

ABCs OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

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verbal
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MISSION & VALUES

CHANGING LIVES.
ONE CHILD AT A TIME.
ONE PROFESSIONAL AT A TIME.



PRESENTER INFO, BACKGROUND, EXPERIENCE

- Began working in the field of autism and behavior analysis in 2001
- BCBA since 2006; been with Verbal Beginnings as a senior BCBA/Clinical Coordinator since October 2018
- Worked with children and adults with disabilities in a variety of environments including home, public school, private school, and residential placements
- Extensive experience conducting functional assessments and developing behavior intervention plans for children and young adults with autism and related disabilities
- Trains families and staff to implement behavior programming to decrease maladaptive behavior and teach replacement alternative behaviors
- Mom of 2 boys (7 and 4), soccer and basketball coach

OBJECTIVES

- Parents will be able to explain the three term contingency
- Parents will be able to identify the four functions of behavior
- Parents will identify at least five proactive strategies they can use
- Parents will identify at least three reactive strategies they can use
- Parents will identify how to use these strategies in the time of online learning and working from home

THREE TERM CONTINGENCY - THE ABCs!

- Antecedent: what is occurring right before a behavior occurs
- Behavior: what the child does
- Consequence: what occurs immediately following the target behavior

THREE TERM CONTINGENCY - ANTECEDENT

- Can be
 - Direction from an adult (e.g., sit down)
 - Being told “no”
 - Having a preferred item removed or no longer work (e.g., iPad dies)
 - Presence of an object (e.g., cookie on the counter)
 - Being presented with non-preferred item (e.g., peas)
 - Internal (e.g., hunger, headache)
- These are events that trigger or occasion the behavior

THREE TERM CONTINGENCY - BEHAVIOR

- Actions that are observable
 - Sitting down
 - Asking for a cookie
 - Throwing peas
 - Hitting head against wall
 - Dropping to the floor

THREE TERM CONTINGENCY - CONSEQUENCE

- This is what happened in the environment after the behavior occurs
- Can be
 - Being given a cookie or an iPad
 - Being told “Stop that!”
 - Removal of item (e.g., peas)
 - Removal of attention (e.g., mom walking away)
 - Being told “Good job!”
- These are the events that will increase or decrease the probability of the behavior occurring again

THREE TERM CONTINGENCY - REINFORCERS AND PUNISHERS

- Reinforcers and punishers are consequences
- Reinforcers
 - Increase the probability that a behavior will occur
- Punishers
 - Decrease the probability that a behavior will occur
- Can be positive or negative
 - Positive: something is added to environment
 - Negative: something is removed from environment

FOUR FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR

- Function of a behavior: Why the behavior occurs
 - The reason for the behavior occurring
- The consequence that is maintaining the behavior
- Why is it important to know the function of a behavior?
 - Then we can develop an intervention that will be effective!

FOUR FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR

- Use the acronym EATS to remember the four functions
- Escape
- Attention
- Tangible
- Sensory/Automatic

FOUR FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR - ESCAPE

- Removal of a non-preferred or aversive activity/event
- Examples
 - Getting out of work/task
 - Avoiding social interaction
 - Leaving an unpleasant location

FOUR FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR - ATTENTION

- Access to social interaction
- Examples
 - Physical interaction (e.g., tickles)
 - Verbal admonishment (e.g., “Don’t do that. Stop!”)
 - Verbal praise (e.g., “Nice job!”)

FOUR FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR - TANGIBLE

- Access to an item or activity
- Examples
 - Access to preferred item (e.g., iPad)
 - Access to edible (e.g., cookie)
 - Access to preferred activity (e.g., trampoline park)

FOUR FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR - SENSORY/AUTOMATIC

- The behavior itself is reinforcing
- The behavior adds or removes a sensory stimuli
- Examples
 - Hand flapping
 - Head banging
 - Scratching an itch
 - Taking Advil to get rid of a headache

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES (ANTECEDENT MANAGEMENT)

- Interventions put in place to reduce the probability that challenging behaviors will occur
- These are strategies used to alter the environment before maladaptive behavior occurs that will reduce the likelihood of the behavior occurring
- These strategies also increase the probability that appropriate behaviors will occur

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES (ANTECEDENT MANAGEMENT) - EXAMPLES

- Change the environment or set up room so it is less likely that the behavior will occur
- Example
 - Child runs away from work area to escape homework
 - Put desk against wall and sit next to child and between child and door to minimize opportunities to elope

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES (ANTECEDENT MANAGEMENT) - EXAMPLES

- Use schedules and routines
- Examples
 - Follow predictable routines (e.g., bedtime is always pjs, teeth, book, lights out)
 - Written or visual schedule (e.g., for the day, for getting dressed)
- Visuals are especially helpful as they are tangible and can be continually referenced

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES (ANTECEDENT MANAGEMENT) - EXAMPLES

- Set clear contingencies and expectations
- Review these contingencies and expectations proactively (throughout the day and before potentially challenging times)
- Pair these contingencies and expectations with visuals, written schedules, and/or timers

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES (ANTECEDENT MANAGEMENT) - EXAMPLES

