



Understanding
and Supporting

Students With
Emotional
and Behavioral
Disorders

VERN JONES
AL GREENWOOD

Understanding and Supporting Students With Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

by

Vern Jones, Ph.D.
Lewis & Clark College
Portland, Oregon

and

Al Greenwood, Ph.D.

· P A U L · H ·
BROOKES
PUBLISHING CO.®

Baltimore • London • Sydney



Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
Post Office Box 10624
Baltimore, Maryland 21285-0624
USA
www.brookespublishing.com

Copyright © 2022 by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.
All rights reserved.

"Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co." is a registered trademark of
Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

Typeset by Absolute Service, Inc., Towson, Maryland.
Manufactured in the United States of America by Versa Press, Inc.

This book was previously published by Pearson Education, Inc. (©2015) under the title *Effective Supports for Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: A Continuum of Services*. This book published by Brookes Publishing Co. has been extensively updated and revised to reflect changes in the field and include new materials for faculty and new content on trauma-informed classroom management and discipline; social-emotional learning; understanding students with emotional and behavioral disorders and how this impacts supporting their academic, social, and behavioral growth; and working with families.

The information provided in this book is in no way meant to substitute for a medical or mental health practitioner's advice or expert opinion. Readers should consult a health or mental health professional if they are interested in more information. This book is sold without warranties of any kind, express or implied, and the publisher and authors disclaim any liability, loss, or damage caused by the contents of this book.

The individuals described in this book are composites or real people whose situations are masked and are based on the authors' experiences. In all instances, names and identifying details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Purchasers of *Understanding and Supporting Students With Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* are granted permission to download, print, and photocopy the forms in the text for clinical and/or educational purposes. This form may not be reproduced to generate revenue for any program or individual. Photocopies may only be made from an original book. *Unauthorized use beyond this privilege may be prosecutable under federal law.* You will see the copyright protection notice at the bottom of each photocopiable page.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Control Number: 2021057277

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data are available from the British Library.

2026 2025 2024 2023 2022

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

About the Online Materialsix

About the Authorsxi

Preface xiii

Acknowledgments..... xvii

Dedication..... xviii

**Chapter 1 Key Concepts and Assumptions Related to Effective
Support for Students With Emotional and Behavioral Disorders..... 1**

Services and Levels of Success for Students With EBD 2

Key Assumptions Underlying Effective Support for Students With EBD..... 5

Assumption 1: When Developing Methods to Support Students With EBD, Incorporate a
Wide Evidence Base 6

Assumption 2: An Understanding of the Complex Factors That Contribute to EBD Helps
Educators Develop Effective Supports 6

Assumption 3: All School Staff Assigned to Work With Students With EBD Face Challenges
and Require Broad-Based Support, Including Attention to Their Wellness 8

Assumption 4: Support for Students With EBD Begins With Strong Administrative
Leadership..... 10

Assumption 5: Methods That Support All Students Also Benefit Students With EBD, and
Many Methods Designed to Support Students With EBD Benefit All Students..... 14

Assumption 6: Language Educators Use About Students With EBD Impacts Decision
Making, Behavior, and Effectiveness 15

Assumption 7: How Staff Members Use Control and Authority Impacts the Effectiveness of
Their Support for Students With EBD..... 15

Assumption 8: Effective Schoolwide Student Management Based on a Tiered Approach Is
Essential to Effectively Support Students With EBD 18

Assumption 9: It Is Important to Help Students With EBD Develop a Sense of Hope..... 21

Assumption 10: Students With EBD Need Schools and Classrooms That Reflect
Trauma-Informed Thinking and Practices..... 23

Assumption 11: Effective Support for Students With EBD Begins With Teachers Skillfully
Implementing a Wide Range of Classroom Management Methods..... 25

Assumption 12: Effective Support for Students With EBD Is Rooted in Function-Based Thinking	26
Assumption 13: Educators Are Most Successful in the Behavior Change Process When They Utilize a Framework Such as the BSP Process That Helps Them Approach Student Behavior Change in an Informed, Objective, and Systematic Fashion	27
Assumption 14: Interventions for Students With EBD Should Include Social–Emotional Learning	28
Assumption 15: Collaboration With Community Agencies Is an Essential Component of Effective Services for Students Identified as EBD	29
Assumption 16: Specialized Support for Students Identified as EBD Is Most Effective When It Incorporates All Components of an Effective Program	30
Case Study	30
Summary	32
References	32

Chapter 2 Developing a Foundational Understanding of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders 39

Appreciate the Complex Nature of Behavior Associated With EBD	41
Oversimplifying Behavior	42
Proactive and Reactive Approaches	43
Develop Accurate Conceptualizations	44
Utilize a Developmental Perspective	47
The Developmental Journey Involves Important Interactions	47
The Developmental Journey Involves Constant Change	48
Interactions and Conditions Have Multiple Levels of Impact	49
Interactions and Events Early in Development Are Important	49
Be Knowledgeable About Risk and Protective Factors	50
Understanding Risk and Protective Factors	50
Adverse Events as Risk Factors	52
Domains of Impact	57
Recognize Key Skill Deficits and Unique Characteristics of Students With EBD	62
Executive Function	63
Relationships	66
Social Cognition: Distortions and Misperceptions	68
Language and Communication	69
Individual Characteristics of Students With EBD	71
Use Methods and Practices That Facilitate Effective Supports	73
Understand and Utilize Mental Health Systems and Perspectives	74
Bridging the Gap: Similarities Between Education and Mental Health Systems	76
Important Concepts of Comorbidity and Shared Characteristics	81
Summary	84
References	84

Chapter 3 Developing Relationships That Support Students With EBD 93

The Importance of Educator–Student Relationships in Supporting Students With EBD	93
Research on the Importance of Educator–Student Relationships	94
Importance of Caring	97
Developing Trust	99
Methods for Developing Supportive Relationships With Students	101
Communicating Openly and Honestly With Students	104
Nonverbal Communication	107
Appropriate Communication	107
Responding Effectively to Students	108
Providing Behavior-Specific Feedback	111
Communicating High Expectations	113
Importance of Listening Skills	116
Attributing Student Behavior to Factors Educators Can Control	117
Creating Supportive Peer Relationships in the Classroom	118
Research on the Importance of Creating Supportive Peer Relationships	118
Understanding the Stages of Group Development	122
Helping Students Know Each Other	122
Establishing a Cohesive Group	126
Developing Supportive Relationships With Caregivers	132
Reaching Out to Develop Positive, Supportive Relationships With Caregivers	134
Keeping Caregivers Informed Regarding the Student’s Academic and Behavior Progress	135
Collaborating With Caregivers to Support the Student in Developing Improved Academic and Behavioral Skills	137
Modeling Calm, Supportive Responses to Caregivers’ Expressions of Concern	137
Providing Caregivers With Skills to More Effectively Support the Children in Their Care	139
Helping Caregivers Receive Support From Community Agencies	141
Summary	142
References	142

Chapter 4 Developing Behavior Standards and Increasing Students’ Motivation to Learn 151

