Serving EBD students—
Some Basic Principles of a GNETS Community

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What is GNETS?

- **The Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support** (GNETS) is a program developed to provide comprehensive educational and therapeutic support services to students who might otherwise require residential or other more restrictive placements due to the severity of one or more of the characteristics of the disability category of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD).

- The Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) is comprised of 24 programs which support the local school systems’ continuum of services for students with disabilities, ages 3-21.

(From GA DOE website)
DeKalb/Rockdale GNETS: Serves 3 School Districts

• DeKalb County School District
• Rockdale County Schools
• City of Decatur Schools
Locations

• Centers:
  • Eagle Woods Academy Grades 6-12
  • Shadow Rock Center K-5

• Transitional Programs:
  • Murphy Chandler Elementary
  • Salem Middle School
  • Peachtree Charter Middle School
  • Southwest DeKalb High School
  • Chamblee High School
  • Warren Technical School
The Eagle Woods Academy Philosophy
(from the School Staff Handbook)

• 6 Tenets for our GNETS Model
• These have been referenced and followed for over 25 years
Re-Educating Troubled Youth: Environments for Teaching and Treatment
Brendtro and Ness; 1983 (B, N)

6 Tenets of the Psychoeducational Model

• Relationship is primary
• Assessment is ecological
• Behavior is holistic
• Teaching is humanistic
• Crisis is opportunity
• Practice is pragmatic
Seek out and practice what works

Teach to needs

Work through crises

Increase understanding of behaviors

Build and deepen a healing relationship
1. Relationship is primary:

• “The quality of the human relationships is the most powerful determinant of successful programs for the education and treatment of troubled children.” (B, N)
The message we want to give to students:

- I want to work with you
- If I can’t work with you, I will work for you
- I will never work against you
What a Research Study on Counseling Models/Techniques Found--

• More important than what technique were used...
• Having a therapeutic alliance—Agreeing on goals and working together to achieve them
• Mobilizing hope and expectancy of change—Believing that things will get better if I keep working on goals

Establishing therapeutic relationships with trouble youngsters involves (B, N):

- **Enhancing Communication:**
  decode real meanings of behavior and establish trust

- **Social Reinforcement:**
  become significant and constructively influence

- **Modeling:**
  act so students want to be part of your group
A class of students and staff is like a family or a tribe (especially a small group)

• For some students, the class may be the closest thing in their lives to having healthy family interactions

• Special Ed Staff frequently function “like parents” for students (provide acceptance, concern, consistency, guidance, sense of safety, boundaries, etc.)

• Being aware of this dynamic, and using it in a healthy way, often helps in managing behaviors

• “Guard the Nest”
Seek out positive, non-judgmental, and calm interactions

• Put “money in the bank” – greetings, interactions, spoken observations, etc.
• You then are able to “withdraw” when giving structure or directions
• Research recommends 6 positive statements for every 1 negative
• Praise approximations (“It’s good that you sat down—now can you open your textbook?”)
• Praise publically—Structure or criticize privately
• “Pedal the bike when the speed is good” (“Most of you are doing a great job right now...”)
Find the 10%

• The story of the effective chaplain
Three crucial types of relationships at school \((B,N)\)

- staff - student
- student – student
- staff - staff
Examples

• Point Sheets
• Token Economy
• End of day check-in
• Weekly Feedback group
• Monday Morning check-in’s
• Birthday Celebration
2. Assessment is ecological

• The student's behavior in school must be understood in terms of what is happening and has happened in all aspects of their life.
Critical Transactions in the Life-Space (B, N)

• Student – family
• Student – teacher/staff
• Student – peer group
• Student – school/treatment organization
• Student – activity
• Student – structure
• Student – self
3. Behavior is holistic:

• “Emotional and behavioral disturbance in children must be viewed in relation to normal process of physical and psychological development.” (B, N)
Some basic socioemotional needs
(B, N)

• Love
• Security
• New experiences
• Praise and recognition
• Responsibility
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

