Stephanie:

Hey everyone. My name is Stephanie. I am your host and founder here at the intentional IEP. I'm here again with Shelly and we're today gonna be talking all about behavior strategies, but before we get started, Shelly, will you please introduce yourself, share a little bit about your teaching experience and then your current role at the IEP table?

Shelley:

Yeah. So thanks for having me, Stephanie, I'm glad to be back. Um, so my teaching experience is a very long career. I started out as a teacher's aide and then I went into full-time teaching and, um, then I've been subbing for a while and I stopped teaching about five years ago and in total with all of my subbing and all of my paraprofessional and teaching experiences, I've been in this, um, right at third years now. And I can't believe that it's been that long when I think about it. Um, because I mean, I'm just, you know, barely over 30 myself. So I, I don't really know how that can happen, but, um, and in that time I came to love the kids that had the unwanted behaviors the most. And there's, um, in my book, which tell you all about later, there are several stories about students who had some very severe behaviors, and I was able to work with them and with a whole team of people to help them figure out how to manage all those behaviors and how to express what they really wanted to say instead of through using behaviors.

Shelley:

So that's to come up. Um, the rest of, of who I am is I am a live streamer. Um, I have a show hashtag no limits and another show Friday with Fran that are both on YouTube and you can find them just, um, type in hashtag no limits and Shelley keynote, and it'll pop up. And on that, I interview people who society has placed limits upon, but who have busted through those limits. And, um, I'm married. I live in Southern Illinois right today. I know this is a summer series. So this won't necessarily pertain. Hopefully, hopefully this won't pertain then, but we're under a freeze warning right now. And it's, um, late our early spring here. So,

Stephanie:

Oh my God. Yeah,

Shelley:

It just popped up on my computer a few minutes ago that we are at a freeze warning for tonight.

Stephanie:

Mother nature is not happy right now.

Shelley:

No, no. And yesterday it was like 70 degrees and pouring down rain all day long. So yeah, she's, she's definitely, um, March is definitely going out like a lion here in Southern Illinois. So,

Stephanie:

Oh man. Well, I wish you, I will send you some good summer on whether people from Florida. Um, my goodness. Well, let's get started with talking all about behaviors. This is something that I think a lot of teachers need help with, especially now with the pandemic and all of these things. And we're seeing a

lot more behaviors exhibited in the classroom. So what are behavior strategies to get started and why are they

Shelley:

Well, behavior strategy is exactly that it's just a strategy to handle beha unwanted behaviors. Now we actually have strategies that we use when there are wanted behaviors. Um, it's just like, yay. We have a wanted behavior and we don't really do anything about it, but that's the unwanted behaviors. And I want you and your listeners to realize that I'm using those terms wanted and unwanted rather than positive or negative or good or bad because every teacher has their own version of behaviors that they will tolerate and behaviors that they won't a rape. And in speaking with parents over the years, they have helped me come up with the terms wanted and unwanted because that's truly when I sat and thought about it, excuse me, that truly is what it is because you can be in my classroom and I'm okay with a lot of different behaviors. You could go across the hall to the other teacher's classroom and that person not be okay with those exact same behaviors. So it's what I want or what that person wants or doesn't want. And so that wanted, and unwanted are very key strategies for me first and foremost is to have that mentality. And one of the, um, other reasons to have behavior strategies is because you do need to be able to hopefully, um, not have to react, but that you are already prepared. So you are, what is that called pro

Shelley:

Proactive, proactive. Yeah. Proactive in that instead of reactive. And so that will help when you have that sort of toolbox when an unwanted behavior pop up.

Stephanie:

I love that, that mindset shift, and I love that you started there. So for those of you listening, I had no idea how she was gonna answer that question. Um, but I love that you started with just that mindset. Checkin wanted unwanted behaviors, because I think that's really, really important. So let's, let's keep with that, that. And so where in the IEP then let's relate this to IEP real IEPs real quick. And then we'll go back to the strategies, where are we gonna find these behavior strategies or supports in an IEP? Or where would we write these into the IEP?