Developing Clear and Effective General Classroom Behavior Standards and Procedures	153
Developing Behavior Standards	153
Developing Procedures and Routines	159
Role of Reinforcement in Supporting Productive Student Behavior	160
Procedures That Support Students With EBD	162
Increasing Students’ Motivation to Learn and Enhancing Their Academic Success	166
Understanding Issues Related to Motivating Students With EBD	167
Defining What It Means to Be an Effective Learner	169

Ensuring Students Understand the Learning Goals	171
Ensuring Students Understand the Procedures Associated With Each Instructional Activity	172
Helping Students Learn How to Learn	174
Incorporating Academic Goal Setting and Academic Self-Management	175
Incorporating Academic Choice	176
Involving Students in Peer Tutoring	178
Matching Instructional Methods and Cultural Styles	179
Actively Involving Students in the Learning Process	182
Incorporating Students' Interests and Real-World Learning Into the Academic Program	183
Summary	188
References	188
Chapter 5 Responding Effectively to Disruptive Behavior	195
Methods for Responding Effectively to Disruptive or Defiant Behavior	199
General Concepts in Responding to Disruptive Student Behavior	199
Preventive Interventions	205
Initial Interventions	206
Follow-Up Interventions	207
Three-Phase Approach to Responding to Disruptive, Defiant, or Violent Student Behavior	210
Responding to Violent Student Behavior	212
Physical Restraint and Seclusion	213
Creating an Effective Classroom Discipline Procedure	215
A Specific Classroom Discipline Procedure	218
Incorporating Social Problem Solving Into the Classroom and School Discipline System	219
Effectively Implementing Glasser's Problem-Solving Model	222
Using Written Forms to Implement Problem Solving	228
Life Space Crisis Intervention	232
Appropriate Use of Time-Out	233
Points and Levels Systems in a Specialized Classroom for Students Identified as EBD	237
Disciplinary Exclusion for Students Identified as EBD	242
Short-Term Disciplinary Exclusion	244
Long-Term Disciplinary Exclusion	244
Manifestation Determination for Students Identified as EBD	244
Exceptions to the Discipline Process	245
Role of Behavior Support	246
Summary	246
References	246
Appendix	251

Chapter 6 Developing Individualized Behavior Support Plans: Planning for Student Success	257
Understanding the BSP Process.	257
Initiating the BSP Process	261
Components of the BSP Process.	263
BSP Components 1–7: The FBA	263
BSP Components 8–13: The BIP.	288
Using the BSP Process Across a Continuum of Supports	294
Focusing on Classroom Environments	294
Implementing the BSP Process at All Three Tiers	298
Increasing the Effectiveness of the BSP Process	313
Increased Access to Training.	314
Demystifying the BSP Process	315
Reducing Language Barriers.	316
Summary.	319
References	319
 Chapter 7 Social–Emotional Learning Methods for Supporting Student Success	 323
Understanding Social–Emotional Learning	324
Social–Emotional Competencies.	324
Cognitive–Behavioral Interventions as a Key to Enhancing Social–Emotional Learning	327
Importance of Self-Management.	329
Methods and Strategies for Developing Self-Regulation.	332
Mindfulness.	332
Relaxation.	333
Self-Talk	335
Self-Monitoring	338
Facilitating Self-Awareness and Understanding.	343
Connecting Neuroscience to Student Behavior and Decision Making.	343
Helping Students Understand Their Emotions and Develop a More Accurate and Effective Interpretation of Events: Reducing Cognitive Distortions.	344
Structured Approaches to Assisting Students in Understanding and Modifying Their Thinking	351
Teaching Social Skills	352
Implementing an Individual School Behavior Skills Lesson	354
Problem Solving as a Strategy for Helping Students Develop School Behavior Skills.	359
Behavioral Goal Setting	362
Developing Contracts With Students.	363

Using Principles of Systematic Desensitization and Cognitive Restructuring to Assist Students in Adjusting to Stressful Situations	372
Reintegrating Students Into General Education Classrooms	372
Responding Effectively to a Substitute Teacher	373
Improving Test-Taking Skills.	374
Summary	375
References	375

Chapter 8 Developing an Effective Program for Students Identified as EBD. 383

Components of an Effective Specialized Program for Students Identified as EBD	384
Component 1: District-Adopted and Written EBD Program Entrance and Exit Criteria Exist	391
Component 2: Administrative Support Exists for the Program and Its Staff	393
Component 3: Effectively Written Behavior IEP Goals Are in Place for All Students in the Program.	395
Component 4: Positive, Supportive Staff Model Effective Communication Skills in Their Interactions With Colleagues and Students.	398
Component 5: Effective Classroom Management Methods and Skills Are Consistently Used	399
Component 6: A Procedure Is in Place for Assisting Students in Understanding and Reviewing Progress Toward Their Academic and Behavior Goals	399
Component 7: Social–Emotional Learning Is Integrated Into All Aspects of the Program.	401
Component 8: Staff Utilize Curriculum and Instruction That Students Find Meaningful, and Students Experience Academic Success	402
Component 9: Within a Framework of Tiered Interventions, a Written Program Plan (Based on an Existing BSP and Additional Relevant Information) Is Developed and Implemented for Each Student	403
Component 10: Students Are Provided With Interpretive Feedback Directed at Helping Them Understand the Dynamics of Their Behaviors.	405
Component 11: The Program Staff View Students’ Caregivers as an Important Source of Support for the Student and the Program, and This Is Consistently Communicated to Caregivers	407
Component 12: Staff Have Awareness of Resources in the Community and a Willingness to Engage in Collaborative Efforts to Support the Students in the Program.	408
Ensuring Program Quality.	409
Clear Guidelines for Reviewing the Quality of Program Components and Establishing Goals for Program Improvement.	410
Consultation to the EBD Program Staff to Support Their Implementing Best Practices	411
Supports for Paraprofessionals	412
Summary	415
References	415
Index	419

About the Authors

Vern Jones, Ph.D., Lewis & Clark College

Dr. Jones has been a junior high school teacher of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD), a junior high school vice principal, and a district coordinator for students with EBD. He has consulted with university faculty, state departments of education, school districts, and educators in more than 25 states in the areas of classroom management, programs and individual interventions for students with EBD, and school violence prevention. Dr. Jones is Emeritus Professor of Education at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, where he was chair of the education and special education departments in the Graduate School of Education and Counseling. His books include *Comprehensive Classroom Management, 12th Edition* (2021); *Effective Supports for Students With Emotional and Behavioral Disorders* (2016); *Practical Classroom Management, 2nd Edition* (2015); *Creating Effective Programs for Students with Emotional and Behavior Discipline* (2004); *Responsible School Discipline* (1981); and *Adolescents With Behavior Problems* (1980). He was selected by the National Association of Colleges of Teacher Education to write the chapter on classroom management for the *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (1996) and wrote the chapter “How Do Teachers Learn to Be Effective Classroom Managers?” for the *Handbook for Classroom Management: Research, Practice, and Contemporary Issues* (2006).