- **Physiological**
  - Food, Water, Warmth

- **Safety**
  - Security, Shelter

- **Belonging**
  - Friends, Family, Community

- **Self-Esteem**
  - Achievement, Mastery, Recognition

- **Self-Actualization**
  - Pursue talent, creativity, fulfillment
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stage in Life Cycle</th>
<th>Crisis</th>
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<td>Infancy</td>
<td>Gaining trust in self and enviroment vs. Feeling mistrust and wariness of others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ages 1 1/2 - 3</td>
<td>Achieving a sense of autonomy vs. Shame and doubt over one's ability to be independent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ages 3 - 5 1/2</td>
<td>Learning how to take initiative comfortably vs. Feeling guilty over motivations and needs</td>
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<td>Ages 5 1/2 - 12</td>
<td>Gaining a sense of industry and competence vs. Feeling inferior and inept</td>
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<td>Adolescence</td>
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<td>Achieving intimacy and connection with others vs. Feeling stagnant and unfulfilled</td>
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<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Achieving ego integrity and relative peace with one's life vs. A sense of despair and wastedness</td>
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<td>Level/Stage</td>
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<td>I: Obedience/Punishment</td>
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<td>I: Self-Interest</td>
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<td>III: Universal Principles</td>
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Finding the student’s “territory”: Reflect on the IEP

• Medical info (diagnoses, medications)
• Testing info
• Present Levels of Performance
• Behavior Intervention Plan
• Goals
• Student Supports
Research other IEP related documents

• Eligibilities
• Psychological Reports
• Social Histories
• Hospital discharge summaries
• School system discipline records
• Old IEP’s
Common mental/emotional issues of EBD students:

- Difficulty managing emotions
- Irritable and Angry
- Sad or depressed
- Anxious or withdrawn
- Easily upset
- Poor coping skills
- Restless or hyperactive
- Impulsive

- Problems getting along with others
- Lack of social skills
- Negative attitude
- Misperceive events
- Mistrustful of others
- Verbally hostile
- Physically aggressive

...have found very little success in school and relationships
Some medical diagnoses of EBD students

- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)
- Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Anxiety Disorder
- Autism
- Schizophrenia
- Reactive Attachment Disorder
- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
- Intermittent Explosive Disorder
Learn and keep in mind the student’s life journey

- Long-term behavior and emotional issues
- Successes and failures
- Supportive and harmful relationships
- Places lived and “homes”
- Retell yourself the student’s life story
Help students get a sense of their life stories

• Learn where students have been, and where they hope to go
• Help them learn to sense, reframe, and claim the story of their lives
• Help them focus on where they want to go in life
• Help them learn to use school to work towards achieving life goals
• Help them understand that each of us is on a unique journey through life, with different lessons to learn along the way
• Help them learn to respect other’s stories
Homeroom and Story Sharing

- Decision Making Time
- Yearly cycle: individual and group; time-lines
- Getting to know each other
- Hello’s and good-bye’s
- Naming the un-named
- Reframing the story
Examples

• The AIDS caretaker
• The shout and curse guy
• The coin dropper
• The always angry guy
• The speeding mom
• …?
4. Teaching is humanistic:

• “All learning takes place within the context of an interpersonal relationship with teachers.” (B, N)
Good instruction is the most effective behavior management tool
“Bring the Feast”

• Learning activates pleasure centers in the brain
• Try to visualize each class as you serving your students “a meal” they will enjoy consuming (that’s also healthy—helping them grow)
• The Ramen story
• **Words and ideas**
• What is missing or concerning?
• What is good?
Students (esp. EBD) need to feel they have a place at the table”

• Every student should feel welcomed and encouraged to be part of the class
• Every student who tries should successfully experience learning—”a meal she can enjoy eating”
• Instruction needs to be differentiated to accommodate both academic and emotional/behavioral needs
• Every student should know that if he is not participating in class, he will be missed
As you plan your lessons, pay attention to what excites or “hooks” you

• What do you find “cool” or “mind-blowing” (or at least interesting)
• What do you find important – something most people should know
• How can you help your students to experience the same pleasure of learning that you feel?
In addition to the curriculum, you are teaching...

