, process implementation, which is more of an expressed or active theory of change and includes the adoption of ideas and engaging in training, and performance implementation, which revolves more around integration of the theory of change via functional components of activity used with good effect for consumers (Fixsen et.al., 2005). The core components of an intervention practice or program are the most essential and indispensable features, as they specify which traits of a programs are replicable, how they are created, and where they are worth putting into place (Fixsen et. al., 2005). Examples include evidence based practices, such as skills, techniques, and strategies that can be used by the practitioner. Despite the lack of a large field of study on the implementation process, the ideas offered by the available literature

are informative and may provide useful ideas when considering active implementation of evidence based interventions.

The context of a community is a vital component of the implementation process, as change may be viewed with discomfort, uncertainty, and perhaps even hostility in some situations, especially when long-standing policies and procedures are called into question and up for revision when sticking with traditional methods is no longer the objective (Fixsen et. al., 2005). Areas that have been found as necessary components when attempting to work a new intervention or program into the makeup of an already established community are communication between all participants as well as the development of local champions who will consistently advocate for the change and encourage others to do so as well (Fixsen et.al, 2005).

More specifically to implementation within an educational setting, Fixsen et. al. (2005) review the early stages of preparation for adopting innovations as developing an understanding of the local big picture, including how the innovation can and will contribute to the larger agenda, mobilizing interest, especially by gathering support among key stakeholders and policy makers, and clarifying feasibility, such as how the functions of the intervention can be instituted through the existing infrastructure. Once an intervention has been selected, there are several essential components to the process of implementation at the conceptual level to consider. Essential adjustments to ensure desirable outcomes include changes in adult professional behaviors, changes in organizational structures and cultures, both formally and informally, as well as changes in relationships to consumers, stakeholders, and systems partners (Fixsen et. all, 2005). The process of preparing for, and engaging in, implementation of an intervention is a dynamic

one, requiring flexibility and movement between the various components of both the foundation and action (Fixsen et. al. 2005). Additionally, certain conditions must exist in order for the implementation of a program to be accomplished effectively and in an efficient way: information must be provided in an understandable way, all instrumentation must be available and applicable for the program, and incentive for participation in the program must be established (Maher, 1999).

The stages of actual implementation might include behaviors such as exploration and adoption of ideas, program installation, initial implementation, full operation, innovation, and sustainability (Fixsen et. al, 2005). These beginning stages can feel awkward to the individuals experiencing them, but Fixsen et. al. (2005) warn that effectiveness of an intervention or its implementation cannot be measured until the stages of implementation are complete, meaning innovation has been done thoughtfully and the process has been scrutinized to avoid program drift. The sustainability phase may be faced with various scenarios, such changes in staff, new problems, and the like, so implementation site leaders and staff must remain aware of the functional evidence based components of the intervention, as the goal during this stage is continued effectiveness (Fixsen et. al., 2005).

#### *Evidence Based Practice Elements of Behavioral Consultation in Schools*

Brinkman, Segool, Pham, and Carlson (2007) suggest the critical elements included in behavioral consultation should be identifying information, reason for referral, consent, problem solving techniques, background information, problem identification, data collection methodology, problem analysis, baseline data presentation, problem

definition, goal definition, treatment implementation, summative treatment evaluation, progress monitoring data presentation, formative treatment evaluation, summary, and recommendations. While these components may combine into an ideal consultative report, a more manageable set of evidence based practices may provide a more applicable combination of activities for behavioral consultation in schools. Mueller and Nkosi (2007) suggest a school wide model of behavior analytic consultation that includes a functional behavior assessment, functional analysis, treatment selection, treatment evaluation, teacher and staff training regarding treatment implementation, evaluation of implementation, generalization evaluations, and assessment of social validity issues.

In their chapter regarding best practices in school based problem solving consultation for school psychologists, Kratochwill, Elliott, and Callan-Stoiber (2002) describe the five stages of consultation as development of a relationship between the consultant and consultee, problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, and plan evaluation. During the problem identification stage, functional assessments, direct observations, interviews with teachers and staff, the completion of behavioral rating scales and checklists, and the collection of baseline data are included. These activities have the goal of operationally defining the behavior being targeted for change by understanding all aspects of its occurrence as well as the perspectives and goals of the individuals involved. During the problem analysis stage, antecedents and consequences are analyzed to determine the conditions under which the behavior occurs, as well as any additional influences predicting or maintaining the behavior (Kratochwill et. al., 2002). Plan implementation and evaluation stages include preparing and training for implementation, modeling intervention efforts, monitoring for effect, evaluating

outcomes based on predetermined goals, and making any necessary modification to the process (Kratochwill et. al, 2002).

Positive behavioral interventions for correcting behavior problems include, but are not limited to, differential reinforcement, behavioral momentum, school-home contingency notes, group contingencies, self-management (Bear, Cavalier, & Manning, 2002). Specific to behavior management in the classroom, evidence based practices include maximizing structure and predictability via high classroom structure and a physical arrangement that minimizes distraction; posting, teaching, reviewing, and providing feedback on expectations with active supervision of students' behavior; actively engaging students in observable ways with high rates of opportunities to respond, response cards, direct instruction, computer assisted instruction, classroom-wide peer tutoring, and guided notes; using a continuum of strategies to acknowledge appropriate behavior via specific and/or contingent praise and classroom-wide group contingencies, behavioral contracting, and token economies; and using a continuum of strategies to respond to inappropriate behavior by providing error corrections, performance feedback, differential reinforcement, planned ignoring plus contingent praise and/or instruction of classroom rules, response cost, and time out from reinforcement (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008).

Structure is defined as the extent to which classroom routines are explicitly defined as well as the physical design of the classroom (Simonsen et. al., 2008). By minimizing crowding and distraction and providing more structure, students have been shown to demonstrate more appropriate academic and social behaviors (Simonsen et. al., 2008). Establishing expectations for student behavior followed by posted rules, teaching

of behaviors, and active supervision, has resulted in gains in displays of desired student behaviors (Simonsen et. al., 2008). Actively engaging students in instruction results in it being difficult for students to engage in incompatible behaviors; therefore, increasing a student's opportunities to respond has shown a positive effect on behavior (Simonsen et. al., 2008).

By having several ways in which to respond to appropriate student behavior, teachers have more options and opportunities to acknowledge desired behavioral goals. Specific, contingent praise is a positive statement only provided upon the display of a desired behavior; group reinforcement contingencies are when a group of students earn a specified desired consequence based on the display of the entire group engaging in a certain behavior; behavior contracts include the written format of contingencies such as those previously mentioned; and token economies are where, upon display of a target behavior, students earn tangible tokens that have been paired with backup reinforcers and will be turned in for the preferred items or activities (Simonsen et. al., 2008).

Teachers also benefit from having multiple ways in which to respond to inappropriate student behavior. Error correction is the brief and specific explanation to a student of what he or she should be doing rather than what he or she is doing (Simonsen et. al., 2008). Though similar, performance feedback differs from error correction because students are given information on their behaviors in general, rather than only upon display of a specific target behavior (Simonsen et. al., 2008). Differential reinforcement is a reinforcement contingency where positive reinforcement is provided based on behaviors that qualify as incompatible, alternative, or other forms of behavior besides that behavior which has been targeted for decrease (Simonsen et. al., 2008). By



reinforcing behaviors besides those being targeted for decrease, teachers can maintain a routine of positive reinforcement while increasing the future likelihood of behaviors that will replace the problem behavior. This method of reinforcement is often easy for teachers to implement on a classroom-wide basis, though desired effects may take time. Planned ignoring is when teachers refrain from attending to behaviors that have been maintained by social attention; however, the effect of this intervention is related to the how reinforcing students view the teacher's attention (Simonsen et. al., 2008). Time out from reinforcement, which is the intervention's proper title despite its common abbreviation to simply "time out," is when a student is removed from the environment in which reinforcement is maintaining the display of that behavior (Simonsen et. al., 2008). While evidence based as an effective tool for reducing the future likelihood of problem behaviors, time out from reinforcement may be an intervention that is harder to put into practice in classrooms. In order for it to be effective, the student must be removed from all reinforcement according to the function of the behavior; in schools, not only may such situations be difficult to create due to lack of space, but having a student miss out on instructional time in the classroom might become cause for concern and an obstacle to effective implementation of this intervention.

#### *Various Practices & Methods of Consultation in Schools*

Successful consultants are currently described as possessing interpersonal skills that have been determined important for effective consultation. Establishing rapport, displaying interest in both the referral problem and the referral person, displaying a willingness to get involved, facilitating expertly, and displaying competence during

interpersonal encounters have been ranked by teachers as the most important factors in consultation (Knoff, Sullivan, & Liu, 1995; Skinner & Hales, 1992). In fact, so important are these interpersonal aspects that teachers ranked them higher than the consultant's experience in the field (Knoff, Sullivan, & Liu, 1995). This provides hope for even those school psychologists who are less experienced in behaviorally based consultation, as other interpersonal skills that can be taught, learned, and applied immediately, even during their early consultation efforts, have been reported as more important to teachers than basic experience is.

Various methods of consulting in schools have been utilized over the years. Traditionally, school consultation was linked with Bandura's Social Learning Theory as well as an ecological framework (Kratochwill & Sladeczek, 1995). Additionally, consultation within schools has traditionally been conducted with teachers, where teachers take on the role of mediator between the consultant and the student displaying the problem behavior (Kratochwill & Sladeczek, 1995). Several advances in the field of school based consultation, however, have resulted in newer models of intervention, such as parent-based consultation, parent-teacher consultation, child-based consultation, peer-mediated consultation, pre-referral and behavioral consultation teams, school-wide or district-wide consultation, and even consultation via technology and teacher training (Kratochwill & Sladeczek, 1995). Additionally, a more recent form of behavioral consultation that focuses on more of a direct than indirect approach is offered by Watson & Sterling-Turner (2008).

Tools for use before behavioral consultation may be implemented within a school include the Evidence Based Practice Attitude Scale (E-BPAS) and the Organizational

Readiness to Change Scale (ORC), both targeting the readiness of a context before an evidence based intervention is introduced (Fixsen et. al., 2005). Such methods of surveying attitude and readiness before even introducing a novel concept or idea may assist in gaining a better understanding of the context in which the consultation will take place, including areas that may be targeted for growth and/or support.

It is evident throughout the literature that various tools for increasing the effectiveness, efficiency, and application of behavioral consultation in schools have been developed throughout the years. Amongst the various models of behavioral consultation, these tools include, but are not limited to, supports for the beginning stages of consultation, such as reinforcement inventories, the Problem Identification Interview, and the Academic Competence Evaluation Scale (Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990; Diperna et. al., 2000 as cited in Kratochwill, 2008; Wilkinson, 2003). Supports for the planning and implementation stages include user-friendly behavior rating scales, target behavior checklists, the Treatment Monitoring Interview, and the Academic Intervention Monitoring system (Diperna et. al., 2000 as cited in Kratochwill, 2008; Wilkinson, 2003). Finally, supports for the process and evaluation of consultation efforts include the Consultation Evaluation Form (Erchul, 1987).

### *Implications & Ideas for the Future of Behavioral Consultation in Schools*

Now that behavioral consultation has been determined a successful, evidence based intervention in schools that is highly preferred by professionals within the fields of special and general education for both remediation and prevention of problem behaviors, Robbins & Gutkin (1994) suggest an area for additional focus in the future might be

answering the question of what kind of consultation efforts work for which kinds of students and consultees in which kinds of settings. Kratochwill & VanSomeren (1995) suggest more research is warranted to determine when more assessments, whether psychoeducational, behavioral, or otherwise, are necessary and useful for the information they add. They also suggest research on the relationship factors between the consultant and consultee that go into consultation, as these appear to be viewed by consultees as just as important as the content areas addressed during the consultation process (Kratochwill & VanSomeren, 1995).

On the consultant's part, Axelrod, Moyer, & Berry (1990) remind consultants that if they are expecting improved outcomes, from either teachers, students, or both, it may require changes in the efforts of the consultant. If current actions and efforts are not resulting in what a consultant expected or hoped for (i.e. the consultant's input is not resulting in the desired output), the consultant should consider that a change in practice may be required to result in a change in product. Putnam, Luiselli, & Jefferson (2002) remind consultants that ensuring early work, such as problem identification, matches with the desired outcomes, such as goals for intervention, is essential for choosing the appropriate type and course of treatment. Segool, Pham, & Carlson (2007) suggest more formalized treatment approaches may be the answer in such cases. Watson & Sterling-Turner (2008) suggest that making behavioral consultation more of a direct, rather than traditionally indirect, service delivery model may alleviate such disconnects between input and output.

### *Use of Electronic Surveys*

The use of a survey as a means of gathering information about a target population may be considered a standard practice in the field of research and development. Surveys are implemented in various forms, such as in-person polling, focus groups, and distributed paper surveys, to name a few. The process of surveying people for sought-after information ranges flexibly, depending on the surveyor's goals and needs. Customer satisfaction surveys are often seen as an anonymous way for clients or customers to provide feedback. Surveys may include questions regarding broad or specific subject matter, including anything from how they were treated, in general, to how a certain product suited their needs, in particular. Surveys allow researchers to gather information on a few or many things and provide a method of doing so anonymously, if desired. A new form of the traditional survey, however, is adding even more flexibility and utility to this age-old process of collecting information: the electronic survey.

The electronic survey may become the only type of survey used for the upcoming generation of researchers. With the growth of the internet and the ever increasing use of online communication tools, such as email, chat rooms, websites, and the like, the electronic survey is quickly becoming a popular method of polling a target population for their thoughts and opinions. Shannon et. al. (2002) explain that the popularity and use of the electronic survey is with good reason, as this new method brings with it several advantages over the traditional survey methods; however, as with any new idea, there are several limitations that researchers continue to work out when implementing the electronic survey. A search of the literature on electronic surveys, as well as of the dissertation abstracts database, found that electronic surveys are on the rise as far as using

them to gain information from a target audience. Dissertations available via the Dissertations and Theses search engine revealed 1156 dissertations that included the use of an “electronic” or “online” survey. Out of these dissertations, 946 of them, or 82.1%, were produced within the last 5 years (since 2004), showing the rapid increase in the frequency of the electronic survey since its first inclusion in a dissertation in 1982. However, the electronic format is not yet the prevailing method of obtaining information via survey across all research methods, a statistic most likely due to the nature of its limitations and caveats (Shannon et. al., 2002).

The electronic survey is defined as a survey that is distributed electronically. One of these methods includes via email, where the survey material is embedded in the body of an email message; by opening the email, the recipient is able to read the entire survey (Shannon et. al., 2002). In order to respond to an emailed survey, the recipient must understand the process of replying and typing in his or her answers once the email is in reply mode. Additionally, the responder must understand that the survey must be sent back to the distributor via a reply email. If the responder does not enter reply mode before responding, his or her answers will be for naught. Additionally, if the responder does not send the reply email, his or her answers will not reach the surveyor. An understanding of such technical processes is necessary for an emailed survey to receive a high response rate. An additional limitation to the electronic survey implemented via email is that, while it is easy to open and read, the process of responding is virtually impossible to make anonymous. The survey will be sent back to the surveyor with the respondent’s email address evident, possibly leading some respondents to either not

participate or to answer in a manner that is affected by the fact that their responses will be identifiable.

Another, and even older, version of the electronic survey is a method that was implemented via the use of floppy disks (Shannon et. al, 2002). Utilizing this method meant the surveyor would create a survey on the computer and then save the survey to multiple floppy disks. The disks were then delivered to targeted responders. Responders would put the disks into their computers, access the survey, input their responses, resave the survey to the disk, and return the disk to the surveyor. Limitations to this process included fiscal resources, in the cost of the disks and delivery, as well as temporal resources, in the time it took to save the survey to, and then open the surveys from, each individual disk used in the process (Shannon et. al., 2002). Limitations to the floppy disk electronic format included not just the technological understanding that is assumed in this process, but the number of things that could impede the process, such as the disk being lost in transit, the responder making a mistake in saving his/her completed version of the survey, or the disk simply not working correctly in one computer versus another.

The newest, and possibly best yet, version of the electronic survey is the use of a URL or World Wide Web (www) address, where the survey is uploaded by the researcher to a website and saved so that it can be viewed by targeted responders (Shannon et. al, 2002). By posting the survey online at its own dedicated web address, targeted responders may receive the survey in a less laborious process as compared to previous methods. The web address may be distributed via email, letter, fax, phone call, and the like. However, the responder must have an understanding of following the active hyperlink or typing the web address in so that he or she may navigate to the survey's web

location (Shannon et. al. 2002). Once the responder has access to the survey, he or she may view and provide answers anonymously. Questions may be skipped at will, and the responder even has the option of opting out of participating at any time by quitting the survey operation. Whether a responder completes a few questions, all of the survey, or views it and decides against participating, actions of respondents may be kept anonymous to the surveyor. Data can be analyzed after the survey is closed to ensure confidentiality even further. Overall, web-based electronic surveys allow for quick delivery and easy return, enable the researcher to reach many potential respondents, and web-based survey services often include data summarization tools (Jansen, Corley, & Jansen, 2007). However, such web-based electronic surveys can also result in a lack of control over the sample, as the identity of actual respondents may be unknown, leading to the possibility of unintended respondents as well as multiple responses from the same participant (Jansen, Corley, & Jansen, 2007).

While this latest version of the electronic survey appears to be the most efficient and useful method in the field thus far, it brings with it its own set of limitations (Shannon et. al, 2002). As with any electronic survey, the survey posted online limits its responders to not only those with access to a computer, but those with access to the internet. Along with that, the credibility of the sample may be uncertain, as recipients may have shared the web address with others whom the researcher had not originally intended to include in the targeted sample population (Jansen, Corley, & Jansen, 2007; Ye, 2007). However, the chances of such may be reduced by providing respondents with passwords or personal identification numbers in order to access the survey, though such



identity markers may raise the uncertainty of responders who feel uncertain about the confidentiality or anonymity of the survey process itself.

Advantages of the electronic survey via website posting include the possibility of pre and post alerts to targeted recipients (Shannon et. al., 2002). Researchers may get increased responses when follow-up email reminders are provided (Ye, 2007). The survey will remain posted online as long as the process is open and, therefore, the researcher can make multiple attempts to alert responders to the survey through notifications, reminders, and follow-up requests via email, letter, fax, and the like (Ye, 2007). A caution with email contact, however, is that emails should only be sent to those individuals who have published their email addresses or voluntarily provided their email addresses to be included in such a recipient pool (Shannon et. al, 2002). Additionally, to increase the chances that the rate of response will be high, researchers should ensure the email addresses obtained are reliable. Instructions to targeted responders should be clear and explicit, including the purpose of the survey and the possible motivation the responder might have to participate (Shannon et. al., 2002). Finally, contact information should be provided, in case the responder has questions or concerns regarding the survey and/or process. Researchers should be cautious, however, as most online surveys are responded to from a self-selected sample of respondents, namely individuals who may spend more time on the computer or are more comfortable with the format of an electronic survey than others, creating a sample that is more homogeneous than randomly selected (Ye, 2007).

Regardless of whether a survey is delivered electronically or otherwise, its content, design, and implementation should be considered in order to ensure a high

response rate (Lumsden, 2007). Additionally, the questions posed should target all of the information necessary for the research at hand, but without additional questions that have no bearing on the subject matter. Motivation to targeted responders should be stated clearly and may be explained in terms of how the outcomes of the research will benefit the responders themselves. If the electronic survey is easily accessible, additional tangible rewards may be unnecessary (Shannon et. al., 2002).

As with all electronic surveys, targeted responders must have access to the electronic technology necessary to access and respond to the electronic survey. While the method of electronic communication provides access to people who might not have been able to respond via traditional methods, it also creates a truncated group of responders that includes only those individuals with enough access to, and understanding of, technology to make it a possibility. Even if the overall rate of response to an electronic survey is more than would be via traditional survey methods, the group of responders will all be from within the subset of the population that has access to electronic methods of communication. Researchers who use electronic surveys should consider this when deciding whether or not an electronic survey would be right for their targeted population of responders (Shannon et. al., 2002).

### *Summary*

Behavioral consultation has been established as a valuable intervention for managing the challenging behaviors of students within public school systems, focusing on utilizing environmental variables to change behaviors. Additionally, behavioral consultation is an evidence based intervention that can be utilized within general and

special education settings. Results from behavioral consultation efforts include a decrease in referral rates and the generalization of skills taught to teachers across educational settings (Witt & Elliott, 1983). Areas for additional focus in the future might include determining specific consultation efforts for specific students, consultees, and settings as well as determining when additional educational assessments are necessary.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

#### ABSTRACT

This chapter describes the process of developing the electronic Behavior Management Survey utilized in these dissertation efforts, building the database of respondents, and distributing the electronic survey to as many members of the targeted population as possible. Additionally, how the author made use of an online survey production service for development and distribution of the Behavior Management Survey as well as in the process of analysis of the results is clarified. The process of developing the guide to behavior management within New Jersey public school systems based on a review of relevant literature and survey results is described. Finally, the way in which the guide to behavior management was shared with interested respondents, while maintaining anonymity as the level of item response, is addressed.

*Building the Database of Respondents*

The State of New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) website provides the county, county number, school district number, and contact information, including name, title, mailing address, and phone number, for each of the directors or coordinators of special education in school districts across the state of New Jersey. The NJDOE website provides a link to this information under the "school directory download" menu item of "special education coordinators." Another link available under the "school directory download" menu is "school districts," a database that includes a listing of the county, town, school district number, school district name, superintendent's name, mailing address, and phone number, board secretary's name, mailing address, and phone number, business administrator's name, mailing address, and phone number, special education coordinator's name, mailing address, and phone number, and, finally, the website address for each school district in New Jersey. According to the information provided by the NJDOE, there are 660 school districts listed with 658 professionals identified as holding the title of special education coordinator for their school district. For some school districts listed as having no such person in the position of special education coordinator, administrative information is provided. The NJDOE directory included professionals from all of the twenty-one counties of New Jersey; however, comprehensive contact information was not available for all school district personnel.

By utilizing the information provided between the NJDOE school district and special education coordinators directories, the author visited each school district's website and searched for the email address of the coordinator or director of special education services, by either name or title. Email contact information was obtained so

that the electronic Behavior Management Survey could be distributed to as many coordinators and directors of special education services in school districts across the state of New Jersey as possible. Limitations met during this process, however, included school districts' websites that were not in service, under construction, or simply not working properly. Additionally, several websites did not offer email contact information for school district personnel. In other cases, school district websites did not list a special education coordinator in their staff directory, either by the name in the NJDOE directory, or by title. For those targeted respondents whose contact information was obtained, participants were invited to share access to the electronic survey with colleagues whose responses might add valuable information and whom may also benefit from the opportunity to receive the analyzed results and guide to behavior management in public school systems, which would be developed based on a review of relevant literature as well as survey results. In recognition of the fact that participants from various professional role groups may respond, a survey item was added for the purposes of data analysis in which respondents were asked to clarify the position they currently hold within their school districts.

### *Creating the Electronic Behavior Management Survey*

This dissertation sought to gain perspective on the current practices of school systems across the state of New Jersey regarding managing the challenging behaviors of students. Particularly, Behavior Management Survey items were developed to gain perspective on how and why school districts decide to spend, or not spend, resources, such as time, money, and personnel, on managing the challenging behaviors of students.

At the time of this dissertation, behavioral consultation practices across New Jersey public school systems were hypothesized as extremely varied, according to the author's professional experience. Neither federal, state, regular, nor special educational law requires that a behavioral consultant be maintained on the staff of a school in New Jersey. Based on the professional experiences of the author, some New Jersey school districts currently go to great lengths to secure a behavioral consultant on staff while other school districts allot a certain amount of money for sporadic behavioral consultation as needed. Finally, some school districts in New Jersey refrain from obtaining professional behavioral consultation services at all.

While there are laws guiding consequences for students who engage in high-risk behaviors, such as bringing a weapon to school, school districts remain autonomous across the state of New Jersey in terms of how they deal with the everyday challenging behaviors of their students, such as noncompliance, nonviolent classroom disruption, and the like. However, special education law mandates the manifestation determination process, which states that any student who is known as or suspected of having a disability cannot be suspended for more than ten days within a school year without that student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team meeting to discuss whether or not the behavior in question is a manifestation of that student's disability (IDEA, 2004). In such cases, if the IEP team decides that the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability, a plan of action must be decided upon in response to the behavior. In other words, the school's policy of automatic suspension for certain behaviors might not be implemented for this student, depending on the IEP team's decision. Regardless, the manifestation

determination meeting must be held to discuss the student's disability, behavior, and how to proceed in response to the behavioral infraction.

Special education law also states that schools must include a functional behavior assessment in the evaluation process of a student suspected of having a disability if and when that student's behavior is also determined as a factor interfering with the learning of that student or other students (IDEA, 2004). Students who are referred for psychoeducational assessment to determine whether or not they are eligible for special education and related services are considered within the "suspicion of a disability" category from the moment the referral is submitted; such students are therefore afforded both a manifestation determination and/or functional behavior assessment when their behavior warrants either (IDEA, 2004). Additionally, positive behavior supports are now included as interventions necessary as ways schools must prove their efforts to maintain special education students in their least restrictive learning environments, or LREs (IDEA, 2004). With such demands to respond to challenging behaviors of special education students and students suspected of having a disability at all stages of the referral and evaluation process, especially when that behavior is affecting the student's learning or the learning of others, some New Jersey school districts have decided to dedicate resources to obtain a professional behavior consultant. The behavior consultant is usually an individual who specializes in assessment of challenging behaviors as well as application and implementation of evidence based behavioral interventions and supports in school settings.

After each survey respondent was asked to provide his or her role group (i.e. child study team member, director or coordinator of special education, other), survey items



asked for demographic information about each school district, including total and type of the student population served. The respondent was then asked whether or not his or her school district currently had an approach to addressing the challenging behaviors of students. A separate question asked the respondent which, if any, methods his or her school district used to manage challenging behaviors of students, such as teacher workshops, classroom observations, behavior intervention plans, teacher or parent consultation, and the like. Whether or not their school districts were currently engaging in any efforts, respondents were asked what efforts, in their professional opinion, might benefit their school districts in managing the challenging behaviors of students.

Whether or not a school district has chosen to secure professional services for behavior management consultation, there are usually students who require supports or interventions for their challenging behaviors supplementary to those provided to all students. Respondents were asked who would be the professional to guide their school team in providing such services (i.e. a member of school personnel with that job description, an out-of-district professional, other). Respondents were also asked whether behavior management services and procedures were currently utilized in special education, regular education, or both settings within their school districts and if, or how, such services have been documented. A survey item also sought to gain perspective on how immediate consequences for high-risk behaviors, such as fighting or bringing a weapon to school, are determined (i.e. according to a school- or district-wide behavior response crisis plan, individually on a case by case basis, other).

Respondents were asked to share their professional perspectives regarding how they feel about their schools' efforts at managing the challenging behaviors of students.

Additionally, respondents were asked whether or not they consider behavior management outcomes as worth the resources expended to achieve them. Respondents were also asked to rank the benefits of managing the challenging behaviors of students in terms of greatest perceived benefit to the school, including reduction of behaviorally-based referrals to special education, improved displays of student behavior, improved satisfaction of school personnel, and the like. Finally, regardless how they felt about the possible outcomes, respondents were asked whether or not they considered their school districts as currently having the resources to support and manage the challenging behaviors of their students.

With the goal of obtaining enough information to gain perspective on the current status and utilization of behavioral management and behavioral consultation services in public schools across the state of New Jersey, motivation to respond was provided. Respondents were invited to provide their contact information, email or other, which would be kept separate from their survey responses in order to maintain anonymity at the level of their answers to survey items. The contact information would be used to provide the survey findings, analyzed after all responses were collected, and/or the guide to behavior management in public school systems, which would be developed based upon a review of relevant literature and the survey findings.

The Behavior Management Survey itself was developed by use of an online tool called Survey Monkey. With the purchase of an annual subscription to Survey Monkey, the author was able to develop a survey that included various types of questions, such as multiple choice, fill in, or a combination of the two. After the survey was developed and saved, it was assigned its own web address, a functioning hyperlink that could then be

copied and pasted into the body of an email or letter so that targeted respondents could follow the hyperlink to the survey and respond. The hyperlink itself could also be copied by recipients and pasted into other email messages so that targeted respondents could share the survey with colleagues and other professionals in managing the challenging behaviors of students. Included in the subscription services, the Survey Monkey website collected the responses and analyzed the results by survey item.

### *Distributing the Behavior Management Survey*

The goals of distributing the electronic Behavior Management Survey were to make it easily accessible for as many respondents as possible. The survey's website address hyperlink was embedded into the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) approved informed consent, which made up the body of an email letter. The original informed consent also functioned as the recruitment notice, explaining the purpose and goals of the survey and dissertation and inviting the recipient to both partake in the survey as well as provide his or her contact information to receive the results of the survey and behavior management guidelines. The letter to participate in the survey was sent via email to the 598 email addresses of the target population, including special education coordinators, directors, or other contacts when coordinators' or directors' email addresses were not published. Based on feedback that the combination recruitment notice and informed consent letter was too long, a follow-up cover letter was submitted to and approved by the IRB. Three weeks after the original email distribution, an IRB-approved follow-up email was sent to all targeted responders, thanking them if they had already responded and encouraging those that had not yet responded to do so. A limitation of the use of an

electronic survey was that those members of the population of New Jersey special education coordinators and directors without access to the internet, if any, or without the technological capability to follow a hyperlink might not be able to access the survey to provide their responses. Those directors and coordinators whose emails were unobtainable were invited to participate by an IRB-approved letter sent via the postal service; however, this method was less than ideal, as it meant the respondent would have to hand type the hyperlink into the address bar, which increased the level of effort required for participation. Recipients of letters sent via regular mail were invited to contact the author for an emailed invitation, but doing so also required increased effort.

With the total population of special education directors and coordinators totaling approximately 658 across twenty-one counties in the state of New Jersey, the goal in terms of total number of responses was determined to be a minimum of 10%, or approximately sixty-six respondents. Since this research effort was one of the first of its kind, it was extremely difficult for the author to predict the rate of response or representativeness of the final sample. Additionally, despite arduous research efforts, usable contact information was only obtained for 598 directors and coordinators across the state of New Jersey; therefore, approximately sixty individuals from the target population were unreachable for participation from the start. With the goal of gaining an understanding of the current practices and perspectives of educational leaders within New Jersey public school systems, distribution of the electronic survey revolved around an initial invitation to participate, including coherent instructions and guidelines for potential respondents, as well as systematic follow-through, via two additional recruitment notices after the original invitation.

The original recruitment letter, as well as subsequent follow-up notices, invited recipients to share the electronic survey link with colleagues who also might be interested in providing valuable insight regarding the behavior management efforts currently in place in their school districts. The decision to open the invitation to additional participants was made so that a larger number of responses would be more likely, thereby adding to the sum of professional knowledge collected during this process. By inviting members of the target population to include other professionals as they saw fit, the information collected was considered valuable, as the additional participants were invited by members of the target population themselves based on their involvement in behavior management activities in their school systems.

