Challenging Behavior

Behavior emitted by a child that results in self-injury, or injury to others, causes damage to the physical environment, interferes with the acquisition of a new skill and/or socially isolates the child.

Doss & Reichle (1991)
Behavior is Communication

• For children who have limited communication skills, challenging behavior serves to communicate needs and wants
• For example:
  – Hit my head: receive medical attention
  – Bite my friend: receive adult attention or escape non-preferred activity

Behavior Deficit Vs. Behavior Excess

• Deficit: a skill or necessary behavior is missing or not observed
• Excess: a skill or behavior is used too frequently

Reinforcement Paradigms

Reinforcement (increases or stays same)

Punishment (decreases)
**Behavior Excess**

- Why Does Behavior Occur?????

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**Form Vs. Function**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORM</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hit</td>
<td>obtain attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hit</td>
<td>escape activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hit</td>
<td>clear earache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cry</td>
<td>obtain attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grab toys</td>
<td>obtain attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>call names</td>
<td>obtain attention</td>
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</tbody>
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**Obtain**

- Objects
- Activities
- Attention
- Sensory

**Avoid/Escape**

- Objects
- Activities
- Attention
- Sensory
Setting Events

- Heat
- Noise
- Hunger
- Sleep
- Fear for their safety
- Arguments at home

Functional Behavioral Assessment

1. Indirect Assessments
2. Direct Observation Assessments
3. Functional Analysis
4. Develop Hypothesis
5. Intervention linking (can I honor the function?)

5. Linking Assessment & Intervention

- Examine current C's
- Examine current A's
- Identify missing skills
**Intervention: What does IDEIA say?**

- Students cannot be suspended for more than 10 days
- Cannot change placement based on behavior without first conducting FBA
- If emergency change in placement is made… need FBA completed within 10 days
- When a student’s behavior interferes with his/her learning (or that of his/her peers)… must consider Positive Behavioral Supports and reinforcement must be used

**Positive Behavioral Supports**

- Behavioral Science of Human Behaviors
- Interventions
  - Practical
  - Based on FBA
  - Teach independence, adaptive, or improve communication
  - Monitored with systematic data collection and analysis
- Social values during assessment and intervention
- Behavior change observed across all environments and over time

**What PBS is NOT**

- Same plan for all children
- Simple form that is created in a meeting
- BIP that is filed away and not implemented
- BIP that includes restraint
Belief System

- When a student doesn’t know how to drive……...
  - we teach him.
- When a child doesn’t know how to wash her hands……
  - we teach her.
- When a person doesn’t know how to read……
  - we teach her.
- But when a child doesn’t know how to behave…….
  - we punish him. 😞

“So what do I do?”

- Prevent behavior before it starts
- Recognize triggers to target behaviors
- Recognize behavior chains (what happens before escalation)
- MAKE SURE an FBA is in the records
- MAKE SURE the BIP is being implemented correctly

New Belief System

- Teach students new skills
- Teach students new behaviors
- Teach students new strategies
- BEFORE they have the opportunity to misbehave
- We call this the antecedent condition
Strategies

1. Improve the Student’s Communication
2. Improve the Adults’ Communication
3. Increase Reinforcement
4. Trick Them
5. Modify the Instruction
6. Provide Consequences Consistently

1. Teach Students to Communicate Appropriately

A. Communication Intervention

- Build a functional language repertoire
- Which of the following are functional language skills?
  - Knowing the capitals and 50 states
  - Identifying all the colors
  - Counting to 100 by 10s
  - Requesting a drink
  - Rejecting a social offer
  - Choosing what to eat for lunch
  - Asking to take a break
B. Functional Communication Training

• After determining function of behavior
• Identify new skill to obtain “same” outcome
• Identify problem time
• Prompt communication
• Reinforce

Form of New Behavior

• Verbal Response
• Vocal Response
• Gestural Response
• Symbol Use
• Voice Output Device

Form of Request

• Request Assistance
• Request Attention
• Reject Activity
• Request Additional Activity
• Request Item
FCT: Reinforcement

- Functionally Equivalent as challenging behavior
- Immediacy of reinforcement
- Quality of reinforcement
- Quantity of reinforcement
- Response effort

2. Communicate Clearly

Schedules
Prespecified Reinforcers

A. Scheduling Activities

- Make a schedule
- Display the schedule
- Follow the schedule
- Adapt schedule to meet needs of class (e.g. very active children alternate to active activity)
A. Scheduling Activities

