Intervening with Students with Problematic Behaviors

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Learning Objectives

• Fundamentals of effective individualized behavioral intervention for students with Autism

• Strategies for implementing researched-based interventions for students with Autism
A Teacher’s Revelation

“I’ve come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized.”

Haim Ginott
Child Psychologist
Fundamentals
(Thoughts from George Sugai)

• Redundancy builds fluency
• We must teach behavior as relentlessly as we teach academic content
• 3 places to invest
  – School Conditions, Quality Teachers, and Classroom conditions
• Primary prevention
• Easier to change experiences, than mindsets

Algonzzine, Wang, Violette (2001, p. 16)
Intervening with students with problematic behaviors...

For your punishment, write 100 times, "I will not waste my time on meaningless tasks."
Why can intervening with problematic behavior be difficult for students with Autism?

• Because of the characteristics of students with Autism
  – Deficits in communication, understanding relationships, difficulty adjusting behavior to fit social context, insistence on sameness, highly restricted patterns of interest, and hyper or hypo-activity to sensory input!

• These can be triggers to problematic behaviors!
So how do we intervene?

• Prevent
• Teach
• Reinforce
• De-Escalate

• AND use functional assessment to effectively intervene!
What is behavior?

- All behavior is a form of communication
  - To GET
  - To GET AWAY
    - From something...

- The behavior will accomplish this!
Functions of Behavior

- Attention
- Tangible (objects & activities)
- Sensory
- Get away

GET

Diagram:
- Attention to GET
- Tangible to GET
- Sensory to GET
- Get away to GET
Behavioral Errors

• Why?
  • “Skill Deficits”--Students do not have appropriate skills
  • “Performance Deficits”--Students have skills, but do not know when to use skills or choose not to use them in specific situations
  • Students have not been taught specific classroom procedures & routines
  • Skills are not taught in context
  • Skills are not rewarded & encouraged consistently
Traditional Discipline vs. PBIS

**Traditional Discipline:**
Stop undesirable behavior by:
- Punishment
- Focuses on the student’s problem behavior

**PBIS:**
Stop undesirable behavior by:
- Replacing with a new behavior or skill
- Altering environments
- Teaching appropriate skills
- Rewarding appropriate behavior
Applied Behavior Analysis Principles

- Behavior is shaped by experiences
  - Learned

- Functional relationship between behavior & environmental events
  - Antecedent events
  - Behavior
  - Consequence events
Guiding Behavioral Principles

- Human behavior is lawful
- Human behavior is important, understandable, & predictable
- Human behavior is learned
- Human behavior is malleable & teachable
- Behavior does not occur in a vacuum... it is affected directly by environmental events
Fundamental Rule

• You should not propose to reduce a problem behavior without identifying the alternative, desired behaviors the person should perform instead of the problem behavior (O’Neill, pg. 71).

Diana Browning Wright, 2010
Behavior Intervention Plans

- The redesign of ENVIRONMENTS!!!
- It is about what WE can do DIFFERENTLY.

Behavior Support Plan template
Available:
http://doe.sd.gov/oess/sped_pbis.asp
Click “SD Behavior Support Plan” on right side

Diana Browning Wright, 2010
Components of effective response

• Target or Problem Behaviors
• DATA (Baseline and Intervention)
• Hypothesis (Function of behavior)
• Antecedents---Antecedent modifications
• FERB (Functionally Equivalent Replacement Behavior)---Teaching Strategies
• Positive Reinforcement
• Reactive Strategies
• Team Communication
Response focus for today

• Antecedent modification
• Functionally Equivalent Replacement Behaviors
• Positive Reinforcement
• Reactive Strategies
ANTECEDENT MODIFICATION
STRATEGIES
Examples of Preventive Strategies

• **Increase academic skill levels**
  (Ongoing assessment to ensure instructional match & success)

• **Modify the curriculum**
  (Interests, preferences, choice, sequence)

• **Modify the demands**
  (Quantity, difficulty, input, output, groupings, alternative tasks)

• **Clarify the expectations**
  (Use of schedule, charts w/ visual cues of steps)

• **Reorganize the physical & interactional setting**
  (Supplies available, pair or independent seats, structure interactions)
Antecedent/Setting Event Strategies

- **Remove** a problem event.
- **Modify** a problem event.
- **Intersperse** difficult or unpleasant events with easy or pleasant events.
- **Add** events that promote desired behaviors.
- **Block** or neutralize the impact of negative events.