When emailed recruitment notices were returned to sender due to faulty email addresses or changes in personnel, the author returned to the original method of searching for updated contact information on respective school districts' websites. Additional attempts at contact were made in several cases, including emailing the webmaster of the school's website or a member of the Child Study Team, such as the school psychologist. In the few cases where personnel could be verified, but contact via email was not possible, recruitment letters were sent via regular mail; no letters were returned to sender.

### *Collecting & Analyzing the Behavior Management Survey Results*

Approximately seven weeks after the original letter of invitation was distributed to targeted participants, the 124 survey responses collected were summarized. Responses to each of the survey items were then analyzed, first describing responses separately by item, and then considering trends or patterns, to gain an understanding of the current

practices in behavior management and consultation within public school systems across the state of New Jersey.

The first item of the Behavior Management Survey provided information about the participants, including how they identify professionally and the makeup of the student populations they serve. This was to gain an understanding of whose professional opinions were being represented by the survey data collected, including which types of student populations the information could be considered representative of. The next series of questions pertained to the current services in place, including what activities respondents' school districts currently engage in, how successful the outcomes have been, and what additional activities might be beneficial. Questions regarding resources expended on behavior management efforts attempted to capture the professional opinions of participants, including whether their school districts had ample resources to support behavior management efforts and whether or not they felt the outcomes were worth the resources expended. By comparing the answers to these questions with one another, it was possible to establish trends and summary statements regarding how professional opinions, practices, and available resources affect the overall approach to behavior management in New Jersey public school systems. Interestingly, the survey item regarding whether or not school districts currently have the resources necessary for behavior management efforts received the greatest amount of written in commentary from respondents, which was considered in the data analysis.

Several survey items pertained to understanding who New Jersey professionals turn to in times of need regarding managing the challenging behaviors of students. By gathering information regarding the relationship between job descriptions and actual

responsibilities, trends became apparent. Additionally, relationships between the availability of resources for behavior management services and the decisions to use personnel from within district or outside of district were compared. When it comes to crisis situations involving high-risk behaviors, district personnel were asked to describe their protocol of action, be it predetermined or decided on a case-by-case basis. Again, descriptive analysis allowed for an overall depiction of current practices, as well as ideas for such situations in the future.

Finally, survey items attempted to understand the goals and potential outcomes of behavior management efforts in New Jersey public school systems, asking respondents to rank the provided choices and/or write in their own. Gathering information about outcome goals provided knowledge about the reasons why some school districts have established certain activities as priority while others have not. Additionally, relationships between survey items addressing desired goals versus resources expended and overall outcomes allowed for several summary statements regarding how New Jersey professionals perceive their own efforts and measure their own success with managing the challenging behaviors of their students.

### *Developing the Guidelines*

The guide to behavior management in public school systems was based on information collected from the Behavior Management Survey of New Jersey professionals as well as a review of relevant literature. The outline of the guidelines is based on several sources, including Maher's (1999) program planning and evaluation framework, Fixsen et. al's (2005) research on the process of implementation, and the

author's professional experience in the field of behavioral consultation in schools.

Throughout development, the author consulted relevant literature on evidence based interventions, the utilization of school based behavioral consultation, current practices within the fields of education and school psychology, and the process of implementation of programmatic change. Of invaluable influence were the opinions and thoughts of the professionals who partook in the survey, providing information on current practices and perspectives across New Jersey's public schools. By gaining insight from professionals currently involved in managing the behaviors of students in New Jersey's public school systems, the author was able to consider activities already in place as well as targeted outcomes and relevant areas of concern, thereby developing an applicable set of guidelines based on the reported needs and resources available in New Jersey public school systems.

The guidelines were developed so that public school systems at various levels of commitment to behavior management efforts could use them to address their current needs or circumstances. A visual display of various tiers of intervention includes a choice of levels for implementation of services, outlining activities each stage that can be adapted according to the school's capacity. The timeline of the guide follows an academic year, though there is flexibility in application. Activities are described in chronological order with a flow chart depiction of efforts. Methods of evaluating progress and deciding the future course of actions are provided. Roles and responsibilities for all behavior management program participants are operationally defined, as are practice elements and programmatic tasks. Finally, visual displays depict ideal and acceptable variations of the program components.



The author's anticipation is that the guide will be an ongoing resource for public school systems regarding behavior management approaches and activities, regardless of the level of commitment, availability of resources, or student population. Not only will school districts be able to use the guide as a resource for implementation, but also as a basis by which to compare current practices already established within a school district, thereby utilizing the information in the guide to supplement any areas of need in their established efforts. With a user-friendly format, the guide to behavior management for public school systems provides scientific information in a coherent and accurate way. The guide was developed for application and strives to be an accommodating and supportive resource for public school systems.

#### *Distributing the Guidelines*

Survey respondents were invited to provide their contact information if interested in obtaining the guide to behavior management in public school systems based on the findings of the Behavior Management Survey as well as a review of relevant literature. A total of seventy-five participants communicated interest in receiving the guidelines; all provided email addresses. Information collected from this survey item was kept separate from all other items, thereby ensuring anonymity of at the level of item responses. Once developed and finalized by the author, a copy of the guide, in pdf format, was emailed to each participant who expressed interest. Recipients were invited to provide feedback to the author about the guide, including implementation and outcomes. Additionally, recipients of the guide were invited to contact the author at any time in the future, should any questions or concerns arise throughout their behavior management efforts.

*Summary*

An electronic Behavior Management Survey was developed and its electronic link was distributed to coordinators and directors of special education in New Jersey. The goal of the survey was to gain perspective on the current status and utilization of behavior management consultation efforts in public school systems across the state. Contact information of respondents was obtained from the New Jersey Department of Education's online directories. A total of 124 survey responses were collected over a period of seven weeks. A guide to behavior management in public school systems was developed, based on reported needs and available resources collected via the Behavior Management Survey as well as a review of relevant literature. A copy of the survey results and guide to behavior management was emailed to each participant who expressed interest, along with the invitation to provide feedback on implementation and outcomes.

## CHAPTER IV

### REVIEW AND SUMMARY OF RESULTS

#### Abstract

This chapter reviews the data collected throughout the electronic Behavior Management Survey process, analyzes the data in terms of trends across areas of focus, and summarizes the findings into useful and applicable practice ideas and elements. Discussion of the usefulness and applicability of these research findings are included. Several limitations of this research effort, as well as ideas for future focus of related research, are discussed. Finally, the intended use of the Behavior Management Survey findings with the guide to implementation of behavior management programming is described.

### *Analysis of Behavior Management Survey Respondents*

A total of 124 electronic survey participants responded over a period of approximately seven weeks. While the recruitment letter originally targeted directors and coordinators of special education services across the state of New Jersey, it also invited them to share the survey with colleagues in the field of special education, particularly those professionals engaging or sharing in the experience of managing the challenging behaviors of students. There were a total of 130 responses to the first survey question, displaying the fact that several survey respondents identified themselves with more than one professional role group in their school districts at the time of survey participation.

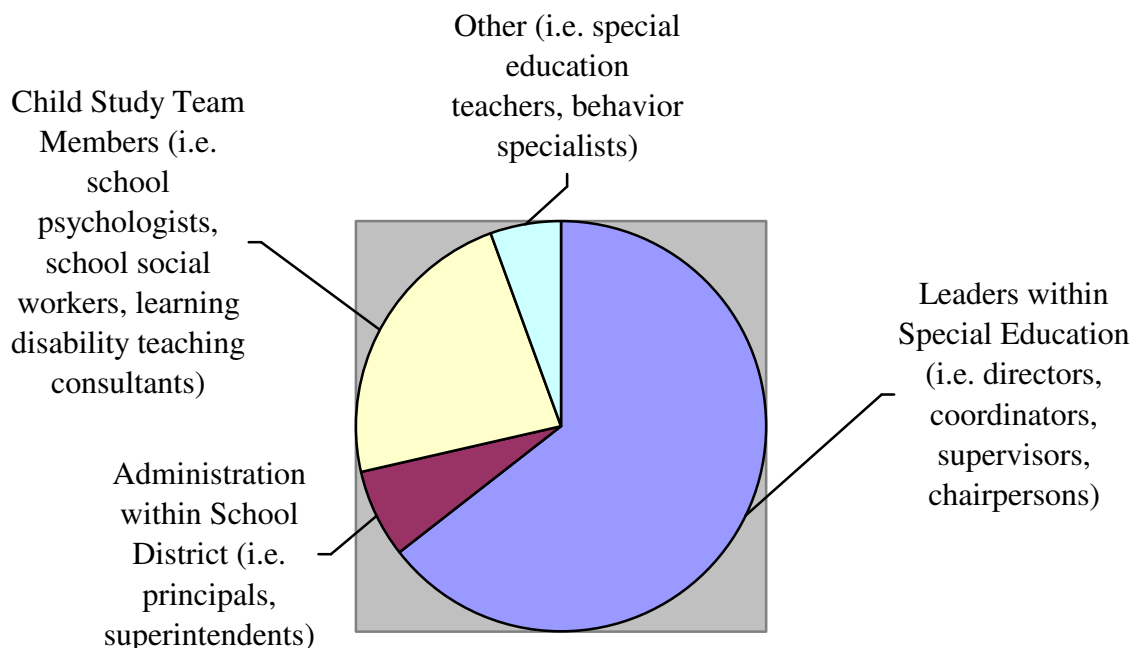


Figure 4.1. Analysis of survey respondents by professional role group; based on 130 responses.

Figure 4.1 displays the makeup of the final survey response sample by professional role group, as identified by respondents. Of the 130 responses to the first survey item, which asked respondents to identify their professional role within their school districts, 43.1%, or fifty-six individuals, identified themselves with the title of Director of Special Services and 13.8% of the respondents, or eighteen individuals, identified with the title of Coordinator of Special Education. Another 5.4%, or seven individuals, identified themselves with the title of Director or Supervisor, though their areas of supervision varied, including special services, student services, early childhood, and special education. Another 2.3%, or three individuals, identified themselves as Child Study Team Chairpersons. Therefore, the majority, or 64.6%, of the survey respondents may be considered leaders in special education in public school systems across the state of New Jersey, representing directors, coordinators, and administrators in various areas of special education who are currently working to manage the challenging behaviors of students. Of note is that the New Jersey Department of Education's online directory includes Child Study Team chairpersons, superintendents, and administrators when there are no directors or coordinators of special education services available.

Also of note is that 6.9% of the respondents, or nine individuals, identified themselves as superintendents, assistant superintendents, or chief school administrators, representing educational administration. Another 23.1%, or thirty individuals, identified themselves as child study team members, while 3.1%, or four individuals, described themselves as behavior specialists and 2.3%, or three individuals, were reported as special education teachers. Therefore, the professional makeup of survey respondents may be considered a good sample of the various professionals coming into contact with

issues related to behavior management of students within New Jersey public school systems. The respondents in the categories of leaders or educational administrators may be involved at the decision-making levels related to budget and resources while the Child Study Team members, behavior specialists, and teachers may be involved on more of the day-to-day basis, dealing with students and their challenging behaviors.

For the purposes of gathering information about the types of school districts represented in this research sample, respondents were asked how they would describe their school districts in terms of demographic classification. The majority, or 67.5%, of respondents described their school districts as suburban. Another 23.6% of respondents described their school districts as rural, while 7.3% reported that urban best describes their school districts, and 1.6% could not decide.

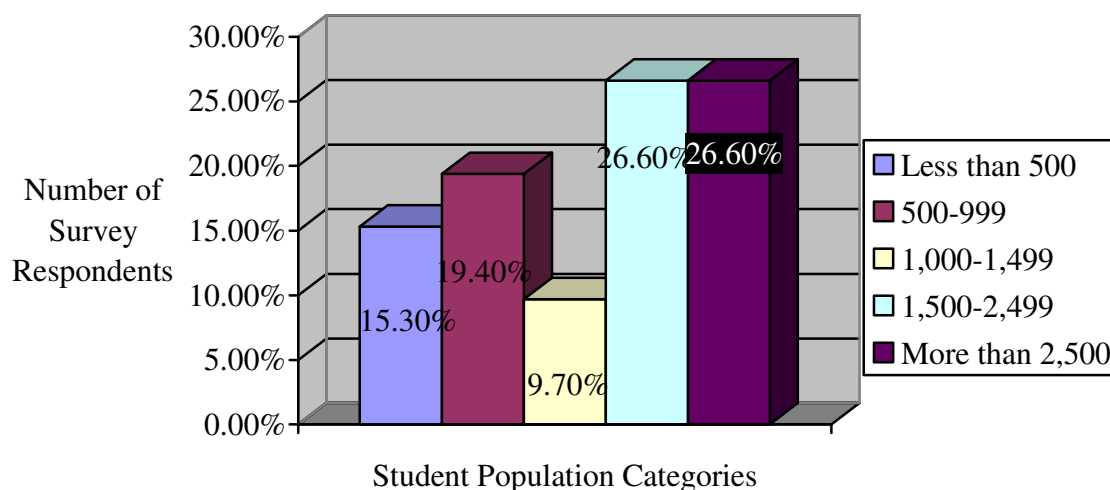


Figure 4.2. Survey responses by student population size; based on 124 responses.

Respondents were also asked to clarify how many students are currently attending the schools or school districts for which their survey responses pertain; 124 respondents provided answers to this survey item. Figure 4.2 displays the make-up of survey responses as related to student population reports. According to respondents, 26.6% of survey responses collected in this investigation represent populations of 1,500-2,499 students and another 26.6% of survey responses represent populations of more than 2,500 students. 19.4% of survey responses represent populations of 500-999 students while another 15.3% of survey responses represent populations of less than 500 students. 9.7% of survey responses represent populations of 1,000-1,499 students. Finally, 1.6% of respondents were not sure the size of their student population.

This information is valuable as it allows us to understand that the majority, or 53.2%, of the survey responses collected during this research represent populations of either 1,500-2,499 students or more than 2,500 students. However, it should be noted that the next largest group represented in survey respondents (34.7%) are schools or school districts with less than 999 students. Therefore, the actions described by survey respondents are, for the most part, attributed to New Jersey schools or school districts serving either less than 1,000 students or more than 1,500 students. This information should be considered in terms of representativeness of the data collected here compared to the target population.

Additional information regarding grade levels served was reported by survey respondents. The majority of survey respondents, approximately 70%, report serving populations of students ranging from early childhood through twelfth grade; therefore, the behavior management services described by the majority of the survey respondents

represent actions across all grades in public education. However, it should be noted that the next largest population represented by approximately 30% of survey respondents are the secondary levels, or seventh through twelfth grades only; therefore, behavior management services described by these survey respondents are pertinent for secondary grade levels, which is, again, important when considering the representative nature of the professional perspectives and practices included in this study. Figure 4.3 provides a visual representation of the grade levels serviced by survey respondents.

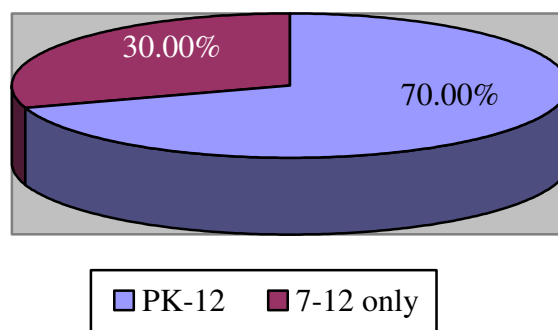


Figure 4.3. NJ grade levels served by survey respondents; based on 124 responses.

The results of this survey initiative are considered useful and informative because all respondents were identified from professional role groups intricately involved with the management of students' challenging behaviors within their school districts. In order to create a set of guidelines that could be found useful across the state of New Jersey, this research sought to be representative of the majority of current perspectives and practices.



### *Analysis of Behavior Management Survey Results*

The results of the Behavior Management Survey presented here are based on a sample size of 124, which included 84 members of the original target population as listed in the New Jersey Department of Education's directory of directors and coordinators of special education or other administrators in addition to another 40 individuals who were invited to participate by members of the target population and who identified themselves with the professional role groups of Child Study Team members, behavior specialists, and special education teachers. Although statistics beyond those that are descriptive in nature cannot be provided due to anonymity afforded to respondents at the item level, the resulting information is considered valuable. By utilizing descriptive statistics to examine the survey results, one can gain an understanding of current practices and perspectives within New Jersey public school systems. However, further information on limitations of this research, as well as ideas for future improvements, are included in their respective sections.

In order to understand the current practices in public school systems across the state of New Jersey, survey respondents were asked to share whether or not their school districts currently have an approach to address the challenging behaviors of students to ultimately increase their chances of learning successfully. Figure 4.5 displays how this sample of professionals from New Jersey public school systems endorsed whether or not their school districts are currently providing behavior management services.

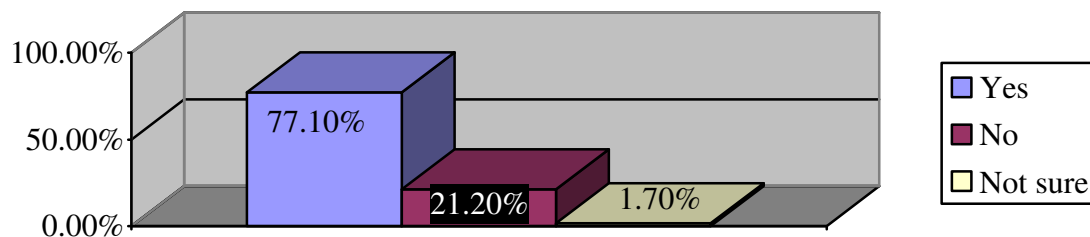


Figure 4.5. NJ school districts currently instituting behavior management approaches; based on 118 responses.

Survey responses showed that the majority of respondents, or 77.1%, represent school districts that do have a behavior management approach currently in place, while 21.2% reported their school districts do not have such an approach and another 1.7% reported they were not sure. Ten of the 118 survey respondents who provided an answer to this question offered additional comments to clarify their answers. The information provided by these comments included ideas such as: each building within the district is currently developing its own interventions; interventions are implemented in some of the district's schools, but not in all; teachers are being trained in behavior management to develop interventions individual to their own classrooms; the district is looking at individual student needs, rather than utilizing general approaches; the district does not have any behavior management approach, but is currently attempting to enlist outside help to develop one; the district has approaches, but they are not consistent across schools; and the district does not yet have any formalized approach to behavior management. In summary, the majority of New Jersey school districts represented in these survey responses are utilizing some sort of behavior management techniques or approaches and many more are utilizing less systematic approaches, but still working on

developing them. Some of those school districts reported as without behavior management approaches are described, at least in part, as working on such an approach for the future.

In order to gain an understanding of the practice elements currently being used to manage challenging behaviors of students within New Jersey public school systems, respondents were asked to choose which, if any, behavior management methods are currently in practice in their school districts. Figure 4.6 displays the practices described as currently in place within New Jersey public school systems, in rank order of frequency, as reported by 122 survey respondents.

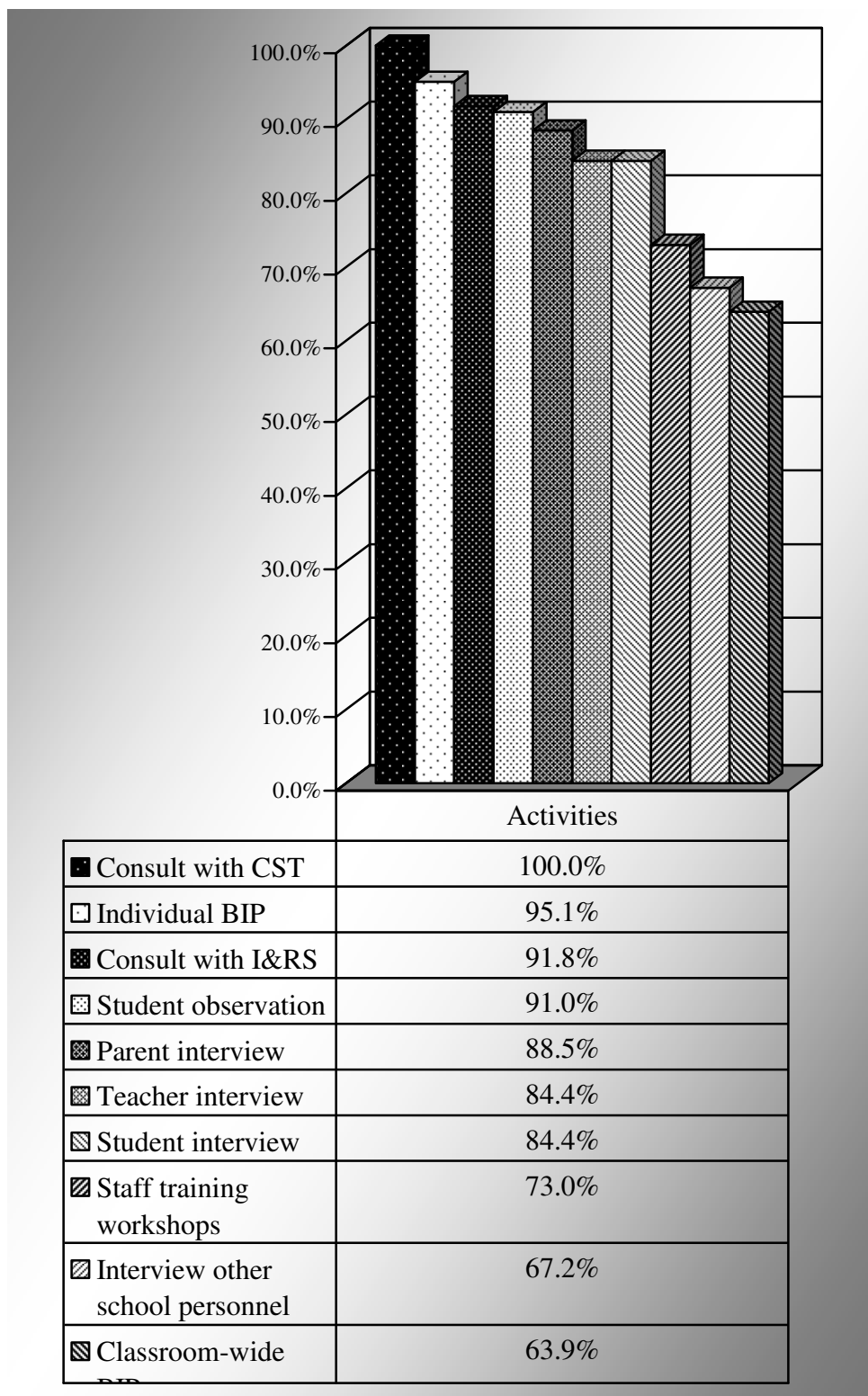


Figure 4.6. Current practices in managing the challenging behaviors of students; based on 122 responses.

The number of responses to this question is, perhaps, evidence that schools within New Jersey are reportedly utilizing certain behavior management techniques and practice elements, even in absence of district-wide behavior management programs or systematic approaches. There were 122 respondents to this survey item, even though only 91 respondents described their districts as currently implementing behavior management approaches defined and operative within their school districts, as summarized in Figure 4.6. This may be descriptive of schools utilizing certain practice elements to manage the challenging behaviors of students, but without implementing behavior management efforts as part of a systematic program.

As evident in Figure 4.6, 100% of the 122 survey respondents who answered this question reported using consultation with Child Study Team members in their approach to behavior management. This finding shows that, across the board, New Jersey Child Study Team members are reported as actively engaged in the management of challenging behaviors within their school districts. Additionally, more than 90% of the survey respondents who answered this question reported consultation with Intervention & Referral Services team members, observation of students, and/or development of individual behavior intervention plans as behavior management methods currently utilized in their school districts. More than 80% of the survey respondents who answered this question reported conducting interviews with teachers, the student, and the student's parent(s) as components of the behavior management practices within their school districts. More than 70% of the survey responses to this question indicated staff training as a current behavior management practice within their school districts. Finally, more than 60% of the survey respondents who answered this question indicated that classroom

behavioral interventions and interviews of school personnel, besides the teacher, student, and parent(s), are behavior management practices currently in use within their school districts.

With the majority of survey respondents engaging in most of the behavior management practices described above, current efforts to manage the challenging behaviors of students within New Jersey public school systems are evident; however, these efforts do not appear to add up to the sum of behavior management programming for all school systems. Additionally, 25 survey respondents, or 20.5%, wrote in additional practices currently in place in their school districts, such as: conducting functional behavior assessments, obtaining opinions of professionals from outside of the school district, consulting with behavior specialists, developing behavior contracts, utilizing alternative educational placement options for students with challenging behaviors, and implementing positive behavioral support programs. New Jersey school systems appear willing to reach out for help with managing the challenging behaviors of students.

With the choices the same as the previous question, survey respondents were next asked to select or add additional efforts and actions involved in managing challenging behaviors of students from which they think their school staff might gain benefit; in other words, these might be areas for potential growth regarding future behavior management efforts within New Jersey public school systems. The comparison between the responses to this and the previous question allows us to understand which actions might be beneficial for school systems across New Jersey, in addition to the efforts they are already making. Interestingly, 17 of the survey respondents who answered the previous question chose to skip this question, though the reasons why cannot be known. Out of the

105 survey respondents who did answer this question, over 85% reported staff training workshops would be a beneficial addition to their current practices towards managing the challenging behavior of students in their school districts. Over 70% of survey respondents who answered this question considered developing classroom-wide behavior intervention plans as a beneficial effort to add to their current repertoire.

The remaining options, including those written in by survey respondents, were endorsed by less than half of those who responded to this question. It should be noted that fewer endorsements of options of this survey item may be due to the number of school districts reporting that such practices are already included in their schools' current behavior management efforts and are therefore already considered beneficial, as established by the response rate to the previous question. Approximately 45% of those who responded to this question reported the development of individual student behavior intervention plans would be beneficial. Approximately 35% of respondents reported consultation with members of either the Child Study Team or Intervention & Referral Services team would be a valuable addition. Of respondents, approximately 25% reported interviews with parent(s) and/or observations of students would be helpful and approximately 20% described interviews with teachers and other school personnel as a potentially beneficial addition to current efforts. Finally, approximately 10% of respondents wrote in other actions they view as potentially beneficial to their schools, such as obtaining and maintaining support from out-of-district community agencies. Additionally, several written-in responses commented on the need for more time in a day, increased systematic implementation, and more efficient and effective implementation of current approaches already adopted. It must be noted that the choice of student interview

was inadvertently left out of the list of options for this survey item; therefore, knowledge about perceived beneficial outcome regarding the addition of this practice cannot be known.

Survey respondents were asked whether or not there is a professional within their schools who has been designated as the “go-to” person when a student’s challenging behaviors are determined as requiring additional support. A total of 119 survey respondents answered this question; however, 191 endorsements were collected, meaning that several New Jersey school systems reportedly have multiple professionals who have been designated as interventionists when a student’s challenging behavior requires additional support. Such an outcome speaks not only of the call for such professional support, but of the efforts being made by school districts across the state of New Jersey to have professional available for such cases.

Figure 4.7 displays the results of New Jersey school districts’ “go-to” professionals, as described by survey respondents. Of the 191 responses to this question, the majority, or 60.5%, reported that a district employee serves this function for their schools, even though this employee is not described as such in his/her job description.

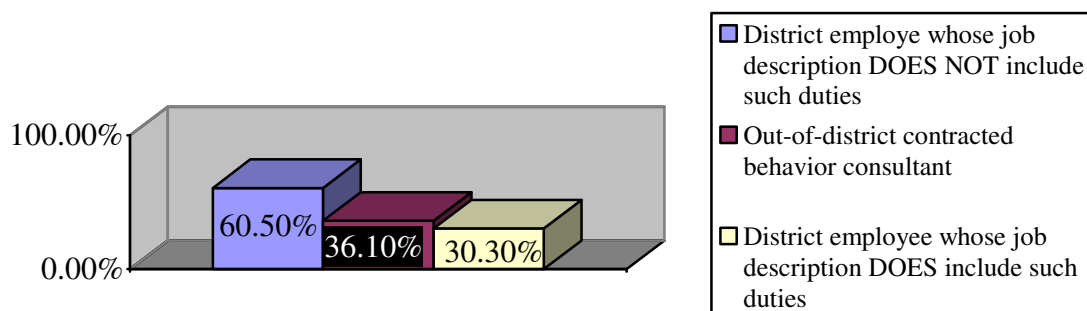


Figure 4.7. NJ school districts' "go-to" people for behavior management guidance; based on 119 responses.



Such an overwhelming response provides evidence that, in the majority of reported cases, certain professionals within schools across the state of New Jersey are faced with the responsibility of intervening on students' challenging behaviors, even when their job descriptions do not include such tasks. From such reports can also be derived the apparent need New Jersey school systems are experiencing for professionals with the training and ability to manage the challenging behaviors of students. Of the responses to this question, 36.1% described an out-of-district contracted behavior consultant as the professional who has been designated for additional support with students' challenging behavior. A district employee whose job description includes providing support and intervention when a student's challenging behavior warrants such was reported at a rate of 30.3%, meaning that roughly one-third of New Jersey school districts represented in this sample have developed and financially committed to maintaining a professional on staff whose job description includes managing the challenging behaviors of students. Of the responses to this survey item, 21.0% included additional comments or information, which included naming district employees currently in positions such as guidance counselor, school psychologist, social worker, case manager, Child Study Team member, classroom teacher, or simply "whomever." These findings show that over one-third of New Jersey public school districts, as reported by respondents, rely on outside consultants for guidance regarding managing the behaviors of students in district. Although it cannot be known from this research alone, it would be interesting to track these rates for increase or decrease in the rate of out-of-district consultation utilized in New Jersey schools to see whether or not the actual trend is headed towards establishment of behavior consultation as a district position.

In order to gain a better understanding of the educational settings in which behavior management services and procedures are utilized within New Jersey public school systems, survey respondents were asked to specify whether their schools' efforts were available for students in special education settings, general education settings, both, neither, or other. Figure 4.8 displays the summary of where services are currently being provided within the school districts of the 120 respondents who answered this survey item.

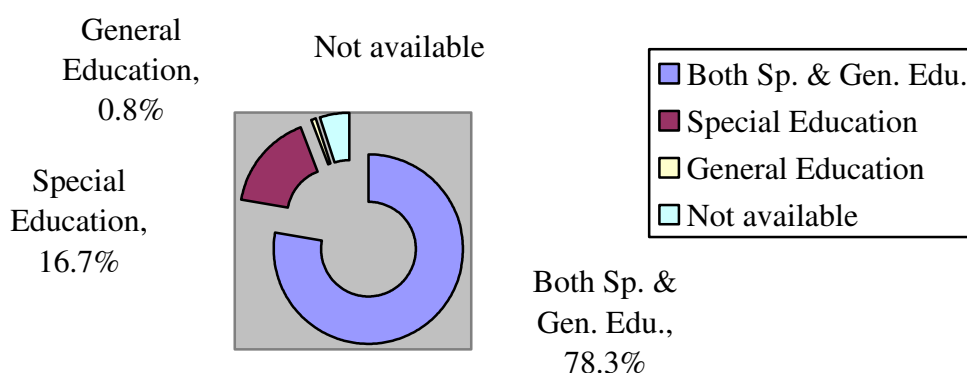


Figure 4.8. Educational settings where behavior management services are utilized; based on 120 responses.

