

BASIC SKILLS INFORMATION

Prevention and Management of Aggressive Behavior (PAMAB)

All of us, the individuals we serve and the staff alike, have the right to protect ourselves from acts of aggression. Although no risk management training can cover all possible situations that may occur, and no training can take the place of sound personal judgment, in a progressive manner, PAMAB teaches school personnel to use both non-physical and physical interventions to stop aggressive student behavior so that neither students nor adults are put in harm's way. The non-physical aspects of PAMAB provide a strong intervention focus in attempting to avoid a physical restraint step, and the physical restraints taught in PAMAB are varied to apply to different situations. In order to be certified in the use of PAMAB, completion of a minimum of ten hours of instruction is required; however, knowledge of the scientific principles and practical thoughts on which PAMAB is based may help an individual when confronted with aggressive behavior.



COMMUNICATION!

Your communication skills are the most powerful tools you have for preventing aggressive behavior. What you communicate and the way you communicate will help shape an environment of mutual respect and cooperation or one of hostility and possible violence. Effective communication reduces the need for physical management of aggression and that means a safer environment for students and staff.

How a message is received by others:

- 10% comes from actual words used.
- 20% comes from the way things are said.
- 70% comes from body language that is used.

For a message to be clear, the meaning of the words must match the tone of voice and the body language. Learn to make your message clear AND learn to read the messages of your students. Having a calm mind and a relaxed body will help you give and receive the appropriate messages.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

CROWDING THE AGGRESSOR

TALKING DOWN

ARGUING

BRIBING

THREATENING

STEP-BY-STEP COMMUNICATION IN AGGRESSIVE SITUATIONS

1. Make Contact

- Pay attention.
- Observe silently.
- Listen carefully.
- Identify feeling, silently.
- State behavior and feeling.
- Check understanding.

2. Discover Source of Distress

- Restate feeling and ask for source.
- Paraphrase feeling and source.
- Check understanding.

3. Assist With Altering Student Focus

- Ask for wants.
- Ask about attempts and outcomes.
- Ask for action and direct student.
- Follow-up to see how person's plan worked later, and adjust plan if necessary. This shows a caring attitude.

REMEMBER: The most important thing for providing a safe environment is using clear and consistent communication that is appropriate to the situation. When staff members are comfortable with their communication skills, they should feel less anxious about encountering aggressive students. With less fear of injury, staff members are more free to relate in a caring manner to the individuals they serve. This attitude of caring, more than anything else, reduces the likelihood of aggression becoming physically threatening.

GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTING AND MANAGING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR:

- Follow Fulton County Schools' policies, procedures, rules, and your supervisors' directions.
- Safety is the main objective. Practice it at all times.
- Have an open mind, be inquisitive, respect all persons, and be supportive.
- Use a calm or otherwise appropriate voice and concentrate on your communication skills.
- Do not argue with an out of control student. Do not ask "WHY" questions of angry students. Rather ask "Who? What? When? Where? How?" questions to help focus their attention on specifics they should be able to answer.
- Maintain a safe distance and direct others away from an adversarial student.
- Be aware of your physical limitations, and do not go beyond them.
- Understand that the small spaces present problems not always seen in larger spaces. As a result, practice being in different parts of your work area and reacting to an aggressive student in imaginary situations.
- Never turn your back on an aggressor unless you are able to move away from him faster than he can get to you. Never put yourself in a corner during controversial situations.
- Maintain 2-way radio or telephone communication capability whenever possible.
- Know that students contained in one area for a long period or riding long distances on buses require extra attention. Let students know you understand this, give them empathy for their stress relating to this.

PHYSICAL THINGS TO CONSIDER WHILE COMMUNICATING WITH A PHYSICAL AGGRESSOR:

- When possible, stand approximately two arm lengths away from an angry student so that you are close enough to show support, but far away enough to scoot away if the student becomes physically aggressive.
- Make your body flexible and scoot away while facing the aggressor and communicating. Standing in a balanced posture and moving efficiently from that posture are primary skills for protecting yourself and others from acts of physical aggression. Practice how to do this from various areas on your school campus and on the school bus.
- Avoid the aggressor's strikes and kicks while facing the aggressor, scooting away, and communicating...moving arms to protect both body and head only if physical contact is unavoidable.
- Avoid the aggressor's pushes (and strikes and kicks while cornered or when in limited space) by turning to the side and moving off the line of force.
- Yield to the force of the person's emotional or physical aggression and then direct it safely away.
- Use a comparable amount of energy as the aggressor...and do so in one continuous, fluid motion.
- If a student makes body contact with another student or with you in a hand or arm grasp or choke, the first thing you do is TELL the student to release the hold.
- If a student does not release his hold, mentally form a plan to get out of the grasp without injury to you or the student. Then, follow your plan, step-by-step until release occurs and you can scoot away from the aggressor.
- Do not use pain-causing techniques against an aggressor for this may increase the aggressive behavior, injure participants, and is not the least restrictive or safest alternative...that we are required by law to provide.
- Take a PAMAB class through the Staff Development Department for greater knowledge about preventing and managing aggressive behavior in your environment.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PAMAB

PAMAB is a comprehensive risk management program that teaches participants to use preventive measures and physical actions in providing a safe educational environment. Initiated in the state of Texas, the innovative philosophy and techniques of PAMAB have been implemented by human service organizations throughout the United States, coming to the southeastern area in 1998. The mission of PAMAB is to design, develop, and deliver extraordinary learning experiences that enlighten and empower school staff towards creating the safest possible environment for everyone involved.