Case Study: Joelle

Reason for Referral

Joelle is a 16-year-old high school freshman. Her math and science teachers referred her to the school's behavior support team due to extreme social issues that impact her ability to work with her peers and disrupt the class. She spends the majority of her time alone during class, free time, and lunch. When other students try to interact with her during free time, in the hallways, or during lunch, she attempts to engage but the conversations often end in arguments and swearing. If she answers a question in class and the teacher or another provides some additional information or a correction, she becomes argumentative and verbally disruptive for at least 5 minutes. Due to her outbursts, many students try to avoid conversing or working with her. This leaves her isolated in many classes.

DBDM Step 1: Identify Non-Responders to Tier 1

Tier 1 Supports

  Interventions: Hunt High School has been using a SWPBIS framework for the past 4 years. During roll out, they spent the first year training and coaching teachers on Tier 1. They spent the second year training and coaching teachers on Tier 2 and the third year rolling out Tier 3. This current year is the first with all three Tiers fully in place and all with high fidelity as measured on the Schoolwide Evaluation Tool.

  The school frames its schoolwide supports around the motto: Be Prepared, Be Respectful, and Be Safe. Each of these expectations is defined by area on matrices posted in the hallways and in classrooms. The school holds a contest each year for students to create short SWPBIS videos to teach students about the expectations. These videos are used by teachers to review the expectations each quarter.

  The school uses office discipline referrals (ODR) to track students who engage in problem behaviors. Each ODR form includes information about the problem behavior and the antecedents preceding and consequences following it. The school's behavior support team is comprised of the assistant principal, the guidance counselor, district social worker, psychologist, the special education department chair, and two teachers. This team meets every month to address teacher nominations for Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports, monitor student response to all Tiers, and review data. At Tier 1, this involves monitoring ODR data alongside teacher recommendations for Tier 2 supports.

  Data: In the first two months of school, Joelle had 6 ODRs (three each from science and math teachers), for noncompliance with teacher requests and verbal aggression/harassment towards peers. Teachers from these classes have recommended Joelle's name to the BST for additional behavior supports.

  ➢ **Has Joelle responded to her school's Tier 1 supports?**
  ➢ **What evidence supports this decision?**

DBDM Step 2: Choose Tier 2 Intervention

Background Information

  Family History: Joelle lives with her mom and grandparents. She has a younger brother in third grade. Joelle's mom works two jobs and as a result, her grandparents spend the most time with Joelle and her brother. Recently, however, their health has begun to deteriorate,

causing her mom to miss work frequently and become stressed and angry while at home. Often, any interactions between Joelle and her mom involve arguments over chores. Joelle is often tasked with watching her brother and caring for her grandparents after school and on the weekends while her mom is at work. Outside of school, she does not spend much time with peers her own age.

      <u>Further Parental Observation</u>: Joelle's mom indicates that Joelle prefers to spend time in her room whenever possible. When asked to do work around the house, all requests are met with a sarcastic retort and a verbal battle ensues between Joelle and her mother. With Joelle's grandparents sick, Joelle has had to assume a lot more responsibility around the house and in caring for her younger brother. Her mom tries to encourage her to invite more friends over to spend time with friends when she is able to, but Joelle refuses to do so.

Academic History

      <u>Introduction</u>: Joelle met the grade level standards on all assessments throughout elementary school. Joelle was diagnosed with an anxiety disorder in sixth grade but did not qualify for special education services. When she transitioned into middle school, she started missing school and had to repeat grade 8 due to too many absences and missing work.

      <u>Teacher & Principal Observations</u>. Joelle was observed for two sixty-minute sessions, one during her science class and one during her math class. During science, the students were in their assigned groups working on a lab activity. This involved reading directions, following steps, and recording notes. Joelle often sat with her head on her arms. When a group mate asked her to do something, she did respond. As soon as her peer provided any sort of correction, she swore at them, yelled "I know how to do it" and threw the materials on table, resuming her head on her arms. This chain of events happened twice during the observation session. Her teacher noted group work happened multiple times per week, and despite the various groupings, this pattern of behavior is common for Joelle.

      During math, we observed a 20-minute lesson followed by a 20-minute group activity, and 20-minute independent work time. During the lesson, Joelle often raised her hand to respond to teacher questioning. However, anytime a teacher called on her when her hand was not raised, she responded with "I don't know" or "You expect me to know that?!?". During group work, students were expected to work through problems together and discuss their strategies. Joelle started working ahead on her own. When a group mate told her to slow down and wait for the rest of her peers, she swore at them and told them to "shut up". This occurred two times during the activity. Once, she noticed a student was not completing a problem correctly and loudly told her, "You're doing it wrong". The peer responded by saying "You're dumb. Like you even know what you're doing". She turned away from Joelle and worked with another group member for the remainder of the activity. During this activity, the teacher was at her desk grading papers. When Joelle yelled, she would tell her to be quiet and return to grading. During independent work, Joelle worked through the problems in ten minutes and brought her work to the teacher. When the teacher told her to correct one of the problems, Joelle, loudly sighed and mumbled "God, I hate math class". She returned to her desk and sat with her head on her hands for the rest of the period without correcting her work.

