**Review:**

* Behavior is observable and measurable
* Every behavior has a function/purpose/is not random
* Challenging behavior is usually communicative
* Challenging behavior is often related to events before and after
* Therefore, identify a reason for the   
  problem behavior

**Communication as a Function:**

* Every behavior has a purpose
* Regardless of whether challenging behavior is for Sensory, Escape, Attention, Tangible, it is also typically because the individual has a tough time communicating
* Analyze the function – What is the person trying to say?
* Teach Functional Communication Training (FCT) as part of any good ABA program

**Classifying the Main Functions of Behavior – Why Does Behavior Occur?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| S | Sensory | The behavior feels good or meets a sensory need |
| E | Escape | From person, task, environment |
| A | Attention | Desire for attention from peers, adults |
| T | Tangible | Desire for a specific item, activity, “My way” |

NOTE: A behavior can serve multiple functions

**Determining Function:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Antecedent** | **Behavior** | **Consequence** |
| What happened before  the behavior | Behavior of concern | What happened after  the behavior |

**Developing a Treatment Plan:**

* Treatment must be feasible in natural situations
* Plan must be customized to the individual
* Consider the ability of the caregivers/teachers to implement the plan consistently
* Program for generalization & maintenance of treatment effects

**Rules to Incorporate into Treatment:**

* Always teach replacement behavior
* Functional communication training: Recognize antecedent and prompt appropriate language/communication
* Use of antecedent strategies can prevent problem behavior altogether
* Change consequences (do opposite of function)
* Reinforcement systems

**What’s in it For Me?**

* Why should I behave properly when screaming/kicking/yelling *[insert other negative behavior here]* gets me what I want??? (and fast!)
* Why do you require me to do so much to get what I want when I can *[insert negative behavior here]* and get it immediately?

**ESCAPE/AVOIDANCE**

Replacement Behavior:

* Functional Communication Training (FCT)
  + I need a break
  + I need help
  + This is too hard
  + Etc.
* Tolerating non-preferred activities
* Tolerating error correction/assistance
* Shaping time on task
* Tolerating transitions/delays/waiting

Antecedent Strategies:

* Program for frequent breaks ***contingent upon appropriate behavior***
* Follow less preferred activities with highly preferred activities (first/then)
* Offer 2-3 choices for non-preferred activities (forced choice)
* Provide clear visual/verbal cues for beginning and end of a task (e.g., timer, verbal countdowns, “Just this page”, “2 more”, “These 5 and that’s it”, etc.)
* Clear expectations – clear and concise instructions
* Use visuals while providing instruction
* Behavioural rehearsal (e.g., role play, video model, social storyTM, etc.)
* Group chants (e.g., “When I wait quietly, I get what I want”) (Hanley et al., 2007)
* Time timers
* First/Then boards
* Visual Schedules
* Choice Boards
* Social Stories / Social Narratives
* Video Modeling

Curricular Revisions:

* Reduce the effort of the task demand
* Ensure that the level of the task demands are equivalent with the student’s skill level
* Reduce the # of responses/items/duration of the task
* Increase the size of the items per page
* Color vs. black and white curriculum materials
* Form of task (e.g., pencil/paper vs. audio/oral instructions/responses)
* Reduce boredom of task (be creative and make task exciting)

To Increase the Likelihood of Compliance:

* Identify a positive contingency for compliance (i.e., what’s in it for them to comply)
* Use specific rather than general requests (i.e., don’t give the option by saying, “Can you do…?” Instead, just say, “Do this”)
* Do not repeat requests – say it once, then follow through by providing guidance if necessary

Consequence Strategies:

* Follow through with task demand
* Goal = Do not let the problem behavior make the demand go away
* Block access to reinforcement until compliance occurs
* Praise for attempts

**ATTENTION**

Replacement Behavior:

* Functional Communication Training:
  + Look at this / See…
  + Come here
  + Let’s play
  + Want to hear a joke?
  + Raise hand
* Appropriate waiting
* Independent leisure skills

Antecedent Strategies:

* Provide regularly scheduled attention
* Provide interesting activities for individuals to engage in when adult attention is diverted (e.g., books, blocks, etc.)
* Provide predictable signals of when attention will be available (i.e., 10 minutes, when this worksheet is done)
* Reinforce for on-task behavior
* Reinforce for appropriate attention-seeking behavior
* Reinforce for playing quietly

Consequence Strategies:

* Ignore the behavior (not the individual)
* Stay neutral (avoid facial reactions)
* If it’s safe, walk away and engage yourself in another activity
* If it’s safe, briefly remove the child from the activity

**TANGIBLE**

Replacement Behavior:

* Functional Communication Training
  + I want…
* Tolerating waiting
* Tolerating sharing
* Terminating preferred activities
* Transitioning to a less preferred activity
* Accepting “no”

Antecedent Strategies:

* Provide scheduled toy and activity changes
* Offer food/drink/toilet regularly and predictably
* Identify precursor behavior (i.e., grimacing, restless behavior) that may indicate a need and prompt for appropriate alternative behavior
* Offer alternatives when denying requests
* Sharing: “Trade you”
* Teach waiting: “When I wait quietly, I get what I want”
* Provide a clear warning for transitions *(e.g., flashlights off and on, 1-min warning, countdown from 10)*
* Rearrange sequence of events so that non-preferred activities are followed by preferred activities
* First/Then
* Visual schedule that indicates when student can access tangible

Consequence Strategies:

* Do not give the student the toy/activity
* Redirect to another item/activity
* Wait until the student is calm for 5 seconds and then prompt them to ask appropriately

**SENSORY**

Replacement Behavior:

* Determine the function of the sensory behavior
* Offer function-based, appropriate alternatives (e.g., chew toy instead of biting finger)
* Time and place

Antecedent Strategies:

* **Engagement**
  + Limit down time so individual cannot practice stereotypic behavior
  + Provide appropriate leisure activities that may provide same feedback
  + Enrich environment
* **Structure**
  + Structure individual’s day with reliable and predictable sequence of leisure activities

Consequence Strategies:

* Block/Interrupt the behavior
* Redirect the individual to a more appropriate activity (i.e., replacement behavior)
* Reinforce/Praise for engaging in more socially appropriate behavior

**IN CONCLUSION**

**Warning:**

* Extinction Burst: Behavior may get worse before it gets better
* If behavior is accidentally reinforced, it can get worse and stay worse – behavior can occur at a higher rate than when you started
* Therefore, if true extinction cannot be done, then don’t use extinction as part of your treatment plan

Diagram

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**Summary:**

* Teach permanent *replacement* strategies
  + Eliminating the behavior without teaching individuals functional ways to replace the behavior is only a temporary solution
* Problem behavior serves many purposes depending on the environment, situation, etc.
  + Therefore, multi-component interventions may be needed
* Intervention involves changing social situations and environments – Not the individual
  + Intervention is not something that you do *to* an individual, it is something that you do *with* an individual

**Lifestyle Change is the Ultimate Goal:**

* Successful interventions allow a person to influence others without having to resort to problem behavior
* They permit an individual to participate directly in the community and have more social, vocational and leisure opportunities

**References:**

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* Carr, E. G., Levin, L., McConnachie, G., Carlson, J. I., Kemp, D. C., & Smith, C. E. (1994). *Communication-based intervention for problem behavior: A user's guide for producing positive change.* Paul H Brookes Publishing.