- Social skills
- Communication skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Organizational skills
- How to trust: adults, routines, communities
- How to be honest with self, and affirm self
- How to get a sense of life story
- How to set realistic and life-directing goals
- How to work to achieve goals
- How to advocate for self
Find your “sling” and use it
Examples

• The shark unit
• The planet talk
• The upset thinker
• …?
5. Crisis is opportunity:

• Crises and struggles are a normal part of every day life.
• They represent an excellent opportunity for teaching and are an integral part of personal growth.
A crisis gives the student a chance to learn that:

• you listen
• You are trustworthy
• you keep things safe
• you remain in-control
• you help solve problems
• You are fair
A crisis gives the student a chance to learn how to:

- appropriately express strong emotions
- calm down
- avoid making things worse
- connect emotions to events
- mediate
- understand another’s perspective
- let go
- take responsibility
- make amends
- apologize
- make a plan
Development of a Crisis

Student Actions
Baselined, “Regular”
Usual positive guidance and support
Consider Barriers
Awareness of “hot spots”
Proactive Strategies

Staff Response
“Something’s not right;” upset; in control
Focused Support, Counseling approach

Physically Unsafe
Defiance, Defensive
“CAR”, Emotionally Disengaged, Directive

Safety Measures
Fatigue
Support, Discuss, Teach

Less Rational
More Rational

Less Rational
More Rational
Invest in “Regular” time (from MindSet)

• Seek pro-action vs. re-action
• Promote choice and trust
• Set-up everyone For success
• Emphasize everyone’s strengths to maximize a safe environment
• Empowerment fosters learning and trust
• Consistency is essential
• Anticipate problems
Be Sensitive to Emotional Contagion and Mirroring Emotions

Who is influencing who?
Stay in your C.A.R.
(Calm, Aware, Respectful)
Be “rooted” in authority, and avoid power struggles

• Find and assert your sense of authority in the class,
• while avoiding the appearance that you are trying to dominate your students.
• The power of being on the side of what’s good.
• Apologize to my mule

• Breakfast Club Detention
MindSet: the 4 Step Counseling Practice

- Step 1: “Say what you see and/or hear”
- Step 2: “Establish the feeling”
- Step 3: “Connect the feeling to the source”
  - (Step 3b Help Gain Insight and Sense of Responsibility; LSCI)
- Step 4: “Plan of Action”
MindSet: effective communication with a defiant person

• Keep a safe distance
• Make eye contact

• Keep your emotions in check. Use non-emotional instead of emotional requests
• Avoid being confrontational. Manage your counter-aggression so that you don’t lose your cool.
• Check your tone of voice, stance, gestures and other non-verbals
MindSet: effective communication with a defiant person

- Use descriptive requests—specifically describe the behavior you want to see
- Use more “start” requests than “stop” requests
- Use clear and concise language. Avoid talking too much.
- Allow reasonable time to comply
- Two requests only (before “next step”)
- Reinforce compliance
- Matador, Mr. Spock, Traffic Cop
Remember…

• Focus on the pro-active
• Authority instead of dominance
• You are the one influencing emotions
• Different crisis need different interventions
• Every crisis is an opportunity to learn
• Much learning can only happen after the crisis is over—find a time to process
Examples

• Respect the brick
• “Leave the room”
• “Not a big deal, yet”
• “I’m just trying to keep everyone safe”
• Step back
• Cedric
• ...?
6. Practice is pragmatic:

• The GNETS model draws from a variety of approaches to maximize the assistance that can be offered to students.
Remember that nothing works all of the time or with everyone

• Teaching is art more than science
• Some things that DO work take a LONG time to start working
Possible reasons for choosing an intervention \((B,N)\)

• Theory:
  This is a rational method (good to be aware of several)

• Research:
  There is empirical evidence to support this method

• Ethics:
  This method matches my values

• Intuition:
  This method seems right for this situation
Talk with others in your groups

• Debrief
• In the halls
• Student Team meetings
• Parents
• Agencies
• Students
Update and change the IEP to help it work better

- Evaluate and modify the goals
- Use, evaluate, and modify the interventions in the BIP
- Use, evaluate, and modify the accommodations in Student Supports
- Remind yourself of the array of established interventions and supports.
Possible BIP Interventions and Consequences