Of the 120 survey respondents who answered this question, 78.3% reported that behavior management is addressed in both special and general education settings within their school districts. Such a majority response may be evidence that, in modern-day educational environments, challenging behavior is an issue that does not discriminate between settings; students are displaying challenging behavior regardless of location, resulting in the fact that teachers may need to be ready to respond to such behavior, regardless of their training as a general or special educator. Of respondents, 16.7% reported that behavior management services and procedures are utilized only within the special education settings within their school districts. While not a majority response,

such a report might warrant further investigation regarding why such supports and procedures are only offered in special education settings. It would be interesting to know whether such decisions have been made based on issues of training, money, time or perhaps the fact that students who display challenging behaviors are placed in special education settings, where behavior management efforts are implemented. Less than 1% of respondents reported that behavior management services are utilized only within general education settings; however, it would be helpful for future follow-up research to investigate the reason behind this finding. The final 5% of responses included comments that school districts either do not utilize behavior management services and procedures or that students with challenging behaviors might receive support from a personal aide or other professional.

A total of 120 survey respondents provided information regarding how their school districts are currently documenting behavior interventions and supports, if at all. Figure 4.9 displays results of how New Jersey public school systems are currently documenting their efforts, according to survey respondents.

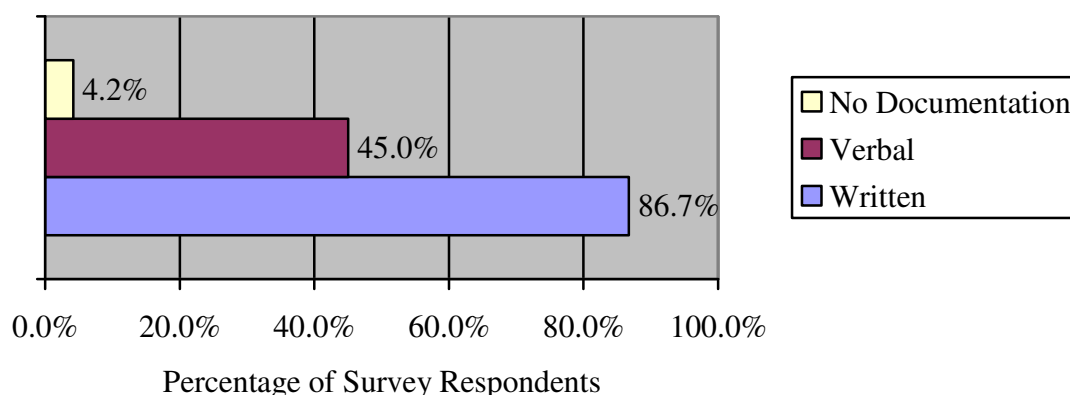


Figure 4.9. Documentation of behavior management activities; based on 120 respondents.

From the overall response rate of 174 total endorsements from 120 respondents, it is apparent that documentation may encompass several methods, even within the same school district. The most frequent form of documentation was reported as written reports or contact summaries, utilized 86.7% of the time according to survey respondents. The second most commonly used documentation was reported as verbal reports or contact summaries, which are used 45.0% of the time. Behavior interventions and supports appear to lack any sort of documentation in 4.2% of cases, according to the respondents who answered this question. Finally, “other” methods of documentation are utilized 9.2% of the time, described as checklists, Individualized Education Plan progress reports, graphs, and the like as well as inconsistent documentation practices, which were described as “depending on the student or the professional involved.” While the responses to this question touch on the inconsistency of documentation in the field of behavior management interventions and supports within New Jersey public school systems, it may be even more telling of the overwhelming use of written reports or contact summaries as record of current practices and efforts. Future follow-up research might aim to understand the reasoning behind documentation decisions, in terms of why certain forms are chosen over others, including whether expenditure of resources, limited options, or possibly preference of services provider are the cause.

At times, regardless of previously noted behavioral needs or lack thereof, students display certain “high-risk” behaviors that require immediate attention and/or consequences, such as fighting, bringing a weapon to school, and the like. Survey respondents were asked to describe how their school districts respond to such events, such as by following an existing crisis behavior response plan, deciding consequences

individually on a case-by-base basis, or other methods. Figure 4.10 displays how New Jersey public school systems currently report dealing with such high-risk behaviors, as reported by 120 respondents.

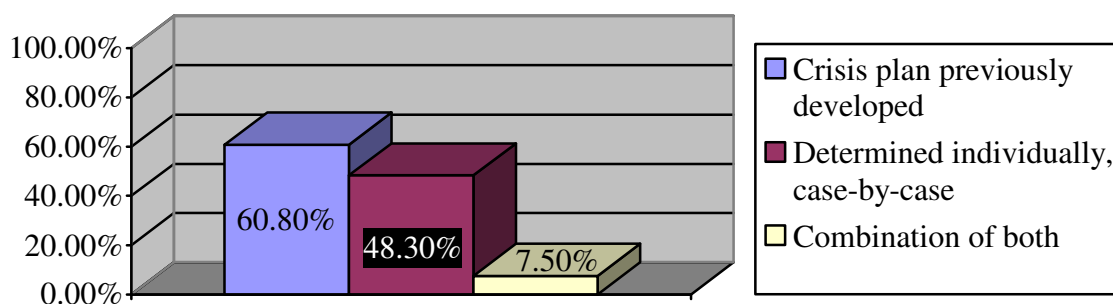


Figure 4.10. How NJ school districts deal with "high-risk" behaviors; based on 120 responses.

Though 120 survey respondents answered this question, an overlap of methods is apparent, as 140 actions were endorsed. It cannot be known from this initial research effort why respondents would endorse multiple answers when the choice of “combination of the two methods” would seem to cover such cases, but perhaps a future version of this survey might present this item as a forced-choice response, rather than allowing for more than one endorsement per respondent. That said, in the majority of cases, or 60.8%, school districts report responding to such high-risk behaviors by following a crisis response plan previously developed at the school level in order to determine consequences for the student. However, in almost half of the cases as described by survey respondents, or 48.3%, consequences for such behaviors are reported as being determined individually on a case-by-base basis. Another 7.5% of cases are described as determined by a combination of consulting established response plans while also considering

individual circumstances. Overall, responses to serious behavioral infractions appear to vary for public school systems across the state of New Jersey at this time.

As professionals and leaders in their school districts involved in behavior management efforts, survey respondents were asked to describe their professional opinions regarding whether or not they have found the efforts to manage the challenging behaviors of students within their school districts successful overall. A total of 119 respondents answered this question, with 15 of them providing additional elaboration of their opinions. Figure 4.11 provides a visual representation of the professional opinions of survey respondents.

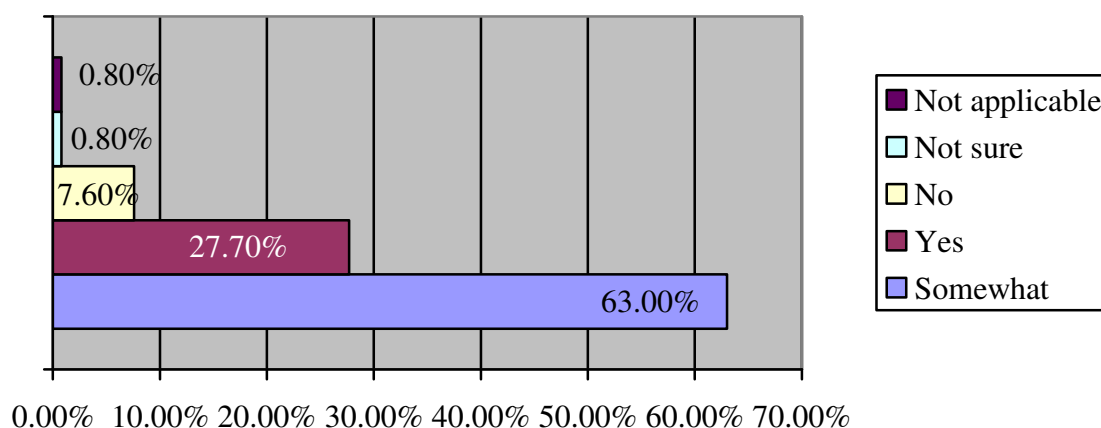


Figure 4.11. Respondents' professional opinions regarding whether or not behavior management efforts have been successful within their school districts; based on 119 responses.

The majority, or 63.0%, of the 119 survey respondents who answered this question described their districts' current practices as "somewhat" effective. Another 0.8% of respondents reported they were not sure, while 0.8% reported that their school districts do not currently utilize behavior management procedures. Of respondents, 7.6%

described their districts' efforts as unsuccessful. Survey respondents who described their districts' current efforts as positively successful totaled 27.7% of total responses.

Elaborations on the opinions of respondents included comments pertaining to ongoing improvement efforts, evidence of steady progress towards success, and the opinion that either more or improved training of staff might lead to better success in the future. While this question is representative of only certain individuals' opinions, it speaks to the ambiguity with which the professionals within the field of education across the state of New Jersey view their own schools' current behavior management efforts. With the majority of leaders describing their own schools' efforts as only somewhat successful, one can begin to recognize the room for improvement in the area of effectively managing the challenging behaviors of students. An area of need appears to include choosing goals for behavior management efforts and then monitoring progress towards reaching those goals throughout efforts to ensure effective outcomes.

Future research might include tracking responses across survey items so that responses to this question could be compared to those of previous questions related to which activities school districts are currently engaging in, as well as which might be beneficial, could be understood. Such information would provide insight regarding how certain proactive elements are viewed in terms of success, or lack thereof, in the overall methods of behavior management efforts within public school systems.

In addition to an overall feeling of success, or lack thereof, survey respondents were asked to compare the outcomes of their behavior management efforts to the resources spent on them within their school districts. The majority of survey participants, or 64.2% of the 120 respondents who answered this question, described decreases in the

challenging behaviors of students as being worth the physical, fiscal, temporal, and human resources spent in obtaining such positive outcomes. This is interesting, since the previous question found professional opinions to be unsure about whether or not outcomes were successful. Apparently, even when current efforts are perceived as only somewhat successful, the extent to which efforts are considered worthy of the resources spent on them remains high. This provides insight regarding areas of potential growth for behavior management programs in New Jersey public school systems. Another 29.2% of respondents deemed the outcomes within their districts as somewhat worth the resources spent on them. Such response rates show the apparent willingness of public school systems in New Jersey to invest a certain amount of money, time, people, and energy to address the behavioral needs of their students. Only 2.5% of respondents described their districts' outcomes as not worth the resources spent on them, while another 0.8% described themselves as not sure. Additional comments offered by several respondents centered around budgetary concerns, the high level of stress already on staff, concerns regarding behavioral interventions that do not "hit the mark," as well as the fact that it might be too early to tell whether outcomes are worth the resources spent on them thus far.

Survey respondents were asked whether or not they felt their school districts currently have the resources, as in temporal, fiscal, physical, and human, to support and manage the challenging behaviors of students. Out of the 116 survey responses collected for this question, the majority, or 53.4%, reported that their school districts do in fact have the resources to support and manage the challenging behaviors of students.



However, another 37.1% reported that their school districts do not have sufficient resources, while the remaining 9.5% of respondents were not sure.

Of all of the questions on this survey, this question received the highest number of written comments, with a total of thirty-six remarks regarding concerns, ideas, and statements related to school districts dedicating resources to managing the challenging behaviors of students. Comments overwhelmingly dealt with budgetary concerns, including having to cut behavior management services and supports after recent budget cuts and constraints. In fact, thirty-one of the thirty-six comments were testimonials to the needs of their school districts, including the need to have more resources available and/or dedicated to behavioral support, with such dedication of resources described as impossible at this time, mostly due to dwindling finances. Another three comments pertained to the attitudes of staff within school districts believing that behavioral supports are not worth the resources required of them. Such responses may represent the level of importance regarding the issue of school resources versus school needs affecting public school districts across the state of New Jersey. Figure 4.12 compares survey responses from three ideas: whether or not resources are available, whether or not the effort and resources are worth the resulting outcomes, and whether or not school districts currently report having an approach to behavior management of students in place.

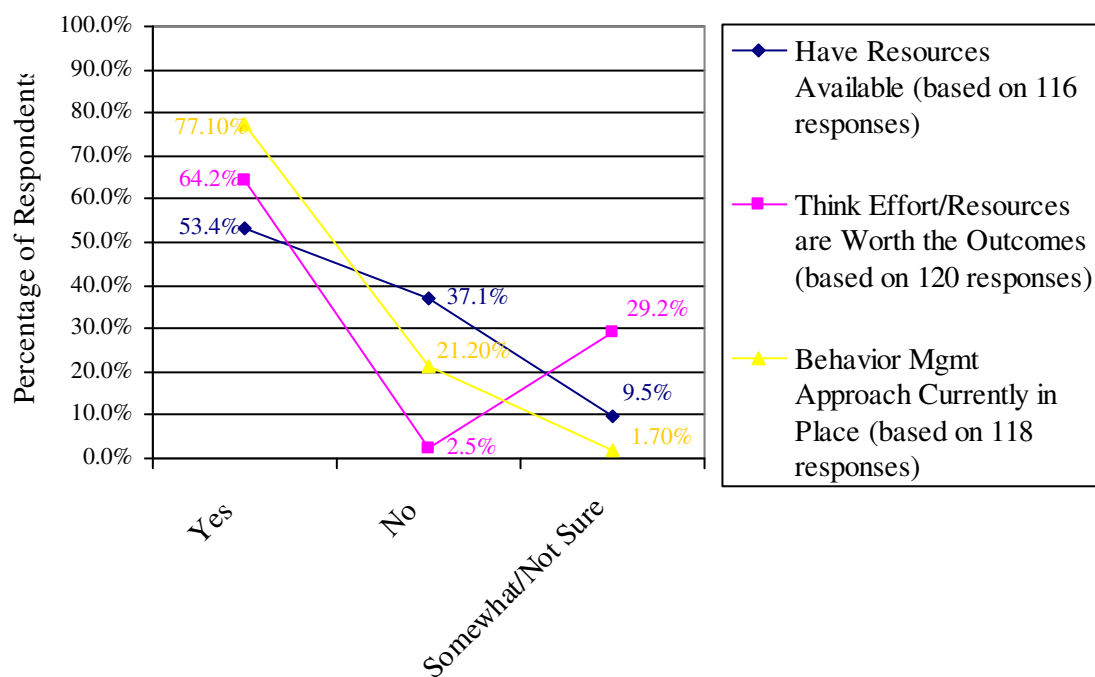


Figure 4.12. Comparing resources spent to outcomes obtained from behavior management efforts.

The data presented based on the responses collected regarding whether or not New Jersey school systems have the necessary resources, are spending those resources on behavior management efforts, and perceive that expenditure as “worth it” make several summary statements apparent: (a) the majority of New Jersey public school systems appear to have resources available and are spending them on behavior management efforts, (b) the majority of New Jersey public school systems think that the outcome of a decrease in students’ challenging behaviors is worth spending resources on, and (c) the majority of New Jersey public school systems are perceiving the success level of their efforts as only somewhat successful. Therefore, New Jersey public school systems seem to have the resources, are willing to spend them, and are spending them on behavior

management efforts, but with only somewhat successful outcomes thus far. Additionally, almost no public school system in New Jersey, as per survey respondents, thinks that resources spent on behavior management are in vain, which appears evidence that this is an area of importance for most New Jersey public school systems. However, almost one-third are only somewhat convinced that behavior management outcomes, defined as a decrease in challenging behaviors displayed by students, are worth the resources spent on them.

In order to understand how educational leaders perceive the benefits of their efforts towards managing the challenging behaviors of students, survey respondents were asked to choose three outcomes they would rank as the greatest payback for their hard work. Figure 4.13 displays the benefits as ranked by survey respondents.

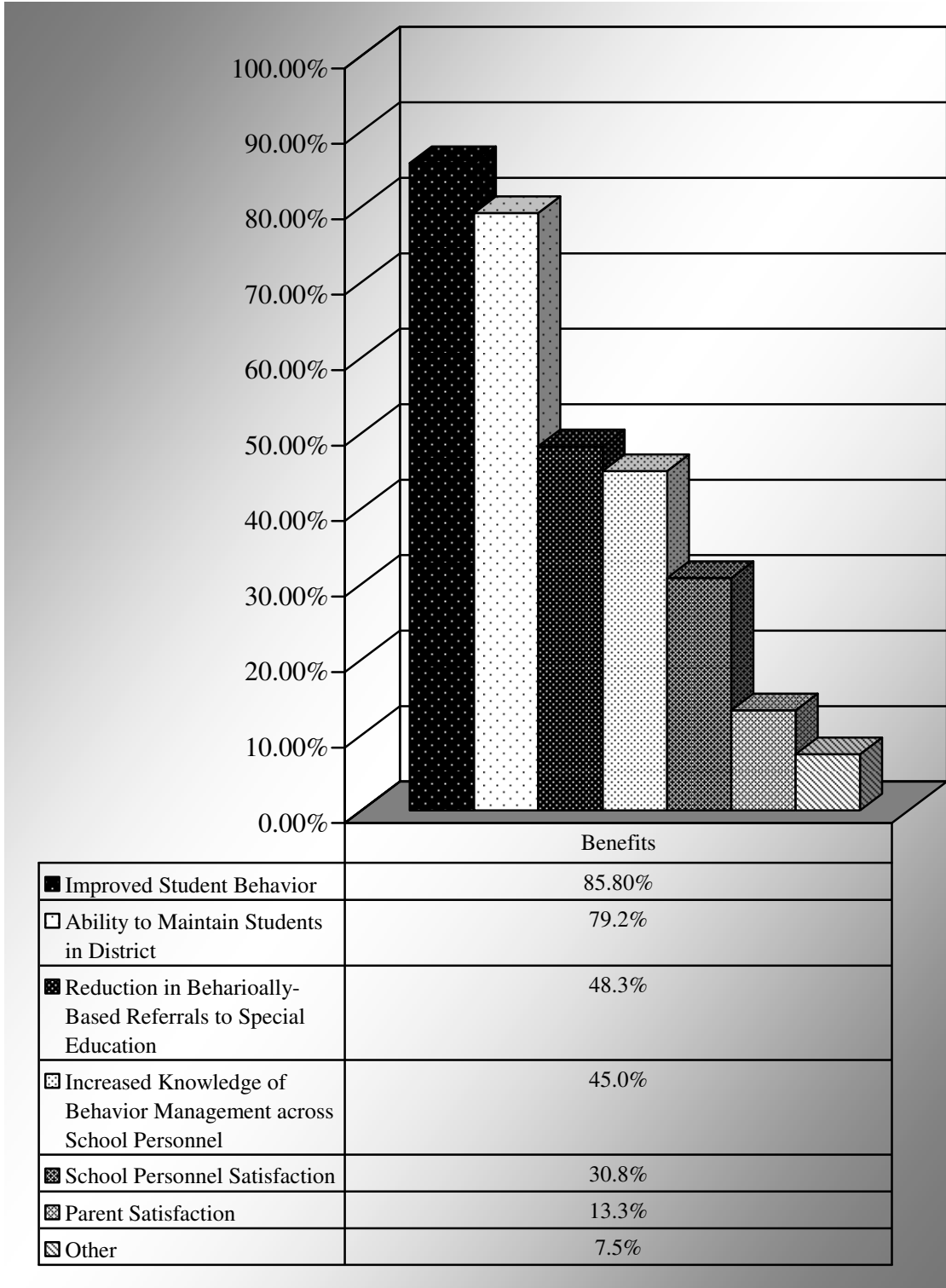


Figure 4.13. Reported benefits from behavior management efforts; based on 120 responses.

Two outcomes were resoundingly endorsed by 120 respondents as the top two outcomes for behavior management efforts: improved student behavior, as endorsed by 85.8% of respondents, and the ability to maintain students in district, as endorsed by 79.2% of respondents. In third place as far as the greatest benefit of managing the challenging behaviors of students are the outcomes of reduction in behaviorally-based referral to special education, receiving 48.3% of endorsements, as well as increased knowledge of behavior management strategies across school personnel, receiving 45.5% of endorsements. Not far behind, school personnel satisfaction ranked fifth, with 30.8% of respondents' endorsements. Only 13.3% of respondents described parent satisfaction as one of the greatest benefits of managing the challenging behaviors of students. Written comments were added by 7.5% of respondents regarding the greatest benefits for their efforts, including increased school safety, promoting school responsibility for all children, and increased student success and achievement.

The responses from this survey item provide us with the information to understand common outcome goals for leaders in public school systems across the state of New Jersey regarding the greatest benefit for their behavior management efforts. In fact, ongoing evaluation goals may include monitoring such outcomes so that success and benefit can be planned for by all involved in behavior management efforts. By targeting improved student behavior, the ability to maintain students in district, and a reduction in behaviorally-based referrals to special education via increased school personnel's knowledge of behavior management techniques, one might be able to create a tool that would be deemed as most beneficial to most school districts.

*Discussion*

A total of 124 responses to this electronic survey effort were collected over the course of approximately seven weeks. Participation was voluntary and survey respondents had the choice to skip questions or exit the survey at any time. Additionally, survey respondents had the option of choosing multiple answers for most items, including writing additional comments or opinions, so that survey responses could capture the ideas of these professionals most accurately; this option resulted in more than 124 endorsements to several survey items. Analyzed by professional role group, leaders within the field of special education in New Jersey represented 64.6% of survey respondents, including directors, coordinators, supervisors, and chairpersons of special education services. Educational administration and Child Study Team members, including school psychologists, school social workers, and learning disabilities teacher consultants, rounded out another 6.9% and 23.1%, respectively. The remaining 5.4% of respondents identified themselves as behavior specialists or special education teachers. Of note is that some of the survey respondents identified themselves with more than one professional role group, evidence that professional roles and responsibilities within the field of special education vary district by district across the state of New Jersey.

The response rate of over 14% of the target population (84 out of 598) is evident of how important the topic of managing the challenging behaviors of students in public school systems appears to be across the state of New Jersey at this time. Participation being completely voluntary with the only benefits to participants stated as the chance to share professional opinions and receive the resulting data analysis and behavior management guidelines based on those results, a total of 124 professionals took the time

to complete the survey, with 84 of those respondents representing the professional role group of the original target population. One may use such a response as a gauge to how much professional thought is spent on behavior management in schools. When utilizing a survey approach to research, the hope is that the sample of respondents will be representative of the whole population. In this case, the professional insight and opinions were collected to create an accurate picture of the current practices and perspectives of New Jersey professionals. The responses were targeted for description, rather than definition, of current practices. Caveats and ideas for improvement in this area of research are discussed in the limitations and consideration sections, respectively.

Based on the student populations described by survey respondents, the information collected via this electronic survey is based largely on school districts serving populations of more than 1,500 students. When considering the practices reported as currently in place by survey respondents, one might consider the budgetary allowances for such practices when a student population is greater than 1,500 students; in other words, larger student populations might mean larger budgets or more available professional resources, and therefore a greater amount of behavior management efforts. However, it should be noted that the next largest group represented by survey respondents is that of school systems serving populations of less than 999 students. Therefore, the current practices and perspectives shared by survey respondents might also be considered that of relatively smaller public schools and school districts in the state of New Jersey. Students served, as described by survey respondents, ranged from early childhood or preschool through twelfth grade for the majority, or 70%, of respondents, with approximately 30% of survey respondents representing the secondary level from

seventh through twelfth grades. Therefore, the practices and perspectives described via these results appear to be applicable to all grade levels, especially secondary.

Across the state of New Jersey, behavior management procedures are reported as defined and operative in approximately 77.1% of public school systems, according to survey responses collected here. This means that the majority of public school systems in New Jersey appear to be attending to the challenging behavioral needs of their students in more ways than reactive punishments such as suspension and detention. The majority of survey respondents described their school systems as having an approach to address the challenging behaviors of students to ultimately increase their chances of learning successfully. This is a positive finding, as educational law has increased pressure on schools by mandating the use of functional behavior assessments in response to disciplinary actions for students with, or suspected as having, disabilities (IDEA, 2004; Lee & Jamison, 2003). Research has also shown that when a behavior consultant is used in schools, referral to special education can be prevented, as teachers become more adept at generalizing the behavior management skills learned throughout the consultation process (Riley-Tillman & Eckert, 2001). However, it must also be noted that this sample of survey respondents might be over-representative of school systems already attending to behavioral needs, as that may have been part of the reason behind their decision to participate in the survey. An additional 21.2% of survey respondents reported that their school districts do not currently have an approach to addressing the behavioral needs of students, while the remaining 1.7% of respondents were not sure of any such approach in their school districts.



Such statistics speak to the large number of school systems in New Jersey concerned with student behavior, resulting in the majority of them addressing these needs via specially designed programs or approaches. For the remaining districts reported as not utilizing behavioral approaches, legal mandates that evidence based interventions in both behavioral and academic areas need to be implemented and documented for effect, or lack thereof, before a referral to special education can be made will hopefully turn them towards future implementation of behavioral interventions (IDEA, 2004; Wilkinson, 2005).

When it comes to exactly what New Jersey public school systems are doing in terms of behavior management approaches, it appears that consultation with members of the Child Study Teams (CST) is the activity of choice across the board. All of the survey respondents who provided information about the activities their schools currently implement included consultation with CST members as one of those activities, making it the only choice that was unanimously endorsed by all survey respondents. Such a finding speaks to the responsibility being placed on New Jersey CST members in terms of providing professional knowledge and guidance regarding the challenging behaviors of students. It also appears that New Jersey public school systems may be in agreement with research findings that show the importance of the relationship between the consultee and consultant and that teachers are more likely to use interventions and skills taught during consultation when the consultant is available within the school, as a CST member often is, for ongoing problem solving and clarification (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002; Skinner & Hales, 1992)

The next activity most frequently included in the behavior management efforts of New Jersey public school systems was the development of individual behavior intervention plans for students. Such popularity for this activity shows that the challenging behaviors of students are, for the most part, viewed as individual problems to be dealt with at the level of the student for the majority of the time, as opposed to larger systems level work such as classroom- or even school-wide intervention approaches. In fact, classroom-wide behavior intervention plans ranked in last place out of the activities included in these schools' behavior management activities. This is of concern, as research has shown that schools need to get out of the reactive process of putting out fires by dealing with individual behavioral disruptions and, instead, adopt preventive programs that proactively address the behavioral needs of students (Dinkmeyer & Dinkmeyer, 1984). Pumroy (1984, as cited in Skinner & Hales, 1992) notes that many teacher training programs do not even require courses in behavior management, so schools must aim to increase teachers' knowledge about behavior analysis and behavior management techniques and strategies for immediate use in the classroom. Additionally, it has been shown that individual behavior plans are harder to implement effectively and poorly sustained when there is not systemic application of behavior management procedures to support such a level of service delivery (Putnam, Handler, Rey, & McCarty, 2005). At a time when schools are required, both ethically and legally, to provide comprehensive evidence based interventions to all students, the way in which to implement these for problems related to behavior appear to either be off the radar or out of reach for New Jersey public school systems

The third most endorsed activity included consultation with Intervention & Referral Services team members followed closely by observing the student targeted for intervention. Such activities show the popularity of professional consultation and provide further evidence of the individual approach to intervening with a student's behavior, though at least observation in the natural setting allows the environment to be considered as a variable that may be affecting the student's behavior. The remaining activities endorsed included interviewing parents, teachers, the student, and additional school personnel as well as providing staff training workshops. However, research has shown that in order to be effective, behavior management must be an ongoing and collaborative process between all involved, including early identification and preventative approaches to behavior support; without such efforts, interventions are less likely to be effective or sustained (Putnam, Luidsell, & Jefferson, 2002).

Regarding which activities, if any, New Jersey professionals consider potentially beneficial additions to their school districts' current activities, staff training workshops were ranked as the most beneficial addition to the current behavioral management approaches already in place. This finding is not to say that this is the best way to address behavior management, but staff training workshops are perceived as an area for potential benefit to many school districts across the state of New Jersey; therefore, staff training workshops may be an area ripe for improvement and ready to be tapped as a source of behavior management support. However, while training activities, such as group workshops, are an easy way to reach a large number of people and increase the knowledge of participants, research has shown that verbal training alone does not lead to effective outcomes (Reid & Parsons, 2006; Skinner & Hales, 1992). Therefore, New

Jersey public school systems may want to grow this area of staff training for the purposes of building a foundation of knowledge, but following up with ongoing support of teachers for classroom based implementation of ideas covered during trainings should follow (Reid & Parsons, 2006).

The development of classroom-wide behavior intervention plans was the next most frequently-endorsed option. According to survey respondents, New Jersey professionals consider classroom-wide behavior intervention plans would be beneficial additional to their districts' current behavior management approaches. This survey finding is encouraging, as it is in line with legal mandates and best practices in education and behavior management. Such results may point to the proactive way in which New Jersey professionals are viewing behavioral supports like working at higher levels, such as for the whole class instead of individual approaches, provide support for the largest number of individuals. However, these results could also be simply the flipside to the previous question's findings that classroom-wide interventions are the least popular behavior management activity currently included in behavior management efforts across the state of New Jersey.

Other areas where survey respondents reported additional activities would be helpful for behavior management practices included increased consultation with members of the Child Study Team and Intervention & Referral Services team, individual behavior intervention plans, interviews, and student observations. Several survey respondents wrote in additional comments for consideration, including a potential area of improvement as obtaining and maintaining support from parents and out-of-district community agencies. These are all viable areas for potential growth of behavior

interventions, as public schools are under ever-increasing scrutiny to improve outcomes across all levels of service delivery (Putnam, Handler, Rey, & McCarty, 2005). Again, targeting such areas of support is a sign for New Jersey public school systems that future attention might be spent on more proactive and wider-arching behavioral interventions such as systems-level work across multiple areas of a student's life, including school, home, and the community.

In order to understand who is providing behavior management support in New Jersey's public school systems, survey respondents were asked to name, by job description or professional role group, the professional designated to provide behavior management guidance, if any. Again, this question resulted in more endorsements than respondents, meaning that there appear to be multiple "go-to" people for behavior management needs in many New Jersey public school systems. The majority of school systems appear to have a designated district employee who acts as the first professional resource in behavior management, even though that employee's job description does not include such responsibility. This finding appears to be an obvious flaw in the system. Across the state of New Jersey, more than 60% of public school systems, as reported by respondents to the Behavior Management Survey, are relying on professionals for behavior management guidance when their job descriptions do not include providing it. The person acting as the main resource when challenging behaviors become apparent is not even a professional who has been hired to act as such. This finding also calls into question how one finds oneself in such a role. Issues that come to mind center around how this professional came to be such a resource within his or her district, whether or not this individual has had any formal training in behavior management or consultation, and

how this person is compensated for providing such assistance above and beyond his or her regular call of professional duty.

