

Stephanie:

Hey everyone. My name is Stephanie. I am your host and founder here at the intentional IEP for the summer PD series and all of your monthly guest speaker chats. I am here with my friend, Tim, and we are gonna be talking all about, hold on. This title's really long, but I wanna get it right. The connection between student behavior and then the frustration and defiance that we might see that might be related to the insufficient supports of child is receiving. Before we dive into all of that, Tim, please share about you, your teaching experience and your role at the IEP table.

Tim:

So my name's Tim Kuman and it's nice to be with everybody today to share some of this information as a former principal and administrator. I remember walking into classrooms all the time where a child's behavior is front and center, literally front and center, right? And as a, as a, as a, a special education veteran, uh, and an administrator for 24 years, we're really working to help teachers to recognize where that behavior is coming from. Um, so it's my pleasure to be here, to talk about this con this content today.

Stephanie:

Well, let's just dive right in because I'm really excited about this topic. Um, so how, how do you even know what that a student's behavior is connected to insufficient supports? Like, are there tell, tell signs things we should look for dill?

Tim:

So there, there definitely is, and it really boils down to the word engagement. Um, you know, um, my company's name is action of an education. I maybe should have mentioned that earlier, but the action side of that is so important because we all do things on a daily basis, right? Actions and our actions speak to what's going on inside of our heads. They speak to the things that we're frustrated by, or that we're encouraged by or whatever, right? We can see our actions. And ultimately at the end of the day, when you see that lack of engagement in the class, the content, the test, whatever I'm working to do, they're not engaged in that. Then you can likely expect that there will be a behavior that will follow. Now, when we talk about behaviors, I wanna define this upfront. We're not always talking about the throwing spit at wifes, up in your face.

Tim:

Um, very, uh, aggressive behaviors, right? We might be talking about just a child. That's checking out, they're putting their head down, they're disengaged in that way. So there's the extremes of behavior from the, all the way over to the very aggressive behaviors down to those behaviors that are just basically avoidance type things, right? Putting my head down and disengaging. So when we talk about, um, recognizing when a child is frustrated due to insufficient support, we're talking about watching for those behaviors watching for that disengagement. Um, I like to always say the behavior is a child saying I'm not buying what you're selling me. I'm not doing what you're telling me. It's one of those things that I'm just trying to communicate to you that I'm not able to, or for some reason, not willing to do what you're asking me to do. I'd rather get in trouble and get thrown outta class. I'd rather get an F on a test. There's lots of things that I'd rather do than engage in what you're trying to get me to do. So that's kind of how, you know, when you start to see these behaviors kicking up, you can kind of know that they're, they're, they're probably not supported app around their needs.

Stephanie:

And I can see just as a special education teacher thinking about seeing the spectrum of behaviors in the classroom, whether it be, you know, just the, the, not paying attention to the lesson or throwing the chairs and kicking books in the bookshelf, we've all been there, right? The wide spectrum, we have to collect data on that. Right. So how, how do we collect data on those insufficient supports? And then what do you do once you have all of this data?

Tim:

Yeah. Before we go there though, Stephanie, let me back up for just one minute, because you mentioned something there that that's important. Um, we talk about the behavior as of the result of, of this, this insufficient support, right? So there's something like a precipitating factor or something that's causing this, this, this behavior way, way, way, way too often, we look at the behavior as the problem, we look at the behavior as the need. In other words, we are collecting data on the behavior when in the behavior is the byproduct, it's the result of the real need. Okay. So it's the overt action that we talked about that is saying I'm frustrated, I'm, I'm struggling. So when we talk about collecting data, we have to recognize the pattern. The fact that every time I ask the child to, um, read out loud and class, he all of a sudden throws this book across the room, huh?

Tim:

Well, he threw his book across the room. We often target that when in reality, the problem is the reading side of things, right? So when we start to talk about the data, we wanna pay attention to the two legs of that. The thing that's causing the problem, the fact I don't wanna read and the behavior, because both of them are, are places where we can begin to chase down the solution to the problem. Right? So, um, the first data obviously is related to the meat. So whether it's reading or, uh, an attention challenge or whatever's causing the problem, we obviously should have the, at data that shows that, that this is going to be a challenge to the child. Right. Because when I am aware that he has a significant reading problem, then I probably will be learn to anticipate the fact he's gonna throw his book across the room.