Shelley:

Well, part you can't actually write behavioral goals without having to do full behavior intervention assessments and of behavior intervention plans. Um, if it's something kind of mild, you can go ahead and just write a goal for it. You can also find it in supplementary aids and accommodations or accommodations, you know, however, uh, wording it is. And like we have said before, you know, everywhere around the country, does it a little bit different words, it a little bit different, but it's in there somewhere. And so yeah, just having these kinds of things and it's actually even something that, um, a social worker or your, um, uh, counselors at your schools might work on with you and or your students.

Stephanie:

Yes, absolutely. So, um, in Shelly's previous chat, we were talking about accommodations and modifications. So, um, if you're wondering maybe where you would put that in terms of like an accommodation or modification, go back and listen to her other chat. I'll link it below this one here. Um, but yes, absolutely. You can find it in all. There's a bunch of different places that you could find it, as

long as it's in there. You're good to go. Just make sure it's in there. Well, what are your top, maybe three to five behavior strategies and how do they work? Why do they work? Like listen on all that.

Shelley:

So, and I did sort of mention the first one, which is remain calm. Um, be because if you are proactive and you have figured out me behavior strategies are a lot of understanding myself, as well as understanding the student. And so if I can know that, Hey, today I am tired or I'm hungry or something has stressed me out. And so maybe my patience level, isn't what it normally is. Things are going to me today, but that doesn't make that, that shouldn't make that a student's problem because it's me, that's the problem. And so in other days, the student could have the exact same behavior and it not bothered me. And therefore the student think that's behavior is okay, but now, today I'm bothered by it. And now the child's getting in trouble and they don't know why they're getting in trouble. So being able to have a little bit of reflection, um, staying calm because the, the more you are upset or anxious, or you start to lose control, the student is going to pick up on that and the behaviors are going to go the wrong way.

Shelley:

They, but they won't get better before they get worse. For sure. Um, and so you wanna have, again, those strategies in place ahead of time and just staying calm and remembering too, that all behavior, and maybe this isn't remembering, maybe this is something I'm telling your viewers that they've never heard before. All behavior is communication. So no matter whether it's you or me or the student, something is being communicated through that behavior, if they're nodding and smiling and it's a wanted behavior, because we think they're listening because they're nodding and smiling at us, that's what they're communicating is, Hey, I'm listening to you. I'm hearing what you're saying. I'm, I'm being an active listener if they're, um, throwing the desk well, okay, why are they throwing the desk? What is going on that has gotten them to that point where they feel like they have no other option, but to throw that desk behaviors are not personal except to the person exhibiting the behavior.

Shelley:

So if a child is screaming at you, if a child is exhibiting severe unwanted behaviors, it's really difficult. And especially until you get a lot of practice at this, but just keep telling yourself this child is in crisis mode. This is not against me. This child is struggling with something and don't take, even if they tell you, they hate you. And you're the worst person in the world. And for the teachers that are parents, this applies to your children at home too. If they're telling you that it's truly not, that they hate you or that you think you're the worst person in the world. They don't like whatever's happening in that moment. And you are just the receptacle that's receiving that, that personal problem that they are dealing with. So remain calm. Um, remember that behaviors are not personal against me, but they are to the person who's of them. Um, think about the, that they are wanted behaviors and unwanted behaviors. Make sure with that too, that, um, another strategy is to make sure that the student knows that it is the behavior that is unwanted, not the student.

Stephanie:

That's good. Yes.

