
Foreword

By definition, children and youth with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) have significant social, communication, and behavioral problems. These challenging learners also frequently experience difficulty in controlling their anger and other emotions. To be sure, educators and parents all too often find themselves in situations where students with autism-related disabilities display meltdown behavior. These problematic and demanding behavioral crises require that supervising adults both engage in appropriate preventative planning and apply evidence-based procedures and tactics.

Without a doubt there is a significant need for evidence-based, practical, and practitioner-friendly resources that help practitioners and families plan for, circumvent, mitigate, and respond to meltdown behavior problems. *Managing the Cycle of Meltdowns for Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder* is a significant source of such information. Colvin and Sheehan's meltdown cycle model reflects years of educational and clinical experience with children and youth with special needs and disabilities, including those with ASD. The strategies they recommend for responding to and managing individuals in various phases of the meltdown cycle are scientifically supported and clearly described. The knowledge and skills that are advanced in *Managing the Cycle of Meltdowns for Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder* are significant, and teachers, related service educational professionals such as speech pathologists and occupational therapists, teaching assistants, and others who work directly with students with autism-related disabilities will find this book to be a valuable resource. Parents and family members will also find the information to be a valuable source of guidance relative to dealing with difficult situations and mitigating problems connected to behavioral crises and urgent problems.

The ASD field is undeniably in its infancy relative to identifying and using the most effective and utilitarian methods for children and youth with ASD. Fortunately, some promising signs on this front can be seen, including efforts by professional associations and individuals to vet the myriad interventions and treatments for children and youth with ASD that purport to improve functioning and quality of life for these learners and their families. These efforts portend favorably for wide-scale adoption of a “best practice” model that is underpinned by procedures, strategies, and other methods with the greatest potential for benefitting learners with ASD and a willingness on the part of stakeholders to consistently use with fidelity maximally effective methods as the foundation for their educational programs.

While general progress on this front is evident, it is also obvious that a number of specific topics relative to effectively serving students with ASD are long overdue for attention. One such neglected area is improving our understanding of behavioral meltdowns among children and youth with ASD and dissemination of utilitarian strategies for preventing and responding to these all-too-common events. In this connection, Colvin and Sheehan have significantly advanced our understanding of meltdown behavior. They offer practitioners and parents proactive recommendations for understanding not only factors associated with meltdown and crisis behaviors but also how to deal with these significant problems. In sum, *Managing the Cycle of Meltdowns for Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder* reflects a sophisticated and multifaceted understanding of a particularly challenging and poorly understood problem of children and youth with ASD. Most important, the practical and practitioner-friendly behavior management and behavior support strategies advanced in this resource bode well for students with ASD being able to learn alternatives to meltdown behavior and ultimately acquire self-control skills that are needed for positive educational and life outcomes.

Richard L. Simpson

Professor of Special Education

University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS