



# **Basic Concepts of Behavior Analysis**

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# Basic Concepts of Behavior Analysis

- The ABC Model
- The Four Functions of Behavior
- Antecedent Strategies
- Consequence Strategies

# The ABC Model

- **Antecedent**- What happens (immediately) before the behavior, the cue or trigger
- **Behavior**- The “act” of an individual that can be seen/heard and measured by others
  - Everything a person does
    - Walking, crying, eating, watching TV, talking, etc.
    - It refers to all behaviors, not just problem behaviors
- **Consequence**-What happens (immediately) after the behavior

# Why do we look at the ABC's?

- If we know what causes a behavior (antecedent), we can change it, prevent it, prepare for it, or teach a new behavior
- If we define the behavior, everyone knows exactly what to look for
- By using appropriate consequences, we can increase (i.e., occur more often) good behaviors and/or decrease (i.e., occur less) problem behaviors

# Most Importantly.....

- If we understand the relationship between the A-B-C's, we can understand why a behavior occurs
- Does this sound familiar?
  - “I don't know why he does that!”
  - “It happened completely out of the blue!”

# What is Function of the behavior?

- To understand behavior, we must know the FUNCTION of the behavior
- Function = The purpose/reason
  - What is the purpose of the behavior?
  - What is the reason for the behavior?
  - What does the individual get out of?

# The Four Functions of Behavior

1. Avoidance/Escape
2. Access
3. Attention
4. Automatic reinforcement (AKA, Self-Stimulatory)

# Functions continued...

- 1. Avoidance/Escape:** To avoid doing something. To escape from a task/activity.
- 2. Access:** To gain access to item(s)
  - To want something
- 3. Attention:** To gain attention
- 4. Automatic reinforcement:** To gain physical sensation
  - Physical sensations may include sounds, taste, movement, or touch.



# Let's try it out!

This morning: My alarm clock went off. I touched the snooze button and went back to sleep for 5 minutes.

**A-**

**B-**

**C-**

What is the function?

Now that we can identify the ABC's as well as the function of a behavior, we can plan for the proper consequence to either increase or decrease a behavior.

So the question is....

How do we do that?



So how do we react to or prevent behaviors?

Identify the Function  
&  
Have a Plan!

# Reactive Plans

## What to do if it's already happening...

- Avoidance/Escape
  - During homework, child runs to his room
  - **Follow through!!** Do not allow him to avoid or escape the task.
- Access
  - Child punches his brother because his brother touches his toy
  - Don't give it to him. Only give it to him when appropriate behavior is occurring again.

# Reactive Plans continued...

- Attention
  - Mom is talking on the phone, child comes up to mom and pulls her hair
  - Withhold attention
- Automatic Reinforcement
  - Child places inedible object inside his mouth
  - Redirect to an appropriate behavior and/or teach a replacement behavior

# Proactive Plans

## What to do to prepare for possible behaviors...

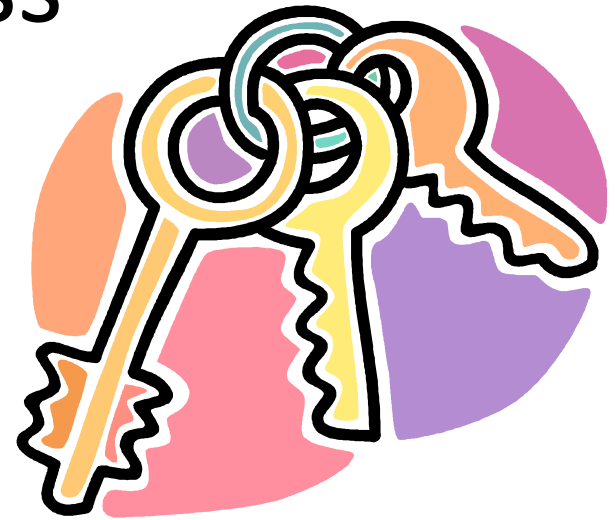
- Avoidance/Escape- Prepare the individual for what they need to do. Let them know how long it is going to take and what is going to happen after. Follow the task with a highly preferred task.
- Access- Reinforce all attempts to gain access to items appropriately by allowing access (e.g., 1 minute). Model how to ask for things. Schedule time when access to preferred items occur.
- Attention- Provide positive attention frequently. Catch them behaving good!
- Automatic Reinforcement- If you know certain tasks trigger the behavior, integrate activities that are incompatible with the behavior. Can't clap if your hands are full. Can't rock if you are standing.