Shelley:

Um, because so often kids will in internalize their behaviors and they think they are bad because they have had so many unwanted behaviors and they've gotten in trouble so much. And having that

relationship with the student is another key component to having good or wanted behaviors in your classroom. And when I say a relationship, I'm not talking about, you know, that you know everything about this student and that you go to every activity that the student is involved in and that you spend hours of your life with this student. No, it's just letting that student know that they are a person in your classroom that you want to be in your classroom, that you know who they are. They're not a number, or they're not a person sitting in a desk, you know, their name, maybe, you know, a little bit about their family or their favorite hobby or their, um, how, you know, what they've done in other classes or activities that whatever it is, it doesn't have to be big things. It's just truly acknowledging that they are a person and that you want them there. And if it's just saying hi and making eye contact with them every day, greeting them when they come into your classroom, whatever it is, because then that when the child does exhibit, because all children will at some point or another exhibit unwanted behaviors, and they then will know, okay, yes, the teacher's upset right now, but the teacher still likes me and, and wants me to be here and wants me to learn.

Stephanie:

I think all of those are fantastic. I love that you brought up behaviors, communication. Don't take it personal. That was a lesson for me. That was, it took me a lot of, a lot of years and a lot of teacher to, um, but it truly is not personal against me. And that relationship building really will help you in the long run with that child. I, I hope all of you are taking notes and all of that, cuz that was all yes. All of those things. Well, so as special education teachers, now we know of this, right? We know about these behavior strategies. So how can we help the rest of the IEP team implement these behavior strategies either correctly or appropriately?

Shelley:

That's an excellent question. And that's probably one of the most difficult parts to have happen because not, it's not just communication, there's actual training. And honestly there really should be practice. And you know, um, we do something here and I know this is a nationwide organization, the crisis prevention intervention Institute. And I went through several trainings, you know, cuz we have to, um, when I was there, it was every two years. I think now they've changed it to every year. You have to re-certify yourself. Um, because you have to have that fresh in your mind because again, you want to be proactive, not reactive. And yes, there are gonna be times where you aren't going to be prepared various. It's just going to happen. But for the majority of the time, you want to be able to have, uh, like I said, a toolbox of things to do.

Shelley:

So having that conversation, having those practice sessions, um, asking the teachers and, and teachers, we have to be okay if a teacher, if a special ed teacher comes to a gen ed teacher and says, how can I help you? What can I do to help you feel better about having this student who has been exhibiting unwanted behaviors in your classroom? How can I help you? We have to be okay saying, oh thank you. Yes. I, I really don't understand. I don't, I, I don't understand how this, how this program works or how this strategy that you've talked about works. Please tell me again. It's okay. To be humble. It's okay. To not know. We tell our students that all the time, it also applies to us. No matter how old we are, we are, we should always be learning. Yeah. Um, and so, yeah, and then gen ed teachers, if a special ed teacher doesn't come and ask you and you're concerned and you're, and you're thinking, I really don't know how to do this.

Shelley:

Or I'm, I'm, I'm worried I'm gonna fail this student. Then go ask the special ed teacher and say, I really want to help the student, but I'm not comfortable role, help me be comfortable. How can we talk this out and figure out how to be comfortable? And it goes back to, we talked about this in the accommodations, one that communication with the team. And I know it is so hard and especially these last few years with the pandemic and you're not even in the same building, it's difficult enough when you're in the same building. Then when we had the pandemic teaching and we were all at home that made it even that much more difficult, but for our mental health, honestly, Stephanie, once I really glammed onto the points that I said about it's not personal and remaining calm and just having that toolbox and learning that a, when somebody is going through something, it's them, it's not on me that helped every aspect of my life. It helped me with my husband. It helped me with my daughter. It helped me with my students. It helped me with my coworkers. I mean, it truly does apply everywhere. And when I actually give behavior trainings, it's called behavior strategies, lessons for a lifetime because it really is stuff that can carry you anywhere you go.

Stephanie:

I have, I was taking notes because I have covering. I have I. Yes, yes, yes, yes. So you were talking about, um, being proactive and not reactive. I wanna say here that if there's a moment where you are reactive, it happens to all of us. It does not make you a bad teacher. No,

Shelley:

No, No, absolutely not.