There is ample research focused on the characteristics, both professionally and interpersonally, of a successful consultant, but these may not be acknowledged in the practice of utilizing a professional whose job description does not include the activities of behavioral consultation. That said, schools may be more successful in their intervention efforts if they were to define the professional role of behavior consultant as having ample knowledge, skills, and ability defined as being able to define, explain, discuss current research on, and outline how training would be provided in the areas related to applied behavior analysis (ABA), consultation, curriculum, instruction and learning, and topics such as use of baseline data collection, reinforcement, differential reinforcement, problems with punishment, operational definition of target behaviors and interventions, functions of behavior, environmental variables affecting behavior, data collection, analysis of data, multidimensional assessments, three term contingences, or antecedent-behavior-consequence (A-B-C), time out from reinforcement, planned ignoring, extinction, self-management or self-monitoring, generalization, ethical considerations in ABA, contingency contracting, token economies, chaining, shaping, goals of consultations, the problem solving process, and the connection between academic instruction and behavior (BACB, 2005; Kincaid, George, & Childs, 2006; Kratochwill, Elliot, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). Additionally, a successful consultant demonstrates ability in not only intervention development and implementation, but in maintaining relationships and providing ongoing follow-up efforts (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002).

Less surprising, but perhaps just as flawed, is the finding that the next largest group of New Jersey public school systems are finding behavior management support via behavior consultants hired from outside of the district. This means that when there is no district employee designated to fulfill the role of providing behavior management guidance, the next choice for public school systems appears to be obtaining expertise from an outside source compensated with district funds. Although this alternative solution assumes a more accurate job description, as well as ample training and expertise, the troubling factor is that school districts, by not creating such employment opportunities from within their own staff of employees, may not be planning for sustainability. It cannot be automatically assumed that an out-of-district contracted behavior consultant costs more in salary and compensation than an in-district resource, but chances are good that such a choice is more expensive, and less sustainable, than creating a district position. Plus, the majority of school districts already endorsed using district personnel, even though a position has not been defined. Such responses result in the idea that district personnel are utilized for the majority of the time without an official job description and, presumably, without additional compensation for such duties or release from their professional duties by job description. However, when funds are available, they are most often designated to hire personnel from outside of the district. It seems apparent that, when no job description is developed, “other” district personnel are utilized. However, when a clear job description is developed, an out-of-district professional is obtained. Again, such actions may not be preparing for sustainability of consultation activities overtime. Future research might seek to gain more of an understanding about the awareness, or lack thereof, and rationale of such decisions.

Creating such a job description of behavior management duties and hiring a district employee to fulfill the professional role was the third choice for survey respondents. Almost one-third of New Jersey public school systems, as reported by survey respondents, have developed and financially supported the professional role of behavior consultant within their school districts. This is a promising finding, evidence of the importance of behavior interventions and management being recognized by New Jersey public schools, as well as showing the willingness for some of those schools to make the commitment to serve such needs by allowing professionals with such expertise to join the district staff.

Another promising finding is that over 78% of New Jersey public school systems are described as utilizing behavior management services and procedures in both special and general education settings. The question of which came first, generalization of behavior management procedures or general education inclusion of students requiring individualized education plans that include behavior management, is hard to tell, but the overall result is that behavior interventions are not seen as techniques designated only for special education settings in New Jersey public school systems. According to Behavior Management Survey respondents, New Jersey students and teachers have access to behavioral guidance regardless of their educational placement, which is extremely encouraging news. Such a finding is also telling of how important behavior management efforts are across educational settings. Educational law mandates the least restrictive environment for all students and behavioral consultation for the treatment of challenging behaviors can help (Putnam, Handler, Rey, & McCarty, 2005). With early identification and ongoing monitoring of students' behavioral needs, as well as behavior management



trainings for all teachers, students have a better chance of being maintained in the least restrictive environment successfully (Putnam, Luiselli, & Jefferson, 2002; Wilkinson, 2005). Of course, approximately one-sixth of New Jersey public school systems only provide such behavior management services and procedures in special education settings, but that may still be considered a step in the right direction as compared to the 5% of districts who reported not utilizing behavior management procedures or techniques in either educational setting. Future research might track these trends across New Jersey public school systems over the next few years to see if the future includes even more widespread use of services.

It appears that including behavior management procedures as part of a district's services may be the first step, followed by the generalization and utilization of those services across all educational settings as a follow-up step. Once behavior management is viewed as important and worthy of a district's attention and dedication, growing those policies and procedures may be easier. The idea that behavior management is a vital role within a school system's already long list of responsibilities must be acquired so that increased utilization and wider-spreading policies may be adopted. It seems that New Jersey educational leaders may have already accepted behavior management as a vital activity for their school systems, as found via this research effort, making growth of those activities possible and perhaps the logical next step across the state.

Documentation is an ever-important issue in educational services. With legal issues becoming more apparent in the field of education, good intentions and verbal agreements are no longer enough; it has become increasingly important for school districts to have evidence of the services they are providing, both academically and

behaviorally, including students' responses to such interventions (Wilkinson, 2007). According to survey results, it appears that the majority of New Jersey public school systems are documenting their implementation of behavioral interventions and supports in written format. However, the multitude of survey responses shows an overlap of documentation efforts within school districts, meaning that written might be the most popular form of documentation used, but it is not the only one. Even within the same school district, documentation of services may take place in either written or verbal forms at times, as roughly half of New Jersey's public school systems report verbal reports are the second most frequently used form of documentation. Of course, verbal reports may be most efficient and effective at times for monitoring and making changes to services as needed, but verbal reports may not allow for future access to information or accurate sharing of details with individuals not present during the initial conversation. Even less ideal are the 4% of New Jersey school districts that, according to the results of this survey, are not documenting their current efforts at managing and intervening with the challenging behaviors of their students at all. Such a lack of documentation may be due to a number of circumstances, such as limited amounts of resources, but shortcuts like not documenting activities may be cause for future predicaments. Not only must efforts during the pre-referral process be documented for all students, but school budgets are now more than ever concerned with student outcomes in learning, social behavior, or both (Forman, 1995; Wilkinson, 2007). Effectiveness of behavioral consultation efforts is essentially defined by school and student achievement in areas such as attitude, behavior, and performance; therefore, efforts may not only focus on such areas, but ought to

include documentation of effectiveness in such areas (Fuchs, Fuchs, Dulan, Roberts, & Fernstrom, 1992).

Finally, there are roughly 9% of New Jersey public school systems reporting that they are currently using “other” forms of documentation, such as checklists, progress reports, and graphs. While these methods overlap with the written form of documentation by definition, they are different from narrative reports and are perhaps more specific in some ways, such as progress reports, while more general in other ways, such as checklists. Either way, the variety and utilization of documentation efforts across the state of New Jersey speaks to the lack of standardization in even such a small part of the process of behavior management. Public school systems across the state might do well to consider standardizing and streamlining documentation efforts to ensure ample tracking of all behavior management efforts as well as student outcomes, especially when behavior management has been individualized for a particular student (Forman, 1995; Wilkinson, 1997; ).

The majority of New Jersey public school systems have proactively developed crisis plans for certain high-risk behaviors, such as fighting or bringing a weapon to school. Such plans are extremely useful during difficult situations, as they help create clear boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors for students, regardless of educational setting or services. As stated, according to survey results, the majority of New Jersey’s public school systems utilize such crisis plans when faced with the task of developing consequences for certain high-risk behaviors. However, almost half of the state’s schools report deciding such cases on an individual basis. Additionally, the multitude of responses shows overlap and variability even within school districts. While

an option such as case-by-base determination may seem open-minded or an opportunity for fairness at first, such a lack of a standardized practice in such high-risk cases may actually be cause for increased liability on the school's part. Best practices for crisis planning in school safety programs include developing a comprehensive school safety plan that complements any established district, town, or county wide plans (Stephens, 2002). Stephens (2002) suggests developing these plans in a collaborative way, with administration, staff, students, and parents involved from the beginning stages. Once developed, expectations for student behavior should be communicated to all in multiple formats, such as verbal and written, and reviewed frequently with all parties on a regular basis; then, rules should be reinforced fairly and consistently (Stephens, 2002).

Developing consequences for extreme high-risk behaviors on a case-by-base basis may leave the bulk of the responsibility on a few individuals, such as the principal, without the foundation of a school-wide crisis plan, a less than ideal situation. Again, the lack of a standardized process in behavior management in New Jersey public school systems, according to survey respondents, and possibly public schools elsewhere, may result in creating unnecessary difficult situations and outcomes for both educators and students.

When it comes to continuing current services or programmatic efforts, a school system's rate of successful outcomes, or the perception thereof by educational leaders and administration, may be considered a major mitigating factor. Despite New Jersey school systems' current efforts across educational settings, however, the majority of the professionals in the field who responded to this survey described their districts' practices as only somewhat successful. This finding is interesting, as it means that there is room for improvement in behavior management practices in public school systems across the state.

Missing from this information is how such opinions compare to previous years; in other words, we cannot detect any trends over time from these initial findings. The next largest group, almost one-third of New Jersey's public school systems, described their efforts as successful. Again, there is no previous data to which this number can be compared, but it seems an overall positive outcome nonetheless. In fact, several professionals provided written comments concerning ongoing improvement, steady progress toward success, and the hope that increased training will add to the potential of future success.

When it comes to allocating the expenditure of resources for behavioral programming and implementation efforts, the professional opinions of leaders and decision makers within the field seems of paramount influence and importance. According to the results of the Behavior Management Survey, the majority of leaders across New Jersey's public school systems report that they currently have enough resources to implement behavior management services. Additionally, the majority of New Jersey public school systems consider the general and potential outcomes of behavior management efforts, such as a decrease in students' challenging behaviors, as worth the effort. Of all of the outcomes, this may be the most promising from this look into current behavior management practices and perspectives in New Jersey public school systems. Most school districts describe themselves as able to implement behavior management programming and, perhaps even more importantly, that such services would be worth spending time, money, and energy on. Though most written comments included budgetary and time concerns, the overall responses showed that results of behavior management efforts are viewed by and large as worth the cost. Also of note is the fact that this question received the highest number of written opinions and ideas of the entire

survey. Apparently, the topic of resources put in versus product received out of behavior management efforts is an issue that brought out personal comments and sharing of concerns for New Jersey's public school professionals. Again, New Jersey public school systems appear to have the resources, describe themselves as willing to spend them, and are reportedly spending them on behavior management efforts, but with only somewhat successful outcomes overall at this point in time.

Respondents were also asked what outcomes are hoped for when engaging in behavior intervention procedures. Improved student behavior and the ability to maintain students in district were overwhelmingly the top choices in terms of greatest results for effort and resources put into behavior management efforts. It appears that New Jersey educational professionals are not only looking for improvements in the behavioral repertoire of students, but are also hoping to increase their schools' abilities to support students with challenging behaviors in-district. Such an outcome is telling of the apparent difficulty of maintaining such students and the frequency with which students may be sent to out-of-district educational placements because they cannot be maintained in their local educational settings. Research has supported the use of behavioral consultation for such situations, finding that consultation on behavior management techniques and strategies has the potential to decrease rates of behaviorally-based referrals for special education, decrease rates of students being placed out-of-district due to behavioral needs, and increase chances of bringing out-of-district students back into district (Kratochwill & VanSomeren, 1995; Riley-Tillman & Eckert, 2001).

The results of this research effort uncover the ideas that educational leaders in New Jersey, according to findings of the Behavior Management Survey, consider most

important when deciding on the level of commitment to behavior management within their schools. When the outcomes include improvements in the display of student behavior and the ability for students to remain in-district with behavioral supports, educational leaders might be more engaged in the process of allocating resources to behavior management programs and policies. Such a finding seems to necessitate evident consideration regarding planning for ongoing evaluation and outcomes data for measurement of behavioral management efforts.

The next most popular product for behavior management efforts was reported as a decrease in referrals to special education based on behavior management difficulties in the classroom. This not only provides information regarding what educational leaders are hoping to gain from behavior management efforts, but is also evidence that referrals to special education may frequently stem from the display of externalizing behavior problems. Again, such a notion is supported by research, and behavioral consultation has been found to not only increase teachers' understanding of behavior problems and improve their behavior management skills, but has also resulted in decreased referrals to special education based on behavioral difficulties (Kratochwill & VanSomeren, 1995). Students displaying challenging behaviors may be referred for special education evaluation because of the difficulty teachers experience with attempting to maintain them in the general education setting. However, while such actions may be the current state of reality, they are neither ideal nor ethical. Special education eligibility requires various data collection methods and sources, and should not be determined based solely upon the display of challenging behaviors (IDEA, 2004). In fact, evidence based behavior management supports can, and should, be provided across educational settings, leaving

less reason to refer for special education services based on behavior alone (Gutkin, 1996). That said, the fact that almost half of New Jersey public school systems describe decreased referrals to special education as a positive outcome to behavior management policies and procedures, it seems apparent that behaviorally-based referrals are still being made.

Of almost equal importance to educational leaders, according to results of the Behavior Management Survey, appears to be increasing staff and personnel knowledge regarding behavior management strategies and techniques. This may be an optimistic outcome in and of itself, but it also seems inextricably related to previous outcomes discussed. In other words, increasing staff competence to manage student behavior effectively appears related, in part, to the larger issues of decreasing referrals to special education and sending students out-of-district based on not being able to handle their challenging behaviors. Skinner & Hales (1992) have also found that a well-taught training in behavior management that is based on the principles of applied behavior analysis can both increase knowledge of participants and change perceptions regarding the use of behavioral principles in schools. These initial efforts are only strengthened by the opportunity for modeling and ongoing practice (Skinner & Hales, 1992). The ability to manage behaviors of students, decreased behaviorally-based referral rates to special education, and decreased rates of sending students out-of-district based on challenging behaviors are among the top picks of leaders across New Jersey public school systems and seem to be in line with the overall idea that increased competence of adults within schools increases the likelihood that students with challenging behaviors may be more tolerated and/or supported more effectively and efficiently.



Finally, the satisfaction of school personnel and parents appear to be on the radar for most New Jersey educational leaders, though these areas are not the main focus of current behavior management efforts, according to the Behavior Management Survey. With no previous research on which to base a comparison, it is difficult to know exactly why such outcomes fall to the lower end of the priority scale; however, staff and parent satisfaction are the only choices that, by definition, are not directly linked to skill-building to increase the ability to effectively support students with challenging behaviors. With educational leaders functioning within an economic climate of budgetary concerns, such as the current situation, it is possible that beneficial outcomes are ranked quite simply by the “bang for your buck” value, with personal satisfaction of teachers and parents being considered less imperative at this point in time than skill-building and referral rate improvements; however, such analysis of the rationale behind this finding is not available based on these initial research efforts alone. School leaders might do well to consider encouraging parent participation in all behavior management efforts, as ongoing parent participation has been found to improve behavioral outcomes for students (Illsley & Sladeczek, 2001).

#### *Use of Behavior Management Survey Results with Implementation Guidelines*

These survey results are provided as a foundation for the accompanying implementation guidelines. The guidelines were developed while keeping the range of survey responses in mind, including the overlap of answers in several areas as well as the variability apparent across the state of New Jersey regarding most behavior management issues. As professionals review the guidelines and make decisions for implementation, it

is the author's hope that the review of relevant literature and data from the survey results will supply the rationale behind the different areas of focus, as well as provide consideration, guidance, and ideas for utilization. Though the field of behavior management is vital and maintains a long history within experimental psychology, it is relatively novel in terms of its professional attention and application as a practice within the field of education. The results of this initial research effort, as well as the effort behind the resulting guide to behavior management based on reviews of relevant literature, are presented as ideas for future focus and further sharing of ideas and standardization of implementation not only across New Jersey, but for all public school systems. The guide to behavior management programming for New Jersey public school systems outlines a process for designing and implementing behavior management programs and services by using principles and procedures of program planning and evaluation. The guide operationally defines critical components and processes of programming, including ideal and acceptable variations of each. This information targets programmatic tasks, such as obtaining a consultant to facilitate programming, defining roles and responsibilities of participants, planning and implementing program activities, instituting ongoing evaluation of efforts, and making data-based decisions to ensure effective outcomes.

### *Limitations*

There are several limitations apparent in this study, including those that were inherent in its design as well as those that became apparent throughout the research process. As one of the first studies of its kind with a focus on trying to understand the

current perspectives and practices regarding behavior management of students in school systems across the state of New Jersey, there was little specific literature on which to base the content. Rather, the components chosen for study were based on more general information referenced in the literature of behavior management and school based behavioral consultation.

The Behavior Management Survey used for this research effort was based on the broad field of literature on evidence based interventions available up to the time of its development. The findings strive to present a descriptive summary of the current practices and perspectives of New Jersey professionals in the field of education based on several areas of focus. The findings also strive to create a foundation for future research efforts by providing an idea of how New Jersey public school systems are currently attempting to approach managing the challenging behaviors of students.

Limitations with the survey instrument became apparent as the research progressed. A mistake made by the author on one of the survey items included inadvertently leaving out an answer choice, thereby rendering the results of two questions that should have been asking about the same choices less comparable to one another. Additional limitations with the survey instrument concerned definitions of words and ideas used in some survey items. As a result, some respondents expressed uncertainty with how to answer such questions. Future research may consider operational definitions for all terms, though the author avoided inclusion of such material so as to not create a final survey document that would be wordy and cause respondents to lose interest before completion.

Limitations to this research and its findings also included issues with the

anonymity of the survey, including not knowing which part of the state was being represented by each answer. With survey respondents answering questions without providing identifying information that could be linked to their responses, it was impossible to analyze survey results according to particular areas of New Jersey. Such information would have been helpful in personalizing the results analysis and accompanying guidelines for particular populations of students and school personnel. It would have been informative to have been able to compare answers from individual respondents, or groups thereof categorized by district or role groups, across survey items to gain further understanding at a more specific level, rather than just majority trends.

A related limitation included being unable to separate the responses of administrators and leaders within the field of special education in New Jersey from those of other invited participants, such as behavior specialists and special educators. Although the majority of survey respondents identified themselves from the targeted population of leaders and administrators, approximately one-third were from other professional role groups. Despite this, however, the majority of survey results may be considered the views of leaders and administrators in the field of special education services.

Another limitation related to survey anonymity was when survey respondents endorsed more than one answer to many questions, such as professional role or title. In such cases, it was impossible to know which survey respondents endorsed certain answers, resulting in a database including professionals from multiple role groups and therefore limiting the correlation of responses across survey items. If such information were available, the results would have included an increased understanding of which New Jersey professionals are engaging in which practices and hold which opinions and

perspectives.

It was difficult to gain a true understanding of the extent to which the information collected via this survey was representative of the target population because of several limitations. Being one of the first studies of its kind, it was difficult to predict the response rate of the target population. In order to increase the potential rate of responses, members of the target population were invited to share the electronic survey link with colleagues who are involved in behavior management efforts and might be interested in the results. However, with responses that could not be tracked by responder, it was impossible to sort out the information collected by members of the original target population. With a final sample of 84 respondents out of a target population of 598 individuals, it would have been helpful to have been able to analyze the target populations' opinions separately from the rest.

A more general limitation related to survey research included the number of respondents. The population recruited for participation for this project included directors and coordinators of special education across the state of New Jersey, a population of professionals who are extremely busy on a daily basis and especially during the spring semester, the time during which this survey was available. Participation was voluntary and, although the results and accompanying guidelines were offered in gratitude for their efforts, recruitment was a laborious and largely uncontrollable process.

#### *Considerations for Future Research*

If this research were repeated in the future, some considerations might include having the electronic survey available for one entire academic year, thereby allowing

ample time for respondents to participate while still obtaining current information regarding that school year. Such a practice would allow respondents to complete the survey at a time that is best for them, while also allowing the chance to send periodic updates and follow-up invitations to participate.

The information collected from the survey might also be more useful if responses were identifiable to their respondents through a process of codes assigned to maintain anonymity. By doing this, each school district or professional role group might have its own special code so that responses can be grouped and analyzed in various ways for trends. Additionally, this would allow comparisons to be made at various levels and accuracy of some responses, such as district demographics, could be verified for accuracy.

Survey items might also be more useful if forced choices were used on certain questions so that respondents must choose an answer, rather than endorsing multiple. Again, this practice would allow for grouping of answers to study trends and make comparisons between certain groups of respondents, with less overlap blurring the boundaries and thereby creating less informative data sets. Additionally, allowing more open-ended questions might be a way to gain insight, as survey respondents seemed to have a lot of comments to share. Finally, additional items regarding the rationale behind respondents' choices would be useful additional information to obtain in future efforts. Future research might be able to look into why and how certain decisions are made, especially regarding the allocation of resources and evaluation of behavior management efforts.

*Summary*

A total of 124 electronic Behavior Management Survey participants responded over a period of approximately seven weeks. The data collected makes several summary statements apparent: (a) the majority of New Jersey public school systems appear to have resources available and are spending them on behavior management efforts, (b) the majority of New Jersey public school systems think that the outcome of a decrease in students' challenging behaviors is worth spending resources on, and (c) the majority of New Jersey school systems are perceiving the success level of their efforts as only somewhat successful. Therefore, New Jersey public school systems seem to have the resources, are willing to spend them, and are spending them on behavior management efforts, but with only somewhat successful outcomes thus far.

## CHAPTER V

### BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMING AND CONSULTATION: A GUIDE FOR DECISION-MAKING AND DEVELOPMENT WITHIN NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS

#### Abstract

This chapter attempts to fill a gap between research and practice for behavior management programming in public school systems. Guidelines are provided for public school administrators to utilize when developing behavior management programming in their schools, including operational definitions of critical components and processes of programming as well as ideal and acceptable variations of each. Information presented here is based on both a review of literature from relevant fields of study as well as a recently conducted Behavior Management Survey of the current behavior management practices and perspectives of public school professionals across the state of New Jersey.



### *Introduction*

According to the Behavior Management Survey conducted as part of these dissertation efforts, perspectives and practices regarding managing the challenging behaviors of public school students vary widely across the state of New Jersey. Additionally, the development of behavior management programs within school districts and the use of behavior consultants are currently lacking clear definitions and frameworks for implementation. To fill this void, this chapter provides guidelines for behavior management in New Jersey public school systems, including definitions for content elements and programmatic tasks for effective implementation of evidence based behavioral interventions. This framework helps to minimize the research to practice gap in the delivery of behavior management services in schools. With influence from relevant literature in the areas of applied behavior analysis, school based behavioral, or problem solving, consultation, response to intervention, organizational behavior management, outcome management, program planning and evaluation, implementation of evidence based interventions, crisis planning, and adult learning and training, these guidelines are considered both research based and current.

Additionally, this guide is based on feedback from New Jersey professionals, including 84 leaders in the field of education and another 40 professionals involved with behavior management in public school systems. Information regarding the current practices utilized to manage students' behaviors in New Jersey public school systems, as well as the perspectives of New Jersey professionals regarding goals and outcomes of behavior management programming, was collected via an electronic survey over a period of seven weeks. By utilizing current research literature findings along with information

from professionals managing the challenging behaviors of students on a daily basis, these guidelines were developed to be especially relevant and applicable for decision making and programming tasks required of administrators within New Jersey public school systems. Stakeholders may utilize these guidelines for the initial consideration or development of school based behavior management programs. The information included in the guide offers methods for clarifying the needs and readiness of schools regarding behavior management programming as well as determining relevant outcome goals. Also included are considerations for implementation and evaluation of school based behavior management services.

### *Background*

Schools have been charged with the responsibility of managing the challenging behaviors of students for as long as the doors to public learning centers have been open. Student behavior is inextricably related to a student's availability for learning and the importance of providing sound behavior management procedures has become increasingly pertinent in recent years, due to new legislation and educational law stating that not only are schools responsible for managing students' behaviors, but that students have the ethical and legal right to sound, evidence based behavior management practices (IDEA, 2004). According to educational law, schools are required to use evidence based interventions before a referral for special education evaluation may be considered (IDEA, 2004). Such efforts should include empirically supported interventions of a behavioral nature, especially when the referral problem relates to a student's academic or social

behavior (IDEA, 2004). A comprehensive school based behavior management program based on behavioral consultation methods can facilitate this process.

As a direct result of placing all students in their least restrictive environment for education, general education teachers face more challenging behaviors and need increased support to manage the behaviors of certain students in their classroom, resulting in an increased need for behavioral consultation in schools (Gutkin, 1996). Behavioral consultation in schools has also been shown to prevent referrals to special education based on behavior problems, to decrease the number of out-of-district placements, and to help students return from such, when it includes early identification of behavioral needs of the student, preventative approaches to behavioral support, teacher training, support from leadership, and ongoing evaluation (Putman, Luiselli, & Jefferson, 2002; Riley-Tillman & Eckert, 2001). Recommendations for proactive behavioral provisions include identifying and tracking students who may need additional or individual behavioral supports, implementing functional behavior assessments and behavior support plans, and involving parents in order to encourage positive perceptions of behavioral supports (Putman, Luiselli, & Jefferson, 2002). However, individual behavior support plans are only one piece of the school-wide behavior management program suggested in these guidelines, as it has been shown that individual behavior plans are easier to implement effectively and more likely to be sustained when there is a systemic application of behavior management procedures to support such a level of service delivery (Putnam, Handler, Rey, & McCarty, 2005).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) also mandates that interventions be implemented by a multidisciplinary team and that functional behavior

assessments be conducted in response to disciplinary actions for students with disabilities. Assessment is, again, only a beginning, as once we understand the nature of a challenging behavior, appropriate interventions still need to be developed and implemented. A recent position statement by the National Association of School Psychologists (2009) discusses the importance of using a problem solving, multi-tiered approach to effectively address the specific needs of students. In order to provide such supports to their students and build such abilities in their staff, administrators across public school districts may find themselves needing to obtain and implement behavior management programming services. Beyond the mandate that evidence based behavior intervention practices be utilized with students, however, school administrators are currently left to their own devices regarding the process of implementation. In other words, administrators are responsible for obtaining or developing behavior management programming services for their students and staff. However, despite the legal and ethical implications for public school systems, the process for doing so has lacked substantial attention and guidance. Evidence exists, for instance, on how behavior is analyzed and interventions are applied, as well as what general components need be included in school based behavioral; consultation however, school administrators must either connect the dots to fill in the missing information themselves, such as how current research and evidence may be applied to their school districts, or look to professionals who describe themselves as experts in this area to do it for them (Cooper, Heron, Heward, 1987; Kratochwill, 2008; Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). Additionally, if or when behavior management procedures are established for a school district, administrators are again charged with the responsibility of appointing a facilitator for behavior management

programming, with little criteria available for establishing the expertise for such a position.

According to the leaders surveyed from public school systems across New Jersey, the person selected to fill this role varies, from district personnel with or without a job description including behavior interventions to professionals brought in as consultants from outside of the district. Such decisions may be based on resources available, including time, money, physical, and personnel. As a relatively new application in schools, the lack of a definition regarding who represents a qualified professional to facilitate behavior management programming leaves an overwhelming gap between what schools are told to do and how they can possibly attempt to implement such procedures. The components, or actual procedures in behavior management intervention, are easy to find through various publications and websites offering such, but it is the implementation, or how to go about putting such practices into place in a school in a functional way, that has been left as a task for most school systems to figure out for themselves. In New Jersey, according to the Behavior Management Survey, the methods of implementing behavior management interventions are presently unique to each school district. Though positive similarities in practices are apparent, such as offering behavior management strategies to students in both general and special education, without a standardized method of creating and facilitating behavior management programming in schools, inconsistent practices in development, implementation, and resulting outcomes are apparent across the state.

Often, in human service organizations, such as schools, there is a lack of a bottom-line measure of effectiveness (Reid & Parsons, 2006). These guidelines seek to

provide ways in which the effectiveness of behavior management programming can be measured and monitored. Here, the goals are not just related to student outcomes, such as improved student behavior in school, but in staff outcomes as well, such as gaining behavior management skills, displaying competence in problem solving, and implementing evidence based behavioral interventions with fidelity. The information here aims to define behavior management programming specifically based on the reported needs of New Jersey public school systems, including recognizing variations of a competent professional to facilitate suggested activities and outcomes measurements to establish to what extent evidence based interventions are being implemented with fidelity, how personnel are fulfilling their responsibilities, and whether students and staff are benefiting by the program meeting its goals.

First and foremost, administrators need to be committed to behavior management programming and all it includes, such as new or revised expectations of staff, the allocation of resources, and ongoing support and monitoring of all program efforts. Broadening the perceptions of school personnel toward behavior management efforts as part of a school-wide program, if necessary, must start before any actions begin (Skinner & Hales, 1992). Committed attitudes and belief in behavior management efforts should be modeled initially by school administration.

#### *Review of Literature from Relevant Areas of Study*

A brief review of the relevant literature regarding school based behavioral, or problem solving, consultation and applied behavior analysis is complemented nicely by the inclusion of literature from relevant fields of study such as response to intervention,

organizational behavior and outcome management, program planning and evaluation, implementation of evidence based interventions, crisis planning, adult learning and training, cultural competence, and consultation.

*Relevant Area of Study: Applied Behavior Analysis*

Applied behavior analysis provides the founding principles for this behavior management programming guide. While behaviorism may have gained a negative reputation in education as only applicable to a certain population of students, it is essentially an evidence based and useful system to control or change behavior with a wide range of students (Axelrod, Moyer, & Berry, 1990). The principles of behavior include that behavior is learned as a product of the environment and can therefore be unlearned. This is especially salient for school programming, where it means that the manipulation of environmental variables may allow for the increase or decrease in the display of a target behavior. By analyzing the antecedents and consequences of a target behavior, the function of a behavior can be derived as either obtaining social attention or access to a preferred task or tangible, gaining sensory stimulation, avoiding or escaping a non-preferred task or situation, or avoiding or escaping pain (Iwata, 2009).

By understanding the circumstances in which a behavior is maintained, environmental manipulations can increase or decrease the future likelihood of that behavior. Such knowledge allows for the identification of appropriate intervention techniques that will more likely lead to desired outcomes. Without an understanding of applied behavior analysis and the functions of behavior, behavior management may

simply be a game of chance, where the process of intervening is trial and error and outcomes are extremely uncertain.

*Relevant Area of Study: Response to Intervention*

Response to intervention (RTI) has become a major initiative in today's field of education. Based on Caplan's (1970) medical model, RTI offers three tiers of support for students, namely universal services for all students, targeted services for at risk students, and individual services for students selected for intervention (Howell, Patton, & Deiotte, 2008). RTI is often used for academics, but the basic tenets are easily translated for application with behavior. A major component of an RTI framework includes the universal screening of all students to identify students who may be at risk for certain problems and, therefore, require additional interventions in addition to those provided to all (Sprague, Cook, Browning Wright, & Sadler, 2008). In addition to screening, all students receive certain interventions at the lowest level of intervention. According to the behavior management programming suggested in this guide, interventions at the universal level should be available for all students, even in the absence of universal screening methods. When students are provided with universal behavior management programming, 80-90% of students receive the support they need to reach desired outcomes, while 10-15% of students move up to receive interventions for students targeted as at risk for behavior problems, and 1-5% of students are selected for individual behavior interventions (Howell et. al., 2008). Figure 5.0 delineates an adaptation of the RTI framework, individualized according to the reported needs and available resources of New Jersey public school systems.



