

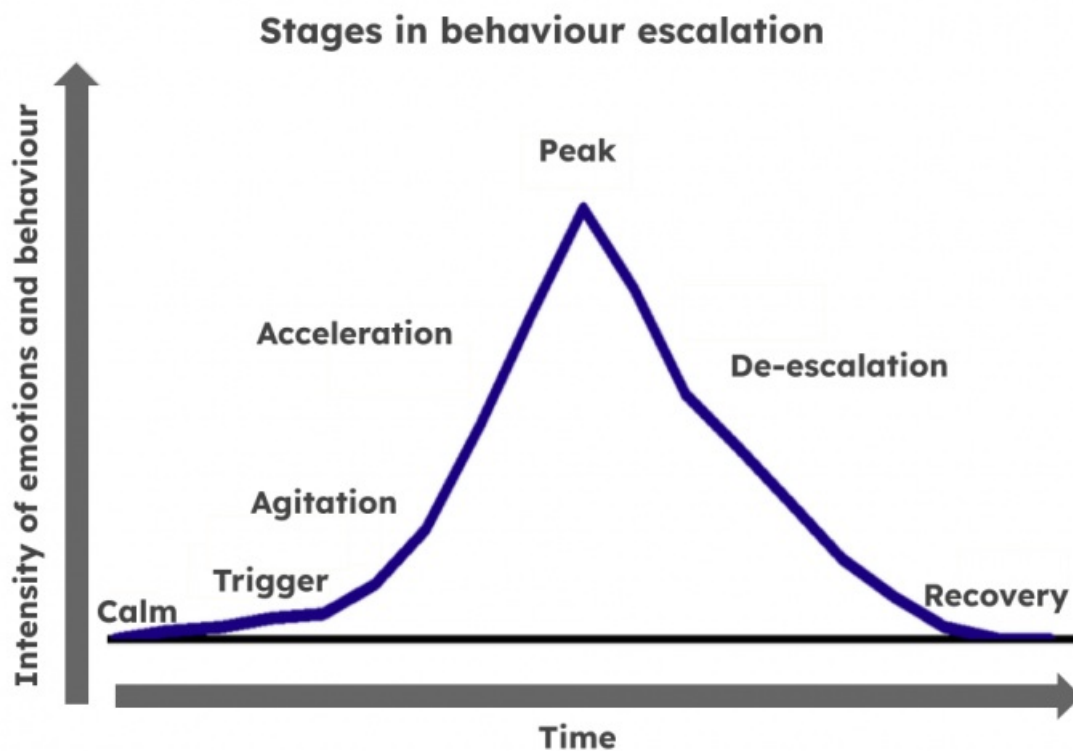
Respond

A suggestion for implementing the strategy
'Respond in challenging situations' from the
Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Includes:

- Recognise stages in behaviour
- Pay attention to your own emotional responses
- Check and connect
- Connect with positive interactions
- Distract or redirect

Recognise stages in behaviour



Source:

[Responding to non-responders: Managing escalations, Colvin and Sugai](https://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/assets/inclusive-education/resource-documents/Responding-to-non-responders-Managing-escalations.pdf)

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Colvin and Sugai describe each behavioural phase and suggest specific strategies for intervention as student behaviour escalates. Work with ākonga and whānau to identify agreed strategies.

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From

Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Respond in challenging situations](#)

Suggestion: [Respond](#)

Date

13 September 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/behaviour-and-learning/respond

Pay attention to your own emotional responses

What you think, say and do matters. It also matters that what you think, say and do are aligned. Research shows that people look for consistency between what is said, how it is said and what is done.

Mā mua ka kite a muri, mā muri ka ora a mua.

Those who lead give sight to those who follow, those who follow give life to those who lead.

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Check and connect

Build rapid rapport and connection with the students.

For example:

- Connect, chat and show you care. For example, open a conversation about known interests, whānau, important people, role models.
- Connect and value culture. For example, open a conversation with te reo or aspects of ākonga pepeha, or incorporate tikanga, cultural contexts and whakapapa.
- Connect and tweak the activity. For example, offer visuals, buddy supports or assistive technologies.
- Connect and inquire. For example, ask if ākonga need anything or if they are having any difficulties with the task.
- Connect and offer social and emotional supports. For example, talk about happy places, identify zones of regulation or places in the learning pit.
- Ask another staff member or student to do a check and connect.

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Connect with positive interactions



Source:

[Ministry of Education](#)

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/2950799?page=2&page=3&page=4&page=3&page=2&page=1>

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Focus on positive interactions rather than directing behaviour.

Distract or redirect

At the early stages of distress, you may be able to distract or redirect ākonga. Note that distraction and redirection do not address underlying issues. This means they may be ineffective in the long term.

For example:

- Remove, eliminate or reduce unnecessary demands.
- Distract and draw ākonga attention to a known activity or thing of interest.
- Offer alternative desired options, for example, offer fidget items as an alternative to jostling others.
- Offer simple choices, for example, if ākonga appear to be distressed at noise levels offer headphones or a change to a quieter space.
- Offer a break, for example, if a child is upset, offer a movement break or time out in a quiet space.
- Interrupt challenging situations, for example, giving ākonga responsibility for something or inviting ākonga to complete a short task such as clearing the board, helping the teacher or delivering notices.

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