Tim:

Yeah. Okay. Now that, that makes sense, right? The, the key to fixing it, obviously in my opinion, is not the focus on the behavior. It's rather to focus on the front side, the fact that he has this reading need. Um, remember the topic of conversation is that we're noticing behaviors as a result of insufficient support. In other words, he's acting out because he needs support. He needs a, a, an accommodation or some way to help improve a need so that he doesn't throw the book across the room anymore. Okay. So the data now that we can talk about is two sides. First of all, the need side, how needy is the reading problem or the attention problem or the, um, whatever the challenge is there. And then the other side is how big of a problem is the behavior. So we may record things like frequency data. How often does he, does he display this behavior? Um, intensity data? How long does the behavior last? That kind of stuff, right? That's to get our head around the behavior, but don't ignore the front side, the need that's causing the behavior in the first place. Okay. It makes sense. Do you wanna add something to help? Help clarify?

Stephanie:

No. I mean, I'm just thinking about it in terms of like, when we do FBAs, we have the ABC data, the AnSed and the behavior, the, the consequence. Right. So, but I've never, I personally have never thought

about the antecedent as in the way that you explained it like that. It's um, you're I, again, wish I had a notepad to take notes because please keep going

Tim:

The idea. So we specialize in, in accommodations modifications. And the reason we do that is because that's a very efficient way of supporting a child around their need. If I can support a child around their need, I will drastically reduce and maybe even eliminate the need for the child to act out the need for the child to demonstrate this behavior. Right. And all of that is encapsulated in that ANED. And that what happens before as a principal, there was nothing more challenging than coming into an environment where the child has done X, Y, Z. I know nothing about what happened before just this kid threw a book and he should be taken outta my classroom because he threw a book. But I need to know what happened before, because that might tell me that the problem is he has a reading disability, and you ask the kid to read versus he's just some S SCO rule that threw a book crosser.

Tim:

Right? So paying attention to that early, that ANED, that helps me to establish a pattern of wow. In interesting that every time certain thing happens, he's asked to read in class, the child demonstrates some kind of behavior, those Anthes establish that pattern. We can begin to record his observations. We can begin to say, well, is this happening anywhere else? Maybe in math class, he's throwing a book across room, but in social studies class, when he is asked to read, he just simply kind of gets really small in a, in his chair and disappears. Right? Well, there's still that ANED, the behavior might be a little bit different, but we can notice a pattern, a pattern of, of disengagement, right? So the data that we're gonna collect then is that around that idea, something's triggering this behavior. Let's find where we can see that and does a behavior happen every time or very frequently after this is hap this, this, this, uh, AnSed occurs. So looking for this pattern across environments is really important. Okay. And once we've identified that, then obviously we can begin to talk about a plan for how to support the child appropriately through the use of accommodation and so on.

Stephanie:

Well, I'm gonna switch gears, but still not kind of switch gears. What is meant by manifestation? So special education teachers, you in my first year, I had to write a manifestation determination, like three times for one student. And I was like, man, if this is the worst that I ever have to do, like, and ma Ugh, God taught me a lesson. Let me just tell you, but what is meant by manifestation and how does that all relate to this? And why does it maybe seem so messed? Understood?

Tim:

So it's interesting because that manifestation is, is the, is the, is the fancy word for exactly what we're talking about today, right? The idea that a need manifests a behavior problem, right? It's the reason why the law stands there and says, you cannot suspend this kid for a behavior, unless you've determined that it, the behavior is not a manifestation of their disability. Okay. It's the thing that a lot of people don't understand why I can't suspend his kid with special needs. Well, the reason you can't suspend his kid with special needs just to, uh, they're gone is because way too often, their behavior is caused because of insufficient support. We don't have something in place to support the child around their need. So for that reason, they're causing, there's a behavior kicking up here, they're throwing their book, they're cussing the teacher out. They're doing what, who knows what doesn't matter at the end, end of the day, it's caused because of a need manifesting itself as a behavior, the behavior we can

control, because we can control it by supporting the child. We can't suspend that kid because we can control it. It's manifested from their need.

Stephanie:

I have a sense. And I have a question for you. And it's a scenario that you, I mean, as an administrator, and I feel comfortable asking this because we are friends. Um, as teachers, we get frustrated when we send a child to the principal's office and they come back with a lollipop or they come back and they're not in trouble, but I see a connection between why they don't get in trouble. Do you have like any insight into that as an administrator that maybe teachers need to hear, especially myself.

Tim:

So I do. Um, and, and, and oftentimes, I mean, I don't think that I ever really sent a kid back to the lollipop, but I, I understand what you mean, that, that, that, that it, that a teacher thinks that the child should have some kind of punishment, right. A consequence. Yeah. And, and that's, that's, that's true. Um, here's the thing, though, the purpose behind a punishment behind a consequence to change a behavior. Okay. That's the reason why we punish somebody, right? To say, you should not do this anymore. We should instead do this or that. Now here's the problem, though. If the behavior is a manifestation of something that my staff can control, and other words, we're not supporting this child around their need, that's why he is doing this. The kid can't control that. So punishing him, isn't gonna change that support. Does that make sense? It's saying that it's saying, oh, I'm gonna paddle you because, well, I can't paddle anymore, but you know what I mean? The old fashioned days, right. Of punishment, right? The consequence can't change the fact that, um, he has a reading need and he's not sufficiently supported in a classroom around his reading need that punishment. Doesn't change that right

Stephanie:

Now,

Tim:

The punishment can discourage the kid from throwing a book. So instead I might say, Hey, look from now on, instead of throwing a book, put your head down, okay, I'm gonna teach the child in the administrative setting, right? It's the principal. I'm gonna teach the child a replacement behavior. And I'm gonna say, now, I wanna see you do that. I wanna see you instead of throwing the book to put your head down as a way of saying, I'm struggling here, I'm frustrated. Gotcha. I'm gonna send a kid back and then say, now, as long as you can, can do this behavior instead, here's your lollipop. Right? In other words, I'm not gonna punish you. I'm gonna say try this instead, because I didn't change the problem. The problem is you need support around his need.

Stephanie:

Right. I am mind blown again. Like that makes so much sense.

Tim:

Stephanie, think about it like this it's frustration, right? Let me, and let's, let's call it what it's the child is acting out as a result of frustration, avoidance, that kind of stuff. Think about yourself. I mean, I'm, I'm a firm believer that there's only one person in this world that I can control and that's me. Okay. So when I

get frustrated, what do I do? Well, I, I will avoid things, right? I'll try to get from something that's causing me frustration. Um, I might need some time to chill and think about it, or I might take ahead on, and I might just not try as hard as I can, right. Or I might not put a hundred percent into it. I mean, there's natural things that we as adults do when we're frustrated, but it's really interesting when you stop and think about it. Most of the things next time, you're frustrated. Think about this conversation. Okay. Most of the things we as adults do, kids can't do, I'm frustrated. I'm gonna say, you know what? I'm gonna take 10 minutes and just walk away from this and come back to it. What happens if some kid says, I need 10 minutes to walk away from this,

Stephanie:

The teacher's not gonna let

Tim:

Them exactly the teacher's like, no, no, no, no. Get back here, sit down.

Stephanie:

You don't need a break. You don't need a break.

Tim:

Exactly. Right? Yeah. We, we don't let the natural things that we as adults do when we're frustrated, when we are challenged by something, we don't let those things happen. And then all of a sudden kid throws a book across the room. Hello? Because we took all the normal things away. Right. The things we would naturally do. So the classroom being such a, a controlled, for lack of better word, maybe setting, um, takes away. So many of the things that we do. So we need to find that way to first support the child to reduce, but then secondly, help them to see maybe a different way of communicating with us that they're frustrated. But when they say they're frustrated, we, we can't just dismiss it and say, oh no, you'll be fine. Oh, it's okay. No, we need to listen to them. We need to listen to their behaviors, to their things that they're doing to say, wow, this kid is definitely STR struggling with a need. That's why it manifests itself as a, as a discipline problem.

Stephanie:

And I feel like self-regulation comes into play a lot here too. Students might be having issues or not know how to self-regulate their feelings or emotions or whatever. They might not know that they're frustrated. They just immediately shut down. They don't know how to verbalize how they feel. Right. So I think I love what you said and I, but I also, and maybe you can add onto this, just tying in that, teaching them those self-regulation strategies, giving them options. So they don't throw the book. Right.

Tim:

Well, right. We mean, we tend to do what we know to do. So when I'm frustrated, first of all, you're asking me to identify it. And then you're saying, oh, by the way, the things that you would normally do, you can't do. And then you're saying, the thing that you did do is inappropriate. So do this instead, right? That's three steps removed during a very pressure sensitive, frustrated. And

Stephanie:

If that were me, I'd be out like three I'm out. Like I'm not doing anything now.