Al Greenwood, Ph.D.

Dr. Greenwood is a licensed clinical psychologist. He spent the first 10 years of his career at Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland, Oregon, working with children having complex neurodevelopmental, learning, and behavior challenges. Since 1989, he has been an independent practitioner providing support to children with EBD and their families and has been actively engaged as a special programs consultant to school districts and education service districts. Dr. Greenwood has conducted numerous trainings and workshops on the BSP process and supportive interventions for students with EBD. He is often called on to be an independent evaluator in special education litigation. For more than 20 years, Dr. Greenwood was also an adjunct professor in the Graduate School of Education and Counseling at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. He currently consults with school districts on special education issues, program development, and best practice methods for supporting students with EBD. He is also co-founder of 321 Insight, a web-based company providing training and support for educators.

Preface

PURPOSE

This book was written on behalf of students who experience social, emotional, and behavior problems that negatively impact their school success. Compared with students with other disabilities, students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) make limited academic progress, have high rates of disciplinary actions, and experience serious problems after they leave school. We have spent our careers committed to creating school and treatment settings that enable these students to have much more positive and successful educational experiences that allow them to become productive citizens.

Our experience and review of the research indicate that effective interventions for this student population include assisting students with EBD to better understand themselves, helping them learn to effectively identify and manage their emotions, and assisting them in developing behaviors that enhance their school success and help them establish positive relationships with others. When student support is combined with efforts to create environments that more effectively respond to the needs of students with EBD, many if not all of these students can make significant progress toward experiencing greater school success.

This book was also written to advocate for all school staff who have responsibility for the educational experiences of these students. More specifically, it is about advocating for responsible decision making in providing support to students with EBD. This requires school staff to understand the developmental experiences and needs of students with EBD and to understand the types of decision making and support structures necessary to enable them to effectively support these students. Staff members need the best possible education in research-based methods for helping these students become academically and behaviorally successful learners. Jim Kauffman (2001) stated:

The school, like the family and biological factors, does not operate unilaterally to determine students' emotional and behavioral development, but we can identify classroom conditions and teacher reactions to pupil behavior that make behavioral difficulties more likely to occur or that could be changed to reduce the likelihood of acting out and other types of emotional and behavioral problems. (p. 262)

We present extensive methods for helping students develop new behavior skills while we also acknowledge the critical nature of the learning environment. We present methods for creating classroom settings that meet students' social and emotional needs and help them view the world as more supportive and hopeful.

AUDIENCE

This book is written for individuals who are seeking to advance their knowledge and skills in supporting students with EBD. This includes professionals currently working with students with EBD and those who are involved in coursework to develop skills and professional licenses to serve this student population. We have used the content of this book in supporting educators with years of experience; with graduate students studying special education, school psychology, and administration; and with upper-division undergraduate students.

RESEARCH BASE FOR THE MATERIALS PRESENTED IN THIS BOOK

In writing this book, we reviewed a large number of articles, books, dissertations, and conference presentations. We strongly support the concept that decisions made to support students with EBD are most successful and responsible when they are supported by evidence-based practice. This is why we have made a concerted effort to provide research support for a wide range of concepts and strategies presented in this book with more than 1,100 references. We also believe that educators' experiences, when they involve action research with careful detail to the interventions and associated data, are extremely valuable sources of information. Therefore, we have included interventions that we, and the professionals with whom we have worked, have implemented and carefully reviewed the results.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

In this book, we present the knowledge and skills that are essential for effectively supporting students with EBD. These include understanding the key concepts involved in developing effective supports, an understanding of the developmental factors that underlie the behaviors that cause students to be identified as EBD, methods for creating school and classroom settings that provide support for students developing essential academic and behavior skills, a variety of methods to support individual students in developing desired behaviors, and an understanding of how to develop a specialized individual and group program for students identified as EBD.

Chapter 1

The first chapter presents an overview of concepts and assumptions that provide a foundation for school district personnel to offer effective support to students who experience EBD. It is our strong belief that the way school staff think and talk about students with EBD significantly impact the quality of services provided to these students.

Chapter 2

This chapter describes key factors contributing to the behavior and day-to-day functioning of students with emotional and behavior problems. To effectively manage and support students with EBD, it is essential for educators to recognize each student's

developmental history, their psychological and neurobiological development, and their unique skill sets, social perceptions, and personal characteristics as important factors influencing their behavior. These factors need to be integrated into educators' conceptualizations of students and intervention planning. An understanding of these important personal factors will assist those working with students with EBD in recognizing and responding thoughtfully to a full range of variables influencing their students' behaviors. Chapter 2 also provides encouragement for educators who support students with EBD to become more familiar with mental health systems and perspectives and, when appropriate, collaborate with mental health professionals to broaden their array of supports.

Chapter 3

This chapter examines methods for developing positive, supportive personal relationships within classrooms. The climate of the classroom is often an underemphasized factor in supporting students with EBD. Classroom factors can have a significant positive impact on the behavior of all students, but it is particularly important that students who experience serious and/or persistent behavior problems in school settings are able to demonstrate responsible classroom behavior and improved academic achievement. Because students with EBD have often experienced less than ideal relationships with adults and peers, the quality of personal relationships they experience in the school setting can significantly impact their immediate school behavior and their long-term ability to develop attitudes and skills that will allow them to become healthy, productive adults.

Chapter 4

This chapter discusses how to most effectively involve students in creating behavioral standards that support engagement in meaningful instruction within safe and supportive learning environments. The chapter also explores the goal of involving students who experience EBD in meaningful, engaging instruction that encourages them to demonstrate responsible behavior and become more successful learners.

Chapter 5

This chapter examines methods for responding when students act in ways that disrupt the learning environment by failing to follow behavior standards they have helped developed and to which they have committed. The chapter also outlines methods for adults engaging students in individual skill-based problem solving and methods for assisting students in resolving conflicts.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 addresses the concept of function-based thinking and how to incorporate that thinking into a behavior support plan (BSP) involving a functional behavior assessment (FBA) and behavior intervention plan (BIP).

Chapter 7

This chapter provides detailed information on the effective use of individualized interventions to assist students with EBD in developing social–emotional competencies that enable them to experience school success. The chapter addresses the importance of social–emotional learning (SEL) and factors associated with the successful implementation of SEL. The chapter concludes with specific methods for helping students develop necessary school skills and addressing cognitive and behavior issues related to their EBD.

Chapter 8

The final chapter outlines effective practices in more self-contained programs for students identified as emotionally disturbed under the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 (PL 108-446). We examine the components to an effective program and methods for reviewing a program to determine how effectively these components are being implemented.