Modifications to the Identified Antecedents
1. Adjust difficulty of work assignments
2. Alternative seating/standing arrangements
3. Break large tasks/activities into smaller assignments
4. Build sensory opportunities into the daily classroom schedule
5. Consistent use of visual supports
6. Counseling
7. Decrease whole class instruction/increase small group and/or one-to-one instruction
8. Develop a communication system
9. Develop and maintain schedules
10. Increase hands on activities
11. Increase opportunities for participation in class lessons
12. Increase opportunities to participate in the activity/lessons
13. Increase proximity control
14. Increase the number of positive statements/interactions with student
15. Journaling
16. Minimize downtime
17. Minimize sensory distractions
18. Provide advanced organizers
19. Provide choices
20. Provide short instructional periods
21. Provide advanced notice prior to changing activities
22. Reduce complexity and frequency of teacher verbalization
23. Referral to Social Worker
24. Reinforce appropriate behaviors of peers
25. Sequence new/difficult activities between preferred activities-sandwich
26. Short planned transitions
27. Structured breaks
28. Systematic use of prompts
29. Teach and reinforce school rules consistently
30. Teach self-monitoring strategies
31. Teach student organizational strategies
32. Teacher/Student Conference
33. Use peer modeling
34. Use Timers
35. Uses a calm, non-emotional tone of voice

Consequences for Target Behavior
1. Block or stop the behavior/redirect/provide prompts to continue work/provide choice of other reinforcer
2. Deny access
3. First work/then choice of other reinforcer
4. Give First/Then Statement
5. Ignore inappropriate behavior/nonverbal redirection back to task/wait/reinforce
6. Interpret intended message/teach appropriate way to communicate
7. Loss of privileges
8. Provide choice and state consequence
9. Provided minimal eye contact and verbal interaction while redirecting
10. Redirect to finish 1 or 2 more items then prompt student to request break/after break student must a portion of previous assignment
11. Refer to the predetermined rule that states consequences for appropriate/inappropriate behavior
12. Time out
13. Use visual supports

Alternative Behaviors (Meet the same function as the target behavior)
1. Provide alternative method of completing work/technology.
2. Teach the student a way to communicate the following: request an item or attention, seek assistance or help, end activity, say “finished or, protest/reject something.
3. Teach the student skills that will get them attention for being good.
4. Teach the student to ask staff to clarify directions.
5. Teach the student to make choices about work, environment and schedule.
6. Teach the student to solicit reinforcement for appropriate behavior.
7. Teach the student to wait for tangible item/activity.
8. Teach way for student to ask for the item/activity.
9. Teach way for student to gain attention from adults or peers.
10. Teach way for student to remain calm during activities they cannot control.
11. Teach way for student to request a “break” from work.
Possible IFP Student Supports

Instructional Accommodations – Lesson

1. Small group instruction with instructional support
2. Provide study guides
3. Provide written outline of material
4. Present material in small chunks
5. Use visual materials/manipulatives/multi-sensory materials
6. Provide visual demonstrations/prompts/cues
7. Provide assistance with note taking
8. Provide copy of notes
9. Allow [FirstName] to tape record lectures or lessons
10. Allow for short breaks between assignments or tasks
11. Allow extra time for processing and responding
12. Pre-teach vocabulary
13. Check frequently for understanding of concepts/directions
14. Cue important information
15. Gain [FirstName]’s attention before speaking
16. Highlighted instructional materials
17. Limit copying from the board or provide alternative
18. Make use of graphic organizers
19. Provide verbal instructions along with written instructions
20. Simplify/restate/paraphrase directions
21. Signed interpretation of text
22. Insure [FirstName]’s attention and focus skills before presenting new information
23. Use chunking and chaining concepts for presenting long/difficult information
24. Use demonstrations, role-playing or other movement activities to help teach new concepts
25. Assess knowledge/understanding use cloze cue format (i.e. Please open the ____)
26. Use organizing words such as before, after, first, second, third, etc. to help with new learning
27. Request [FirstName] to restate directions and instructions to demonstrate understanding
28. Use a variety of question strategies to ensure [FirstName]’s understanding
29. Ask [FirstName] to provide a brief summary of instruction and oral discussions
30. Add a helpful hint in a “thought bubble”
31. Provide a scaffold
32. Use one or more of the following to enhance general presentation: underline, bold, enlarge key words/phrases/symbols
33. Reformat layouts–reorder items or passages
34. Separate reading passages into segments, followed by related items