Tim:

Right? Exactly. So, you know, recognizing that as not the behavior, but what the behavior is trying to say to us, that's at that heart of that manifestation thing, that's that kid saying, look, I don't think I'm going to do well on this test. I know what's going to happen when I don't do well on. So for that reason, I'm just gonna wrinkle your test up and throw it in the garbage. Okay, it's communicating, it's saying I need support. I'm going to fail this test. So instead I just assumed get rid of the old chalk, the Chuck away. Right?

Stephanie:

Well, and now I feel like this connects with not just kids that have disabilities, but I feel like, like this can happen in the general ed setting as well with kids who aren't identified as having special needs. So is there something that we, as teachers, as professionals, as IEP teams are just as professionals in general, is there something that we can explore or should be exploring beyond an IEP or beyond a child with an IEP?

Tim:

So with COVID and the things that are going on right now, um, honestly these behaviors are more prevalent than they ever were. There. There's lots of reasons for this. Obviously, you know, when you have inconsistencies in education, you have gaps. So a child may struggle with a need today because might have been something they were, they were going to learn last year and, and maybe slip through the cracks or, or in the challenge of COVID there's a gap there. Right? So now all of a sudden you have kids that aren't, wouldn't normally, let's say it this way, be struggling, but they are because they have a gap or they have a challenge. The second reason is because, you know, schools as institutions, we tend to establish the, the rules for school. Right. Um, and we do that starting from the day one in kindergarten, where the kid comes in and we understand, okay, this is what we do.

Tim:

And then that grows every single year. Well, now we have two years of inconsistent where these institutional rules that we have these procedures and things like that, haven't been well learned. So you have kids that have kind of not been through that series of events that normally cause them to understand there's a different way to respond when you're frustrated. Right? So we have an increase in frustration due to gaps, and we have a less than, um, normal, um, typical maybe is the right word to say, um, series of events that cause it to get, to not know the normal way to respond or an appropriate way to respond. Right. Um, these two challenges have led to the place where yes, there are more challenges in the regular classroom, but at the end of the day, all behaviors should be seen as communication. What's the kids saying, if you can establish a pattern, every time I ask the kid to do such and such, it seems like they're I doing this behavior? Okay. Then that's that kid communicating. I have a need in this area that I'm trying to avoid, or that I'm trying to prevent from becoming a, a, a challenge to me. Um, there are, there is, is more that, more of that going on, and that manifestation idea needs to be explored across the board, not just with kids with special needs, but with every child to say, why is this kid doing this? Okay. And following that communication back to the source to that need, that need that they, that they're, they're struggling with.

Stephanie:

I, I have another question for you that relates to this, but also I'm for my own curiosity, I'm curious what you think. So I know that with the pandemic, there have been a lot more students now who are being

referred for services and are being identified as having a disability or special needs. I feel like though, after listening to our convers that yes, there's gaps. I'm not saying there's not gaps. There are very big gaps, but maybe some of that is coming from insufficient supports and not necessarily a disability.

Tim:

Yeah. So to answer your question, Stephanie, I have to go back to one of the things that, that, that my company's working to get out there and we call this the through and around process. Okay. Now here's how the through and around process worked. It's really at its heart. Um, what makes special education so special? Right? So the through part, we're talking about a need, okay, whatever the need is, reading, reading, challenge, whatever the need is, right. When we are working on the through part of things, what we're trying to do is improve a child's skills. So if they're struggling at reading below grade level, it's going to, I'm going to plan some things to help improve their reading skills, right? Programs, extra activities they might do during the school day. Maybe even some extra homework or something that they can do to help improve their reading skills.

Tim:

Right. We call that working a child through their need. We're taking a head on and we're improving the skills so that we can fix this need. Right. There's a problem with that though. The problem is it takes time. I can't just click my fingers and have the child reading a grade level. Okay. So the second tier then is the around part, supporting a child around their need. We talked earlier in a different, different talk, I guess, about the idea that accommodations support the child around their need. Right? Okay. Their instant, they can happen very quickly. So the idea of through and around improve the needs, but while that's happening, support the child around their need works for any child, that's struggling with a special need. It doesn't have to be only for a child with an IEP. Now let's back up to your question. The challenge with COVID is we should see the same solution through and around plan ways to an improve the need, support the child around the need while this plan is taking place. Right? So we have an increase of need or an increase, uh, desire to use this through and around idea, but we need to use it for every child that's struggling right now. Not just kids that are identified with, with a, with an IEP. Okay. Does that follow?