HOW TO USE THE BOOK

This book is intended to prepare you to more effectively support the academic, emotional, and behavioral needs of students with EBD. The first two chapters focus on key knowledge and beliefs to support the implementation of the more practical day-to-day interventions presented in the remainder of the book. Throughout the book, we have incorporated reflection activities intended to support the understanding and application of the content. Whether you are first beginning your study of how to most effectively support students with EBD or are in your 20th year of this important and exciting work, we believe these activities will help make the ideas and strategies presented in this book become part of your professional repertoire. Even though we have written these activities as if they were to be done individually, we hope you have opportunities, whether directly with your colleagues at your work site, in a university classroom, or electronically during an online course, to discuss your ideas with colleagues. Our experiences suggest these interchanges can be an extremely enriching and important aspect of your professional growth.

REFERENCE

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, PL 108-446, 20 U.S.C. 1400 (2004).
Kauffman, J. (2001). *Characteristics of emotional and behavioral disorders of children and youth* (7th ed.). Merrill.

1

Key Concepts and Assumptions Related to Effective Support for Students With Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

CHAPTER 1 OUTCOMES

At the end of this chapter, the reader will be able to:

- Outline the current state of affairs in supporting students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD).
 - Understand the key factors influencing an educator's ability to support students with EBD in becoming successful learners.
 - Describe the key assumptions that support effective school-based supports for students with EBD.
-

Students with special needs, like all students, are our future. If we fail to assist them in developing productive behavior, we throw away a valuable resource while creating a group of students who will demand educators' and society's attention and resources for many years. Students with EBD may be among our most effective staff development specialists. Staff and students develop skills and sensitivity when responding effectively to students with special learning and behavioral needs. The extent to which we learn to respond sensitively to their needs is an indication of our skill, compassion, and dedication.

Emotionally disturbed (ED) is a special education eligibility category under the current revision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004). The term is used to describe a population of students who have chronic and severe social-emotional and behavioral difficulties markedly different from the majority of students, and through a series of assessments and interventions, they have been found to be eligible to receive special education services. *Emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD)* is

a synonymous term that is widely used in both research and practical settings. Neither ED or EBD is a clinical diagnosis, nor do they represent a clinical condition.

When referring specifically to students identified under IDEA for special education services, we have used the term *identified as EBD*. There are, however, a number of students experiencing chronic and significant social–emotional and behavioral difficulties who, for any number of reasons, have not been found eligible for special education services (Forness et al., 2012). In order to be inclusive, we use the term *EBD* in this book as it refers not only to students with special education eligibility but also to those non-identified students experiencing persistent problems in school due primarily to social–emotional and behavioral factors. The population of students with EBD includes those identified as EBD under IDEA; students with other identified disabilities who, whether determined eligible as EBD or not, struggle with these issues; and students who have not or should not be identified under IDEA but whose social and emotional struggles are a significant factor limiting their ability to benefit from their educational experiences. Although their application may vary depending on student needs and severity of challenges, the concepts, strategies, and methods we promote in this book apply to the inclusive EBD population.

When available, we have used research based directly on studies with students identified as EBD. We have also cited supporting research based on work with students with unidentified behavioral challenges who are served in general education settings. In other cases, we have cited our experiences based on observation or unpublished data. We agree with noted writers in the field of EBD:

Finally, successful and pragmatic reform recognizes and legitimizes that educators and others who directly work with students with EBD will of necessity base their instructional, management, and other decisions on a variety of approaches and styles, including scientific thinking, logical judgment, common sense, personal experiences and attitudes, and so forth. (Simpson et al., 2011, p. 233)

SERVICES AND LEVELS OF SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH EBD

In a national study on programs serving students with EBD, Knitzer and colleagues (1990) reported a negative picture of special education programs focused on control rather than innovative, individualized interventions. In response to the level of concern expressed in this report, a group of leading scholars who named themselves the Peacock Hill Working Group (1991) met to develop a summary of current research-based practice and recommendations for providing services for students with EBD. Twenty years later, a group of scholars noted that little progress had been made in implementing current research into practice in serving this student population (Lewis et al., 2010). About the same time, another group of leaders in the EBD field summarized services to this student population.

There is little reason to believe that most students identified as EBD are currently receiving an education based on effective methods and that all educators who work with these learners are well prepared to use strategies, curriculum and procedures that are associated with the best outcomes. (Simpson et al., 2011, p. 231)

Bettini and colleagues (2016) reported similar findings in their review of the research on the working conditions of special education teachers serving students with EBD in self-contained classrooms. They noted that “conditions necessary for

learning and implementing evidence-based practices are seldom present in these settings” (p. 83).

Nearly 30 years after publication of *At the Schoolhouse Door* and the Peacock Hill Working Group’s findings, a group of 25 scholars, called the Creek Bend Consortium, met for 2 years to review the most current issues related to educational services for students with EBD. In 2019, members of this consortium published five articles in the *Journal of Behavioral Disorders* to present their findings. Several of these articles support the concept that although strategies exist for serving students with EBD, these are too seldom implemented with fidelity, and the outcome is continued low rates of academic and behavioral success for students identified as EBD.

The complex needs of students with EBD require school personnel to make concerted efforts to provide multifaceted, synchronized, and validated supports (Zaheer et al., 2019, p. 118).

Unfortunately, widespread implementation of effective interventions to prevent the development of ED or ameliorate the problems of these students when they first appear has not been achieved (Mitchell et al., 2019, p. 78).

At the classroom level, teachers of students with EBD infrequently use evidence-based practices (EBPs) in their instruction (Lloyd et al., 2019, p. 88).

Our experiences working with general education administrators, general education teachers, and special educators serving students with EBD validate these findings. Although we have seen instances of excellent services for students with EBD, the delivery of services both in general education and special education programs rarely reflects current best practices. This has been especially true for students with the most severe behavior problems. This book is written to provide educators with the tools to improve these conditions.

Leaders in the field of serving students with EBD indicate that at any one time at least 12% of students in Kindergarten (K)–12 classrooms have a relatively serious behavioral and emotional disorder, and 20% experience mild to serious problems. In addition, approximately 38% of all students will experience severe or moderate emotional and behavior problems during their K–12 school years (Forness et al., 2012). As many as 12% of students in the United States experience serious emotional and behavior problems (Ringeisen et al., 2016), and individual students with serious and/or frequent behavior problems are responsible for between 15% and 28% of behavior violations within classrooms (Owens et al., 2018). Researchers discovered that when universal mental health screening was incorporated, there was a 180% increase in students “identified with behavioral risk or need for mental health interventions” (Splett et al., 2018). These numbers help explain why many teachers report that students with ongoing and serious behavior problems are their greatest concern (Alter et al., 2013; Burkman, 2012) and why 43% of teachers agree or strongly agree that student behavior problems interfered with their teaching (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2018). Perhaps surprisingly, given the impact their behavior has on their learning and that of others, less than 1% of all students are determined eligible for services as emotionally handicapped (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019).

Students identified as EBD are almost three times as likely as children with any other disability to be removed from school and to receive either an in-school or out-of-school suspension (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Students with emotional and behavior problems in childhood require the most extensive and expensive societal resources (Groenman et al., 2017; Institute of Medicine, 2009). Research suggests

that significant numbers of students with an eligibility of EBD show decreases in academic engagement and increases in disruptive behavior across time in school (Gage et al., 2017). Students with externalizing behavior problems struggle with academic achievement during the transition from elementary to middle school (Palmu et al., 2018). In a study of students identified as EBD and receiving services in self-contained and full-inclusion classes and in high- and low-poverty schools, these students made no significant progress on reading or math achievement or behavioral progress (Siperstein et al., 2011).