Instructional Accommodations – Organization and Study Skills

1. Provide extra set of textbooks
2. Send weekly/daily progress report home
3. Monitor daily homework assignments in agenda planner
4. Assistance with organization of class work/homework
5. Assistance with recording homework and maintaining notebooks

Instructional Accommodations – Environmental

1. Seat away from distractions
2. Provide preferential seating
3. Use teacher proximity
4. Reduce auditory distractions
5. Reduce visual distractions
6. Use study carrel or quiet place
7. Use of headphones to block extraneous noise
8. Use visual schedule
9. Adaptive Furniture (e.g. slant board)
10. Special or adapted lighting

Instructional Accommodations – Assignment

1. Shortened assignments to reflect full scope of content
2. Reduced homework assignments to reflect full scope of content
3. Allow alternative to handwritten assignments – oral response or word processor
4. Extended time for completion of class work
5. Extended time for completion of home work
6. Provide alternate assignment or project
7. Provide word bank
8. Alternate format to allow for more space for increased writing/decrease visual clutter
9. Allow use of word processor
10. Manuscript writing rather than cursive

Instructional Accommodations – Behavior Supports

1. Allow a cooling off period when student is upset or angry
2. Designate alternate location for cooling off time
3. Use tangible rewards
4. Use verbal cues for behavioral prompts
5. Develop self-monitoring system for student
6. Use daily point sheet
7. Use nonverbal cues to maintain on task behavior
8. Follow sensory schedule
What is an ethically adequate IEP?

• A legally defensible IEP is important
• An ethically adequate IEP is much more important
• Reflect on what an ethically adequate IEP looks like for each of your students
Update and change the IEP to help it work better

• Hear the music as well as the notes
• Teach each student help manage IEP and to advocate for self
Idea of a simple, unofficial, blank IEP

• Important things to know about me.
• Things I do well; things I like to do; things I’m able to do; areas where I have improved
• Things I need to work on
• Things that help me do better
• Jobs or vocations I might want to do during my life
Check to ensure you are following good general classroom management strategies

• Much of what works for general education students also works with EBD students

• It’s easy to let some helpful strategies fall into dis-use

• Like a baseball batter periodically focuses on “the basics” – the significant components of his swing – teachers benefit from periodically reviewing basics of classroom management.

• It’s good to regularly review and compare different websites, articles, and books
15 Best Classroom Management Books

- **Conscious Discipline** by Becky A. Bailey
- **Tools for Teaching** by Fred Jones
- **The First Days of School** by Harry K. and Rosemary Wong
- **Dream Class** by Michael Linsin
- **The First Six Weeks of School (from the Responsive Classroom)** from the Northeast Foundation for Children
- **Whole Brain Teaching** by Chris Biffle
- **Positive Discipline** by Teresa LaSala
- **Setting Limits in the Classroom** by Robert J. Mackenzie
- **The Classroom Management Secret** by Michael Linsin
- **The End of Molasses Classes** by Ron Clark
- **Teaching With Love and Logic** by Jim Fay, Foster Cline, and Charles Fay
- **Win-Win Discipline** by Dr. Spencer Kagan
- **1-2-3 Magic** by Thomas W. Phelan
- **Teach Like a PIRATE!** by Dave Burgess
- **Conscious Classroom Management** by Rick Smith
Concluding Thoughts
Good Questions to ask over and over

• What do our students need from us to have the best chance of success at school and in life?
• What opportunities today do I have to do something good?
Never give up

- For many EBD students, much of life has been people rejecting or giving up on them.
- Many fill like they have little or no control over what happens to them.
- Many will try to make you reject them or give up on them—they think it will happen anyway, and they feel in-control if they make it happen.
- Work each day to have an image of what a good day would look like for each student, and each day invite them to that day.
- Remember mystery of growth (sometimes it takes a LONG time).
- Example: the student “putting acorns in her backpack”
Build and deepen a healing relationship

Increase understanding of behaviors

Teach to needs

Work through crises

Seek out and practice what works
A Story: shining the light

A Story: the red wig
Phrases to Remember

• Put money in the bank
• Guard the nest
• Look for the wound
• Retell the story
• Bring the feast
• Set a place for each guest
• Use your sling

• Stay in your CAR
• Feel your roots (authority)
• Respect the brick
• Shine your light
• Find the wig
• Relationship is primary
Thanks!