• Activities should be functional
• Activities should occur in a logical order
• All activities should be scheduled

Display schedule and review as necessary
• Alternate work and play activities
• Intersperse active and quiet activities
• Have back-up activities (overplanning is better)

Schedule Options

• To Do List
• Afternoon schedule
• Task Analysis (decrease prompting)
• Transition Activities
• Allow child to make daily schedule
B. Prespecified Reinforcer (Premack Principle)

- Identify Problem Times or Activities
- Know Child’s Preferences & Reinforcers
- When delivering requests, BE SURE to let child know what the reinforcement is when they are finished

Examples

- When you come to circle you can play with the tambourine.
- When you finish your assignment, you can have time on the computer.
- When you pick up the toys you can go swing.

3. Provide REGULAR Reinforcement

Increase Reinforcement AFTER Skill is Mastered, Fade Reinforcement (Tolerance)
Increased Adult Attention

- Determine how frequently the child gets attention for challenging behavior (e.g., once every 10 minutes)
- Deliver Attention to child (IF BEHAVIOR IS APPROPRIATE) at a faster rate (e.g., every 8 minutes)
- Do not deliver attention for inappropriate behavior

Increased Attention Examples

- Join the child during block play
- Ask the child if she’d like a story
- Walk by and pat the child on the head
- Ask “how’s it going?”
- Smile and give a positive gesture

Other Increased Reinforcers

- Increased tangibles
  - Giving access to favorite foods, toys, clothing
- Increased activities
  - Giving access to computers or outside
- Increased breaks
  - Releasing from circle or manipulative activities early
- Increased or decreased sensory
  - Giving access to swings, massages, or brushing
  - Giving breaks from noise, large groups, or music
Tolerance for Delay
What is it?

• Is an intervention developed to help children maintain participation in
• an undesirable activity for increasing lengths of time
• or
• waiting for a desirable activity for increasing lengths of time

What is it?

• Consists of delivering a delay cue, which tells the child to wait. Following this waiting time, a release cue is given. Children are then reinforced by either leaving the current activity and/or obtaining a different activity or object.
• Components
  • Delay cue
  • Wait
  • Release cue
  • Reinforce

Examples

• At snack time say, “Eat three more
• During group time say, “Almost done.”
• During table top activities say, “Sort 3 blocks.”
• During work time say, “In a little bit you can go play.”
• During clean-up time say, “Pick up one toy.”
Implementation

• 1. Identify the function of the challenging behavior; is it to obtain something or avoid something?
• 2. Determine the critical time period.
• 3. Choose a delay signal.
• 4. Choose a release signal.
• 5. Engage the child in the activity.
• 6. Deliver the delay cue just prior to the critical time period.
• 7. Deliver the release signal and release the child.
• 8. Gradually increase the amount of time in the activity.

4. Trick Them

Choice
Distracter
HPR
Embedding

A. Choice Making

• Provide Choice of 2 options
  – may need visual cues
  – may need 2 preferences
  – shift to 2 nonpreferred
• Examples
  – Would you like to play blocks or look at books?
  – Would you like your drink or snack first?
  – Would you like to pick up red blocks or blue blocks?
B. Preferred Item as a Distracter

- Select Reinforcers
- Identify Problem times
- Deliver the reinforcer during the problem time
- Examples
  - give a Koosh ball during transition time.
  - give a tape to listen while riding in the car
  - read a magazine while in line at the grocery store.

C. High Probability Request Sequences

- Identify high probability tasks
- Identify problem behavior (low probability task)
- Request 2-3 high p's
- Request low p
- REINFORCE
- Tips
  - random activities
  - REINFORCE along the way
  - quick
D. Embedding

- Intersperse requests to do non-preferred tasks within preferred tasks
- For example, have a child jump up and down on the way to bathroom if they are resistant to go.

Tips for Success

- Vary your interventions
- Vary your reinforcers
- Keep your enthusiasm up
- Know what is reinforcing for the child
  - ask parents
  - ask other teachers
  - observe what child does most
  - ASK THEM!