Stephanie:

As long as it's not every single time. Right. And you're not being proactive and you're not trying to make it better for that child. Um, and also asking for help. Doesn't make you a bad teacher either. It doesn't make you stupid. It doesn't mean you don't know what you're talking about. And one thing that when I give trainings on special ed and gen ed collaboration like gen ed, teachers are the general education curriculum experts. Like I, I will never be that I am a special ed. I will never be what that gen ed teacher is. Yep. It will never happen unless I'm a gen ed teacher and that's I'm, but I am built for special ed, but me too special ed teachers, we are experts at what we do. We are experts at advocating. We are experts at writing IEPs. We are experts at all of these different strategies, trying different things, adapting. And so we each have different wheelhouses that we are experts in. We cannot be expected to know everything. So it is okay to ask for help. It does not mean that you are not a good teacher and one bad day in your classroom, maybe even two bad days, a bad week in your classroom also does not make you a bad teacher.

Shelley:

Exactly.

Stephanie:

So I wanted to add that in there. It is okay to ask for help. I love that you brought that up. Um, even if you're a special ed teacher and you're like, I don't know how to do that. Ask for help. And for those of you that maybe are listening and you're like, I'm a gen ed teacher. I went to my special ed teacher and

she is not helping me at all. Or maybe the other way around or like maybe admin is not supportive or helpful ask one of us

Shelley:

Like, absolutely.

Stephanie:

The great thing about social media is that you can interact with teachers from all over the world and learn things from the I'm like you're doing right now. So reach out and ask for help. We are here to help you. We are here to, to teach you and learn from you as well. Um, so just don't be afraid to ask. There's no question that is too silly. You are never taking up too much of anyone's time. Please ask. Um, because it does a, just the whole world, uh, of a difference when you ask for help, if you're unsure of how to do something.

Shelley:

Yeah. And I'm so glad that you said that and you reinforced that because those, I said at the beginning, you know, the students that I have worked with that have had the behaviors, it's been a whole team of people. I've not always had all the answers I have multiple times reached outside of my own school district and reached out to experts outside and said, Hey, I've got this situation going on. And I just don't know. I mean, I've tried a, B and C strategies and it isn't working. What else, you know, have you ever had this? What as in our world today, as many students as we have, we have that many different behaviors. And so there isn't one strategy that is going to work for everybody every single time in all situations. So, yeah, even though I love behaviors and I've dealt with behaviors and, and really that's been my focus for probably the last us 10 or 12 years of my teaching. There's so much that I still don't know and I still have bad days and I still had to be, and I still reacted in situations. So I'm so glad that you really hammered that point home because it is, we have to be okay with ourselves and give ourselves grace. And we don't do that as often as we should.

Stephanie:

And I will be honest and I will, like, I am not a behavior guru. I can do the basic strategies. I can do a, B and C, but I am the first person to go ask somebody in the behavior world who knows much more about it than me. What can I do because I need their help. Like I will go ask for help when it comes to behaviors, which is why Shelly is here today. Um, so it doesn't, it you're still a good teacher. I just, I really hammer that home for, for everyone. Well, will these strategies only work for students with IEPs or are they good for any child, which you kind of already talked about, but

Shelley:

Yeah. Oh no. They'll the remembering, like I said, that all behaviors communication. So just thinking about, you know, if somebody's coming at you, um, you have the ability to escalate or, or keep it at a level that it's at or possibly deescalate it. Um, and so just like I said, anybody that you deal with and I, I, I keep coming back to my home situation when I learned all this stuff as I was going through teaching, and then I was like, wait, I could apply that at home. And oh yeah. Okay. When my daughter is screaming at me that she hates me, she doesn't really mean that she hates me because later on she's like, mom, I didn't mean it. And you know, that had happens. And if that happens way too often with our kiddos that have so many unwanted behaviors that do have those meltdowns and they are acting in ways that they don't have any control over. And they're saying things or they're tearing things apart and they feel so

badly afterwards it's because they didn't mean those things in the first place. So if we can remember that we're a, a lot further down the road.

Stephanie:

Yes. These behavior strategies are good, even for adults.

Shelley:

Yes they are.

