

Proactive Approaches to
Changing Behaviors:
Positive Behavior Management



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Agenda

- Introductions... Hello!
- A bit about you
- Training Objectives
 - Define behavior.
 - Identify behavior function.
 - Define reinforcement.
- Q & A



What Is Applied Behavior
Analysis?

- Applied Behavior Analysis or ABA is a science devoted to the understanding and improvement of human behavior.
- Based on basic principles of learning and motivation which come from a body of scientific research.



Behavior Defined

- Everything people do, including how they move and what they say.
- Focus on measurable & observable behavior



Things a dead man can do (Not behavior)	Things a dead man can't do (Behavior)
Be quiet	Talk
Don't argue	Follow Directions
Be good	Read a book
Don't interrupt	Raise your hand

- Behaviors can be Good, Bad, Neutral



Problem Behavior

- Behavioral excesses- occur too often
 - Interrupting, talking in class, arguing, hitting
- Behavioral deficits- occur too little or nonexistent
 - Finishing homework, taking baths, doing chores, playing independently



Problem Behavior

- Can make an individual's life more difficult and less fulfilling.
- Can make the lives of people around an individual more difficult.
- Can interfere with learning or limit an individual's access to locations/activities.



Function of Behavior

- Every behavior serves a purpose or function
- Why do folks do things they aren't supposed to?
- Just about all reasons can be explained as either:
 - Getting good stuff (positive reinforcement)
 - Access to attention
 - Access to desired items, activities
 - Avoiding bad stuff (negative reinforcement)
 - Escaping non-preferred activities, demands



Function of Behavior

- Problem behavior can be a form of communication
 - To demonstrate wants or needs
 - To gain access to something
 - To escape or avoid something
- Those we care for may not have the language skills to ask for what they want.
 - Our person may not know or care that their way of telling you is not the "appropriate way."



Function of Behavior

Example: avoiding "bad stuff"

Michael dislikes taking baths. His mom says "time to take a bath."

→

Michael throws himself on the floor and starts to scream and tantrum

→

Michael's mom says "Ok you can play for 5 more minutes and then take a bath."

How is Michael throwing a tantrum similar to language? What is he trying to communicate? What would be an appropriate way for him to communicate this?



Function of Behavior

Example: getting "good stuff" AND avoiding "bad stuff"

Jack is playing video games. His mom says "Time to stop playing and get ready for bed." → Jack ignores his mom and continues to play his video game. → Jack gets more time playing video games and avoids having to get ready for bed.

How is Jack's ignoring his mom's request similar to language? What is he trying to communicate? What would be an appropriate way for him to communicate this?



Functional Behavior Assessment

Analyzing what happens immediately before the behavior (ANTECEDENTS), the behavior itself and what happens immediately after the behavior (CONSEQUENCES) to determine the function of a behavior

A ANTECEDENT → B BEHAVIOR → C CONSEQUENCE



Functional Behavior Assessment

Identify the A,B,C's in the previous example

Michael dislikes taking baths. His mom says "time to take a bath." → Michael throws himself on the floor and starts to scream and tantrum. → Michael's mom says "Ok you can play for 5 more minutes and then take a bath."

The consequences that follow a behavior often determine whether that behavior will increase or decrease. In this example, Michael's mom actually rewarded his challenging behavior by allowing him to avoid taking his bath. This consequence increases the likelihood that Michael will tantrum again in the future when he is directed to take a bath.



Importance of Function

- If we understand why behaviors are occurring we can identify effective strategies to:
 - Decrease undesirable or problem behaviors
 - Increase appropriate behaviors
- Avoid ineffective interventions



Identifying Behaviors to Change

- Determine which behavior is of greatest concern
- Collect information (data) to determine:
 - Is the behavior harmful to the individual, to other individuals or does it cause damage to the environment or personal property?
 - How often does the behavior occur?
 - Does the behavior significantly impair learning of the individual or others in the environment?
 - Does the behavior limit the individuals access to certain environments or activities?
 - Does the behavior draw unwanted/negative attention to the individual (is it socially stigmatizing)?
 - Does the behavior interfere with relationships (bothers others)?



Minimizing Problem Behavior

- Proactive strategies- how to prevent challenging behaviors from occurring.
- Reactive strategies- how to respond when challenging behaviors occur.
- Think "act" versus "react".