Stephanie:

Yeah, that makes so much sense. And I feel like we do that anyway, maybe, or we should be doing that anyway,

Tim:

And we might need to be increasing the intensity or including more opportunities and things like that. But, um, the idea is, yes, we're recognizing the need and we're working to improve it. We have to then also support the child around the need that supporting them around might prevent the identification from happening. Because again, we can't just improve that need instantly. So we have to be, have some patience there, but we can employ this special ed strategy with any kid given the, the, the mindset of improving it and then supporting them around it while the improvement takes time.

Stephanie:

Hmm. This is such a great conversation. I could probably can come up with so many more questions, but we're gonna leave it with this. What is your best piece of advice for finding that connection between student behavior and those insufficient supports?

Tim:

Um, I, I, I'd have to go back to that idea of patterns. Um, you know, there's, there's, we all have a bad day, right? We all have something that, um, I woke up on the wrong side of the bed. So for that reason, I'm not myself and I have a, a negative behavior. Maybe I, I did something I wouldn't normally do. So that's not cause for concern. Sure. It's an incident and it needs to be handled appropriately, obviously. But if you establish a pattern, in other words, it seems like this happens all the time. Then you are seeing a situation that is likely the cause of insufficient support. In other words, the child is struggling with a knee need that we need to find a way to support them around so that they don't continue to display this behavior. Um, that pattern really is the key to identifying that the presence of that versus just saying some incident that that happened because of a bad day.

Stephanie:

I love that, that actually, I love that that's your best piece of advice because I can see even like the thinking back to being in the traditional classroom, setting myself as a special ed teacher in any setting for special ed and hearing this whole conversation and just being like, man, now I have to like, watch all of the behaviors and take all of the data and graph all of the things. But I do. And I love that you said that watch the pattern. Like we all have bad days, right? Like you all, we all wake up on the wrong side of the bed sometimes it's okay. Every day's a new day, but if it's a pattern where you're seeing it happening every day or after every time he's asked to read, or when we line up to go to Jim, maybe there's a behavior. I don't know. It was just down there, but just looking for that pattern. And I think that's really important. And I, I hope that those of you listening under, like you were like, yes, thank you for like, that was like relief. I feel like was just look for the patterns. You can watch all the behaviors you don't need to take down on all the behaviors, but look for the patterns and then really go from there.

Tim:

Exactly. That's the key.

Stephanie:

Yeah. I think that's so important to remember. Well, thank you so much, Tim, for being here and sharing about just the connection between student behavior and insufficient supports. I think this is a conversation that we need to be having more in education, especially now more than ever. Um, so I appreciate you being here and just sharing your knowledge and, oh my gosh, just all the things and letting me go rogue and pick, pick your brain about other things as well. Where can we find you, whether it's website or social media, and I will link all of Tim's things below this video for y'all to click and go.

Tim:

Stephanie had to say before I tell you that, I'd say, I appreciate what you're doing to get the, these, these messages out to teachers. Um, teachers need solutions. I know when I was in the trenches in the classroom, um, it seemed like it was a lonely man game way too often. So someone like you out there helping to get this message out there to provide this professional development is just, is just, thank you. That's all I can say for that. Um, as far as my, my, my presence, um, my company action driven education, we have a website action driven education.com. Um, and we are on all the major social medias and so on. Um, we're working to get that, that memo out there and, and the idea that teachers, um, need these tools and these resources. So, um, that's, that's what we're using our social media, you

for, um, subscribe for our newsletters, that kind of stuff, all that can be found on our website@actiondriveneducation.com.

Stephanie:

Awesome. And I will link again. I will link him things below this video. I will also say that those of you are here for the summer PD series. If you go to my count, you'll see a little box. It's a, they're all blue boxes, but they're all different shades of blue. There's a box that says Amos, and you can click that box to learn more about action driven education and how the intentional IEP we didn't do it purposely. We kind of just met together through the internet. And then we were like, wow, like what we're both doing just is in sync with one another. Um, so you can watch how to use the intentional IEP as well as Amos together to help you build IEPs. I'll link that link to the box below here. So you don't have to go to my account, click all the buttons.

Stephanie:

Um, so you'll find Tim's links below. You will also find that link for AKAs to learn more. Um, and yes, thank you so much, Tim, for being here. I have learned so much from you today. I appreciate it so much, and I appreciate all that you do all of you that are here. Thank you so much for taking am out of your summer day, to learn more about, um, just behaviors and insufficient supports and what we can do as educators and professionals to help our students succeed. So thank you all so much for being here again. Thank you, Tim. And I'll see y'all in the next.