- Examples
 - When giving directions, don't present as a question/suggestion (e.g., "Pick up the pencil" not "Can you pick up the pencil when you have a second?")
 - Tell child what to do; don't say what not to do (e.g., "Use your inside voice" not "Don't whine/scream")
 - Use first then language (e.g., "First clean your room, then snack")

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES (ANTECEDENT MANAGEMENT) - EXAMPLES

- Dense schedule of reinforcement
- Provide behavior specific praise
- Example
 - Provide praise at least 2-3 times as often as you are providing constructive feedback
 - Provide praise whenever your child does what you ask, follows directions, or does something nice
 - Be specific - “I love how you picked up your room and put all your toys away”

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES (ANTECEDENT MANAGEMENT) - EXAMPLES

- Non-contingent reinforcement - provide access to the reinforcer that maintains the maladaptive behavior BEFORE it occurs
- Example:
 - If screaming is maintained by attention
 - Then provide attention for appropriate vocalizations BEFORE screaming occurs
- Example:
 - If hitting is maintained by escape from demands
 - Then allow escape “breaks” for compliance with demands

PROACTIVE STRATEGIES (ANTECEDENT MANAGEMENT) - EXAMPLES

- Alter the expectations and break tasks up
- Examples
 - Plan more times for breaks, especially if problem behaviors are maintained by escape from tasks
 - Lower the effort (e.g., scribe for child instead of expecting them to write/type)
 - “Chunk” tasks into manageable parts
 - When terminating a highly preferred activity, transition to a moderately preferred activity instead of directly to a non-preferred task

REACTIVE STRATEGIES (CONSEQUENCES)

- Interventions put in place to reduce the probability that challenging behaviors will occur AGAIN
- These strategies are what we do after a challenging behavior occurs
- These strategies should be used in conjunction with antecedent strategies as well as teaching procedures to increase appropriate behaviors

REACTIVE STRATEGIES (CONSEQUENCES)

- Consequences should be planned ahead of time
- Consequences should be consistent; you should follow through each time!
- Consequences can be previewed as rules
 - If you throw your toys, you will have to pick them up before you have a snack

REACTIVE STRATEGIES (CONSEQUENCES) - EXAMPLES

- Reinforcement should be provided regularly when your child engages in an appropriate behavior
- This is the most effective and efficient way to increase appropriate behaviors
- If a child is more likely to get attention/access to tangibles/escape from non-preferred tasks when they act appropriately, they are more likely to engage in those behaviors as opposed to challenging behaviors

REACTIVE STRATEGIES (CONSEQUENCES) - EXAMPLES

- Extinction is when we stop reinforcing a challenging behavior and only provide reinforcement for appropriate/replacement behaviors
- Steps
 - Determine the reason why the behavior is happening
 - Identify and actively teach appropriate replacement behaviors
 - Reinforce replacement behaviors with functional reinforcer
 - No longer reinforce maladaptive behaviors (ignore!)

REACTIVE STRATEGIES (CONSEQUENCES) - EXAMPLES

- Ignoring is hard!
- You are ignoring the BEHAVIOR not the child
- Ignoring is:
 - Keeping a neutral face and voice tone
 - Continuing to direct the child to what they should be doing
- Ignoring is not:
 - Saying “Don’t do that”
 - Leaving the child alone

REACTIVE STRATEGIES (CONSEQUENCES) - EXAMPLES

- Time out: removal of access to reinforcers
- Time out can be effective if used for behaviors that are maintained by ACCESS to something (attention, tangibles)
- They are generally not effective for behaviors maintained by escape (since the child is seeking to leave the environment/task/activity)

REACTIVE STRATEGIES (CONSEQUENCES)

- For behaviors that are maintained by access to attention, you can use time out from attention
 - Attention is removed for a prescribed length of time
 - Child may have to sit in a specific location where he can see other people getting attention but cannot access it
 - Once prescribed time has passed, normal interaction with the child should resume; there should be no residual or ongoing consequence

REACTIVE STRATEGIES (CONSEQUENCES)

- For behaviors that are maintained by access to tangibles, you can use time out from tangibles
 - Access to preferred tangibles is removed for a prescribed length of time
 - Child may have to sit in a specific location where he can see other people accessing preferred item, but he cannot access it
 - Once prescribed time has passed, normal access to the tangible should resume; there should be no residual or ongoing consequence

COVID AND WHAT TO DO RIGHT NOW

- These are unprecedented times for all of us
- There is no “normal” right now, which is hard for us and may be even more difficult for our children
- Finding a balance between working from home, online schooling, and regular life is difficult; and coping with maladaptive behaviors makes this exponentially more challenging

COVID AND WHAT TO DO RIGHT NOW

- Give yourself a break and ensure you are practicing self-care
- Be flexible with your expectations
- Use routines and schedules
- Set reasonable expectations for yourself and your child
- Focus on increasing your use of antecedent management strategies
- Your kids can tell when you're anxious and they feed off your anxiety and stress
- Know that you are doing your best

Q&A





THANK YOU!

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, CONTACT

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