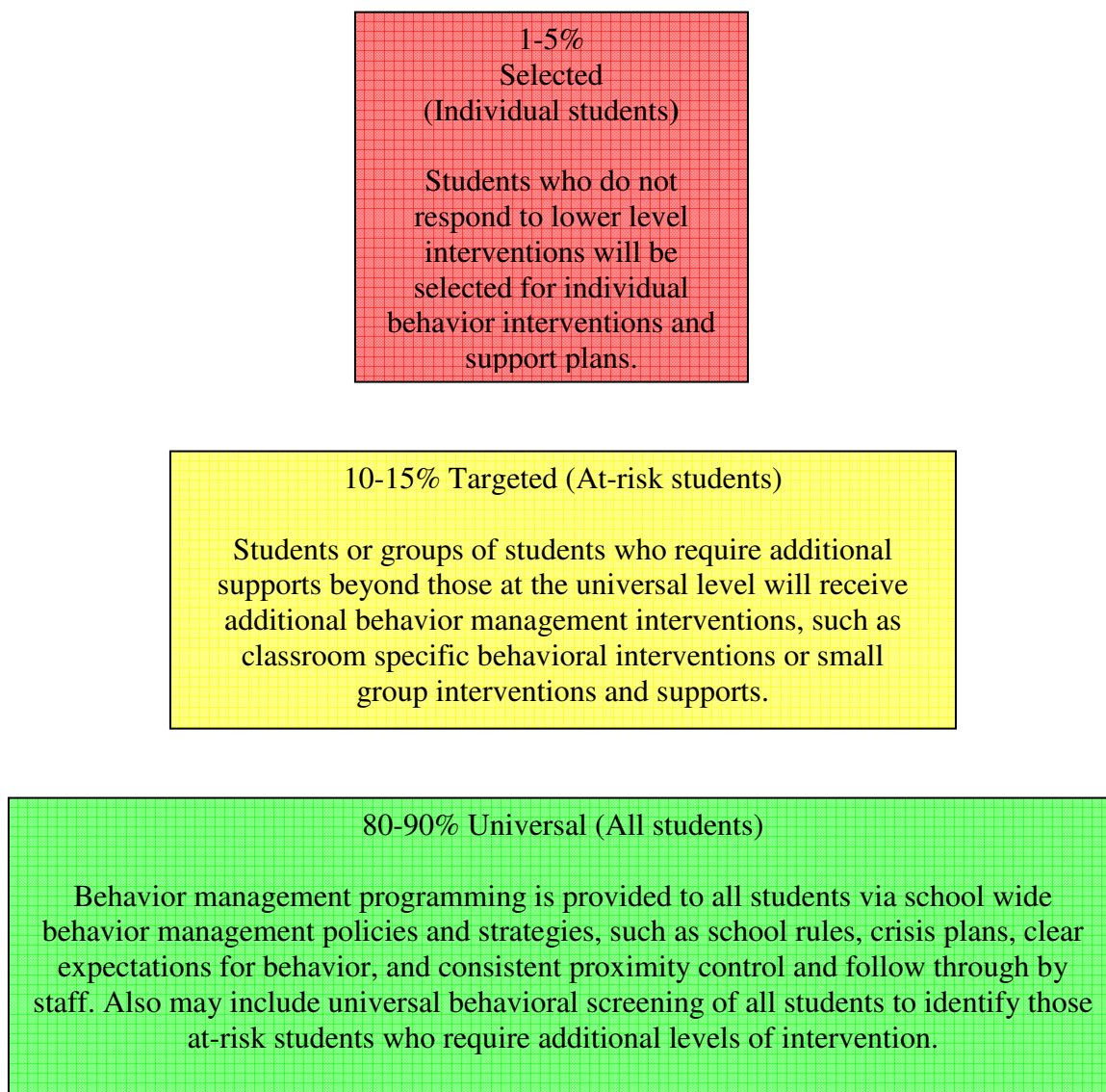


Figure 5.0. Response to intervention (RTI) levels of behavioral intervention (adapted from Howell, Patton, & Deiotte, 2008).

The quality of the universal supports and interventions provided may ultimately determine whether students' responses to interventions will succeed or fail to meet desired outcomes (Howell et. al., 2008). This is also considered relevant for the behavioral interventions suggested here. The response to intervention framework allows a school to adopt universal behavior management policies and procedures that will be successful with most students. However, the framework also provides backup plans for those students who may require additional support. If and when students do not respond to universal interventions provided to all, they will be provided with additional behavioral supports, which are considered the secondary level of at risk students. Secondary level supports proposed in this guide include behavioral interventions that are more targeted than the universal ones provided at the school level to all students, such as classroom-specific behavior management programming or small group contingencies and skill building for targeted students. Evidence shows that effective classroom management of student behavior also supports high academic performance (Howell et. al., 2008). Even more support will be provided to those students who still do not respond to interventions at the secondary level of service delivery. Such students will be selected for individualized behavioral supports, such as functional behavior assessments and individualized behavior support plans.

Second tier interventions for those at risk students who have been nonresponsive or under-responsive to lower level interventions are next selected for smaller group interventions. Students are identified for additional intervention services, according to the RTI model, via universal screening. When certain students move up the tiers to targeted or selected intervention levels, they still receive the universal interventions provided to

all. While the universal and selected (individual) tiers may be easily defined for behavior interventions (i.e. school wide policies and procedures and individualized behavior intervention plans, respectively), it appears from the lack of application reported by respondents to the Behavior Management Survey that the second tier of support has been more challenging for schools to define and implement. This guide considers multiple options of behavioral supports for implementation in schools at the second tier, including classroom-wide plans and group contingencies that support, but are more overt than, school wide practices, as well as the option of pull-out groups in which students may gain access to additional behavior interventions, such as skill building groups.

*Relevant Area of Study: Organization Behavior and Outcome Management*

Organizational behavior management applies the principles of behavior analysis to an organizational setting, such as a school. It is useful, in this instance, to think of it as changing the behavior of staff in order to affect the behavior of students. The behavior of people, or teachers, is changed through a series of activities in order to benefit the consumer, or students (Fleming, 2009). Translated to the guidelines presented here, the behavior is initially defined as staff acquiring foundational knowledge and skills and then applying that knowledge and skills to implement evidence based behavior interventions. Next, the antecedents are determined as instruction, goal setting, and training with follow-up. Finally, the consequences will be feedback and reinforcement from the behavior consultant and administration. As mentioned in related fields of research, staff must be aware of standards of performance before any change in behavior can be expected and, depending on outcomes, any issues of implementation should be separated

into whether they are knowledge issues, and therefore more training may be necessary, or performance issues, in which case monitoring, modeling, and additional consultation may be the best intervention (Fleming, 2009).

Teams may determine that a certain plan should be put in action for a student, but the way in which that is done will require monitoring and guidance, since verbal training and discussions are rarely enough to result in staff actually understanding how to perform certain skills in the natural context (Reid & Parsons, 2006). Literature on outcome management separates the ideas of technology, referring to specific techniques, versus performance, as in how staff implement techniques, stressing a compromise between the learning/planning context and on-the-job practice/implementation; this compromise can be translated to schools utilizing behavior management techniques and interventions by encouraging not only training, but also observation, modeling, and immediate feedback from the expert, or the behavior consultant, to the service provider, or the teacher (Reid & Parsons, 2006).

#### *Relevant Area of Study: Program Planning & Evaluation*

By utilizing Maher's (1999) program planning and evaluation resource guide, the activities involved in behavior management programming are driven by the desired outcomes for students and program participants. Needs of program participants, as well as the students, are driven by comparing the current state of affairs to the desired state of affairs for various areas of behavior management needs. Comparing the current situation to the outcomes that are desired from programming is imperative for identifying areas of need. For example, if the focus is on staff competence in implementing behavior

management strategies with fidelity, which is a key competency for implementation of evidence based practices such as behavioral interventions, a school can measure whether or not this is an area of need for their program participants by comparing the extent to which implementation with fidelity exists currently versus the level of fidelity that is needed or desired.

Additionally, the readiness of a school's context can be assessed by considering relevant components, such as the school's ability to engage in programming efforts at this time, the extent to which the school values behavior management programming, the ideas the school already has about behavior management programming, the level of commitment on the school's part to engage in programming efforts, the timing of implementation efforts, how obligated the school feels to engage in and sustain programming efforts, the relevance of behavior management programming for the school at this time, and the potential yield for the school based on effective outcomes. These guidelines are based on information gained through the Behavior Management Survey, including how New Jersey public professionals describe their own schools' stages of readiness across various areas as related to behavior management programming.

Additionally, throughout this guide to behavior management for schools, various components and practices of behavior management programming are defined so that ongoing evaluation of implementation and outcomes can take place. After all, even the best defined components will not yield effective outcomes if they are not implemented according to plan. Therefore, by defining both the content and process for behavior management programming in a school, as well as conducting ongoing monitoring and

evaluation to ensure implementation efforts are precise, interventions will be more likely to affect the areas of need leading to improved outcome effects.

*Relevant Area of Study: Implementation of Evidence Based Interventions*

Implementation of evidence based interventions has recently received increased attention in the field of education. Implementation science bridges the gap between intervention science, or the study and development of interventions, and service, or the delivery of those interventions to consumers (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). While evidence based interventions and practice elements are available via many sources for educators and staff, the implementation of such interventions has been determined an area worthy of study itself, as the most valuable child outcomes are actualized only when effective interventions are implemented effectively (Fixsen et. al., 2005). Anything that is to be implemented must be operationally defined so that it measurable and quantifiable (Fixsen et. al., 2005). Additionally, its core components must be defined, including who will do or say what, as well as how implementation with fidelity will look and be measured (Duda, 2009).

Implementation of evidence based interventions is most successful when the stages of implementation are considered and worked through. What has been shown to not work is forcing implementation of interventions through mandates or implementing without changing the supporting roles and functions of the individuals involved (Duda, 2009). The roles and responsibilities of all persons involved need to be determined and monitored throughout implementation efforts (Fixsen et. al., 2005; Maher, 1999).

Additional considerations regarding implementation of evidence based interventions are addressed individually throughout this guide.

*Relevant Area of Study: Crisis Planning for Schools*

Best practices for crisis planning in school safety programs includes developing a comprehensive school safety plan that complements any established district, town, or county wide plans (Stephens, 2002). By developing a plan of action and having roles and responsibilities outlined before an incident occurs, a school can decrease the chances of chaos while increasing the chance of consistent and fair treatment of all students. Results from the Behavior Management Survey of New Jersey professionals showed that, while the majority of schools have predetermined crisis plans, almost half do not; instead, these schools consider each situation on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, the overlap between responses is evidence that many schools are inconsistent with their practices, utilizing predetermined plans at times, while considering cases individually other times. Such inconsistent practices may increase a school's liability, as they are not in line with the consistent measures outlined as best practices in school crisis planning. By developing a crisis plan, a school can predetermine a comprehensive and collaborative plan of action that all school staff can review and turn to when faced with high-risk behaviors or situations, such as fighting, bringing a weapon to school, or any threat to student or staff safety. Stephens (2002) suggests developing these plans in a collaborative way, with administration, staff, students, and parents involved from the beginning stages. Once developed, expectations for student behavior should be communicated to all in

multiple formats, such as verbal and written, and reviewed frequently with all parties on a regular basis; then, rules should be reinforced fairly and consistently (Stephens, 2002).

*Relevant Area of Study: Adult Learning & Training*

Adult learning and training literature offers ideas about how school staff may benefit more from behavior management trainings. As adult learners, school staff may learn more in training sessions and learning opportunities that provide ample occasions for learners to actively participate and receive praise. Teachers may help steer the learning process by guiding content coverage, developing topics for future study, engaging in activities; additionally, teachers' needs may be better addressed when trainings start with an assessment of the needs and interests of the group (Murphy & Golden, 2009; Withers, 2009). As learning progresses, adult learners benefit from timely and constructive feedback as well as the opportunity to ask questions (Withers, 2009). Such ideas are easily translated to this guide's suggestions for learning consultations and modeling opportunities with the teacher in his or her natural setting, or classroom, along with immediate feedback from the behavior consultant.

*Relevant Area of Study: Cultural Competence*

As in any educational assessment process, the behavioral assessment portion of behavior management programming needs to be multidimensional, utilizing multiple sources and multiple methods of data and information collection (Shapiro & Kratochwill, 2000). Assessors need to also remain aware of cultural issues that may affect a student's behavior, such as the social norms, communication style, and expectations of their



cultures (Castillo, Quintana, Zamarripa, 2000). Additionally, Castillo et. al. (2000) remind us that behavioral assessors would do well to understand the norms of the classroom environment. In terms of providing culturally competent programming for all students, behavioral strategies are described as good to use because of how concrete and straight forward they are for students and the fact that behavioral interventions allow for immediate feedback to the learner (Castillo et. al., 2000).

*Relevant Area of Study: Consultation*

Consultation warrants additional attention regarding its application in schools. Behavioral consultation is a process utilized in both special and general education (Kratochwill, Elliot, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). School consultation has been defined by Erchul & Martens (1997) as a process for providing services in which the consultant works cooperatively with a staff member to improve the learning and adjustment of students. When used in general education settings, consultation has proven useful in maintaining students with academic, behavioral, and social problems in their general education settings, thereby decreasing the rate of referral up to 40% by increasing teacher support and ability (Kratochwill, Elliot, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). When fewer students are being referred for psychoeducational assessments, the results are not only fewer placements of students in special education, but also less time and resources spent by professionals engaged in conducting testing and evaluations; therefore, examiners may use their time more efficiently with those students who truly require such assessment, rather than with students who may respond to behaviorally-based efforts and interventions. When used in special education settings, consultation has been shown to

decrease the number of out-of-district placements for students based on behavioral referrals (Putnam, Luiselli, & Jefferson, 2002).

Kratochwill, Elliott, and Callan-Stoiber (2002) suggest that “problem solving consultation” should replace the earlier term “behavioral consultation” because the process does not just utilize behavioral techniques, but can include a wide range of assessment and intervention technologies from diverse theoretical backgrounds, including instructional and learning principles. Behavioral and problem solving in nature, these guidelines also consider additional areas of science and implementation that are considered not only useful, but imperative for effective school based behavior management programming, such as outcome management and program planning and evaluation.

Consultation is defined as one or more people with certain knowledge and skills working with individuals or groups within a social system on one or more work-related problems (Cherniss, 1976). Bergan (1977) identified three key people in the consultation process: the consultant, or the person with certain knowledge and skills, the client, or the person/people for whom the consultation process will benefit, and the consultee, or the person who will work with the consultant throughout the process. Martens and Ardoin (2002) note that the relationship between the consultant and the consultee should be voluntary, collaborative, collegial, and confidential, as well as encouraging of the consultee’s active involvement in the process. The goals of consultation include the immediate remediation of the problem to benefit the client, as well as the improvement of the consultee’s abilities to autonomously use the skills learned throughout consultation to independently improve upon future situations (Witt & Elliott, 1983).

In behavioral consultation, the process is closely related to the outcomes of intervention (Bergan, 1977), meaning that the goals of the consultation drive the actions of the participants throughout the process. Behavior consultants are described as providing expertise in a collaborative, problem solving approach. Perhaps because of this fact, behavioral consultation is noted as the preferred model of consultation in education (Bergan, Byrnes, & Kratochwill, 1979; Martens, 2002). An effective consultant is described by Sheridan, Richards, and Smoot (2000) as having and utilizing expertise in both the process, or the act of providing and facilitating behavioral consultation, as well as the content of consultation, or experience with the presenting problem and appropriate interventions. Consultation is considered an ongoing process with teachers, incorporating different activities at different points in time; it needs to be collaborative, but it also requires the consultant to be an expert (Erchul, DuPaul, Bennett, Grissom, Jitendra, Tresco, Volpe, Vile Junod, Flammer-Rivera, & Mannella., 2009).

In this guide to school based behavior management programming, content expertise is defined as incorporating various ideas from relevant fields, such as applied behavior analysis, consultation, and outcome management. Content topics also consider the author's professional experience in addition to areas from a professional task list described as a minimal body of knowledge by a professional board, namely the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (2005), as well as those described in the Positive Behavior Support model (Kincaid, George, & Childs, 2006). These areas of expertise are included in this guide's definition of a competent program consultant.

Caplan (1970) introduced the mental health model of consultation and identified three tiers for intervention, namely primary, secondary, and tertiary. Behavioral

consultation translates these tiers to the educational setting by identifying three tiers for focus within the school: proactive effort towards all students (primary), proactive effort towards some students determined at risk (secondary), and reactive effort towards individual students identified for specific/reactive intervention (tertiary) (Bergan, 1977). The four steps of the behavioral consultation process are outlined as problem identification, problem analysis, intervention implementation, and evaluation (Bergan, 1977; Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990). Kratochwill, Elliott, and Callan-Stoiber (2002) add an initial phase that takes place first and foremost as the development of a relationship between the consultant and consultee.

In addition to possessing a certain level of expertise, the effective consultant, as rated by teachers, is able to collaborate, is aware of relationship issues, maintains a clear sense of identity, evaluates and focuses ideas, and responds appropriately to teachers' participation throughout the consultation process (Knoff, Sullivan, & Liu, 1995). In other words, presenting as both knowledgeable and experienced and being able to guide the consultation process appear to be equally important as building and maintaining a relationship while facilitating work with the teacher. Areas of knowledge considered as necessary for expertise in this capacity for school based behavior management programming include principles of behavior, antecedent-behavior-consequence relationships, functional assessment of behavior, data collection, analysis and display of data, intervention implementation and evaluation, prompting, modeling, problem solving, use of positive reinforcement, chaining, shaping, feedback, ongoing monitoring, and data-based decision making (BACB, 2005; Kincaid, George, & Childs, 2006).

Research has found that results of consultation within the educational setting have included a decrease in referral rates as well as generalization of skills taught to teachers across teaching settings (Witt & Elliott, 1983). Additionally, positive behavioral supports implemented via the behavioral consultation process can result in reduced use of punishment procedures by teachers, an increase in students' academic achievement, and the overall improvement of a school's climate (Mautone, Luiselli, & Handlwer, 2006).

*Behavior Management Survey: Current Practices and Perspectives*

Special education coordinators, supervisors, and directors across the state of New Jersey were invited to participate in an electronic Behavior Management Survey regarding current practices and perspectives in managing the challenging behaviors of students in public school systems. A total of 124 responses were collected, 84 of which represented the target professional role group of special education coordinators and directors and another 40 respondents who were invited to participate by invitation from members of the target group, being professionals involved in the process of managing the challenging behaviors of students. According to the New Jersey professionals surveyed, the majority of school systems across the state are currently implementing some form of behavior management services. Additionally, the majority of schools provide such services across both general and special education settings and include a variety of similar practices, such as consultation with Child Study and Intervention and Referral Services Team members, individual behavior intervention plans, student observation, and interviews. Where the schools vary from one another, however, is in the personnel responsible for providing such services, ranging from a district employee with or without

a job description that includes such responsibilities to an outside professional brought into the district to provide such services. These findings are summarized in Figure 5.1.

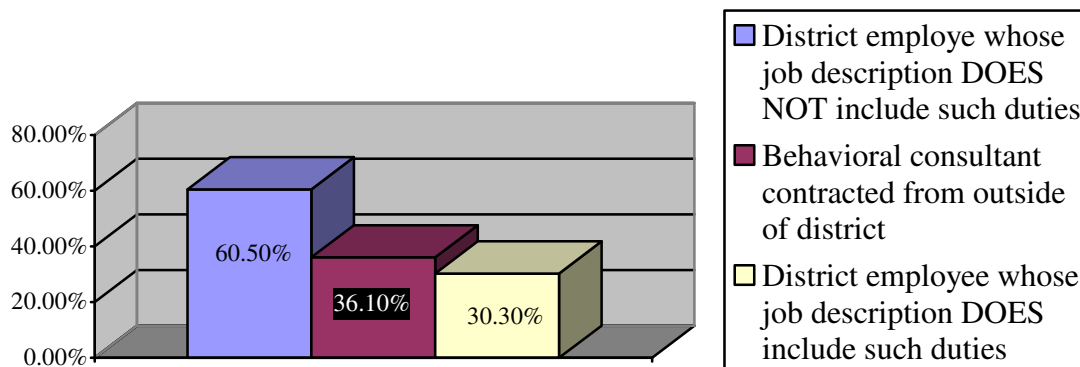


Figure 5.1. NJ schools' "go-to" people for behavior management guidance.

New Jersey schools surveyed also vary in terms of their methods of handling high-risk behaviors, such as fighting or bringing a weapon to school; some schools utilize a pre-established crisis or discipline plan while other schools address each occurrence on an individual basis. Regarding documentation of behavior management practices and interventions, the vast majority of New Jersey public school systems report utilizing written documentation or a combination of written and verbal documentation. Therefore, not only are behavior management efforts being made and procedures being implemented, but most schools appear to be collecting data and notes on their activities in written form for their school records.

Regarding the expenditure of district resources to provide behavior management services, the majority of New Jersey public school systems surveyed reported that they feel they have ample resources available for behavior management of students. Not only

that, but the majority of the New Jersey public school systems surveyed described themselves as willing to spend the necessary resources to implement behavior management services, as the potential beneficial outcomes are considered worth the resources spent on them.

For New Jersey professionals, the most frequently cited measure of success was described as improved student behavior, as shown in Figure 5.2. This means that New Jersey professionals describe the behaviors displayed by their students as the primary way in which they gauge the success of their school's behavior management policies and procedures. The second most cited measure of success regarding managing the behaviors of students was described as the ability to maintain students with challenging behaviors within the school district. In other words, according to the Behavior Management Survey, observing and experiencing improved behavioral repertoires of students along with an increased rate of maintaining students in-district are the most important issues related to behavior management efforts currently on the minds of New Jersey professionals.

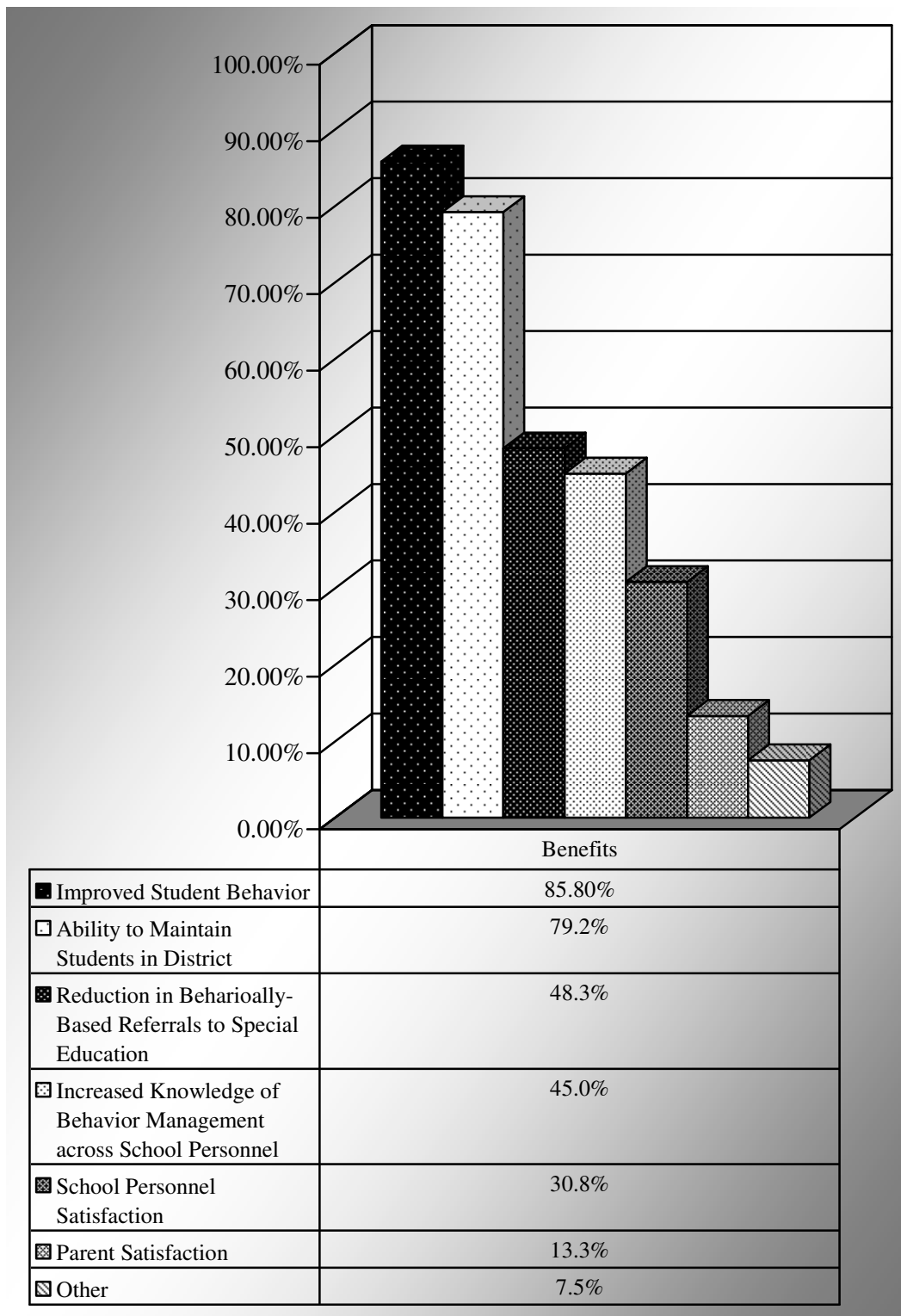


Figure 5.2. Reported benefits from behavior management efforts; based on 120 responses.



While methods for determining the success of efforts in managing the challenging behaviors of students may vary for individual school districts, research literature describes several areas for potential success, including decreased referral rates to special education based on challenging behaviors, increased student achievement, increased staff competence, and decreased rates of students in out-of-district placements (Kratochwill, Elliot, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002; Kratochwill, Sladeczek, & Plunge, 1995; Putnam, Luiselli, & Jefferson, 2002). The goals of consultation include the immediate remediation of the problem, to benefit the client, as well as the improvement of the consultee's abilities to use the skills learned throughout consultation to independently improve upon future situations (Witt & Elliott, 1983). Kratochwill, Sladeczek, & Plunge (1995) report that referrals for psychoeducational assessments can be reduced by up to 40% when school based behavioral consultation is provided to general education teachers. Additionally, the effectiveness of a consultation process may be determined by its influence on teacher behavior and attitude or student behavior, attitude, or academic performance (Fuchs et. al., 1992).

In sum, according to current reports collected in the Behavior Management Survey, the majority of public school systems in New Jersey have resources available for behavior management efforts, are currently providing behavior management services, and are documenting their efforts. That said, overall outcomes, in terms of improved student behavior and the ability to maintain students in district, are described as only somewhat successful by the majority of professionals across New Jersey public school systems, as summarized in Figure 5.3. It is apparent that here is the problem: public school systems across the state of New Jersey have resources available for behavior management

programming and are spending those resources on implementing behavior management services for their students, but perceive and report the outcomes of their efforts as only somewhat successful.

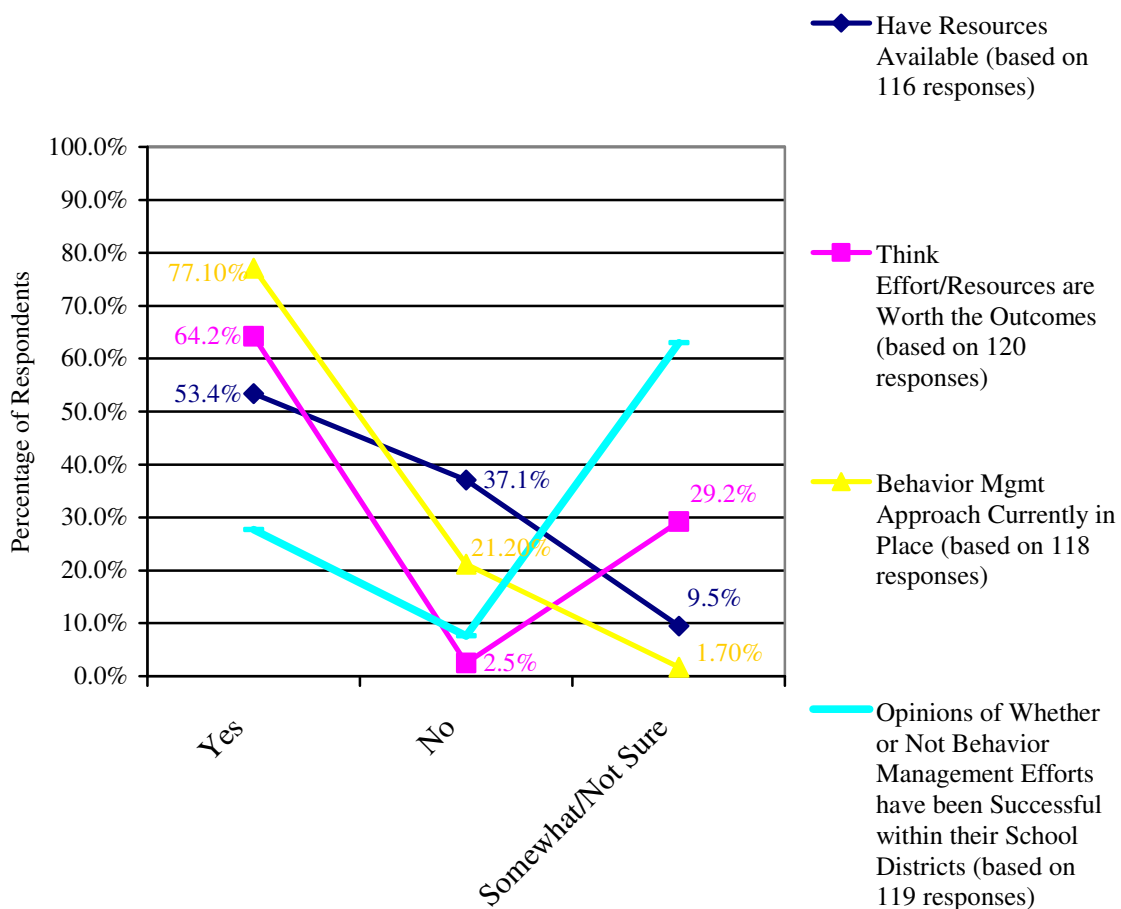


Figure 5.3. Comparing resources spent to outcomes obtained.

Considering the findings of the Behavior Management Survey, some optimistic ideas may be considered:

1. Resources have been allocated for behavior management efforts within New Jersey public school systems.

2. Behavior management efforts are in place in the majority of New Jersey public school systems.
3. Behavior management practices are available to the majority New Jersey public school students in both general and special education contexts.
4. Similar behavior management practices are cited as occurring most frequently across New Jersey public school systems, including consultation with CST and I&RS members, student observations, and staff interviews.
5. Efforts are documented in written format within the majority of New Jersey public school systems.
6. The majority of New Jersey public school systems consider their behavior management efforts as successful when student behavior is improved and/or the rate of students sent to out-of-district placements based on behavioral referrals is decreased.

However, some additional trends are also apparent as possible areas of need, according to the professionals surveyed:

1. Obtaining personnel to provide behavioral consultation to school staff varies greatly between public school districts in New Jersey, from appointing district personnel whose job descriptions do not even include such responsibilities to contracting district professionals from outside of the district.
2. High-risk crisis behaviors are dealt with in varying ways in New Jersey public schools, often on an individual basis instead of according to previously established rules and consequences or crisis plans.