      <u>Parental Observations</u>: Joelle's mom agrees with her teachers that Joelle is argumentative and can be verbally aggressive towards her or her younger brother. She does not like to be corrected or asked to do something in a different way. She is always kind and respectful towards

her grandparents and they always are able talk her down when she is upset. However, as their health deteriorates, Joelle spends less time with them.

- ➢ **What is the function of Joelle's behavior?**
- ➢ **What evidence supports this decision?**
- ➢ **What intervention do you recommend Joelle receives?**

## DBDM Step 3: Set Decision Rules

Keep Standard Protocol:

Adapt/Modify Standard Protocol:

Fade Intervention:

DBDM Step 4: Progress Monitor

The school psychologist observed Joelle in either science class or math class for 20-minute sessions each day for two weeks. The first week of observations occurred before Joelle's Tier 2 intervention was implemented, and the second week of observations occurred during the first week of the intervention. Data were collected on the number of verbally aggressive statements made to peers and to the teacher during the observations. The school also continued to collect ODR data.
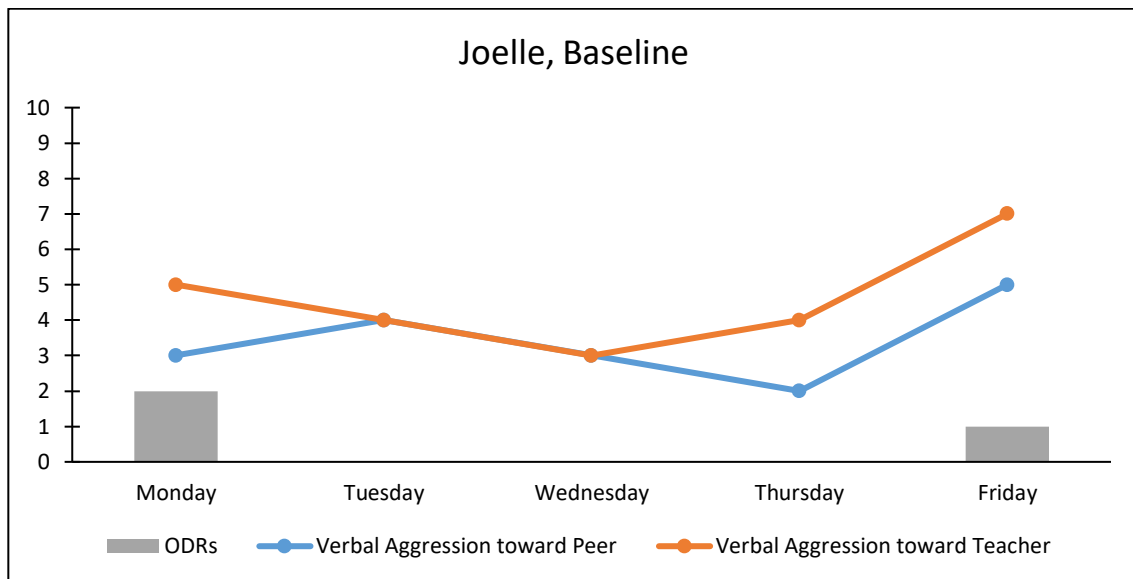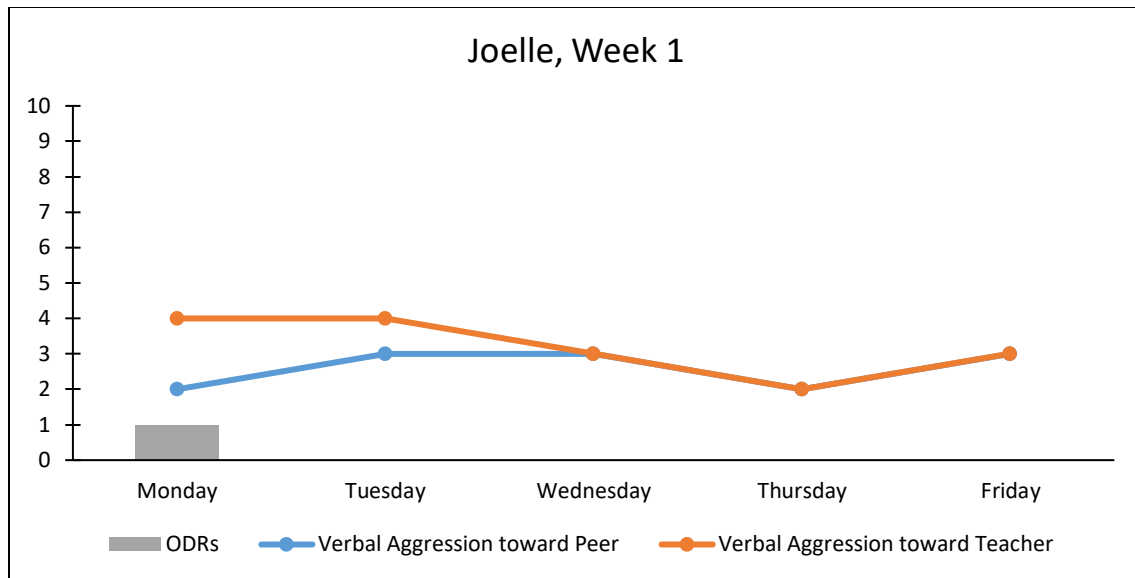
Joelle, Week 1

