



MTSS Tip Sheet

Verbal Aggression

A act calm

D de-escalate

A acknowledge feelings

P problem-solve

T think reflectively

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PURPOSE

This tip sheet will help you help your scholars who are verbally aggressive, make inappropriate comments to other peers and staff. Below are tips that may be helpful, both in the moment and for future planning.

This list is not all encompassing, discuss with OT (and whole team), and see additional references for other suggestions.

TIPS

In the moment:

- Maintain stable, calm voice when engaging scholar
- Acknowledge and validate feelings, while also setting boundaries
 - “I understand you are _____, but it’s not okay to yell”
- Carefully choose language that focuses on problem solving
 - “I notice that sometimes _____”
 - “How can I help?”
 - “It makes sense that you feel _____”
- Avoids placing blame, avoid language that contains absolutes
 - “Why do you always / never _____”
 - “You are being _____”

Future planning:

- Try to understand the “why” behind their verbal aggression
 - Use active listening, validate emotions, help explore possible emotions that led to actions (“I wonder” statements)
 - Identify and document any known triggers
- Practice appropriate responses to potential triggers
- Use students “regulation plan” to identify meaningful alternatives

Information from (Day, 2022), (Turner, 2012), (Hale Brockway, 2023)*

OT / PT WEBSITE

<https://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/occupational-physical-therapy>

* detailed references available on department website