3. Educational leaders in the New Jersey public school systems report their current efforts at behavior management are only somewhat successful according to their own measurements and perceptions of outcomes.

### *Guideline Goals*

An important theme throughout this guide involves operationally defining all components and tasks involved in a programmatic plan of action, including operational definitions of tasks and activities, the responsibilities of each professional role group involved, the timeline of activities, and ideas for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. The goals of these guidelines are threefold and designed mainly for administrators and leaders within New Jersey public school systems. The guidelines aim to define a process of behavioral consultation for New Jersey school systems by considering current practices and perspectives of New Jersey educational leaders as well as taking influence from current educational trends and best practices, such as response to intervention, implementation of evidence based interventions, and ongoing evaluation for increased accountability as well as effective outcomes. It is important to note that these guidelines are aimed at bringing together areas of education that share the common interest of implementing strategies to improve student outcomes in a way that is clearly delineated to address the needs of New Jersey public school systems. There are countless resources from leading professionals in the field of education available regarding the individual components considered in these guidelines. These guidelines provide a way to bring those ideas together to form a programmatic plan, operationally defined and individualized for New Jersey public school systems. However, the information collected

and presented ostensibly could be translated to, and beneficial for, school systems elsewhere.

The first goal is aimed at organizing one of the early stages of behavior management programming within a school, namely the definition and filling of the professional role of behavior consultant. Once a school has decided to implement some organized version of behavior management programming, the next step includes finding a facilitator to organize the implementation of those procedures. Whether looking among current district personnel or hiring a new employee, developing a clearly defined job description with delineated expectations helps increase the likeliness of effective outcomes (Fixsen et. al, 2005; Reid & Parsons, 2006). When the areas of necessary expertise and experience, as well as the professional expectations of the job, are operationally defined and known by all involved, roles and responsibilities can be established and monitoring of goal fulfillment can be more easily conducted. For the purposes of these guidelines, the professional role of overseeing behavior management program tasks and procedures within a school will from here on be termed “behavior consultant.” The behavior consultant’s professional expectations may include activities of training and supervising others regarding the implementation of behavioral interventions, conducting functional behavior assessments (FBAs), the implementation, evaluation, and modification of behavior intervention or support plans (BIPs or BSPs), working on and facilitating professional implementation teams, and providing thoughtful and timely feedback regarding behavior management efforts.

The second goal is to outline the components of a school based behavior management program, operationally defining the critical program components and

practice elements involved in the process. Behavior management programming is currently being implemented in various forms in public school systems across the state of New Jersey. This guide may be used as a comprehensive tool for developing a new behavior management program in a public school system.

The third goal is related to the second in that this behavior management guide attempts to provide information that can be utilized by schools already implementing behavior management efforts as a way of considering their current activities and outcomes and using the process presented here to reconsider, and perhaps reorganize, their efforts. Visual tables may be used as a gauge by which school systems currently implementing behavior management activities can measure their current provisions, gain ideas for expanding their efforts into an organized program, or use the research and information summarized here as a way of increasing support for their current programming efforts from relevant stakeholders.

The tables included in this guide, such as the practice profile and the list of critical components, are designed to present pertinent information in an organized manner and may be used as stand alone extensions of the narrative portions of this behavior management guide. Discussions at the administrative or school level regarding behavior management programming may be based on these visual displays. Additionally, these visual displays may be utilized as checklists during planning sessions or quality assurance observations and meetings. After ensuring that all critical components are included in the plan for a behavior management program, observers can utilize the information provided to ensure components are sustained over time, especially in the face of reduced availability of resources or changes in staff or relevant stakeholders. Additionally, while

operational definitions related to the professional role of a behavior consultant may be helpful during the interviewing process, they may also be used to pinpoint areas of professional growth, such as areas for additional experience or training. Since implementation efforts may take time to build and become a permanent part of a school's infrastructure, ensuring quality of implementation efforts will be a key component for effective outcomes over time.

### *Critical Components*

Despite the legal and ethical responsibilities to provide such services, currently no systematized way of choosing a multitude of evidence based interventions from each of the various relevant fields of research presented here nor combining them for the purpose of developing a sound and comprehensive behavior management program for use in public school systems currently exists. However, the research validated components that are included here are considered to be among the best practices for managing the challenging behaviors of students in public school systems.

Core practice elements in school based behavioral consultation include developing a relationship between consultant and consultee, identifying the problem behavior, analyzing the problem, implementing the intervention plan, and evaluating the plan (Kratochwill, 2008). At the stages of identifying and analyzing the problem, a functional behavior assessment needs to be completed, including activities such as observation of the student and context, interviews with teachers, parents, and student, behavioral checklists or rating scales, and collection of data (Kratochwill, 2008).

When developing the intervention plan, the function of the behavior needs to be understood in order to provide antecedent supports as well as consequences that will result in desired outcomes, whether the goal for the target behavior is to increase or decrease its future likelihood of occurring. Direct instruction and training on the various components involved in behavior management can take place in a variety of ways. Research has shown that verbal training alone is ineffective; however, regular monitoring and follow through in the natural setting can help trainees develop behaviors that are in line with accurate implementation of strategies and techniques (Fixsen et. al., 2005; Reid & Parson, 2006; Robbins & Gutkin, 2004). For example, group training in a conference room that covers the theory and background of behavior management might be more effective if followed up by smaller group or individual trainings, during which school staff practice implementing the techniques with supported guidance and modeling from the behavior consultant.

When implementing a behavior intervention plan at the classroom or individual level, close monitoring by the behavior consultant will help to ensure that the plan is being followed with fidelity, thereby increasing the chances of desired outcomes. Application can be very different from planning, so having expert advice for adjusting a plan to work in the natural setting is key for effective outcomes.

Best practices for dealing with high-risk behaviors include implementing a predetermined crisis plan that coincides with local rules and laws, so schools would do well to develop clear expectations for student behavior, communicating those expectations to students and parents via multiple modalities at multiple times over the course of a school year (Stephens, 2002). When a situation involving high-risk behaviors



presents itself, schools must be prepared with a predetermined course of action, including operationally defined responsibilities for each professional role group involved, to ensure not only a smoother process of dealing with a chaotic situation, but also the fair and consistent treatment of all students (Stephens, 2002).

According to special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, schools must document the implementation of early intervention services, scientifically based academic and behavioral interventions, as well as pre-referral activities in order to minimize the over identification of students and unnecessary rates of referral to special education (IDEA, 2004; Wilkinson, 2005). Documentation may range from anecdotal notes during the consultation process to data taken during the intervention implementation process, including student behavioral outcomes and evaluation of the overall plan.

### *Implementation Considerations*

Some important points regarding implementation of interventions include the idea that a verbal agreement between the consultant and consultee does not guarantee intervention implementation with fidelity as well as the idea that training alone does not lead to the successful implementation of interventions (Fixsen et. al., 2005; Reid & Parson, 2006; Robbins & Gutkin, 1994). Sometimes, it may be a matter of an evidence based intervention not translating to the applied setting of a classroom as originally assumed. Fixsen et. al. (2005) address this research to practice gap by reviewing the process of implementation, especially in terms of how implementation science is different from intervention science. Research shows that both the action of implementation as well

as the content of the intervention must be effective in order to result in effective outcomes. When one or both are not effectively developed or executed, outcomes may not only be ineffective, but might even be harmful, as illustrated in Table 5.4 (Duda, 2009; Fixsen et. al., 2005).

Table 5.4. Interaction of intervention effectiveness and implementation effectiveness

		Effectiveness of Implementation Practices	
		Effective	NOT Effective
Effectiveness of Intervention Practices	Effective	Good outcomes for students, families, & staff	Poor Outcomes
	NOT Effective	Highly variable, often ineffective outcomes; sometimes harmful to children, families, and adults	

Source: Duda, 2009 Fixsen, 2005;

Implementation is defined as a specified set of activities designed so that a program may be put into practice effectively (Fixsen et. al, 2005). Before the start of programming, Maher (1999) describes the process of considering certain needs assessment questions in terms of the current state of affairs versus the desired state of affairs within the context considered for programming efforts. By developing questions that are related to outcome goals, schools may be able to delineate the type and amount of change they would like to see in different areas of knowledge, skills, and ability at the end of their implementation efforts, as illustrated in Table 5.5. Additionally, readiness of

the context for such programming should always be considered, as was done during these dissertation efforts by collecting information related to current perspectives and practices of behavior management from New Jersey professionals, as described in Table 5.6.

Table 5.5. Summary of information from New Jersey professionals surveyed, illustrated for use in clarifying programming needs and evaluating programming efforts

Questions	Current State of Affairs CSA	Desired State of Affairs DSA
To what extent do New Jersey public school systems utilize experienced and knowledgeable behavior consultants?	Currently, this role is filled by various professionals, ranging from experts contracted from outside of the district to district personnel whose job descriptions do not even include behavior management responsibilities.	New Jersey schools utilize the services of a behavior consultant who meets an operational definition of knowledge and experience requirements.
To what extent do New Jersey schools have the resources to allocate for behavior management programming?	Educational leaders within New Jersey school systems report having ample resources to allocate for behavior management programming.	New Jersey public school systems create behavior management programs that are based on current resources, but plan for future sustainability in the event that current resources run out.
What benefits are New Jersey public school systems experiencing as a result of their behavior management efforts?	New Jersey public school systems rank the top potential benefits from behavior management efforts as improved student behavior and decreased out-of-district placements for students, though the actualization of these benefits may require additional monitoring and evaluation efforts.	Decreased referral rates to special education based on behavior, decreased numbers of students sent out of district due to behavior problems, and increased staff competence implementing behavior management strategies and techniques are realized outcomes for behavior management efforts in New Jersey public school systems.

Table 5.5. – continued

Questions, <i>cont.</i>	Current State of Affairs CSA	Desired State of Affairs DSA
To what extent are New Jersey public school systems following systematic protocols for managing the high-risk behaviors of students?	New Jersey public school systems report varied activities, from pre-determined district/school plans for dealing with crises to treating each case on an individual basis as needed.	New Jersey public school systems implement best practices in crisis planning and intervention, including pre-determined plans for high-risk behaviors that correspond to local laws. These plans and expectations will be reviewed via multiple modalities with students and parents on an ongoing basis.
To what extent do New Jersey public school systems perceive behavior management efforts as successful in meeting the desired outcome goals?	The majority of professionals from New Jersey public school systems describe the outcomes of their current behavior management efforts as “somewhat” successful.	New Jersey public school systems report the outcomes of their behavior management efforts as affirmatively successful at meeting the goals of behavior management programming based on clearly defined goals, ongoing monitoring and evaluation while working towards those goals, and data delineating goals achieved.

Source: Maher, 1999

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 Table 5.6. Context assessment information based on survey of NJ professionals

Ability	Professionals from New Jersey school systems report having the ability to allocate resources (i.e. physical, monetary, temporal) in order to engage in behavior management programming efforts.
Values	New Jersey professionals, including administrators, supervisors, and coordinators of special education services, describe behavior management programming as valuable for students and staff. Potential beneficial outcomes described include improved student behavior, decreased number of students sent out of district due to behavior, and increased staff ability to utilize behavior management interventions.
Ideas	New Jersey professionals surveyed describe behavior management programming as necessary for their students and staff as well as worthy of the time and effort spent implementing it.

Table 5.6. - continued

Circumstances	Legal mandates, educational law, and best practices in the field of education direct schools to increase the use of evidence based interventions for behavioral concerns, during both the assessment and intervention stages.
Timing	The current trend in the field of education is towards the response to intervention (RTI) movement for both academic and behavioral needs of students. With that in mind, multi-tiered evidence based behavior management programming is relevant and timely for New Jersey public school systems.
Obligation	New Jersey public school systems are obligated to provide behavior management programming due to educational law and legal mandates. New Jersey professionals surveyed acknowledge this sense of obligation, even if they do not have the resources or capabilities to engage in such efforts.
Resistance	New Jersey educational leaders may be potentially resistant to allocate resources for programming when the outcomes have thus far only been “somewhat” successful in terms of value added to students and staff.
Yield	New Jersey educational leaders recognize that they have much to gain from behavior management efforts, but describe their current outcomes as lacking. Potential outcome goals are described as improved student behavior, decreased frequency of sending students out of district due to behavioral needs, and increased staff competence with behavior management.

Source: Maher, 1999

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Research from the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) suggests that before beginning, the critical components of an intervention, or behavior management program in this case, be defined in terms of the ideal version, acceptable alterations, unacceptable alterations, and drastic mutations (Duda, 2009; Fixsen et. al., 2005). This process is summarized in the practice profile presented in Table 5.9. The practice profile is a comprehensive visual representation of the components and processes involved in behavior management programming for New Jersey public school systems. Based on literature from the various fields of relevant research covered thus far, the

practice profile first defines the ideal version of each component. Then, in order to allow flexibility as well as individualization based on where schools are currently at regarding programming capabilities, acceptable variations of each component are defined. The practice profile covers the ideal as well as both acceptable and unacceptable variations of who, what, and how facilitation of behavior management programming will take place. Additionally, drastic mutations are provided based on the author's professional experience in the capacity of behavior consultant so that schools can recognize if their current or future efforts fall out of line with programming guidelines. Setting up this profile not only allows school administrators to understand what they are looking for in terms of personnel and various other components of behavior management programming efforts, but also provides a gauge by which relevant stakeholders may monitor implementation efforts for quality and fidelity over time. Additionally, the roles and responsibilities of each professional role group involved are operationalized to increase both the understanding of expectations as well as accountability for actions.

Complete adoption and implementation of evidence based interventions has been shown to take between two and four years in educational contexts (Fixsen et. al., 2005). This is not to say that initial efforts will be in vain or without positive outcomes, but that, over time, programming will continue to develop and become a more permanent part of the school's system, thereby allowing for implementation with fewer obstacles, increasing the chances of sustainability of initial efforts. In schools, implementation teams may adhere more closely to intervention efforts when administrators support the process, procedures are kept simple and are developed with existing practices and

routines in mind, and data is used to make decisions (Doll, Haack, Kosse, Osterloh, Siemers, & Pray, 2005).

The guide to behavior management for public school systems may be considered a combination of the collaborative and expert models of consultation and implementation, meaning that an expert need be present to facilitate all programming efforts, but that participants are involved in developing the ways in which practice elements are implemented, monitored, and evaluated so that a sense of ownership among program participants is fostered throughout the process.

#### *Obtaining a Behavior consultant*

The process of obtaining a professional with the knowledge, skills, and ability needed in a school based behavior consultant may be a daunting task for some administrators, especially when this professional will be overseeing the development or reorganization of behavior management programming for their school. Kratochwill & VanSomeren (1995) identified one of the barriers to successful behavioral consultation as the training of the consultant. For example, if the consultant has more of a conceptual understanding of behavioral consultation, rather than practical experience, or the consultant's knowledge and experience are both short of mastery of any important aspect of consultation, outcomes may be ineffective (Kratochwill & VanSomeren, 1995). This guide to behavior management programming suggests that the consultant have ample knowledge, defined as being able to define, explain, and discuss current research, as well as outline how trainings would be provided regarding the areas related to applied behavior analysis (ABA), consultation, curriculum/instruction and learning, and topics

such as use of baseline data, reinforcement, differential reinforcement, problems with punishment, operational definition of target behaviors and interventions, functions of behavior, environmental variables affecting behavior, data collection, analysis of data, multidimensional assessments, three term contingences, or antecedent-behavior-consequence (A-B-C), time out from reinforcement, planned ignoring, extinction, self-management/self-monitoring, generalization, ethical considerations in ABA, contingency contracting, token economies, chaining, shaping, goals of consultations, the problem solving process, and the connection between curriculum, instruction, and behavior (BACB, 2005; Kincaid, George, & Childs, 2006; Kratochwill, Elliot, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). Additionally, a successful consultant demonstrates ability in not only intervention development and implementation, but in ongoing follow-up efforts (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002).

As per relevant research literature in the areas of implementation and program planning and evaluation, by operationally defining the characteristics and expertise needed in such a professional, as well as the professional duties that will be expected of him or her, schools increase the likelihood for desirable outcomes regarding this initial process (Duda, 2009; Maher, 1999). The practice profile provided in Table 5.9 includes the ideal expertise, experience, and expectations for a behavior consultant. The basis for these included components is based on the author's professional experience as well as on a minimal standard of knowledge for practitioners of applied behavior analysis set by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB, 2005). The components included in these guidelines address those skills and areas of expertise that are pertinent to school based behavior management programming in the public school systems in New Jersey. It is a



guide for finding a professional with a certain amount of knowledge, skills, and ability to fulfill the professional role of behavior consultant, including acceptable and unacceptable variations. Using the practice profile as a checklist may guide a school in the development of a job description or even in conducting the interview process.

Additionally, Table 5.10 provides a list of critical practice elements along with definitions, references, and resources for more information. This tool, as well as the table of roles and responsibilities over time presented in Table 5.9, supplements the practice profile and may be used during the process of gaining support from relative stakeholders as well as appointing a behavior consultant.

The practice profile and supplemental tables might also be used as guides to ensuring development of skills and expertise overtime, especially if a professional fulfilling the role of behavior consultant is already on staff, but does not fully meet all of the knowledge, skills, and ability areas. In such cases, future performance goals may need to be developed. It should be noted, however, that the definitions provided in the practice profile are a guide to minimum experience and expertise, and not the final note on ultimately deciding a professional's level of competence.

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**Table 5.7 Roles and responsibilities of professionals involved with behavior management programming**

Roles	Responsibilities	Timelines
Educational support staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend group trainings</li> <li>• Attend implementation team meetings</li> <li>• Collect data on student outcomes</li> <li>• Collaborate with teachers on implementation of interventions</li> </ul>	All activities will be ongoing throughout school year

Table 5.7 – continued

Roles, <i>cont.</i>	Responsibilities	Timelines
Behavior consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training to all program participants</li> <li>• Develop working relationships with all program participants</li> <li>• Develop behavioral interventions for implementation at various levels of service delivery, as per needs of students and staff</li> <li>• Facilitate implementation team meetings</li> <li>• Provide modeling and guidance to program participants in the natural setting</li> <li>• Monitor programming efforts with ongoing observations</li> <li>• Provide feedback to program participants immediately after observation</li> <li>• Provide ongoing training as well as guidance in the natural setting to program participants</li> <li>• Monitor student outcomes and review at implementation team meetings</li> <li>• Evaluate and revise intervention plans to increase likelihood of positive student outcomes</li> </ul>	All activities will be ongoing throughout school year
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend group trainings</li> <li>• Attend implementation team meetings</li> <li>• Implement behavioral interventions and strategies at various levels of service delivery</li> <li>• Guide educational support staff in implementation of behavior management program efforts</li> <li>• Collect data on student outcomes</li> <li>• Collaborate with behavior consultant and implementation team on revisions to behavior intervention plans</li> </ul>	All activities will be ongoing throughout school year
Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather support for behavior management program efforts from relevant stakeholders</li> <li>• Attend group trainings</li> <li>• Model the support and use of behavior management strategies and interventions for school staff and students</li> <li>• Attend implementation team meetings</li> <li>• Observe implementation efforts of program participants</li> <li>• Monitor the activities of the behavior consultant</li> </ul>	All activities will be ongoing throughout school year

### *Gaining Administrative Support*

The practice profile presented in Table 5.9 and supplemental Tables 5.8 and 5.10 operationally define the critical components for developing a behavior management program in a school. By describing each component in measurable and observable terms, school administrators can develop and define the ideal behavior management program for their school systems. Administrators can also use the critical components listed in the practice profile as a tool for deciding which resources will be allocated for certain areas of programming and to what extent. The practice profile may be especially helpful when presenting programming intent to a group of stakeholders, such as boards of education or parent groups. The practice profile may also be helpful in determining areas of growth for existing behavior management programs, like a gauge by which to compare where their school is as opposed to where they would like to be in regards to behavior management programming. Being able to clearly define and communicate the components of a behavior management program may be the first step in gaining the support and understanding of relevant stakeholders. While the practice profile aims to provide a mechanism for defining critical components in visual format, as well as their acceptable and unacceptable components, the process of communicating such ideas is handed over to the school's administrative and decision-making team.

### *The Process of School Based Behavior Management Programming*

The process flowchart presented in Figure 5.8 guides a school's behavior management efforts over the course of a school year. All efforts throughout the process should be documented, including who participated, what was acted upon, and what the

outcomes were. Additionally, parents should be encouraged to participate in all processes, not only to increase the chances of effective outcomes, but also due to legal mandates that encourage parental involvement throughout intervention efforts with students (IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2001). This process remains the same regardless of the level(s) of service delivery included in a school's behavior management efforts and applies to efforts at all three levels of focus: universal, targeted, or selected.

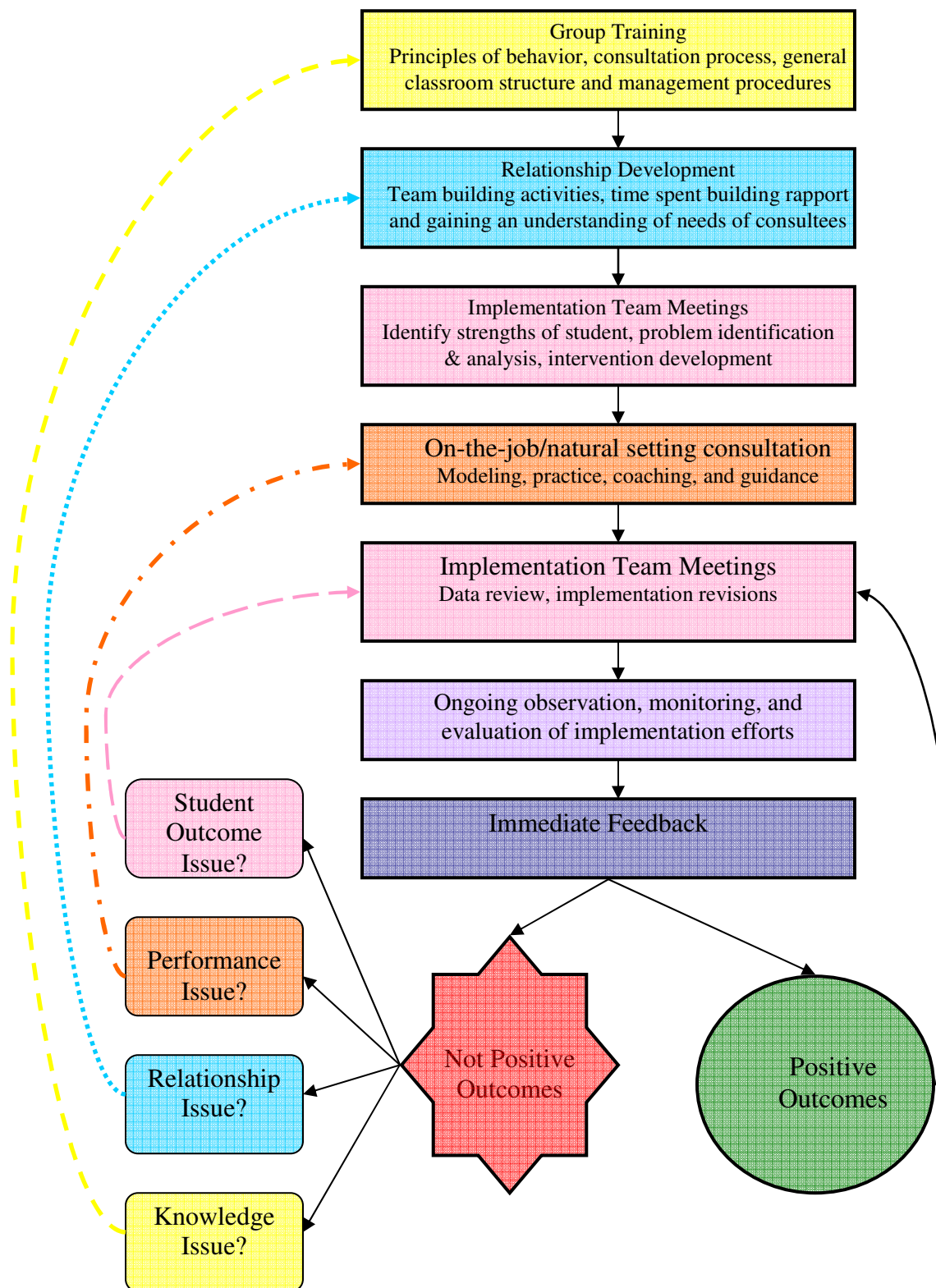


Figure 5.8. Flow chart of school based behavior management programming process facilitated by behavior consultant.

By starting with group training, the initial program goal is to create a foundation of knowledge regarding behavior management for all school personnel. Principles of behavior analysis should be reviewed, including functions of behavior, data collection and analysis, and intervention strategies and techniques related to classroom structure and behavior management, as often teacher training programs do not require courses in behavior management training (Pumroy, 1984 as cited in Skinner & Hales, 1992). Group training can also function as an introduction of the behavior consultant and consultation process to the rest of the school staff. The involvement of administration is key to setting the tone of commitment at the start of any new programming efforts. Once introductions are complete and the initial training has laid the foundation for behavior management efforts, a collaborative relationship between the consultant and consultees needs to be developed. While being experienced and knowledgeable in behavior management strategies and techniques are important qualities in a consultant, the ability to maintain relationships has been rated as equally important to teachers; therefore, abilities in both content as well as the consultation process are imperative (Erchul et. al., 2009; Sheridan, Richards, & Smoot, 2000).

As Reid & Parson (2006) point out, verbal training alone rarely leads to effective results, therefore initial group trainings should be the foundation for subsequent on-the-job trainings (Reid & Parsons, 2006). Group trainings may be utilized as a way for the behavior consultant to share the basics of behavior management, including the principles of behavior analysis, the process of behavioral consultation in schools, the way in which their particular school's process to behavior management will take place over the school year, and how behavior management programming be monitored and evaluated, at the

universal, targeted, and selected levels of intervention. A well-taught training on behavior management not only increases the knowledge base of participants, but can change teacher perceptions regarding human behavior and behavior analysis (Skinner & Hales, 1992).

Implementation team meetings will include all educational staff members who will be participating in behavior management programming for student with challenging behaviors. Team meetings should always start with an emphasis on the strengths of students involved (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). If a school is beginning with implementation at the universal level of intervention, then implementation team meetings will start out with participants from various professional role groups, such as teachers and classroom staff, and will focus on behavior management interventions that are appropriate for all students school-wide. After approximately six weeks of implementation of initial interventions at the universal level, certain classrooms, students, or groups of students may be referred to the behavior consultant for additional behavioral support. At this targeted level of intervention, implementation team meetings may become more focused, including only those staff members working with those students being targeted for additional behavioral support. Classroom-wide or group contingency behavioral contracts and supports may be developed and implemented by team members at the secondary level. Then, the behavior consultant may conduct regular observations and provide feedback to team members within one week of the observation so that implementation efforts can be monitored for fidelity and effect. The implementation team will continue to meet on a systematic basis to analyze data, problem solve obstacles to implementation, and maintain collaboration amongst team members.

The process is similar if and when, after approximately another six weeks of intervention at this level, students are referred to the behavior consultant for additional behavior intervention and support. At this selected level, however, implementation team meetings may become even smaller in size, based on the number of staff members working with a particular student. In this case, behavior analysis, intervention, and implementation will be individualized to meet the needs of a particular student. As mandated by educational law, functional behavior assessments (FBA) are mandated in response to disciplinary actions for students already suspected or found as having a disability (Lee & Jamison, 2003). Education law has also increased the pressure on schools to use FBAs in the creation of individualized behavior intervention plans (LaRue, Weiss, & Ferraioli, 2008). An FBA report may be considered comprehensive when it includes identifying information, referral problem, background information, problem identification, data collection and analysis, problem analysis, problem solving techniques already attempted, problem definition, hypothesis statements related to functions of behaviors, goals, treatment or behavior support plan, and a progress monitoring plan (Brinkman, Segool, Pham, & Carlson, 2007).

Individualized behavior intervention plans should include strategies for generalization of target replacement behaviors from the beginning (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). Additionally, behavior intervention plans should only select one to two target behaviors for intervention at a time and these should be related to needs of the student according to danger to self or others or in order to increase academic productively, making use of positive behaviors to replace challenging ones, even when those may not necessarily match the needs of the teacher (Kratochwill & VanSomeren,



1995). Behavior intervention plans are best when they are made easy for participants to implement and when the intervention is related to the functional behavior assessment findings (LaRue, Weiss, & Ferrailoli, 2008). Once the intervention is in place, the process of ongoing observations, monitoring, evaluation, and immediate feedback remain the same.

Trainings provide overall concept development and implementation team meetings review the intervention plan of action, but it is during the on-the-job guided practice sessions that the behavior consultant can help the teacher plan for application of behavior management techniques and strategies in the natural setting. By providing training via modeling with frequent opportunities for practice and simulations, barriers to teachers' acceptance of applied behavior analysis and its procedures in schools may be reduced (Skinner & Hales, 1992). Additionally, teachers are more likely to utilize behavioral procedures when the consultant is easily accessible and available for ongoing follow-up collaboration, problem solving, and clarification of procedures (Skinner & Hales, 1992; Wilkinson, 1997).

The behavior consultant's role is ongoing as a guide to consultees throughout the consultation and behavior management process. Regardless of the level of intervention in place, this guide suggests that key to effective outcomes will be the consultant's ability to remain flexible, adjusting to the needs of school staff and students (Axelrod, Moyer, & Berry, 1990). Additionally, as per the author's professional experience, the consultant will need to be able to plan ahead in terms of scheduling implementation team meetings around school staff implementing behavioral interventions at various levels of service delivery, as these variables will determine which participants are to meet and on what

schedule. Once again, this guide implores the need for administrative support of the behavioral consultant and behavior management program efforts, as obtaining meeting participants on a regular basis will likely require administrative approval and cooperation.

Depending on the outcome of efforts throughout the process, the behavior consultant will make one of several decisions. If the results of behavior management efforts up to this point have resulted in positive outcomes, which may be individualized according to a particular school's outcome goals, but which most likely pertain to improved student behavior and improved staff competence to implement behavior management strategies and techniques in the case of New Jersey's public school systems, then the ongoing monitoring and immediate feedback loop will continue. If outcomes are determined as not positive, however, the nature of the problem will have to be determined. The behavior consultant will need to conduct additional observations and consultation sessions with the teacher and staff. If it is deemed a knowledge issue on the part of staff, meaning that the consultee does not have enough background knowledge in a particular area in order to implement the intervention effectively, additional theoretical training may be warranted, after which the process would continue as it started.