Behavior problems during preschool years are the best predictor of a variety of negative long-term outcomes (Chen et al., 2011; Whitted, 2011). Although some students with EBD—especially those less severely affected—do make progress similar to their peers (Ysseldyke et al., 2017), the majority of students with EBD “consistently lag behind their peers academically and behaviorally, are likely to be excluded from school, drop out more frequently, and face higher incarceration rates and a host of other negative outcomes as adults” (Freeman et al., 2014, p. 97).

Students with behavior problems experience less-than-ideal educational experiences in both general education and special education classrooms. In general education settings, they receive higher rates of negative feedback, only one positive statement for every 3.8 negative or corrective statements, and many fewer opportunities for academic responses; they also have lower rates of academic engagement than their classmates (Hirn & Scott, 2014; Scott et al., 2017). Students with behavior problems also receive higher rates of reprimands, and they respond to these reprimands with increased negative behavior (Downs et al., 2019). Research suggests that general education teachers seldom adjust their behavior management or instructional methods for students with EBD (Scott et al., 2017).

Another important area requiring improvement is the overrepresentation of certain groups of students in the EBD category. A higher proportion of African American students is identified as EBD, and African American students are overrepresented in more restrictive placements (Downs et al., 2019; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). In a study of data from Wisconsin, African American students were seven times more likely and Latino/a and Native American students were twice as likely as White students to be identified as EBD (Bal et al., 2019). Cultural awareness, culturally sensitive teaching, and the quality of adult–student relationships are important issues that must be addressed when considering how school personnel think about and respond to behavior that they believe is disruptive to the learning environment. Welsh and Little (2018) offer an insightful and important examination of discipline disparities and why currently popular schoolwide methods for reducing discipline problems may not be having a significant impact on reducing the overrepresentation of African American students in school suspensions. These authors note:

Black students are disciplined more irrespective of behaviors, and the vast majority of disciplinary infractions for which students receive a disciplinary consequence are subjective. This suggests that student-teacher matches and interactions, teacher discretion, as well as cultural mismatches play a key role in explaining the discipline disparities. (p. 780)

Given the information presented in this section, it is not surprising that attrition among teachers who educate students identified as EBD is extremely high (Bettini, Cumming, et al., 2020; Billingsley & Bettini, 2019). “Special education teachers (SETs) who teach students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) in self-contained

settings are often less qualified, more stressed and burned out, and more likely to leave teaching than other SETs” (O’Brien et al., 2019, p. 41). An analysis of data from North Carolina reported that “teaching students with emotional/behavioral disorders was associated with a large increase in the odds of turnover for all categories of teachers” (Gilmour & Wehby, 2020, p. 1042). Strikingly, special educators serving 100% of students identified as EBD were nearly 2.5 times more likely to leave the profession than those serving no students identified as EBD (Gilmour & Wehby, 2020). One of our goals in writing this book is to provide educators with knowledge and skills that will enable them to more effectively serve all students with EBD and thus to experience a higher level of job satisfaction and a longer career.

Educational institutions have a long way to go to provide optimal services for students with EBD. All students deserve the right to an educational experience designed to effectively assist them in developing academic and social skills that will enable them to become happy, productive citizens, and the staff who serve them deserve the necessary support to help make this possible.

REFLECTION 1.1

Based on what you have just read, list the facts about the experiences of students identified as EBD that were most dramatic to you.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH EBD

The way educators think about students, the language they use, and the beliefs they hold when planning and implementing interventions for students with EBD impact the professional decisions they make. Figure 1.1 presents a visual demonstration of this important process. Educators’ thoughts about and conceptualizations of a student influence their internal language or self-talk and also the nature of their communication with others. If a teacher thinks of a student as irresponsible or unmanageable, that conceptualization will be embedded in communication. Similarly, how educators think and talk about their students impacts the type and quality of interventions they provide.

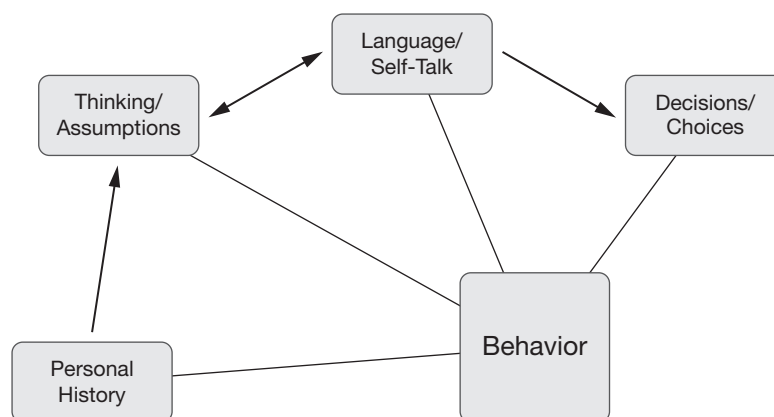


Figure 1.1. How assumptions influence our thinking and behavior.

The following discussion presents key assumptions that are imperative to understand and incorporate into beliefs and actions to effectively support students with EBD.

Assumption 1: When Developing Methods to Support Students With EBD, Incorporate a Wide Evidence Base

Methods used to support students with EBD will be most effective when they are founded on research-based evidence. A number of professional organizations, including the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the American Psychological Association (APA), the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) created by the U.S. Department of Education, and the Promising Practices Network (PPN), have developed criteria for determining what constitutes evidence-based practices. In this book, we have attempted to consistently provide research evidence supporting the efficacy of the methods we recommend, and we have provided more than 1,000 references from peer-reviewed journals. When available, we have used research based directly on work with students identified as EBD. We have also cited supporting research based on work with students with unidentified behavioral challenges who are served in general education settings. In other cases, we have cited findings from our experiences and the efforts of educators with whom we have worked.

There is a significant difference between the *conceptualization* of research and evidence-based practice and the effective implementation of these practices. The actual real-time *implementation* of best practices does not take place in the perfectly tailored environments that research calls for. There is a host of variables that affect the outcomes of interventions, and it is important to bear this in mind when attempting to apply research and evidence-based practice effectively in a school or specialized setting.

Both practitioner experience and scholarly research must be considered when developing the best possible support for students. Action research occurs when those involved in working with students on a daily basis collect ongoing data to determine the impact of interventions that they implement to assist students in experiencing greater school success. “[R]egarding knowledge derived from research and knowledge drawn from practice, neither should be discounted in favor of the other” (Fitzpatrick & Knowlton, 2009, p. 260).

REFLECTION 1.2

Consider the information you use to make decisions about supporting students with EBD. What are the information sources to which you most often refer? What new information sources do you believe would be most helpful for you to strengthen your knowledge base for working with students with EBD?