Diana Browning Wright: Available at www.pent.ca.gov
FUNCTIONALLY EQUIVALENT REPLACEMENT BEHAVIORS
What then shall I do????

AKA: Make the problem behavior inefficient

What skills can be taught to the student that:

1) will meet the same need, or function, as the problem behavior,

AND

2) will improve the student’s ability to cope and adjust to the circumstances?
Alternative Skills to be Taught

• **Replacement Skills**: One-to-one replacement skills that serve the exact function as the problem behavior.

• **General Skills**: Broad skills that alter problem situations and prevent the need for problem behaviors.

• **Coping and Tolerance**: Skills that teach students to cope with or tolerate difficult situations.

(Bambara & Knoster, 1998)
Replacement Skills

Match Skills to Function

Get/Obtain: Attention, Activity, Objects

• Express choice or preferences
• Follow schedule & participate in routines
• Request help
• Initiate interaction or gain attention
• Self-manage within activities
• Work toward delay of reinforcement

Diana Browning Wright: Available at www.pent.ca.gov
Replacement Skills
*Match Skills to Function*

**Avoid/Escape:** Activity, Attention, Demands

- Use schedule or checklist to self-manage
- Set own work goals
- Express preferences or choice
- Request and take break
- Participate in steps or portion of routine
- Request or seek help
Communication Skills

**TEACH**—How to ask for or signal for:

- help
- interaction
- time alone
- more time
- choice
- a break
- attention
- reduced demands
- alternative assignment
- opportunity to move around

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Some considerations

• Reinforce the use of alternative skills
• Respond immediately & consistently
• Select natural consequences to the skill
• Use praise & social interaction
• Incentives should be age-appropriate & logically related to the behavior
• Use Contingency Contracts
Common errors....

- FERB more difficult than problem behavior
- Suggested FERB doesn’t get the same payoff as Problem Behavior
- Problem behavior yields more payoff
- Problem behavior NOT maintained by what you thought: FBA problem
- Environment providing insufficient reinforcement and structure
- Environment actively punishing; no 5 positives to 1 correction
POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT
Positive Reinforcement

• It’s not so much what you say, but how you say it that matters!!!
  – Behavior Specific Praise
  – Skillfully and intentionally delivered
  – Genuine
5:1
Gets the job done!!!
Reinforcement

- **INTRINSIC**
  - Self-praise, Self "satisfaction"

- **PRAISE**
  - from ADULTS - Parent, Teachers, Staff, Peers

- **SOCIAL STATUS & RECOGNITION**
  - Peers or Adults

- **PRIVILEGES**
  - Choice-making, sense of "power"

- **CONTINGENT ACCESS**
  - If-then; 1st ___, then ___; Activities-Free time/Free choice

- **CLOSURE**
  - Completing a set, finishing a list has compulsive features

- **TANGIBLES**
  - Money, stickers, camera, etc.

- **PRIMARY - EDIBLES, PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSES:**
  - Natural/Synthetic Stimulants, Repetitive Behaviors
  - Pacifying, Rocking, Nail Biting

taken from: Diana Browning Wright
www.pent.ca.gov
“Rewarding Appropriate Behavior”
According to Sheldon
REACTIVE STRATEGIES: HANDLING MAJOR BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS
A – E: Support and Correction

A. Teach the behaviors you want
B. Cue alternative behavior
C. Handle disruptions without interrupting the flow of instruction
D. Debrief (use the teachable moment)
E. Consequences (if needed)
What Every Teacher Must Master

- **Shaping**: Reinforcing closer approximations to an end goal
- **Building Behavioral Momentum**: First some irresistible tasks, then follow with less desired
What Every Teacher Must Master