If the lacking outcomes are deemed a relationship issue between consultant and consultee, then going back and rebuilding a collaborative, working relationship may help since, after all, consultation begins with the development of a relationship (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). This case may be apparent if school staff members report feeling unsupported or without the guidance necessary to engage in intervention efforts as planned; regardless of the reason, however, as a behaviorist, the consultant must examine his or her own ways if desired outcomes have not been apparent (Axelrod,

Moyer, & Berry, 1990). Teachers may feel a lack of control in the process, that their ideas were not taken into account, or that the interventions do not fit with their natural style; therefore, the consultant would do well to revisit these areas with teachers while attempting to rebuild rapport in the process (Axelrod, Moyer, & Berry, 1990;1980; Robbins & Gutkin, 1994). Teachers have rated effective consultants as those who have been able to collaborate, focus ideas, respond appropriately, and display interest in the process and consultee's ideas (Knoff, Sullivan, & Liu, 1995).

If knowledge and implementation of the interventions are going well, but the student is not responding to intervention efforts in a positive way, then the implementation team will need to meet and analyze the data. A less than ideal effect on student behavior may point to something like a mistaken hypothesis regarding the function of behavior or ineffective manipulation of environmental variables. The implementation team might also decide that increasing the level of service delivery may be necessary to meet the student's needs. Regardless of what the problem is, if intervention efforts are not resulting in positive outcomes for the student, the implementation team will need to meet and revise the plan of action, and then continue the process again, until positive student outcomes are observed and maintained.

Finally, if the resulting less than ideal outcomes are deemed an implementation issue, the best course of action may be to repeat the on-the-job modeling and guidance sessions until the teacher can implement the interventions in the natural environment with fidelity. When in the natural setting with the teacher, the behavior consultant can work through obstacles in application that appear to be causing the teacher difficulty in

implementation. After such additional coaching takes place, the process continues as planned.

When positive outcomes as a result of behavior management intervention efforts are apparent, the loop simply continues the process of continued implementation team meetings and ongoing monitoring and providing immediate feedback in order to maintain positive outcome effects. Observations will be focused on staying the course of action, thereby not allowing for drift from the original plan. Additionally, ongoing observations will allow the behavior consultant to recognize any environmental variables that might affect staff or student behavioral outcomes, and therefore result in the need to revise the original intervention plan.

The roles and responsibilities of staff involved in behavior management programming are both related and ongoing over the course of a school year, but differ in terms of actions and expectations. Tables 5.7 and 5.10 describe definitions of such responsibilities for administration, the behavior consultant, teachers, and educational staff. Finally, the behavior management implementation decision-making and practice profile presented in Table 5.10 at the end of this chapter might be useful when presenting behavior management programming to relevant stakeholders, such as board of education members, as a novel intervention within a school district. Additionally, the practice profile may be used as a way of presenting a decision making process to relevant stakeholders when considering the allocation of resources for behavior management programming. The practice profile may also be utilized for evaluating and reorganizing a behavior management program already in place within a school system.

The practice profile acts not only as a definition of critical components in school based behavior management programming and consultation, but also as a fidelity scale of quality indicators regarding the implementation of various elements of the behavior management program. The practice profile is also helpful as a checklist that can be used during development of a behavior management program, such as during job interviews with potential behavior consultants or as an ongoing evaluation tool, such as during observations of behavior management practices in the natural setting.

The practice profile presented here includes the who, what, and how of behavior management programming and may best be used after the why has been established and decided upon by school administration. After a policy has been adopted to have behavior management programming developed and implemented, regardless of the level(s) of service delivery included, information presented in the practice profile may be used by a subgroup of committed stakeholders to gain the support of others.

### *Levels of Intervention*

Most of the components of the blended evidence based practice set presented here for behavior management programs in New Jersey public school systems are available for implementation at various levels of intervention. While most research has been focused on “case centered” consultation, where the focus is on individual students, more recent research has begun to look at whole-school or even district-wide interventions (Putnam, Luiselli, & Jefferson, 2002). Kratochwill (2008) offers that consultation will likely be a major part of the response to intervention (RTI) shift in the fields of education and school psychology. Following the RTI framework, schools might consider providing universal

behavior management programming to all students. In this model, those students who do not show improved outcomes in their behavior repertoire at the universal level (all students) would be moved on to the targeted level (at risk students) for more involved behavior management programming/interventions and then the individual level (selected students) of intervention for individualized behavior programming. Figure 5.0 delineates an adaptation of the RTI framework, individualized according to the reported needs and available resources of the New Jersey public school systems surveyed.

However, utilizing behavior management programming at all three levels of intervention might be more than a particular school system and its staff members are ready for at first. Perhaps resources are such that the program will need to start small and grow over time. Additionally, adjustments to levels of services in behavior management programming might be necessary based on the variation of professional experience and knowledge represented by the behavior consultant in place. Regardless of the level(s) of service delivery, behavior management interventions can, and should be, considered for implementation in both general and special education contexts.

Often, as per the author's professional experience, behavior management programming within a public school system is driven by the need of one or few students, and therefore funding for services comes from a certain area or source within the educational system. In order to meet the needs of such cases, behavior management on an individualized basis may be the first order of business. When utilizing such an individual level of behavior management programming as the initial line of programming within a school, the referral process is simply recognizing and addressing the needs of that source student. However, interventions at the secondary level of service delivery might still be

appropriate to address the student's needs while increasing the likelihood of more widespread positive outcomes.

In this guide, a model for behavior management programming is provided with the RTI framework in mind; however, a modification has been provided in the way students move up levels of support. Rather than universal screening in the form of a behavioral rating scale or other measurement tool, as may be used in comprehensive RTI programming, these guidelines suggest a less technical and, perhaps less laborious, adaptation in which schools may incorporate behavioral consultation with a school wide behavior management program to identify students as they move up levels of intervention.

According to current perspectives and practices reported by New Jersey special education leaders, behavior management practices are in place, but they are mostly focused on individual students, which would appear inconsistent with current best practices outlined in behavior management literature. Therefore these guidelines suggest a way to expand current programming efforts, or develop new programs in the area of larger scale interventions. Rather than revamping current programming trends and efforts across the state, these guidelines translate current research and evidence based interventions and practices into a model that is useful and immediately applicable. These guidelines provide ways in which programming efforts can be more effective and efficient. By building on programming already available in New Jersey public school systems, the hope is that these behavior management programming guidelines will fit with districts' current endeavors. By basing these guidelines on research and relevant trends in education at this time, these guidelines make behavior management

programming both applicable and sound, which should ultimately lead to more effective outcomes.

In cases when the universal level of intervention is put on hold in the beginning, such as when new students continue to be considered for intervention on an individual basis, a system of how such students may gain access to behavior management programming services in the future will need to be addressed. Once resources are allocated for the provision of services for an individual student within a school, the school may consider being more proactive for future instances of such need. In other words, initial programming may be driven by the needs of an individual student, but as the behavioral needs of additional students become apparent, ongoing referral processes and allocation of resources may be included to guide future programming efforts.

By developing a system of referral, when and how students are brought to the attention of the behavior consultant for behavior management interventions and programming need be defined for an overall smoother process. Possible sources of contact may be via teacher referral, as teachers are often on the frontline of experiencing students' challenging behaviors. A school might develop a system for how teachers communicate their behavior management needs to the behavior consultant, such as via direct contact, team meetings, consultation with members of the Intervention and Referral Services or Child Study Teams, or by informing the administration. Additionally, the school may want to develop a way of informing and involving additional staff and the students' parents for involvement in defining needs and services for all students. Regardless of intervention level, there should always be a feedback loop of communication between school staff and the behavior consultant regarding behavioral



needs of students and staff, as well as ways in which monitoring of current efforts will take place and be evaluated for continuation or modification.

#### *Universal or School-wide Level*

Behavioral interventions that can be implemented on a school-wide basis include consistent, clear expectations regarding student behavior at all times during the school day, encouraging family involvement in student education and learning, and using proximity control, such as keeping short distances between adults and students and providing supervision of students while in the school building (Howell, Patton, & Deiotte, 2008). Schools may develop school rules that are clearly stated for students of every age, communicated to families and reiterated in classrooms. School-wide reinforcement systems may include awards from the principal, earning time to help in the front office, spending time as junior police officers, and the like.

By encouraging school-wide behavioral expectations that are communicated and supported by administration, students receive a consistent message of the importance of a certain behavioral performance by all students at all times in school. The majority (80-90%) of students will receive all of the behavioral support they need by having access to, and experience with, universal school-wide behavioral interventions (Howell et. al., 2008). However, for those students who require additional teaching and support regarding behaviors targeted for change, the school-wide behavioral expectations and reinforcement system provide a foundation upon which teachers can develop classroom-wide plans for their students or smaller group of students can be targeted for support groups or group contingencies. Essentially, the school-wide level of behavioral

interventions is suggested as the ideal first course of action for behavior management programming in schools, but implementation options exist if a such a level of service delivery is not possible during initial efforts.

### *Secondary or Targeted Classroom Level*

Students may be targeted for behavioral intervention at the secondary level in at least three ways. The first way is as part of a school-wide behavior management program, where students are provided with general behavioral interventions, such as defined school rules, guidelines for both behaviorally motivating and punishing consequences, consistent follow through by all staff and administration, and classroom teachers and staff trained in evidence based behavior management interventions. In such cases, the majority of behavior management needs are addressed through such universal implementation of interventions. However, a percentage of students (10-15%) will present as requiring additional services.

A second method by which students may be targeted for intervention at this level of service is when the referral problem involves the teacher needing to develop and implement more effective behavior management on a classroom-wide basis. In this type of case, the student's behavior is determined as driven by the teacher's needs, and therefore intervention at the level of all students within the classroom is warranted and interventions will be focused on increasing the teacher's ability to implement behavior management strategies effectively.

A third case where this level of service is warranted is when either the behavior targeted for change involves social interaction of, or is similar among, several students or

the behavior targeted for change is being maintained by group contingency and, therefore, interventions may be more effectively implemented at the larger level of the group or classroom rather than with one individual student. Additional services at this level might include classroom behavior interventions and behavior management plans, such as having all students follow the same classroom rules and working for consequences that have been defined as reinforcing for the group. In such cases, these students may be targeted for additional behavioral interventions that might include push-in or pull-out groups facilitated by an adult, focusing on developing certain skill or behavioral repertoires.

Classroom-wide behavior management programming involves effort on the part of the teacher to define and address the needs of multiple students at a time. However, there are several interventions available in evidence based literature that have been validated for successful outcomes at the classroom level. An experienced and open-minded behavior consultant may also be skilled at adapting individual behavioral programming for the classroom level, providing additional consultation and training with the teacher as needed.

#### *Selected or Individual Level*

This individual level of intervention includes the development of an individualized behavior intervention or support plan. Interventions and services at this level are defined by the student's individual needs, above and beyond anything offered at the school or classroom levels of intervention. Students are selected for this level of behavioral intervention when they have not shown response to previous levels of

intervention, if the school's behavioral management programming has included multiple tiers of intervention. However, in other cases, such as schools in which tiered programming does not exist or when initial funding is driven solely by an individual student's needs, a student's first contact with behavior management programming may be with interventions at this selected, or individual, level.

Whether or not a school's behavior management programming efforts begin at the individual level or have arrived at this level based on a lack of response to previous lower level interventions, the development of a student's behavior intervention or support plan should be individualized to meet the student's needs. The implementation team will work together to address what interventions may be put in place for this student, keeping in mind any contextual or cultural variables that were uncovered during earlier efforts as well as all lower level interventions that may create the foundation for the student's individual plan. Examples of interventions that work well within school-wide programming, but can be individualized for selected students, include the opportunity for additional reinforcers that are of particular interest for that student as well as self-management and self-monitoring interventions, where students learn to observe their own behavior and deliver their own rewards. However, as with any level of behavioral intervention, the function of a student's behavior must be analyzed and understood before an effective intervention can be implemented.

### *Level Considerations*

While the development and implementation of behavior management program efforts might be ideal when all school staff and students are included, schools should not

despair if multiple levels of programming are not possible upon initial consideration. In fact, the school-wide implementation of behavior management programming demands a stronger commitment on the part of staff, as well as the allocation of additional resources, as compared to the more individualized levels of intervention. Additionally, the universal level of intervention might be better introduced after the school has implemented individual behavior management programming, as the logistics of the latter allow for momentum to build, local champions of behavior management techniques to develop, and positive outcomes to become apparent, as suggested in research by the National Implementation Research Network (Fixsen et. al., 2005). Teachers might also be hesitant to engage in initial efforts of school based behavior management programming. By utilizing program efforts on a smaller scale at first, such as within certain classrooms or with certain students, the seed is planted within the school setting and, with effective implementation, positive outcomes may, again, set the stage for growing the behavior management program based on the data collected by those involved thus far.

### *Review*

This chapter aimed to fill a gap between research and practice for behavior management programming efforts in New Jersey public school systems. Guidelines are provided for public school administrators to utilize when developing behavior management programming in their schools, including operational definitions of critical components throughout the processes of programming as well as ideal and acceptable variations of each. Information presented in this guide is based on a review of literature from relevant fields of study, the Behavior Management Survey, and the author's

professional experience as a behavior consultant in several New Jersey public school systems.

Administrators might consider using the operational definitions presented here when contemplating or developing behavior management programming within their public school systems. The behavior management implementation decision-making and practice profile presented in Table 5.9 might be useful when introducing behavior management programming to relevant stakeholders, such as board of education members, as an intervention within a school district. Additionally, the practice profile may be used as a way of presenting a decision making process to relevant stakeholders when considering the allocation of resources for behavior management programming. The practice profile may also be utilized to evaluate behavior management program efforts already in place within a school system as a way to consider future intervention efforts.

Based on the Behavior Management Survey of the current practices and perspectives regarding managing the challenging behaviors of students in schools across the state of New Jersey conducted as part of these dissertation efforts, an example of the current versus desired state of affairs is presented in Table 5.5. This table may guide school administrators in their consideration of their schools' current state of affairs as well as where they would like to be at the outcome of their efforts in certain areas of need. Figure 5.3 visually summarizes the salient findings from this survey, including the fact that while the majority of public school systems in New Jersey have the resources available for programming, have behavior management services in place, and think the resources and efforts spent on behavior management programming are worth the potential outcomes, they describe their current efforts as only somewhat successful. Also

based on the Behavior Management Survey, a context assessment of New Jersey's public school systems is provided in Table 5.6. School administrators may use this table to consider the ability, values, ideas, commitment, timing, obligation, and resistance of their schools in terms of behavior management programming efforts, as well as the potential yield from such.

For schools considering implementation of behavior management program efforts according to the guidelines presented here, a flowchart of the process is presented in Figure 5.8, including the various components of programming efforts suggested. At the bottom of the flowchart are options in terms of future efforts for not only continuing positive outcomes, but for intervening on outcome results that are less than positive, such as issues of relationship between the consultant and consultee, knowledge and/or training issues on the part of the consultee, or issues of student outcomes. Roles and responsibilities of the major participant groups involved in school based behavior management programming, as presented in these guidelines, are delineated in Table 5.8. While all activities and responsibilities are suggested for implementation on an ongoing basis over the course of a school year, they may vary in terms of the responsibilities of each professional involved. Practice elements for implementation throughout programming efforts are defined in Table 5.0 with references for additional information.

While this chapter is not a guide to behavioral Response to Intervention (RTI) programming, the guidelines for behavior management programming in public school systems were developed with the RTI framework and multiple tiers of service delivery in mind. This behavior management programming guide does not utilize universal behavioral screening, but it does incorporate three tiers of service delivery that are

navigated according to students' needs, response to lower level interventions, and the available resources within school systems. The adapted tiers of RTI service delivery are presented visually in Figure 5.0, along with a description of each and the percentage of students that may be addressed at each level (Howell, Patton, & Deiotte, 2008).

Finally, when thinking about implementation of interventions, research shows that both the action of implementation as well as the content of the intervention must be effective in order to result in effective outcomes. When one or both are not effectively developed or executed, outcomes may not only be ineffective, but might even be harmful (Duda, 2009). This idea is presented in Table 5.4 in order to visually represent, and stress, the importance of the relationship between intervention and implementation for positive student outcomes.

The ultimate goal of this guide to school based behavior management programming is to provide a sufficient amount of relevant information so that schools in New Jersey, and perhaps elsewhere, can begin the process of building an effective behavior management program for their staff and students. The information provided in the behavior management programming guide aims to provide administrators with the information and data necessary to gain the support of relevant stakeholders and decision makers in their school systems. The experience and knowledge of the ideal behavior consultant is provided as an aid in obtaining a competent professional to lead and build upon a school's behavior management program while the process flowchart guides programmatic efforts over the course of a school year and the roles and responsibilities defined inform each professional role group of their responsibilities. Behavior management programming does require the commitment and effort of all professionals



involved with students; however, it should be considered within reach for any public school system. With the information provided in this guide, evidence based behavior management programming practices are a reality for school systems with the initiative to act on them.

Table 5.9 Behavior management implementation decision-making and practice profile  
(source: Duda, 2009)

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p>“WHO?”</p> <p>BEHAVIOR CONSULTANT with ample <i>knowledge</i> and <i>experience</i> in applied behavior analysis (ABA), and academic curriculum/instruction/learning.</p> <p>Consultant has the ability to work on professional <i>teams</i>.</p>	<p>Ample <i>knowledge</i> is defined as being able to define, explain, discuss current research on, and outline how training would be provided in the areas related to applied behavior analysis (ABA), consultation, curriculum/instruction and learning. Discussion topics include use of a baseline data, positive reinforcement, differential reinforcement, problems with punishment, operational definitions, functions of behavior, environmental variables affecting behavior, data collection, analysis of data, multidimensional assessments, antecedent-behavior-consequence (A-B-C), time out from reinforcement, planned ignoring, extinction, self-management/self-monitoring, generalization, ethical considerations in ABA, contingency contracting, token economies, chaining, and shaping. Additional topics include goals of consultation, the problem solving process, and the connection between curriculum/instruction and behavior. (BACB, 2005; Kincaid, George, &amp; Childs, 2006; Kratochwill, Elliot, &amp; Callan-Stoiber, 2002)</p>	<p><i>Knowledge</i> is based more in ABA than other areas, but <i>knowledge</i> of principles of behavior and school based or problem solving behavioral consultation are demonstrated</p>	<p>Lack of demonstrated <i>knowledge</i> in defining and describing ABA, including no <i>knowledge</i> of principles of behavior analysis (i.e. functions of behavior, A-B-C contingency, reinforcement and punishment, data collection and analysis).</p>	<p>No <i>knowledge</i> of areas listed</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p><i>continued ...</i></p> <p>“WHO?”</p> <p>BEHAVIOR CONSULTANT with ample <i>knowledge</i> and <i>experience</i> in applied behavior analysis (ABA), and academic curriculum/instruction /learning.</p> <p>Consultant has the ability to work on professional <i>teams</i>.</p>	<p>Ample <i>experience</i> is defined as having engaged in the professional activities of behavioral consultation, such as training, including gaining an understanding of needs before training, and supervising others regarding the implementation of behavioral intervention for at least one year on a full-time basis. Additionally, professional experience should include at least one year, full-time, conducting functional behavior assessments (FBAs), as well as the implementation, evaluation, and modification of behavior intervention plans (BIPs). (BACB, 2005)</p>	<p><i>Experience</i> is more with conducting FBAs and implementing BIPs than with consultation efforts such as training and supervising staff. Experience consists of six months of full-time work or twelve months of part-time work.</p>	<p>Less than six months of <i>experience</i> with conducting FBAs and implementing BIPs.</p>	<p>No <i>experience</i> in areas listed</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p><i>continued...</i></p> <p>“WHO?”</p> <p>Consultant has the ability to work on professional <i>teams</i>.</p>	<p>Ability to work on/facilitate professional <i>teams</i> is defined as the ability to attend to all participants in a meeting, listen and respond to all ideas, consider all suggestions, provide positive and constructive criticism, and provide thoughtful feedback regarding behavior management considerations.</p>	<p>Ability to work with professional <i>teams</i> is demonstrated by attending, listening, and providing feedback; more so than facilitating teams.</p>	<p>When working with professional <i>teams</i>, behaviors demonstrated include inattention, lack of focus, and lack of active participation, including lack of providing ideas for discussion.</p>	<p>No ability to work with <i>teams</i> demonstrated; previously noted as less than capable on professional teams.</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p>“WHO?”</p> <p>IMPLEMENTATION TEAM includes various <i>members</i>, such as policy, practice, family, management, and other members.</p>	<p>Implementation team <i>members</i> include: administrator (i.e. principal, vice principal), supervisor (i.e. coordinator/supervisor of other team members), Child Study Team member (i.e. case managers of students), general education teachers (of students), special education teachers (of students), classroom staff members (of students), behavior consultant, and parents (of students). (Duda, 2009)</p>	<p>Implementation team essential <i>members</i> include an administrator OR supervisor, student’s member of the CST, student’s general education teacher, student’s special education teacher, and behavior consultant. Behavior consultant must be in attendance at every meeting. Acceptable for attendance of members to vary at meetings, except the behavior consultant, as long as all members are present for at least one meeting per school semester; also acceptable to participate via phone or webcam. Acceptable for parents to be informed via meeting notes rather than in attendance, as long as notes are provided within 1 week of meeting and parental feedback is addressed at following meeting.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for implementation team <i>members</i> to only include behavior consultant and 1 teacher. Unacceptable for parents to not be informed.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for implementation team <i>members</i> to vary from the essential participants.</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p>“WHAT?”</p> <p>IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETINGS include essential team members and take place regularly to review student data, monitor progress towards goals, and revise behavioral interventions as necessary.</p>	<p>Implementation team <i>meetings</i> take place on a monthly basis to review data of students, classrooms, teachers, etc., evaluate progress towards goals, and identify any areas of need regarding training or consultation.</p>	<p>Acceptable for team <i>meetings</i> to meet at least 3 times per semester.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for team <i>meetings</i> to take place less than 2 times per semester.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for implementation team meetings to be held simply because members meet in the hallway during random or similar lunch/prep times. Unacceptable for parents to not even be aware of behavior management services being provided to student.</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p>“WHAT?”</p> <p>BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM includes program purpose statements regarding WHO will participate, HOW the nature and scope of activities and personnel will go, and WHAT value will be added to participants in terms of valuable accomplishments or outcomes.</p>	<p>Who: Program participants will include all school personnel who work with students receiving behavior management programming, including: administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, health staff, and educational assistants.</p>	<p>Who: Acceptable for health staff to not be involved.</p>	<p>Who: Unacceptable for teachers, paraprofessionals, educational assistants, or administrators to not be involved.</p>	<p>Who: Unacceptable for school staff members who work with student to not be involved in behavior management programming.</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p>“WHAT?” continued...</p> <p>BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM includes program purpose statements regarding WHO will participate, HOW the nature and scope of activities and personnel will go, and WHAT value will be added to participants in terms of valuable accomplishments or outcomes.</p>	<p>How: All participants will attend group trainings, as well as implementation team meetings for specific classrooms and/or students receiving behavior management programming with whom they work. Participants will implement evidence based behavioral interventions as decided upon by implementation team. Behavior consultant will monitor implementation by observing and consulting with implementation efforts of all involved.</p>	<p>How: Acceptable for some participants to miss some implementation team meetings (see implementation team meetings section of practice profile).</p>	<p>How: Unacceptable for participants to not implement evidence based behavioral interventions as decided upon by implementation team. Unacceptable for behavior consultation to not monitor implementation efforts of all involved.</p>	<p>How: Unacceptable for participants to miss group trainings, not attend implementation team meetings, and not implement evidence based interventions.</p>



Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p><i>continued ...</i></p> <p>“WHAT?”</p> <p>BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM includes program purpose statements regarding WHO will participate, HOW the nature and scope of activities and personnel will go, and WHAT value will be added to participants in terms of valuable accomplishments or outcomes.</p>	<p>What:</p> <p>Participants will gain knowledge of behavior management and applied behavior analysis, including evidence based interventions and best practices strategies and techniques.</p>	<p>What:</p> <p>Participants may gain varying amounts of knowledge in these areas at varying rates.</p>	<p>What:</p> <p>Unacceptable for participants not to gain any knowledge at any rate in these areas.</p>	<p>What:</p> <p>Unacceptable for participants to have less knowledge after programming efforts than they had before.</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p>“WHAT?” <i>continued...</i></p> <p>BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM also includes goals that are SMART: Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant, and include a Timeframe</p>	<p>1. After 3 months of involvement with behavior management programming, participants will be able to display increased knowledge of the principles of behavior, as measured by pre and post training assessments (Witt &amp; Elliot, 1983).</p> <p>2. After 6 months of involvement with behavior management programming, participants will be able to implement evidence based interventions and practice elements, as measured by observations by the behavior consultant (Duda, 2009).</p> <p>3. After 6 months of involvement, students will display a decrease in challenging behaviors, as measured by systematic data collection procedures (Mautone, Luiselli, &amp; Handlwer, 2006).</p> <p>4. After 12 months of involvement, the school will report a decrease in behaviorally based referrals to special education/out-of-district placements for students, as measured by school data on referral and placement rates (Kratowill, Elliot, &amp; Callan-Stoiber, 2002; Putnam, Luiselli, &amp; Jefferson, 2002).</p>	<p>Acceptable for timelines of goals to be extended an additional 3-6 months.</p> <p>Acceptable for goal 4 to not be met, as long as goals 1-3 are met.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for goals 1-3 to not be met after 12 months of behavior management programming.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for goals to not be measured or monitored over the course of behavior management programming.</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p>“WHAT?” <i>continued...</i></p> <p>EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS are clearly defined and include best practices in school based behavioral/problem solving consultation, behavior management in schools, and implementation of evidence based interventions.</p>	<p>Practice elements include: development of a working relationship between consultant and consultee (teacher), identification of the problem behavior, data collection, analysis of the problem behavior, identification of the maintaining consequences and functions of problem behavior, development of a plan of action to intervene on the problem behavior, implementation of behavior interventions, ongoing evaluation of implementation efforts, revision to intervention plan according to outcomes (Kincaid, George, &amp; Childs, 2006; Kratochwill, Elliot, &amp; Callan-Stoiber, 2002).</p>	<p>Acceptable for the working relationship between consultant and teacher to be more expert-learner than collaborative, as long as teacher has a method of providing feedback and asking questions of the consultant (Erchul et al., 2009).</p>	<p>Unacceptable for any of the phases or actions to not take place.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for consultant to engage in these activities, such as gathering data to develop and implement a behavior plan, without involving the teacher.</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p>“WHAT?” <i>continued...</i></p> <p>AWARENESS of behavior management program is created and sustained amongst relevant stakeholders and program participants.</p>	<p>Awareness is created, practitioners are knowledgeable about interventions, and a sustainable infrastructure is created (Duda, 2009; Fixsen et. al., 2005).</p>	<p>Practitioners are aware of and are knowledgeable about interventions, but sustainability is still being planned for.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for awareness and sustainability to not be planned for and monitored.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for program plan to consist of only being in place as long as a certain monetary or physical resource is available.</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p>“How?”</p> <p>EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION including implementation of interventions at various levels of service delivery is braided into existing structure of school system.</p>	<p>Levels of implementation include: school-wide (universal), classroom-wide (at risk or targeted), and individual (selected) (Howell, Patton, &amp; Deiotte, 2008). Implementation efforts also take into account existing school structure, such as any school rules or crisis plans that have already been defined and put into practice, and build new programming efforts around those (Duda, 2009).</p>	<p>Acceptable for behavior management programming to start at the targeted or selected levels, based on current needs or resources available; however, goals for future implementation should include all levels of service delivery.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for behavior management programming to remain only at the individual level of service delivery with no plan of action to expand to other levels of service delivery. Unacceptable for implementation to not follow the program as planned.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for behavior management programming to be written on paper one way, but implemented in an entirely different way.</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p>“How?” continued...</p> <p>EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION including implementation of interventions at various levels of service delivery is braided into existing structure of school system.</p>	<p>Efforts are made to get staff prepared and ready for implementation including gaining support of relevant stakeholders and involving participants in the development of training by assessing needs and interest as well as existing pockets of expertise (Fixsen et. al., 2005).</p>	<p>Acceptable for programming efforts to be based on support of relevant stakeholders and on needs of participants as described by relevant stakeholders, such as administration, if a needs assessment of all participants cannot be completed.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for behavior consultant to decide behavior management programming needs without gathering support and information from relevant stakeholders and potential participants at the school level.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for inexperienced program participants to pick and choose areas of focus for behavior management programming .</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p>“How?” <i>continued...</i></p> <p>OUTCOMES are defined by the extent to which the SMART goals for behavior management programming are met.</p> <p>SUSTAINABILITY of implementation efforts is considered for five years into the future.</p>	<p>Implementation follow-up/monitoring includes weekly observations of staff involved in implementation of behavior management interventions of at least 15 minutes in length with data collected on target behaviors and feedback provided within 1 week of observation (Reid &amp; Parsons, 2006).</p> <p>Fidelity of implementation efforts is monitored for program drift during weekly observations (Duda, 2009).</p>	<p>Acceptable for observations to be conducted every other week.</p> <p>Acceptable for observations related to program drift to be conducted on every other week.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for observations to be less than 15 minutes in length or for feedback to be provided more than 1 week after observation.</p> <p>Unacceptable for program drift to not be monitored during observations.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for behavior consultant to not observe implementation efforts.</p> <p>Unacceptable for program drift to not be monitored at all.</p>

Table 5.9 – continued

Critical Component	Ideal Implementation	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation (Drastic Mutation)
<p>“How?” <i>continued...</i></p> <p>SUSTAINABILITY of implementation efforts is considered for five years into the future.</p>	<p>Behavior management programming includes the goal of consultees gaining knowledge and experience so that they may independently intervene on future occasions (Witt &amp; Elliot, 1983). This goal aims for behavior management programming to continue over time, even if current resources (fiscal, physical) are reduced over time (Duda, 2009).</p>	<p>Acceptable for consultees to continue to require expertise of the consultant, as long as progress towards independent use of strategies and techniques is shown.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for consultees to not improve upon their knowledge and experience with behavior management strategies and techniques.</p>	<p>Unacceptable for behavior consultant to implement all strategies and techniques so that the consultee does not have to learn or do anything related to behavior management.</p>



Table 5.10 Definitions of components & practices

Practice Element	Definition	Reference Source
Analysis (as part of applied behavior analysis)	Studying the effect of environmental manipulations on a behavior	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987
Antecedent-behavior-consequence (A-B-C)	A three-term contingency of interdependent parts: antecedent, or what is happening in the environment just before the behavior occurs; behavior, as described in measurable and observable terms; and consequence, or what is happening in the environment immediately after the behavior starts to occur.	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003
Applied behavior analysis (ABA)	Applying the principles of behavior to improve a socially significant behavior to a meaningful degree. Involves the manipulation of one or more of the components of the A-B-C contingency and can show that the manipulation was responsible for changing the behavior.	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987
Baseline	Baseline condition is the time before intervention; used as a gauge by which to evaluate the effects of the intervention, once it is in place.	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987
Chaining	The way in which behavioral components of a task are linked together. A teaching procedure where simple individual behaviors are linked together to make one longer, complex behavior. Forward chaining begins with the first behavior; backward chaining begins with the last behavior in the sequence.	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003

