

Catapult Leadership & Professional Development

BRING BACK OUR VILLAGE: HOW MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT CAN ACHIEVE INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND CREATE A POSITIVE CULTURE

AJ Rinaldi

INFORMATION

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Bring Back Our Village: How Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Can Achieve Instructional Excellence and Create a Positive Culture



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It takes a village to raise a child. Now, more than ever, young people need effective support systems. With teachers leaving the education field at alarming rates, increasing poverty, mental health issues on the rise, substance abuse and addictions, and other societal pressures, our village is under siege. These hosts of issues create a barrier to learning and affect school culture. This keynote will examine how the use of multi-tiered systems of support can benefit student and organizational outcomes. Participants will learn how a data driven system of evidence-based practices rooted in human behavioral science can increase academic results, reduce behavior challenges and exclusionary discipline all while creating a positive culture and climate for youth and staff.

A.J. Rinaldi is a residential administrator at the Milton Hershey School and the tier one coach of their multi-tiered systems of support. Prior to his current role, A.J. served as a house parent and lead mentor where he received the Chairman's Medallion of Excellence, was a 2019 CORE Catherine Hershey Houseparent of the Year nominee, and began the Jr. Gentleman Wrestling program, an afterschool program that utilizes athletics to teach character and leadership to elementary age boys.

In addition to his Milton Hershey School contributions, A.J. is an independent certified coach, trainer, and speaker with the John Maxwell Leadership Team. He is the founder of Pit 2 Purpose, a motivational speaking company where he has spearheaded the Fight for Fatherhood initiative in his native South Florida, a campaign that encourages positive male role models and parenting while educating on the numerous societal effects of absent fathers.

Mr. Rinaldi boasts over 18 years of exceptional devotion to youth care and family services from group homes to street gangs. As a facilitator, A.J. has an inspirational and unique style of delivering experience-infused techniques with practical strategies rooted in human behavioral science. However, A.J.'s greatest accomplishment is being a devoted husband and father to his wife Shavanta, and their 3 young children.

Notes

Use this page to take notes during the session.

Reflection

After listening to AJ's keynote, take some time to reflect on what you have heard or learned by answering the questions below.

1. What challenges are the members of your village facing?
2. How have you learned what you know about MTSS or PBIS?
3. How does your institution work to help prevent negative behaviors instead of reacting to them?



Practice

In this section you will practice applying the concepts you heard in the keynote and work through some of the areas you reflected on in the last section.

Practice #1: Whack-A-Mole

AJ told a story about his son loving the game whack-a-mole and the reason behind his son's affinity with the game. As educators, we often have so much going on in our classrooms that it can be easy to take the whack-a-mole approach to behavior intervention; reacting, rather than preventing. In this section you will spend some time identifying and reflecting on the behaviors in your classroom you tend to react to, and think about how you might work to take a more preventative approach in the future.

In the spaces provided below, identify behaviors you have seen in your classroom, a peer's classroom, or in your institution as a whole but would like to see change.



Describe the Behavior You Would Like to See Change.

Where Do You Tend to See This Behavior Take Place?

When Do You See This Behavior Take Place?