Assumption 2: An Understanding of the Complex Factors That Contribute to EBD Helps Educators Develop Effective Supports

Educators are often confused by the terms *emotional and behavioral disorder* (EBD), *emotionally disturbed* (ED), or *seriously emotionally disturbed* (SED) that have been used by the educational community to describe students with a complex array of significant social–emotional and behavioral difficulties. We have chosen to use the term *emotional and behavioral disorder* (EBD).

Regardless of what term is used, students experiencing significant emotional and behavioral challenges are a unique population that can challenge educators' emotional and instructional skill sets. Therefore, to effectively support this population of students, educators must have a solid understanding of EBD. Students identified as EBD are a heterogeneous population who have widely varied needs and competencies. As such, there is no "one-size-fits-all" explanation for the emotional and behavioral challenges this population of students' experiences, nor is there a menu of social and academic supports that will meet the needs of every student with EBD.

Educators supporting students with EBD must have enough knowledge about emotional and behavioral disorders to view challenging behaviors and emotional management difficulties within the context of unique developmental histories, possible clinical diagnoses, and current environmental conditions. This knowledge also includes information about a student's ethnic background and cultural priorities, social and academic strengths and weaknesses, and the student's understanding of their emotions and behavior. With this knowledge, educators can develop a useful understanding that is free from bias about any challenging behaviors a student may exhibit.

To achieve accurate and bias-free understanding of students with EBD, educators must give a high priority to learning about important developmental factors and life experiences that can contribute to the presence of EBD. The unique backgrounds of students with EBD can provide clues that inform and guide educators in their relationship building and in the development of effective supports. Most students displaying EBD have experienced a developmental journey including but not limited to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), troubled relationships, and diminished opportunities to learn and practice skills necessary to be successful in the academic and social learning community. Educators must remember that it is not just the behavior of students with EBD that is unique, but it is also their background.

Educators need to learn about and appreciate how developmental events and conditions can influence the trajectory of a student's psychological and neurobiological functions, how a student interprets other people's words and behavior, how they perceive their school or classroom environment, or how much trust they have in others can be greatly influenced by their life experiences. Even if a student's history does not include trauma or atypical developmental experiences, the ongoing stress involved in their struggle to manage emotions and behavior and the resulting feedback from their environment affects their perceptions about their world, their personal competencies, and how they will respond to cues from others.

For some students, developmental experiences involving significant stress and trauma may disrupt the normal course of neurobiological development. There is evidence demonstrating how developmental events can alter a child's neurobiological development, resulting in skill delays or deficits that are directly associated with behavioral and emotional outcomes (see Chapter 2). If educators do not appreciate the possibility that most students with EBD struggle with very real deficits, they may overutilize behavior management interventions at the expense of developing an array of supports that include skill training and practice to address a student's emotional and behavioral challenges.

Providing the instructional and social-emotional supports needed to effectively serve students with EBD presents considerable challenges for educators. Excessive stress and teacher burnout are common among those working with students with EBD. A significant contributor to educators' stress occurs if they personalize the actions and words of students. When educators are able to view a student's needs and behaviors

within a developmental and environmental context, it can help them reduce the tendency to personalize those needs and behaviors. Understanding characteristics of students with EBD can help reduce urgency regarding behavior change and general progress. Most students with EBD have longstanding habits and learned behaviors that are not amenable to quick fixes. It takes time to develop and learn new ways of relating to others. When educators attempt to rush the process of growth and change, or become impatient with students, it increases frustration and stress.

Assumption 3: All School Staff Assigned to Work With Students With EBD Face Challenges and Require Broad-Based Support, Including Attention to Their Wellness

Teachers whose entire caseload involves students identified as EBD leave teaching at a rate 2.5 times higher than teachers who do not work exclusively with students identified as EBD (Gilmore & Wehby, 2020). There are several reasons why so many educators working with students identified as EBD leave their jobs.

First, many teachers working with students identified as EBD have not been particularly well prepared for the work they are doing (Prather-Jones, 2011b; State et al., 2019). Second, because teaching students identified as EBD involves supporting them in increasing their academic skills and assisting them in developing productive behavior, effectively supporting these students is intellectually and emotionally taxing. Perhaps in no other field are professionals required to so consistently engage students whose behaviors can be challenging while also examining their own behaviors and emotions. Third, for teachers working with students identified as EBD, the demands of working with colleagues may often nearly match those of working with the students. These teachers are often involved in asking their general education colleagues to work with students most educators find to be the most difficult to include in their classrooms. General education teachers do not always respond positively to these requests. Similarly, teachers of students identified as EBD need and must frequently ask administrators for support in working with parents and other community agencies regarding students' behavior. Administrators may find these requests to be difficult and time consuming and, like their general education colleagues, may feel unqualified to provide the types of support requested.

Paraprofessionals assisting students with special needs face similar personal and professional challenges. These individuals typically have the most hands-on involvement with the highest need students (Garwood et al., 2018), yet too often they lack professional training and ongoing support for skill development that could improve their effectiveness (Feurborn et al., 2018). In addition, hours of employment often limit paraprofessionals' participation on program or school teams that could provide them with a sense of personal and professional affiliation as well as valuable professional development. This combination of high demand and lower professional and personal support puts paraprofessionals at risk for feeling detached, overwhelmed, and vulnerable to the same burnout reported by certified teachers.

Special education staff involved in teaching students identified as EBD need ongoing support through access to skilled consultation, opportunities for team building, opportunities to share concerns and ideas with colleagues, involvement and support that allow them to feel like part of the general staff rather than being isolated, and time

to relax and laugh. We have worked with districts in which all elementary, middle, and high school teachers working with students identified as EBD met monthly for in-service education and opportunities to share their best practices and concerns. In another instance, a coordinator of programs for students identified as EBD from a large urban school district obtained a grant allowing her to provide her teachers with 12 hr of in-service education monthly. This dramatically enhanced the staff's professional skills. In addition, the staff met periodically for events like a softball game or bowling, and awards and gifts were frequently presented during in-service activities. The district went from losing more than 30 special education staff members the previous year to losing only one staff member the year she implemented the in-service program. Mentoring programs are another approach to providing support for special education teachers. Research suggests that mentoring programs can increase teachers' skills as well as increase their intentions to remain in the profession (Whitaker, 2000).

In addition to opportunities to work and socialize with their colleagues, it is important for teachers of students identified as EBD to have opportunities to consult with other professionals regarding student and program issues. "For staff working directly with young people presenting complex problems, there is a substantial body of research that points to supervision for staff as not only an invaluable resource but also essential in monitoring their well-being as a means of maintaining effective practice" (Rae et al., 2017, pp. 204–205).

In many specialized programs serving students identified as EBD, this professional support has been given by a licensed clinical social worker, psychologist, or psychiatrist who was available to staff several times a month to discuss particularly difficult cases. It has also involved having a social worker, master's-level counseling psychologist, or other mental health professional on staff at least half the time. Given the often complex clinical issues facing students identified as EBD, the high demands of working with this student population, and the history of limited effectiveness with these students, it is imperative that teachers of students with EBD have ongoing opportunities to discuss the decisions they are making and to seek a second opinion.

