



COMMON LANGUAGE for PSYCHOTHERAPY (clp) PROCEDURES
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TIME-IN MANAGEMENT

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Definition: A method of classroom and group-home management of childrens' disruptions. It improves on the "time-out-ribbon procedure" for disruptive behavior of severely retarded children, whereby the teacher gives each child the same or a different colored ribbon at the start of class to wear while doing on-task classroom behavior. The teacher also gives praise and edibles for good behavior. For bad (e.g. off-task) behavior, the teacher removes the ribbon for different lengths of time until the bad behavior stops, and is returned when good behavior reappears.

In contrast, with "time-in management", when a child misbehaves removal is of the rewarding object that the child is wearing, not the child itself, so the child can learn to deal with the situation while remaining in it i.e. the child is timed in and its rewarding object is timed out. Time-in management also differs from time-out ribbon in its: use of specific short time-periods during which to change misbehavior; speeding learning by giving children many chances for good behavior; giving wearable rewards that can be earned back faster and stay valuable longer; way of teaching children to value the worn objects; use of a reward-box; reducing teachers' forgetfulness or loss of interest in the procedure. Both time-in-management and time-out ribbon differ from usual time-out by: focussing on many children, not just one at a time; giving children ways to correct misbehavior and, with time-in management, to practise this correction in quick succession over each 2-hour period.

Elements: The teacher or group-home parent selects a 2-hour time period during which the children misbehave, and divides this into six 20-minute intervals. At the start of the first 20-minute interval the teacher fastens onto every child an everyday object they have not worn before (e.g. piece of colored paper; bracelet, necklace, scarf etc. for girls; deputy badge, belt, hat, toy cellphone etc. for boys) by Velcro or snap-on buttons, so it can be quickly put on or removed. Objects are worn for the 2-hour period only. The object's reward value is raised by: teachers and group-home parents complimenting children wearing their object; showing the children how to compliment one another about it (e.g. "Nan, that's neat; I like it on you"); have the child compare the object worn to that worn by another child favorably or otherwise (e.g. "I wish I had your bracelet, mine is ugly;" or "I like my deputy badge more than yours"); allowing children a brief rewarding activity for a half to 2 minutes by choosing from inside a reward box a piece of paper describing the activity (e.g. "you can look at the aquarium" or "you can go on the internet for 2 minutes"). Staff scatter 2-3 reward boxes around the side/back of the room to avoid interruptions of the teacher in front of the class. Next, staff give every child the same task at the start of the first 20-minute interval (e.g. work on math problems, set the table for lunch.) If a child does forbidden things during the 20 minutes (goes off-task, makes a noise, yells, swears, threatens, etc.), the teacher immediately removes the child's object for 10 seconds and asks him/her to apologize to any peer s/he upset, before the 10 seconds expire. If the child apologises, the object is returned but the child is barred from choosing a reward activity in a box during the rest of that 20-

minute period. When the next 20-minute period begins, all children start again as in the first 20-minute period.

Related Procedures: *Time out, time-out ribbon, contingency management, token economy, classroom behavior management.*

Application: For groups of 3-50 children aged 3-11 years in schools, homes, psychiatric residential facilities, youth detention and community recovery centers, rehabilitation cottages, domestic abuse and homeless shelters.

1st Use? As a concept, Foxx & Shapiro (1978)

References:

1. Foxx RM, Shapiro ST (1978) The time-out ribbon: A nonexclusionary timeout procedure. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 11, 125-136
2. Macciomei NR, Ruben DH (1989) *Handbook of homebound teaching*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.
3. Macciomei NR, Ruben DH (1999) *Behavioral Management in the Public Schools: An Urban Approach*. NY, Praeger Press
4. Ruben DH (2004) Time-Out Ribbon Revisited: Revisions for Contingency Control Among Disruptive Preteen Classmates. *Behavioral Systems Monograph*, Vol 5, 1-9.

Case Illustration (Ruben, unpublished)

A teacher complained to her school social worker of disruptions by her 30 seven-year-old students. They were apathetic, fooled around, and made angry remarks, especially between noon and 2pm. During this time, the teacher fastened with Velcro or snap-on buttons on each child's clothing an everyday object the children were familiar with but had not worn before (piece of colored paper; bracelet, necklace, scarf etc. for girls; deputy badge, belt, hat, toy cellphone etc. for boys). Then, the teacher gave every child the same task of working on math problems during the entire 2-hour period. The social worker rehearsed with the teacher how to compliment the children directly for on-task behavior or wearing their object e.g. "Bridget, that's a really nice scarf"; how to compare their rewarding objects with compliments e.g. having Bridget say to Melissa "Your ring is cool"; and pride without put-downs, e.g. having Bridget say to Andrea "your ring is cool, though I like mine better", or making self-put-downs, e.g. "I don't like my ring as much as I like yours." The teacher also set up four reward boxes around the room's perimeter, each no bigger than a shoebox and accessible by every child. On day 1 of time-in management, each 20-minute interval from noon to 2pm included a simple cooperative task of every child doing math problems and grading a peer's answers. When Billy swore at Brad, the teacher immediately removed Billy's deputy-badge, saying "I'll return this badge to you within 10 seconds after you say sorry to Brad." Though Billy apologized very grudgingly, the teacher nevertheless returned the badge to Billy, saying in front of his classmates that he couldn't visit the reward box until the present 20-minute interval had ended and the next 20-minute interval began. Within two weeks, the class's rates of fooling around, mischievousness and showing anger to peers fell markedly. The teacher then stopped time-in management from 12 noon to 2pm, using it instead from 8am to 10am, and thereafter from 10am to 12:00 noon. By the end of 6 weeks the teacher had used the method over the entire school day and the students became cooperative with almost no classroom infractions. At 6-month follow up there were minor relapses of a couple of children talking out of turn, but no serious delinquencies warranting the re-use of time-in management.