Stephanie:

Yep. Well, what is your best piece of advice for behavior strategies?

Shelley:

Um, just remembering that big one, that all behavior is communication. And, and just trying to understand what the other person is communicating.

Stephanie:

That is, that is the perfect thing to end on because that's, it, behavior is communication. Like there's always some underlying communi whether a child or a person adult can or cannot express how they're feeling. There is something there that they are not UN, they're unsure how to deal with. Right.

Shelley:

And it comes, I become a, yeah. I become a two year old when I start trying to figure out somebody's behavior because you know, when we do FBAs functional behavioral assessments, we usually say, well, it's a power struggle. It's attention seeking it's task avoidance. Okay, well, don't stop there. Why is it one of those things? And you keep asking the why just like a two year old, why, why is it do what you answer? I'm like, why, why, you know?

Stephanie:

Yeah.

Shelley:

And I, and I just keep digging until I can find what I think is a root cause of a behavior. Sometimes you can't because it's buried so deep, you just can't find it. But if you're just constantly putting a bandaid on a particular unwanted behavior, and you're never trying to find the root cause that you need to apply the surgery or give the stitches or whatever it is, you're always gonna be dealing with those unwanted behaviors.

Stephanie:

Yes. I don't, again, I don't have anything to add. That's just, yeah. Well, thank you so much, Shelly, for sharing just your experience and your expertise when it comes to behavior strategies. Again, I will not even pretend to be a guru when it comes to behaviors. So I'm so glad that you were here and shared your knowledge with everyone. And I hope that everyone was like burly taking notes. Um, before we go,

though, will you please share where we can find you on social media, on your website? Tell us about your book and then, um, I'll link all of Shelly's things below this video. So you all can go find her.

Shelley:

Yeah, thanks. I very much enjoyed it. And I'm sure you can tell, I could talk behaviors all day long because it is something that I truly love and am passionate about, but your, uh, viewers can find me on Shelley keynote.com. That's my website. And then I am on LinkedIn. I am on Instagram. I am on Facebook and I am on YouTube. And as I mentioned earlier, I've got the, the YouTube, um, live streams. My daughter has corrected me today. And so I'm trying to remember to use the right at terminology. Um, and so, yeah, hashtag no limits and Friday with Fran and the, um, the Instagram is just Shelly keynote IEP. The Facebook is Shelly keynote, IEP consultant. And then I do have a Facebook group that I go live in once a month. And just kind of talk about this sort of thing, or like this the month of April.

Shelley:

Um, I was talking about extended school year versus summer school. I talk about data collection. I talk about behavior. So just something different every month and there's no fee to join. So you get me for an hour once a month. Um, and then yeah, my book, those who can't teach and, um, those who can't, you know, those of us who are teachers, we all hate this saying every teacher I've ever asked, hates this saying, and it's because we feel like we are somehow less than every other profession or that the people saying it, think that about us. That's how everyone in my book feels. This is, uh, true stories of special needs families to promote acceptance, inclusion and empathy. Every story in the book is, um, nine of the stories. There's 10 chapters. One chapter is mine going from my journey of only wanting to teach gen ed students and to where I am now of wanting to make the world better for all one IEP at a time the other nine stories were done through interviews, um, to of these families or the individuals with the disability that I share with everybody, their struggles.

Shelley:

I've done a few book studies with groups of teachers, and they are telling me how there is no other book like this. They wish they've had it sooner that it's changing their perspective. It's changing the way they're teaching, because as teachers, we tend to only focus on the student, but there's a whole fee family dynamic that's happening that we often forget. And so that's what this book is about.

Stephanie:

That's awesome. Well, I will link it below, just along with all of Shelly's other things. She does so many things, so I will link them all below. You can click and go and find her and reach out to her and talk behaviors with her. Um, but thank you again so much Shelly, for being here and sharing your knowledge and expertise. Absolutely. I've our time together. Um, and thank you all for being here and viewing and listening and learning about behavior strategies. We will see y'all in the next.