## Something to remember about reducing behaviors...

- It typically gets worse and then it gets better
  - Be prepared for this and follow through with the plan
  - Do not give in when it is at its worse, or else the child will learn to act out even more next time



# Key Concepts For Success



# Follow Through

Does this sound familiar?

“This is the last time I am going to tell you to stop that... How many times do I have to tell you to stop?... I am going to count to 3. 1...2... are you going to stop?...2 1/2... you need to stop I am almost to 3... Please stop now... Ok FINE! 3!... I really need you to stop...”

# Why follow through?

- Teaches compliance
  - Child listens and follows your request
- If they need help
  - Teach the child to ask for help
- It takes more time in the beginning, but in the long run it teaches individuals how to follow directions efficiently and to do tasks on their own

# Prompting

- Prompting is a technique used to teach/help an individual do something correctly
- You prompt not only to get the correct response but also to minimize the frustration that occurs when an individual makes multiple errors (for you AND them)
- If you reinforce a correct response that is prompted it increases the likelihood that they will give you the correct response independently the next time

# Priming

- Priming is a proactive strategy of increasing the probability of appropriate behavior by preparing the individual beforehand
- Priming can be done in many ways:
  - Verbal reminder (“Remember to...”)
  - Role-Playing (Role playing the appropriate behavior)
  - Modeling (Acting it out for them to see what the behavior should look like)

# Forced Choices

A forced choice is a technique where a individual is given two choices that both lead to the desired behavior.

This technique allows the individual to have a sense of control over the situation. They feel as though they are doing things their way, but they are still doing what you need them to do.



# Catch Them Behaving

(One of the most effective techniques!) 

How many times a day do you point out what an individual is doing wrong?

How many times do you point out what they are doing right?

The more often you point out what they are doing right, the more often they will demonstrate that behavior.

# Even Tones

Your reaction may be exactly what an individual is looking for. Sometimes you may make a funny face that they enjoy as part of the reaction. Getting you to overreact also buys them time when it comes to escaping or avoiding an activity they do not want to do.  
Don't do it!

**Keep an even tone.**



# Calming Techniques

- Deep Breathing
- Squeeze the Orange
- Counting
- Crossed Arms and Legs, Hand on Forehead
- Pulling
- Stretching

# Visual Schedules

- Can be one of the most effective pro-active tools you can use.
- Presenting an individual with a list of the goals to be accomplished allows them to be prepared for what exactly is expected of them. It allows them to know when they get to do the things they prefer most and what they have to do to get there.
- They can be done as a whole group or individually. For a whole group, they can be placed on a wall in plain sight. For the individual, they can be done on a small card that the individual can carry with them.

# Transitions

- Transitions can be one of the toughest things. Transitions can be a time that requires a physical location change or even an activity change in the same space.
- Make your transitions a fun activity. Free time is a time for behaviors to become a problem. If you provide them something to do, it occupies them with a preferred behavior and prevents problems.

# Token Economy System

Token systems are used as a reinforcement plan that allows individual's to earn a larger reinforcer and can be a simple, reusable, and effective method for a group or individual. They can be adjusted to reflect tasks, time periods, or behaviors.

Ex. Marble jars, charts (stickers or icons), themed, poker chips, small objects

# Reinforcer Ideas

- Smellies... a what?
- Stamps
- Stickers
- Food
- Preferred Activities
- Special Praise
- Choice Time
- Time Outside
- Certificate's
- Special Books

# Things to Remember

An individual's attention span is related to their developmental age. **You should only expect a individual to pay attention for the same number of minutes as they are developmentally old.** A normally functioning individual that is seven years old should be able to pay attention for 7 minutes before they need the task to change in some way. A delayed individual who is seven years old but functions at the level of a five year old, should only be expected to pay attention for 5 minutes.

# Things to Remember

**Keep directions clear and simple.**

Say: Give me the book

DO NOT say: Give me the red book that is under the table next to the ball.

# Things to Remember

## **Do not over correct.**

Some individuals need more time. Watch and see if they accomplish what you ask. Maybe they need an extra 5 seconds to begin what you asked them to do.



# Things to Remember

## **Don't forget to praise.**

- Even when providing a sticker, verbal praise should be paired with it
  - Example: Good job for doing your homework and give child a sticker
- By pairing the verbal praise, the child learn to “like” the verbal praise and eventually you no longer have to give him a reinforcer (i.e., sticker)

Thank You!!