Another aspect of providing support for staff teaching students identified as EBD is to consider the importance of providing daily time for the team to discuss the events of the day and debrief critical situations. Unlike general education teachers who often may leave school and take their work home with them, teachers involved with students identified as EBD benefit from working as a team to discuss and resolve issues occurring during the day. To make this time effective, school team members should be paid for after-school meeting times and for clinical supervision. We have worked with a program that scheduled two 1-hr after-school sessions per week in which the classroom staff met with mental health support staff to discuss program and student issues. All team members were paid an extra stipend for this clinical supervision. In this same district, all staff working with students identified as EBD met monthly to discuss program issues and obtain in-service education. Staff were also paid a stipend for these meetings. In some districts, teachers of students identified as EBD have one less period per day of direct contact with students. This provides these teachers with opportunities to collaborate with the general education staff and to complete necessary legal paperwork. If we are to retain the most skilled teachers for this student population, it is imperative that special education teachers and their staff be provided with ongoing personal and professional support and that they experience a sense of being valued and appreciated for the difficult and important work they perform.

It is also important that school administrators and EBD teachers meet regularly to discuss factors related to the effective function of the EBD program. Too often, these meetings only occur following a crisis. It is recommended that these meetings be framed as staff support and program planning sessions and are scheduled regularly, starting at the beginning of the school year. These meetings will allow opportunities to discuss how to best work with individual students, parents, and general education teachers. It is important that the on-site administrator is a member of the team and that they understand and incorporate the perspectives that the special education staff bring regarding their students.

Teacher wellness and the development of teacher's social-emotional competencies have received increasing attention. "The evidence for the relationship between teachers' emotional well-being and pupil outcomes has been well documented in both national and international research" (Rae et al., 2017, p. 200). It is no longer reasonable for teachers to simply provide instruction in social-emotional learning (SEL). Most researchers agree that in order for SEL to be effective, teachers must develop their own base of important SEL competencies, model these competencies in their social interactions, and integrate them into their instructional methods and relationships (Osher & Berg, 2017; Rae et al., 2017). A solid base of SEL competencies allows educators working with students with EBD to develop safe and predictable relationships, address complex behavioral needs, and provide the supportive classroom culture and environment this population of students so desperately needs.

REFLECTION 1.3

Make a brief list indicating why you believe educators working with students with EBD benefit from thoughtful, planned support from their colleagues. Next, write a statement about what types of support you believe would be most helpful. Finally, write a statement describing what you might do to get the support that would enable you to increase your effectiveness in serving students with EBD.

Assumption 4: Support for Students With EBD Begins With Strong Administrative Leadership

Research consistently indicates that administrative support is a key factor influencing special education teachers' job satisfaction (Ansley et al., 2019; Robinson et al., 2019), stress levels (Haydon et al., 2018), burnout (Barnes et al., 2018), retention (Bettini, Cumming, et al., 2020; Bettini, Gilmour, et al., 2020; Conley & You, 2017), and quality of services provided to students (Bettini et al., 2016). Administrators can support their special education staff by providing quality feedback and demonstrating they value teachers' input by involving teachers in decision making (Bettini et al., 2015).

The quality of support provided to students with EBD is an extension of the educational philosophy of the school district. Districts with effective and appropriate services for students with EBD have district-level and building administrators who believe schools have a responsibility to all students, including those with special needs, and advocate for all students. These administrators attempt to be aware of the needs these children and their families are experiencing, and they provide leadership through high expectations, training, and administrative support for the implementation of effective practices for serving students with EBD.

Prather-Jones (2011a) reported that teachers of students identified as EBD defined administrative support as including three major components:

1. Teachers look to principals to enforce reasonable consequences for student misconduct and to include them in the decision making about these consequences.
2. Teachers feel supported by principals who make them feel respected and appreciated.
3. Teachers need support from the other teachers in the school, and principals play an important role in developing these relationships. (p. 5)

Administrative support for professional development is another key factor impacting the quality of job satisfaction of special education teachers and their ability to provide high-quality services to students (Robinson et al., 2019). Unfortunately, many administrators feel unprepared to support these teachers (Bettini et al., 2015). Therefore, support for administrators through effective in-service training and consultation services is an important first step in providing effective services for students with EBD.

Administrators can demonstrate effective administrative leadership through:

- Actively developing mechanisms that support staff and students
- Creating clear procedures for making decisions regarding students with EBD, including the use of objective and current behavioral data
- Actively participating with staff in solving problems
- Providing opportunities for all staff to participate in proposed plans
- Providing education to enhance staff's understanding of the etiology of EBD and the needs of the students
- Supporting staff training and skill development in working with students with EBD
- Advocating for students with EBD to support both their academic and emotional needs

Example of Effective Administrative Support

An example of effective administrative leadership for students with EBD was demonstrated by a principal of an elementary school. As a vital component of their positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) plan, the school PBIS team implemented a discipline data collection system. When the PBIS team met and analyzed the first 3 months of discipline data, they determined that 40% of the discipline referrals were being generated during recess. Further examination of the data revealed that 70% of these recess discipline referrals were written for students identified as EBD. Further analysis of the data indicated that the bulk of the referrals were occurring at the end of recess during the transition of students from the playground back into the classroom.

The principal had developed a discipline committee composed of representative teachers from all grade levels, the school psychologist, the school counselor, a special education teacher, the building principal, and two classified staff. The classified staff were particularly valuable in this case because they articulated their perception that

there was confusion among the rotating classified staff who were responsible for playground duty. It became evident that there were varying assumptions among the staff regarding the transition process, and consequently they were communicating mixed messages about staff expectations of students. It also became clear that this confusion would create a fertile ground for misunderstanding and confusion for students, in particular students with EBD who often have difficulty when expectations are unclear or confusing.

The discipline committee decided to create a schoolwide student transition plan including skill training for students and meetings with all of the rotating classified staff assigned to playground duty to increase the consistency of expectations and to attempt to reduce misunderstanding and confusion among students and staff alike. The plan involved the classified staff in the development of the new transition plan; however, due to budgetary problems there was no time to have the classified staff meet or to train them on the new plan.

At this point, the principal stepped in and provided the leadership and advocacy that generated a solution. Her proposal was for the discipline committee to develop a one-page draft playground transition plan and for committee members to assign classified staff to committee members based on their contact or ongoing relationships with the classified staff. The committee members then checked in with the building principal who created a master schedule that created a time for each of the committee members to meet with their assigned classified staff to share and fine tune the draft plan and subsequently bring the final version to the classified staff. To accomplish this, the principal took over the duties of a number of classified staff.

Once agreed upon, the plan was implemented after the winter break. Implementation included a separate plan to ensure the students identified as EBD had training to assist them in understanding the new procedures. Implementation of this plan was associated with a dramatic reduction in the discipline issues on the playground and discipline referrals, particularly for students identified as EBD.