DBDM Step 5: Make Decision

- ➢ **Has Joelle's behavior changed since she began receiving Tier 2 supports?**
- ➢ **Has Joelle continued to receive ODRs?**
- ➢ **What patterns do you notice in Joelle's behavior? Are there certain days of the week when she struggles more?**
- ➢ **Based on the decision rules set in Step 3 and the data collected for the first two weeks, what do you recommend we do with Joelle's intervention? Should we keep the standard protocol, adapt/modify the standard protocol, or begin to fade the intervention?**
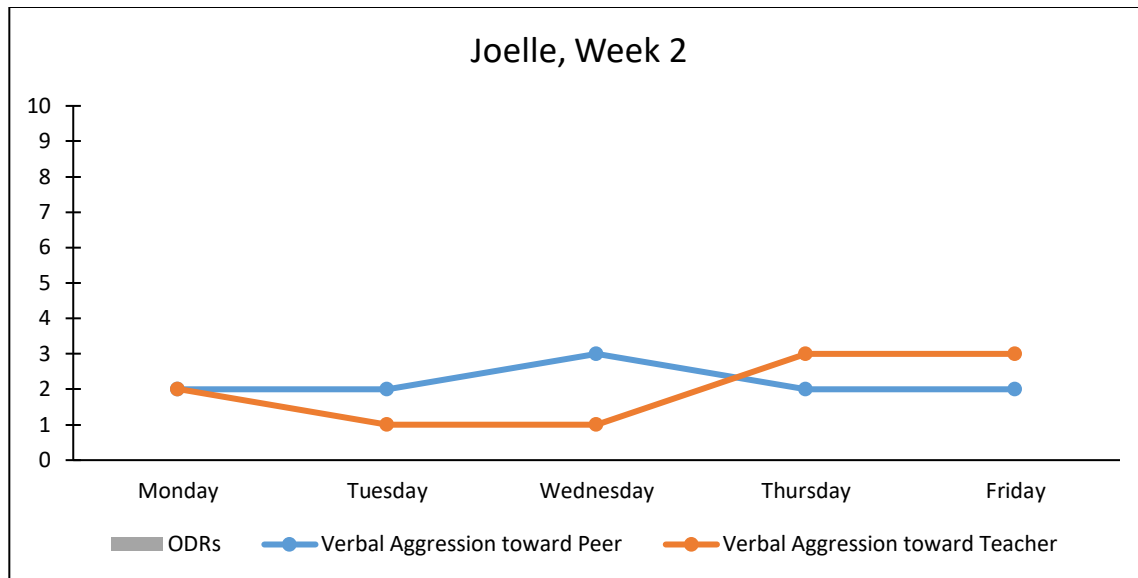
DBDM Step 6: Repeat Steps 3–5

Step 3: Set Decision Rules

Keep Intervention:

Adapt/Modify Intervention:

Fade Intervention:

Step 4: Progress Monitor

Joelle, Week 2

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Verbal Aggression toward Peer	2	2	3	2	2
Verbal Aggression toward Teacher	2	1	1	3	3

Legend: ODRs, Verbal Aggression toward Peer, Verbal Aggression toward Teacher

Step 5: Make Decision

➢ **Has Joelle's behavior changed since the first week of Tier 2 supports?**

➢ **Has Joelle continued to receive ODRs?**

➢ **What patterns do you notice in Joelle's behavior? Are there certain days of the week when she struggles more?**

➢ **Based on the decision rules set in Step 3 and the data collected for the last week, what do you recommend we do with Joelle's intervention? Should we keep the intervention, adapt/modify the intervention, or begin to fade the intervention?**