Replacement Behaviors

- ☛ Behaviors that serve the same function as problem behavior
 - ☛ Safe, socially acceptable way to get what you want (obtain reinforcement)
 - ☛ *Example:* Johnny hits other kids in his preschool when they are playing with toys that he wants to play with. We teach him to ask for a turn playing with the toy instead.
- ☛ Teach replacement behaviors outside of "problem times"



Replacement Behaviors

Problem Behavior	Function	Replacement Behavior
Hitting	To get candy	Ask for candy
Screaming	To get attention	Request attention
Tantrum	To escape homework	Request a break/delay Request help with assignment
Elopement	To get attention from preferred peer	Ask to play with peer
Chewing on clothing	To get sensory stimulation	Chew on gum, beef jerky, chew necklace
Arguing with siblings	To get toys	Problem solving, ask for a turn with toy, negotiate a trade



Schedules

- ☛ Sequence of activities: alter order of activities
 - ☛ Gradually transition from highly preferred activities to less preferred activities.
 - ☛ Schedule highly preferred activities following undesirable activities
- ☛ Carefully select duration of activities- ensure duration matches ability
- ☛ Ensure access to preferred activities & reinforcement on a consistent schedule



Schedules

After School list

- Put away shoes/boots
- Hang up jacket
- Put backpack on chair
- Wash hands/ Have Snack
- Unpack backpack
 - Put away lunchbox
 - Put away water bottle
 - Put papers for mom/dad on table
- Homework
 - Have mom/dad sign sheet
 - Do homework
 - Put in homework in folder
 - Put folder in backpack
- Chore

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Put away shoes	Wash hands	Unpack backpack	Put away lunchbox	Put away water bottle

- Provide opportunities for choice
- Provide structured leisure activities during "down time"
- Use visual supports



Expectations

- Set realistic expectations, limits & rules
- Decide on expectations and consequences BEFORE challenging behaviors occur
- Be specific about expectations (where, when, how often)
- Discuss with child face to face, away from distractions and when child is calm/relaxed
- Ask child to repeat expectations to ensure that he/she understands
- Provide ongoing feedback (remember: 4 to 1 Rule)
- Frequently remind/review rules, behavior expectations (some context dependent)



Reinforcement

- What is reinforcement?
- Examples
 - Social (talking, giving compliment, high five)
 - Tangible (food, money, movie tickets, prize box)
 - Activities (playing a game, going to the park, choosing dinner)
 - Privileges (outings, later bedtime)
 - Breaks (from tasks or work)
- Isn't that bribery?



My reinforcers might not be your reinforcers

- Usually, reinforcers depend on the person.
- Examples:

Pizza! OR Kimchi?!?



Attention from: Mrs. Pritzl OR Spitting History Teacher



So how do we know?
1. What does your child like?
2. If its delivered right after a behavior, does the behavior happen more in the future?



Reinforcement: Planning & Using

- In general, reinforcement works better if
 - Consistent
 - Immediate
 - Predictable
 - For specifically targeted, active behaviors (see "Dead Man's Test")
- So, better if planned out and structured:
 - Contracts
 - Sticker systems
 - Points systems
 - Token economies, etc.



Reinforcement: Tips for using effectively

- Something your person:
 - Likes
 - Doesn't always have access to
 - Gets only after the positive behavior has occurred
 - Is desirable enough to motivate him/her (it's worth it)
- What motivates a person can change over time (satiation)



Reinforcement: Sticker system

Cy's Sticker Sheet!

	
	
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Good Table Manners :
- Keep your hands to yourself.
- Keep your food on your plate.
- Tell Mom and Dad when you are done eating.



Barriers to effectively changing behavior

Acceptance: if you decide that your child has a behavior that needs to change and it is not getting better, you need to accept:

- 1. What you have been doing up until this point has not been working
- 2. Something about your behavior must change

Commitment

- Start small, try to change 1 thing at a time
- Prioritize-** don't try to tackle everything all at once

Perseverance



Coping strategies for avoiding burnout

In the moment:

- Remain calm/neutral
- Be self aware
- Be mindful of your own feelings/reactions
- Avoid cognitive distortion
- Try not to take your child's problem behavior personally



Coping Strategies

- Over time:
 - Manage your own expectations
 - Have a plan
 - Develop stress/frustration management strategies and use positive self-calming strategies (model this for your kids)
 - Use positive self-talk
 - Debrief following problem behavior
 - Know your limits and ask for help if you need it



Coping Strategies

- Avoid coercion:
 - strategies that we use in the moment when faced with a problem behavior or conflict. Intended to help but can backfire because they are negative in nature and are intended to create feelings of guilt, shame or sense of being forced.
- Kinds of coercion:
 - Questioning, arguing, sarcasm, force, threat, criticism, despair, logic, taking away, telling on them, one-upmanship, silent treatment ...



Evaluating Effectiveness

- Very important to monitor occurrence of problem behaviors to ensure that strategies being used are effective
- We can do this by documenting problem behavior/recording data
- Analyzing data allow us to:
 - Identify** changes in the occurrence of problem behaviors- has the behavior decrease, increase, or remained the same?
 - Troubleshoot** strategies being used if behaviors are not improving
 - Discontinue** ineffective strategies