When the school staff experienced the leadership and advocacy of the school principal, it was apparent that they felt respected and recognized for the importance of their work. They were impressed that the building principal was willing to adjust her schedule to provide the opportunity to make the new playground transition plan successful.

This situation provided a number of examples of effective administrative leadership:

- *Actively developing mechanisms that support staff and students.* The principal supported the creation of a schoolwide discipline committee, and in doing so promoted the concept of schoolwide management involving collaboration and teamwork among staff members. In addition, supporting schoolwide problem solving demonstrates support for staff as they address challenging behaviors.
- *Active participation in solving problems.* By becoming a team member, the principal in this situation took an active role in addressing staff and student needs. This also demonstrated to staff flexibility regarding administrative roles, schedules, and ways to support a positive school culture.
- *Providing opportunities for multilevel participation.* This principal promoted the concept that all staff members are valued and can provide unique and helpful contributions to serving students.

- *Recognize and support training.* In this example, the administrator supported training for students as a way to increase their chance for success. Effective leaders strive to adequately prepare both students and staff in order for them to have the best chance of being successful.

Example of a Lack of Administrative Support

A student had a successful final 6 months in an elementary school classroom for students identified as EBD. The elementary school special education teacher recommended that he be included in regular classes for at least half of the school day when he transitioned to the middle school. However, in middle school, he was placed full time in a classroom for students identified as EBD. This student was generally very successful in this setting, scoring above 90% on his daily point card for 48 of 51 days. There were two instances in this setting in which he was quite violent—both of which occurred in the hallway outside his class. Because the administration and staff at his current school continued to be hesitant about allowing him access to general education classrooms, they decided to transfer him to a self-contained classroom in another middle-school building that had a lower rate of school discipline issues, where the general student population was more successful at school, and where he would have a male teacher. It was hoped that within this setting he could be mainstreamed quite rapidly, although this was not shared with staff at the receiving school.

When the meeting occurred to discuss the transfer, four administrators were in attendance (the principal and two vice principals from the receiving school and a vice principal from the sending school). The school psychologists from both of the schools were present, and both had been prepped to indicate why the student could not be placed in their school. In addition, the special education teacher from the sending school had been told by her principal to downplay the positive information regarding the student. The director of programs for students with EBD at the district level was not informed of the meeting.

The meeting began with a staff member from the sending school reading a 2-year-old report from a gang task force in another city indicating the seriousness of the student's problems. The conversation focused almost exclusively on why the student needed to be educated in a day treatment program. It is important to note that this student was African American, and the receiving school was located in the district's most affluent and least diversified neighborhood. In less than an hour, the decision had been made that the student would be served in a day treatment program located in a building separate from the general education school. When the coordinator for EBD programs heard about this and attempted to question the placement, he was told that the parent had agreed, and the placement would not be reconsidered. The student was nearly a model student in the therapeutic day treatment program. Prior to having an opportunity to be transitioned back into a regular school setting, his family moved to another state.

The issue in this case was that it appeared that this student did not need to experience extensive time in a therapeutic day treatment program. Supporting the needs and rights of students with EBD requires that procedures be in place to enable educational leaders to carefully review data and provide thoughtful input to ensure that the politics of school staff and the fears of educators do not impact placement decisions and services to students with EBD.

In this example, several administrators failed to provide adequate support for the student identified as EBD by not:

- Following clear and best practice procedures for making decisions regarding student placement in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- Placing the needs of the student identified as EBD as priority and instead focusing on what they believed would be more acceptable to some staff
- Using objective and current behavioral data in decision making

REFLECTION 1.4

Consider the situation described previously in which a student identified as EBD was moved to a more restrictive environment based on a rather “political” decision. What problems do you see in the way this decision was made? What factors within the district may have allowed this to occur? What changes would you recommend to ensure that this type of decision-making process did not occur in the future? Can you think of other areas where issues of administrative leadership might have a significant impact on how effectively students with EBD are supported?

Assumption 5: Methods That Support All Students Also Benefit Students With EBD, and Many Methods Designed to Support Students With EBD Benefit All Students

All students benefit from educational practices and methods that create a safe, supportive community where students feel valued and are motivated to learn meaningful academic content; where instruction is engaging and culturally sensitive; and where educators respond to behavior that disrupts students’ learning by treating students with dignity, examining the classroom environment, and teaching students new skills to be successful learners. For students with EBD, these methods are essential and may require more precision in their application.

Students with EBD are excellent staff development experts in that they frequently will not be successful learners and will disrupt the learning environment unless school staff implement a wide range of evidence-based practices that support student learning and the development of positive student behavior. In communities with a high percentage of students who live in social settings that are often associated with limited student success, it is still possible for schools and classrooms to have a significant percentage of students experience high levels of academic success (Darling-Hammond, 2001, 2010; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011; McEwan, 2009; McLeskey et al., 2014). It is almost certain that the methods being implemented in these schools will have equally, if not greater, positive effect on students with EBD. Similarly, methods essential for the success of students with EBD, such as positive teacher–student relationships, positive peer relationships, engaging instruction, clear behavior standards and procedures, discipline focused on problem solving and the dignity of students, SEL opportunities, and special interventions when learning and behavior problems occur, are aspects of these effective schools and benefit all students. Educators responsible for creating these effective learning environments are successful because they more consistently implement methods known to support the achievement of all students.

Students who experience serious emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) are at risk for a wide range of negative outcomes, from limited academic progress to later problems with employment and community life. Positive educational experiences can help, and this textbook fully prepares all educators to create supportive K–12 learning environments that help students with EBD thrive.

This comprehensive text gives educators and other professionals a deep understanding of key issues associated with EBD and practical, trauma-informed approaches for working with these students in a variety of settings, from general education classrooms to specialized intervention programs. Readers will discover how to:

- Recognize **key factors** that influence each student's behavior, such as developmental history, skill sets, and social perceptions
- Help adults and peers develop **positive, supportive relationships** with students with EBD
- Involve students in **creating behavioral standards**
- Respond with **proven strategies** when students fail to follow established behavior standards
- Engage students in **problem solving** and **conflict resolution**
- Implement **social–emotional learning strategies**
- Develop effective **behavior support plans** that include assessment and intervention
- Develop programs that provide **specialized support settings** for students with more intensive needs
- **Support staff** who are working in programs for students with EBD

An essential textbook and an important in-service professional resource, this book gives readers the knowledge and skills they need to support students with EBD and help them succeed in school and in life.

Includes a complete package of online companion materials for faculty, featuring PowerPoint slides, a test bank, and sample syllabi!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: **Vern Jones, Ph.D.**, is Emeritus Professor of Education at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, where he was chair of the education and special education departments in the Graduate School of Education and Counseling. He consults with school districts on services to students with EBD and classroom management. **Al Greenwood, Ph.D.**, is a licensed psychologist. He consults with school districts on special education issues, program development, and best practice methods for supporting students with EBD. He is also co-founder of 321 Insight, a web-based company providing training and support for educators.