5. Modify Instruction

Modify Level of Difficulty
Embed Reinforcers
Decrease Work Load
A. Modify Level of Difficulty

- Research shows that teachers lack precision in providing work at the student's level
  - Independent work
  - Instruction needed
- Work that is too easy
- Work that is too difficult

B. Embed Reinforcers

- Use reinforcers as part of the instruction
- Allow brief access during work time
- Allow simultaneous access during work time

C. Lessen the Work Load

- Is it necessary to do 50 problems?
- What is the minimum number necessary?
- Embed skill practice in other activities (natural and functional)
The great thing about addressing challenging behaviors......

If you mess up.......you'll more than likely get another chance to try again!

What NOT To Do After Behavior

- Over-react
- Shouting or raising voice
- Arguing
- Tugging or grabbing the student
- Get in the student’s face
- Nagging or preaching
- Engaging in power struggles
- Cornering the student
- Make threats you can’t carry out

5. Consequence Interventions

Extinction
- Time Out

Punishment
- Response Cost
- Restraint
A. Extinction

- Withholding reinforcement following the target behavior
- Identify current reinforcer
- Withhold reinforcer

Extinction following Challenging Behavior

- Keep children safe without providing reinforcement
- Respond without emotional reaction

What Does “Extinction” (Attention)

- No use of target child’s name
- No eye contact
- No emotions
- No lectures
- Limited “chasing”
- Restraint IS a LAST resort
What Does Extinction (Tangible) Look Like?
- Not giving toy
- Not giving food
- Not giving clothing

What Does Escape Extinction Look Like
- Not allowing running from circle
- Not allowing escape from bathroom
- Not allowing break from table work
- Not allowing interaction with adult or peer to stop

Characteristics of Extinction
- Gradual reduction of behavior
- May cause an "extinction burst"
  - increase in rate/intensity of responding
  - induce aggression
  - spontaneous recovery
Tips for Extinction

- Maintaining extinction for a sufficient time
- Everyone must do it
- Be aware of extinction bursts
- If stopped, behavior will re-occur at greater rates and intensities.

Reinforcement Paradigms

- Reinforcement (increases or stays same)
- Punishment (decreases)

Punishment Procedures

- Decreasing behavior by:
  - Removing consequences
  - Adding consequences
Disadvantages of Punishment

- Tends to elicit aggressive behavior
- Can produce other emotional side effects (crying, etc.)
- Can cause people and settings to become conditioned punishers
- Does not teach any new behavior
- May cause students to model our behavior
- Immediate, short term effects
  - Behavior usually returns but only strengthened
  - Professionals may opt to use this method and disregard using reinforcement procedures

Negative Punishment

- Decreasing a behavior by removing a consequence
  - Time Out
  - Response Cost

Time-Out

- Time out is not a chair
- Time out is not a place
- Time out is not restraint
- Time out is not a threat
Time Out From Reinforcement

- Opportunities to obtain reinforcers are eliminated for a short time.
- Ways of implementing a LEGAL time-out:
  - take away a toy
  - time out ribbon
  - remove other children to a safe place

Recommendations for Time-Out

- Should not exceed one minute per year of age
- Use of bathroom and drink must not be withheld
- Do not time out from an aversive event
- Child should be monitored (no attention)
- Release is contingent on targeted challenging behavior or pre-selected criteria
- Document all use and length of time out

Response Cost

- Decreasing a behavior by removing a reinforcer
- Late fees (lose money)
- Traffic tickets
**Positive Punishment**

- Decreasing behavior by adding a consequence following a behavior
- Usually in the form of aversives or conditioned reinforcers
- Over-correction
- Reprimands
- Blasts of air
- Corporal or spankings

**Advantages and Disadvantages**

- **Advantages**
  - may effectively reduce behavior
  - long lasting effect
  - aversive stimuli not necessary
- **Disadvantages**
  - delayed effects
  - temporary increase in rate/intensity
  - imitation by peers given temporary increase in rate/intensity
  - controlling reinforcing consequences

**Other Consequences**

- Physical Guidance
- Blocking
“I HAD to restrain this kid”

- Wouldn’t line up when I asked him to
- Told me no
- Threw work materials
- Destroyed work materials
- Spit at me
- Called me a B#$%!#
- Tipped over his desk

When to Restrain

- DOE position statement
- State laws vary
- Know your state

Legal Definition of Emergency

- Emergency means a situation in which a student’s behavior poses a threat of:
  - imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others; or
  - imminent, serious property destruction
“So what do I do?”

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QUESTIONS?