

A Few Key Assumptions about Supporting and Educating Students with Challenging Behaviors

- It is impossible to speak about behavior change outside of caring relationships.
- A school wide, systematic approach is fundamental to this work.
- Behavior is functional, is learned and is an attempt to communicate about unmet needs. These unmet needs are often connected to concerns about belonging, independence (power/control), mastery/competence, and generosity. Sometimes behavior is way to get attention and or get revenge.
- Behavior exists on a continuum from unable to unwilling.
- Disciplinary responses (teaching alternative ways of communicating and behaving when facing stress, anger, disappointment, etc.) are more likely to promote long term behavioral change than punishments. We get further down the road with honey than vinegar.
- Positive, pro-social learning environments are the result of the teacher's attitudes, expectations and instructional strategies.
- Understanding the connection between student non-compliance and adult counter aggression is essential.
- Parental and community involvement is critical.
- Data keeping and analysis is needed.
- There are neither magic bullets nor quick fixes.
- Collaborative, creative and focused solution seeking strategies based on the student's strengths offer us the greatest hope.