#1

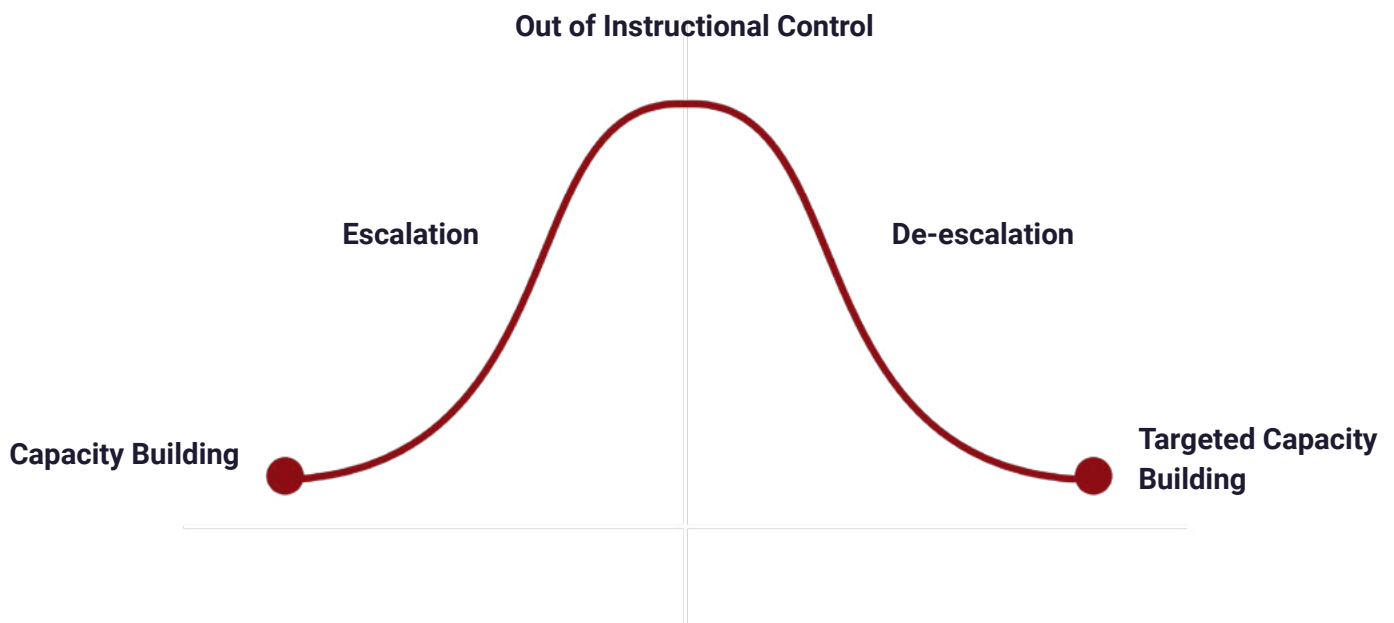
#2

#3

#4

#5

Now that you have identified behaviors and some of the factors surrounding them, take a few minutes to think about how you react to them. Below is the behavior curve AJ presented. List the numbers correlating to the behaviors you listed above on the curve to show when each behavior is usually addressed.



Practice

Reflection Questions:

Looking at where you placed the different behaviors you listed on the curve, what do you think you could do to be more proactive in your reaction?

What tactics or best practices could help prevent these behaviors?

What assistance would you need from your village in order to help prevent specific behaviors?

Practice #2: End Your Class With A Positive Balance

AJ shared an evidence-based practice that can be used in your classroom every day. Research suggests that one of the best ways to change behavior is simply to point out the behavior you want to see.

This activity is more of a challenge. Print out the “Behavior ATM” page before your next day of teaching and keep tabs on the deposits and withdrawals you make when it comes to student behavior. Every time you point out something that a student is doing correctly (ie. modeling a behavior you want to see), make a tally mark (deposit) in the ATM box. Every time you point out something a student is doing incorrectly, make a tally mark in the withdrawal box. At the end of your day calculate your positive or negative balance by subtracting your withdrawals from your total deposits.

Once you have determined your balance, answer the reflection questions provided below.

Reflection Questions:

Did you end your day with a positive or negative balance in your ATM? What you could do to be more proactive in your reaction?

Did thinking about your interactions with students as deposits or withdrawals influence the way you approached certain situations? How?

Did you notice any changes in student behavior when you made a deposit? What were they?

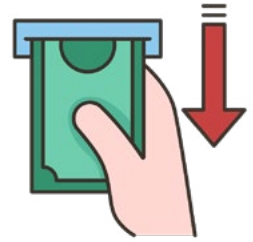


Practice



DEPOSITS

WITHDRAWALS



Implementation

In this section you will work to identify action items that can be implemented into your daily work.

Implementation #1: Coaching In The Classroom

Receiving coaching in the classroom has a greater impact on managing behavior than any other training component. Coaching is critical because it is hard to see the chain reaction that causes certain behaviors in a classroom when you are teaching, providing feedback, and managing transitions in instruction. You may not have an MTSS coach at your disposal but any trusted partner will work for this activity.

Ask a partner you trust to observe one of your classes. It might be best to have them observe a class where you feel you have more behavior challenges. Ask this person to keep an eye out for different behaviors in your class, how those behaviors escalated, and how you react to those behaviors. We have provided a template to use for this activity below and provided space for you to add your own questions. Make sure to debrief with your partner and reflect on the experience in hopes that you can take away some key findings to apply in your classroom.

	Behavior #1	Behavior #2	Behavior #3
What behavior was witnessed?			
How did this behavior escalate? (What factors were involved?)			
What was my reaction to this behavior?			
Other:			
Other:			

Implementation

Implementation #2: Goal Setting


Identify three things you can immediately start doing to create a positive culture in your school or classroom.

❗ STEP#1:

❗ STEP#2:

❗ STEP#3:



A black and white portrait of Frederick Douglass, a Black man with a beard and mustache, smiling. He is wearing a suit jacket and a white shirt. The background is dark and textured.

“It is easier to build
strong children than to
repair broken men”.

Frederick Douglass

○ Getting to Know AJ

What was your first job? What did you learn from it?

As a residential education administrator, my first experience was working with kids in detention centers and street gangs. I learned that the human development that takes place in the first several years of life is extremely potent. However, it is not a final determination on who an individual will become. A well-intended, highly skilled adult can be transformational in the life of a young human being.

Where/who do you look to in order to stay updated on changes in your field?

Anything from the John C. Maxwell or his Leadership Team. Books, Podcast, Keynotes, etc.

What sparked your interest in work-based learning?

I learned through application and education that practices rooted in Human Behavioral Science is a necessity to develop people to their maximum potential. It's like investing in a stock that has done well for decades. It plays the percentages on what's good for young human beings.

What missteps would you caution others to avoid as they work to promote or develop work-based learning opportunities?

In education, we often focus on the results. The test score, the graduation rate. Results are important, but process is paramount. Being at your healthiest is a worthy result. Having a happy long lasting

marriage is a worthy result, but you had better become focused on the process if you're going to achieve it. Lets find and learn the best evidence based practices available to us, but more importantly, lets get obsessed about applying them.



READING

"Atomic Habits"
-James Clear

Follow-Up/Resources

Explore more AJ Rinaldi resources to **Bring Back Our Village: How Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Can Achieve Instructional Excellence and Create a Positive Culture.**

[Pit2Purpose](#)



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