Table 5.10 – continued

Practice Element	Definition	Reference Source
Consultation	One or more people with certain knowledge and skills working with individuals or groups within a social system on one or more work-related problems. Goals include immediate remediation of the problem to benefit the client as well as the improvement of the consultee's abilities to use the skills learned throughout consultation to independently improve upon future situations	Cherniss, 1976; Witt & Elliott, 1983
Contingency contracting (aka behavioral contract)	Document that specifies a contingent relationship between the completion of a specified behavior and access to, or delivery of, a specified reward	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987
Curriculum, Instruction, and learning	<p><i>Curriculum</i>: The skills and information one is teaching. Also used to refer to the bank of materials from which teacher programs are chosen.</p> <p><i>Instruction</i>: The antecedent that directs an individual to engage in a given behavior.</p> <p><i>Learning</i>: relatively permanent changes in behavior that come about as a result of experience with one's own actions in particular situations and the consequences they produce.</p>	Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003
Data collection procedures	Collecting information on a behavior for the purposes of guiding the decision-making process; includes frequency count, rate (frequency over time), latency (period of time between antecedent and behavior or between two behaviors), duration, percentage of response, anecdotal observation, event recording, interval recording (whole or partial), momentary time sampling	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003
Differential reinforcement	Applying the reinforcer to one behavior and not to others. (Includes differential reinforcement of other, alternative, and incompatible behaviors as well as high, low, and zero rates of behavior.)	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987

Table 5.10 – continued

Practice Element	Definition	Reference Source
Environmental variables affecting behavior	Circumstances in which the behavior takes place; includes antecedents and consequences	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987
Ethical guidelines in ABA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Doing no harm</li> <li>2. Respecting autonomy</li> <li>3. Benefiting others</li> <li>4. Being just</li> <li>5. Being truthful</li> <li>6. According dignity</li> <li>7. Treating others with caring and compassion</li> <li>8. Pursuit of excellence</li> <li>9. Accepting responsibility</li> </ol>	Bailey & Burch, 2005
Evidence based practices	Skills, techniques, and strategies that have been empirically supported as effective and can be used when a practitioner is interacting directly with a consumer.	Duda, 2009; Fixsen et. al. 2005
Extinction	<p>Withdrawal of reinforcement for a previously reinforced behavior.</p> <p><i>Extinction burst</i>: behavior temporarily increases in frequency, magnitude, and variability (gets worse before it gets better).</p>	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003
Functional Behavior Assessment	Process of identifying the function of a behavior, including problem identification, operational definition of the behavior, indirect/direct methods of data collection, interviews of key people, observation of the behavior, development of hypotheses regarding the function of behavior, treatment goals for replacement behaviors, and recommendations	Brinkman, Segool, Pham, & Carlson, 2007
Function of behavior	The maintaining variable for a behavior; commonly include access to social attention/preferred activity, sensory stimulation, avoidance of non-preferred task/activity, pain attenuation	Iwata, 2009; Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003

Table 5.10 – continued

Practice Element	Definition	Reference Source
Generalization	Variation in either response or setting. Response generalization is changing the form of a behavior, but the new form serves the same function. Setting generalization is displaying the behavior in different settings than those during teaching.	Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003
Multidimensional behavior assessment	Using various assessment methodologies to determine the nature of a problem, such as environmental events, antecedents and consequences, and reinforcers surrounding the behavior.	Shapiro & Kratochwill, 2000
Operational definition	Defining something so that it is observable and measurable (quantifiable)	Duda, 2009
Planned ignoring	When social reinforcers are removed for a brief period of time upon display of a behavior that is targeted for decrease.	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987
Problems with punishment (habituation)	Degree to which the effects of short and long term punishers are minimized; a decrease in response to a particular stimulus as a result of repeated exposure to the same stimulus.	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003
Problem solving process	Problem identification, problem analysis, treatment implementation, and evaluation	Bergan, 1977
Prompt	An added antecedent stimulus to trigger a specific behavior.	Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003
Punishment	Addition of an aversive stimulus (non-preferred) upon display of a challenging behavior, thereby decreasing the future likeliness of that behavior occurring.	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003

Table 5.10 – continued

Practice Element	Definition	Reference Source
Reinforcement	Contingency between a behavior and its consequence that leads to an increase in the future likeliness of that behavior occurring.	Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003
Self-management/self-monitoring	Behavior change strategies that lead to the desired modification of a person's behavior. People self-manage when they observe their own behavior and self-deliver their own reinforcers upon display of a particular behavior.	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003
Shaping	Differentially reinforcing approximations to a desired behavior (the target response).	Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003
Target behavior	The behavior that is the object of our analysis and is being identified for change.	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003
Time out from positive reinforcement	Upon display of a challenging/problem behavior, positive reinforcement is removed with the effect of reducing future likeliness of that behavior occurring.	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003
Token economies	Upon display of the behavior targeted for increase, tokens (or symbols for exchange) are provided; tokens can later be exchanged for a backup reinforcer.	Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; Newman, Reeve, Reeve, Ryan, & Phil, 2003

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*Summary*

Trends in survey findings, along with reviews of relevant literature, were used to develop a guide to behavior management programming for New Jersey public school professionals, addressing their reported needs while considering available resources. The guide to behavior management programming for New Jersey public school systems outlines a process for designing and implementing behavior management programs and services by using principles and procedures from program planning and evaluation. The guide operationally defines critical components and processes of programming, including ideal and acceptable variations of each. This information targets programmatic tasks, such as obtaining a consultant to facilitate programming, defining roles and responsibilities of participants, planning and implementing program activities, instituting ongoing evaluation of efforts, and making data-based decisions to ensure effective outcomes.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY & IMPLICATIONS

#### Abstract

This dissertation focused on behavior management efforts across New Jersey public school systems by reviewing relevant areas of literature, surveying professionals about their current practices and perspectives regarding behavior management efforts, and designing a guide to developing and implementing a comprehensive behavior management program for public school systems, with special consideration for application within the state of New Jersey. In this chapter, the dissertation goals and process will be reviewed and summarized. Additionally, the implications for the role of school psychologists in behavior management programming will be discussed. Limitations and ideas for future research and application are also included.

*Summary of Dissertation Efforts*

The goals of this dissertation were to gain an understanding of the current practices and perspectives of educational leaders regarding behavior management in New Jersey's public school systems. Then, this dissertation effort sought to develop a guide to behavior management programming based on literature from relevant fields of practice, yet individualized for New Jersey public school systems based on the needs as reported by administrators across the state. The goals of this dissertation were achieved.

Behavior management of students in public school systems has become an issue that appears to be more important than ever for many school districts, with educational law and legal mandates increasing both the expectations of outcomes for students as well as those of school systems. Academics and behavior have been found as inextricably linked, leading to increasing focus on the behavioral needs of students in addition to academic needs (Howell et. al., 2008). This focus is especially true with students whom have been found as, or are suspected of, having a disability, as educational law mandates that behavioral needs of these students be addressed through several actions, such as the manifestation determination and functional behavioral assessment (IDEA, 2004). Even when students are not already receiving special education and related services, however, the burden has been placed on schools to show a lack of response to evidence based interventions, both academic and behavioral in nature, before referring students for a special education evaluation (IDEA, 2004).

The drive to provide evidence based behavioral services appears to stem not only from educational law, but also from the realized needs of professionals in the field of public education. Public school systems report seeing profound results from proactive



and responsive evidence based efforts regarding the behavioral needs of students, including reduced referral rates to special education, reduced numbers of students in out-of-district placements due to challenging behaviors, and increased numbers of students returning from out-of-district placements due to school staff learning behavioral techniques and being more able to manage these students' challenging behaviors within the school setting, with ongoing evaluation and administrative support (Kratochwill, Elliot, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002; Putman, Luiselli, & Jefferson, 2002; Riley-Tillman & Eckert, 2001). Teachers report a preference for the behavioral consultation model (Gutkin, 1996). The potential benefits for schools engaging in behavior management efforts are profound. Consultation is considered a major approach for, and best practice in, providing psychoeducational services to children (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). However, the process of implementing evidence based practices to manage the behaviors of students is not always easy, especially when the expectation of outcomes includes benefit to all involved in the efforts, such as both staff and students.

This appears to be the current situation in public school systems across the state of New Jersey. An online Behavior Management Survey was sent to 598 of New Jersey's special education coordinators and directors using contact information gathered from the New Jersey Department of Education's online directories. Survey respondents were asked to share information related to their practices and perspectives regarding behavior management efforts in place within their school systems. Overall, the majority of the New Jersey professionals surveyed reported having the resources to provide behavior management services, believing that the potential outcomes in student behavior and staff ability are worth the resources spent on behavior management efforts, and that they are

currently engaging in behavior management efforts in both general and special education. However, the majority of New Jersey professionals surveyed also described the outcomes of their behavior management efforts as only “somewhat” successful overall.

Additionally, it appears that the professionals facilitating behavior management efforts are largely individuals whose job descriptions do not even include such responsibilities. Therefore, questions may be raised around how services are currently being organized and delivered, the level of expertise of the professionals overseeing such services, the way in which schools are basing their decisions on data, and whether they are objectively monitoring progress to better ensure effective outcomes in New Jersey public school systems.

While professional perspectives and current practices are extremely valuable in order to increase our understanding of how schools are managing the challenging behaviors of students at this point in time, a review of literature relevant to the subject of behavior management in schools helps increase our understanding of where public schools might strive to be regarding programming. Specifically, the consideration of implementation science, or the study of putting evidence based interventions into practice, is helpful to consider regarding the research to practice gap for applying such strategies within the natural setting. Additionally, considering resources on program planning and evaluation in order to organize the process of behavior management in public school systems into a comprehensive program that functions within the school system to benefit students helps increase the chances effective outcomes. Literature on what makes a competent behavior consultant provides information necessary to outline a job description based on the professional responsibilities and expectations for this role.

Finally, literature on behavioral and problem solving consultation in schools, as well as how adults learn, help to define the behavior consultant's responsibilities throughout the process of programming.

A guide to behavior management programming in New Jersey public school systems was developed as part of these dissertation efforts. The guide considers all of the information gathered during reviews of relevant literature and from surveying public school professionals, using it as a foundation for sound behavior management programming. Included are ways to organize activities, monitor fidelity during implementation, monitor progress of both staff and students, and make decisions based on data and outcomes. The initial goal of the guide to behavior management programming for public school systems was to give school administrators across the state of New Jersey a way to gather support for current and future behavior management programming efforts by providing ways for administrators to present information to relevant stakeholders and decision makers in a clear and cohesive way. Additionally, the guide to behavior management programming aimed to provide New Jersey public school leaders with ideas for growing their current efforts based on their reported areas of need, which included obtaining a professional to provide effective behavioral consultation and utilizing resources efficiently and effectively, such as on lower level interventions that reach more students as a precursor to individual behavior plans. The guide to behavior management programming is presented as a means of increasing the chances that New Jersey public school systems may achieve effective outcomes by monitoring and measuring progress in their reported areas of focus, namely decreasing the challenging behaviors of students and increasing staff's ability to maintain students in-district.

*The Role of School Psychologists in Behavior Management Programming*

Based on relevant literature as well as the reports of New Jersey professionals, school psychologists are often the people that school personnel choose to consult with when in need of behavior management guidance. This preference on the part of school staff for consultation with the school psychologist is seconded by educational law, which supports the expanded implementation of problem solving interventions by school psychologists (Wilkinson, 2007). According to Hosp & Reschly (2002), school psychologists in the Northeast United States spend 6.6 hours per week, or 16.5% of a forty hour work week, involved in problem solving consultation and 2.6 hours per week, or 6.5% of a forty hour work week, on systems/organizational consultation. These findings indicate that school psychologists in the Northeast spend approximately one-quarter of their time providing some type of consultation (Hosp & Reschly, 2002). To utilize this time effectively, the school psychologist's role throughout consultation efforts in New Jersey school systems might benefit from the operational definition and process outlined here in the guide to behavior management for public school systems.

The guide to behavior management programming developed as part of these dissertation efforts includes operationally defining the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to facilitate behavior management programming efforts in public school systems. For many school psychologists, such areas of expertise come with the training and experience of the school psychologist position, making them perhaps the perfect people for the job. As professionals trained in assessing the behavior of human beings for intervention, school psychologists may also be the district employees with the most appropriate expertise, therefore assigned with the task as the district's behavior

consultant, including assessing and modifying interventions for use with students. It is suggested that school psychologists are perfect to pull from not only behavioral principles, but also instructional principles, in order to intervene on a student's challenging behaviors (Kratochwill, Elliott, & Callan-Stoiber, 2002). School psychologists who want to engage in such efforts should be well-versed in behavioral principles, on which the premise of behavioral consultation is based (Forman & Burke, 2008). However, there may be some school psychologists who lack the training in applied behavioral analysis that is also a critical foundation for intervening on challenging behaviors (Putnam et. al., 2005). In such cases, school psychologists might consider using the areas of knowledge and experience included in the guidelines as a checklist of their current abilities, seeking additional training and support in their individual areas of need until they have the combined experience and expertise suggested in order to facilitate behavioral management programming in schools.

Additionally, a school psychologist's placement within the school makes him or her available to both build relationships as well as provide ongoing support and monitoring of intervention effects. By utilizing a professional who is already a member of the school staff, such as the school psychologist, schools are utilizing resources already on hand, thereby increasing efficiency (McDougal, Nastasi, & Chafouleas, 2005). By being a part of the ecology of a school, school psychologists may likely be in the best position to start at the level that the school is currently at and then guide staff through intervention efforts (Shriberg & Fen, 2009). School psychologists may be in an especially good place to make sure behavior assessments and interventions are included where they need to be throughout the educational planning process (Knoster & McCurdy, 2002). Not

all students referred for special education are determined eligible for services, meaning those who were referred for evaluation based on their behavioral problems may remain in general education settings and teachers may therefore require ongoing support to address the behavioral needs of these students (Knoster & McCurdy, 2002).

School psychologists also have an understanding of how the process of implementing a program at the systems level in education takes place (Curtis & Stollar, 2002). In fact, school psychologists can bring their knowledge of the workings of implementation at the systems level to their schools, deciphering the various components necessary for effective implementation of evidence based behavior management programming efforts in their own districts (Fixsen et.al., 2005). The knowledge and training school psychologists have, combined with their ideal placements as professionals working in schools, results in a context that is primed for school psychologists to engage in behavior management efforts (NASP, 2009). In fact, throughout the literature, school psychologists are named as the school personnel often assigned such responsibilities, known as the nontraditional school psychologists who take on roles in which implementing progressive and evidence based interventions are integral parts of their job descriptions (Forman & Burke, 2008; NASP, 2009). School psychologists can also prevent the intervention, as well as the team of professionals involved, from becoming disjointed and disorganized. By coordinating behavior management services across service levels, school psychologists can keep a team working together so that students receive the support they need (NASP, 2009).

*Limitations*

As one of the first research efforts of its kind within New Jersey's public school systems, there were several things that might have been done differently to meet the goals of this dissertation. One limitation that became apparent regarding the electronic survey of professionals across the state of New Jersey was the relatively short window of opportunity (seven weeks) for participants to respond. Future efforts to increase the number of respondents from the target population might include distributing the survey in the beginning of an academic year then keeping it available over the course of an entire academic school year. By doing so, additional invitations to participate could be distributed and respondents would have more time and opportunities to respond at any point throughout the year that is convenient for them.

An additional limitation of this study was the fact that, in order to increase the total number of responses, members of the target population were invited to share the electronic survey with colleagues who might provide additional information about their school districts. However, this allowance, combined with the level of anonymity promised to participants, resulted in the author not knowing which responses were from which respondents, and therefore unable to delineate the extent to which the sample of responses was representative of the target population of coordinators and directors of special education services. As a novel research effort, it could not be predicted how many participants would respond, so the initial decision was made to allow for additional participants to be invited by the target population, as not only would this increase the amount of information received, but the information would be gathered from professionals that the target population members felt could add professional expertise to

the subject. While all information collected was considered valuable in fulfilling this dissertation's goals, revising the electronic survey so that responses could be sorted by professional role group would allow for those from the target population to be separated from responses of other professional role groups who participated in the survey, as it would have been especially useful for the purposes of these dissertation efforts to be able to analyze the target population's responses apart from the rest.

### *Ideas for Future Research*

Future research efforts in the area of behavior management programming across New Jersey public school systems might include a focus on the guidelines developed as a result of this initial research effort. Participants might implement behavior management programming efforts according to the guidelines suggested in these dissertation efforts. Then, research might focus on surveying the target population for information regarding application, outcomes, and professional opinions regarding utilization.

An additional area of future research might focus on the role of the school psychologist in behavior management efforts within public school systems across the state of New Jersey. While research has been conducted to learn about the amount of time school psychologists spend involved in consultation within their regions, it would be enlightening and extremely useful for preservice training programs to learn more about the extent to which those consultation efforts are based on evidence based practices, regarding both school consultation and behavior management. Such information would add to these dissertation efforts by providing additional areas of growth in behavioral consultation conducted by school psychologists within New Jersey's public schools.



*Summary*

This dissertation sought to gain an understanding of current practices and perspectives of school based professionals regarding managing the challenging behaviors of students in public school systems in New Jersey. Trends in survey findings, along with reviews of relevant literature, were used to develop a guide to behavior management programming for New Jersey public school professionals, addressing their reported needs while considering available resources. The guide to behavior management programming for New Jersey public school systems outlines a process for designing and implementing behavior management programs and services. Future research in the area of behavior management programming across New Jersey public school systems might focus on the guide developed as a result of these dissertation efforts by surveying school based professionals about application, outcomes, and professional opinions regarding utilization.

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## APPENDIX A

## BEHAVIOR SURVEY INFORMED CONSENT

Title: Managing and Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviors: An Assessment of Perspectives and Practices within Public School Systems

You are invited to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Gina Marie Restivo, who is a doctoral candidate at the Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology at Rutgers University. This research study is being advised by dissertation chairperson Dr. Charles A. Maher, who is a professor at the Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology at Rutgers University. The purpose of this research is to determine the opinions and perspectives of New Jersey public school districts regarding managing the challenging behaviors of students. More specifically, this research study will be focused on clarifying whom the students with behavioral challenges are, how NJ schools currently respond to challenging behaviors, and what the strengths and/or limitations to current approaches provided to these students are. Challenging behaviors of students may encompass classroom disruption, noncompliance/refusal, physical or verbal aggression, and the like. Your responses to the survey items will increase what we know about students' challenging behaviors. In addition, the information you provide will be used to develop a set of procedural guidelines for planning and evaluating services for students with challenging behaviors that may be useful in your school district. This research study will be conducted via electronic survey available at:  
[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Q64r\\_2b7YEs16LV\\_2bMKr0Or2g\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Q64r_2b7YEs16LV_2bMKr0Or2g_3d_3d).

Approximately 658 subjects between the ages of 21 and 90 years old will participate in the study, and each individual's participation will last approximately 10 minutes. Subjects will include professionals, including directors and coordinators of special services, in public schools across the state of New Jersey. Subjects will be contacted via email addresses, as published by each school district's website; school district websites will be obtained from the New Jersey Department of Education's website. Participants will also be invited to share the electronic survey link with colleagues working in New Jersey public schools.

Participation in this study will involve completing the electronic survey, available at [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Q64r\\_2b7YEs16LV\\_2bMKr0Or2g\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Q64r_2b7YEs16LV_2bMKr0Or2g_3d_3d), which should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The last two survey items offer the opportunity for participants to provide contact information if they would like to receive the summarized results of this state-wide electronic survey and/or the procedural guidelines for planning and evaluating services for students with challenging behaviors that will be developed based upon summarized responses to this research study as well as a review of current literature on the subject.

This research is anonymous. Anonymous means that I will record no information about you that could identify you. This means that I will not record your name, address, phone number, date of birth, etc. If you agree to take part in the study, your responses to items on the electronic survey will be collected and summarized by the online survey service after all responses have been received and the survey is closed, with no way to track individual item responses to the responder. If you choose to provide your contact information in order to receive either the summarized data, the procedural guidelines developed as a result of this survey, or both, your contact information will in no way be linked to your electronic survey responses. Your name will appear only on a list of subjects, and will not be linked to the data collected. There will be no way to link your responses back to you. Therefore, data collection is anonymous.

The research team and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the list of subjects. The research team, the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University, and those participants who provide their contact information as requests for results are the only parties that will be allowed to see the summarized group results data, except as may be required by law. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group results will be stated. All study data will be kept for 3 years.

There are no foreseeable risks to participation in this study.

You have been told that the benefits of taking part in this study may be: receiving the summarized results of this state-wide electronic survey and/or the procedural guidelines for planning and evaluating services for students with challenging behaviors that will be developed based upon responses to this research study as well as a review of the current literature on the topic. However, you may receive no direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw at any time during the study procedures without any penalty to you. In addition, you may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable.

If you have any questions about the study or study procedures, you may contact myself at: Gina Marie Restivo, 411 Hobron Lane, Apt. 2614, Honolulu, HI 96815 or by email at: behaviorsurvey@gmail.com, or you may contact my advisor at: Dr. Charles A. Maher, Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 152 Frelinghuysen Road, Piscataway, NJ 08854, or by email at: camaher@rci.rutgers.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB administrator at Rutgers University at: Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 3 Rutgers Plaza, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559; telephone: (732) 932-0150 ext 2104; email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu.

By clicking on the url for the electronic survey:

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Q64r\\_2b7YEs16LV\\_2bMKr0Or2g\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Q64r_2b7YEs16LV_2bMKr0Or2g_3d_3d),  
the subject agrees to participate in the research study.

Thank you very much,

Gina Marie Restivo, MA, PsyM, BCBA  
School Psychology Doctoral Candidate  
Rutgers GSAPP

Charles A Maher, PsyD  
Dissertation Chairperson &  
Professor, Rutgers GSAPP

*Protocol #E09-380*

*This informed consent form was approved by the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects 3/10/09.*

## APPENDIX C

## LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY

Title: Managing and Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviors:  
An Assessment of Perspectives and Practices within Public School Systems

April 2009

I am writing to you about my dissertation efforts: a research study to determine the opinions and perspectives of New Jersey public school districts regarding managing the challenging behaviors of students.

The attached information was emailed to your colleagues across the state of New Jersey as invitation to participate; however, your email address was unavailable. I have mailed this letter so that you have the same opportunity to participate as your colleagues.

Please review the attached informed consent about this research study. The electronic link to the anonymous survey is available within the informed consent document. In appreciation of your time, you will have the opportunity to receive the results of this research, as well as the guidelines developed based on the findings.

Your participation is important and will be very much appreciated.

If you would prefer to receive the hyperlink for the electronic survey via email, please do not hesitate to contact me at [behaviorsurvey@gmail.com](mailto:behaviorsurvey@gmail.com).

Thank you very much for your participation!

Gina Marie Restivo, MA, PsyM, BCBA  
School Psychology Doctoral Candidate  
Rutgers GSAPP  
152 Frelinghuysen Road  
Piscataway, NJ 08854

*Recruitment letter approved by IRB 4/17/09*

*Attachment: IRB approved recruitment notice for protocol #E09-380 approved 3-10-09*

## APPENDIX B

## FOLLOW UP CONTACT

Title: Managing and Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviors:  
An Assessment of Perspectives and Practices within Public School Systems

I am writing to you about my dissertation efforts: a research study to determine the opinions and perspectives of New Jersey public school districts regarding managing the challenging behaviors of students.

You were recently invited to participate in an anonymous electronic survey regarding managing the challenging behaviors of students within your schools.

If you provided your responses to the survey items, thank you! Your participation is important and appreciated!

If you have not yet provided your responses to the survey items, please take 5-10 minutes to do so. It is information from professionals like you that will increase our knowledge about statewide practices for managing the challenging behaviors of students.

Please review the attached informed consent about this research study. The electronic link to the anonymous survey is available within the informed consent document. In appreciation of your time, you will have the opportunity to receive the results of this research, as well as the guidelines developed based on the findings.

If you have any questions or feedback, please do not hesitate to contact me at [behaviorsurvey@gmail.com](mailto:behaviorsurvey@gmail.com).

Thank you very much for your participation!

Gina Marie Restivo, MA, PsyM, BCBA  
School Psychology Doctoral Candidate  
Rutgers GSAPP  
152 Frelinghuysen Road  
Piscataway, NJ 08854

*Recruitment email approved by IRB 4/17/09*

*Attachment: IRB approved recruitment notice for protocol #E09-380 approved 3-10-09*

## APPENDIX D

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SURVEY

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Q64r\\_2b7YEs16LV\\_2bMKr0Or2g\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Q64r_2b7YEs16LV_2bMKr0Or2g_3d_3d)

Managing and Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviors: An Assessment of Perspectives and Practices within Public School Systems

Managing and Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviors:

You are invited to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Gina Marie Restivo, who is a doctoral candidate at the Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology at Rutgers University. This research study is being advised by dissertation chairperson Dr. Charles A. Maher, who is a professor at the Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology at Rutgers University. The purpose of this research is to determine the opinions and perspectives of New Jersey public school districts regarding managing the challenging behaviors of students. More specifically, this research study will be focused on clarifying whom the students with behavioral challenges are, how NJ schools currently respond to challenging behaviors, and what the strengths and/or limitations to current approaches provided to these students are. Challenging behaviors of students may encompass classroom disruption, noncompliance/refusal, physical or verbal aggression, and the like. Your responses to the survey items will increase what we know about students' challenging behaviors. In addition, the information you provide will be used to develop a set of procedural guidelines for planning and evaluating services for students with challenging behaviors that may be useful in your school district.

All information will remain anonymous. Anonymous means that I will record no information about you that could identify you. If you choose to provide your contact information in order to receive either the summarized data, the procedural guidelines developed as a result of this survey, or both, your contact information will in no way be linked to your electronic survey responses.

The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The last two survey items offer the opportunity for participants to provide contact information if they would like to receive the summarized results of this state-wide electronic survey and/or the procedural guidelines for planning and evaluating services for students with challenging behaviors that will be developed based upon summarized responses to this research study as well as a review of current literature on the subject.

There are no foreseeable risks to participation in this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw at any time during the study procedures without any penalty to you. In addition, you may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable.

If you have any questions/concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me, Gina Marie Restivo, at [behaviorsurvey@gmail.com](mailto:behaviorsurvey@gmail.com), or you may contact my advisor, Dr. Charles A. Maher, at [camaher@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:camaher@rci.rutgers.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB administrator at Rutgers University at: [humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu](mailto:humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu).

By clicking on the url for the electronic survey, the subject agrees to participate in the research study.

You are welcome to invite fellow professionals and colleagues working in New Jersey public schools to respond to this survey as well.

Please provide the following general information about your school/school district:

**1. What is your current professional role in your school district?**

- Child Study Team Member
- Director of Special Services
- Coordinator of Special Education
- Other (please specify)

**2. How do you describe your school district currently?**

- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban
- Not sure
- Other (please specify)



**3. What is the current student size of your school/school district?**

- Less than 500 students
- 500-999 students
- 1,000-1,499 students
- 1,500-2,499 students
- More than 2,500 students
- Not sure
- Other (please specify)

**4. What student populations do your schools/school district serve? (check all that apply)**

- Early childhood (Preschool)
- Primary (K-6)
- Secondary (7-12)
- Early childhood through secondary (PK-12)
- Primary through secondary (K-12)
- Not sure
- Other (please specify)

Please provide the following information about the process of managing challenging behaviors within your school/school district:

**5. Does your school district currently have an approach to address the challenging behaviors of students to ultimately increase their chances of learning successfully? (Such as an approach to decrease challenging behaviors by increasing target adaptive behaviors.)**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Comment

**6. What methods are used to manage challenging behaviors within your school district? (check all that apply)**

- Interview of individual students
- Interview of other school personnel
- Interview of parents
- Staff training workshops
- Observation of students
- Development of classroom-wide behavior intervention plans
- Interview of teachers
- Development of individual behavior intervention plans
- Consultation with Child Study Team members
- Consultation with Intervention & Referral Services team
- Other (please specify)

**7. If you think that people in your school would benefit from additional efforts/actions in managing challenging behaviors of students, check all that apply:**

- Consultation with I&RS team
- Consultation with CST members
- Interview of teachers
- Interview of other school personnel
- Interview of parents
- Observation of students
- Development of individual behavior intervention plans
- Development of classroom-wide behavior intervention plans
- Staff training workshops
- Other (please specify)

**8. Once a student's challenging behaviors are determined as requiring additional support or intervention, is there a designated professional to provide those services? If yes, who is it?**

- District employee whose job description includes "behavior management" services
- District employee, though not officially described as "behavior management" service provider
- Outside/out-of-district contracted behavior consultant
- Other
- Not sure
- If your response is "no" or "other," please specify:

**9. Please check the setting in which behavior management services/procedures are utilized within your school/district:**

- Special education (i.e. behaviors goals & objectives within the IEP; individual behavior support plans for special education students; behavior management systems within special education classes)
- General education (i.e. individual behavior support plans; behavior management systems within general education classes; school-wide behavior management system)
- Combination (i.e. behavior management is addressed across both general and special education)
- Behavior management services/procedures are not currently utilized
- Other (please specify)

**10. How are behavior interventions/supports documented? (check all that apply)**

- Written reports/contact summaries
- Verbal reports/contact summaries
- We don't document interventions/supports
- We don't currently provide behavior supports/interventions
- Other (please specify)

**11. When a student within your school/school district displays behavior that requires immediate attention/consequences (i.e. fighting, bringing weapon to school), how is the response to the behavior determined?**

- According to our existing behavior response or crisis plan (school- or district-wide)
- Individually (on a case by case basis)
- Not sure
- Other (please specify)

Please provide your professional opinion regarding the following:

**12. In general, do you find efforts within your school/school district to manage the challenging behaviors of students successful?**

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat
- Not sure
- We don't currently utilize behavior management procedures

Please elaborate on your professional opinion:

**13. Are behavior management outcomes (i.e. decrease in challenging behaviors) worth the resources spent on them (e.g. physical, fiscal, temporal, and human resources)?**

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat
- Not sure
- We don't currently utilize behavior management procedures

Additional comment:

**14. Does your school district currently have the resources (e.g. temporal, fiscal, physical, human) to support and manage the challenging behaviors of students?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If no, why not?

**15. What do you consider the greatest benefits of managing the challenging behaviors of students? (choose up to 3)**

- Improved student behavior
- Parent satisfaction
- Reduction in behavior-based referrals to special education
- Ability to maintain students in district
- Increased school personnel knowledge of behavior management strategies
- School personnel satisfaction
- Other (please specify)

You have completed the survey.

Thank you for your participation!

Please provide the following information if you would like to receive any of the following:

1. Summary of results across respondents
2. Procedural guidelines for planning and evaluating services for students with challenging behaviors

These responses will be kept separate from the survey; answers to previous survey questions will remain anonymous.

**16. The results of this survey will be used to develop a description of how schools are managing students with challenging behaviors in public schools across the state of New Jersey.**

**In appreciation of your time and effort in completing this survey, we would like to offer you a summary of the findings and guidelines for helping these students.**

**If you are interested in receiving a summary of these findings, please provide your contact information:**

Email address

Other contact information

**17. The results of this survey will also be used to develop procedural guidelines for planning and evaluating services for students with challenging behaviors.**

**In appreciation of your time and effort in completing this survey, we would like to offer you those guidelines.**

**If you are interested in receiving the procedural guidelines, please provide your contact information:**

Email address

Other contact information