• Gaining, Maintaining and Re-establishing following disruption:
  – Instructional Control: Following any direction given by a teacher
  – Stimulus Control: Doing what I should be doing in that setting (e.g., seatwork at the desk)
Sequence

• Redirect/Reinforce—(stimulus change procedure)
  – Can you take this paper up to my desk for me please?”
  – “Talk about nothing”

• Prompt/Cue desired behavior

• Reinforcement Sandwich
  – Can apply consequence within the structure
  – 60 seconds max
Teaching Interaction – Reinforcement Sandwich

- **A** (Reinforce earlier behavior)
- **B** State inappropriate behavior with calm voice ("Just now, you…")
- **C** Empathy statement
- **D** State appropriate behavior
- **E** Rationale statement
- **F.** Require response
- **F.** (Require performance)
- **G.** Consequence given/ ½ given or mentioned
- **H.** Reinforce compliance

Diana Browning Wright, Available pent.ca.gov
A Correction Strategy explained...

1. **The Top Bread** - Approach the student, get on eye level or below. Tell the student what he had done correctly before the problem occurred.

2. **The Cheese** - State the problem behavior that just occurred.

3. **The Meat** - Remind the student of what he/she will do as previously agreed.

4. **The Condiments** - Tell the student you will continue with another task and wait for him to show you the agreed-upon behavior to use in this stressful situation.

5. **The Bottom Bread** - When he has demonstrated the agreed upon behavior, return to the student at eye level and give verbal reinforcement.

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OFFERING CHOICES

1st Give a positive statement
2nd Pause
3rd Give choices
4th Pause, move away, allow time to process

- non-preferred paired w/ consequence
  use visuals

+ preferred paired w/ consequence
  use visuals

EXAMPLE:

"You have had a great morning, so far."  Pause  "If you do not get done, you will need to finish during recess."  OR  "You can finish now, and go to recess."  Pause, move away, allow to process

"You have been quiet & paying attention during circle"  Pause  "You are being loud & touching others & will need to sit in quiet time away."  OR  "You can sit quietly with hands in lap and stay for snack."  Pause, move away, allow to process
Behavior Support and Correction that Minimally Disrupts the “Flow of Instruction”

Phase C: Handling the Problem Skillfully
Behavior Support and Correction

Support and correct skillfully
Reactive and Deescalation Strategies

Teach What You Want
Cue alternate

Handling the problem

A
B
B

Debriefing, using the teachable moment

E

Consequences if needed

D

C

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5 Rules of Responding

1. Don’t direct peer pressure to a misbehavior publicly when the matter can be handled gently in private.
2. Do move toward the student creating an aura of personal contact.
3. Develop nonverbal cues.
4. Identify the misbehavior after the reprimand and direct the student toward the desired activity.
5. Direct the sanction to a specific person.
Ten Variables that Affect Compliance

1. Stop using a question format
2. Reduce distance
3. Achieve eye contact
4. Limit to two requests
5. Reduce loudness of request
6. Give the student time
7. Cue alternative
8. Flat tone, words spaced
9. Describe minimal compliance to exit
10. Reinforce
Let’s talk about JUNK BEHAVIOR!!!!!

Any age-typical behavior that may be annoying, but is not harmful to self, others, property, or animals. WHY????????

- To get you to respond or react.
- To make you angry (get even).
- To get you to give in to them.
- To get you to comfort them.
- To make you go away.
- To get you to do it for them.
- Because it is just a habit.
- Because it is what kids do at this age.
Behavior Support and Correction that Minimally Disrupts the “Flow of Instruction”

Phase D: Debriefing
Behavior Support and Correction

Teach What You Want

Cue alternate

Support and correct skillfully
Reactive and Deescalation Strategies
Handling the problem

D Defusing, using the teachable moment

E Consequences if needed

taken from: Diana Browning Wright
www.pent.ca.gov
Debriefing

- Active Listening
- Thinking about my inappropriate behavior
- Problem-solving steps
- Teacher’s request for behavioral assistance
- Incident report
Eventually, Billy came to dread his father’s lectures over all other forms of punishment.
Thinking About My Behavior

Student: __________________ Date: __________________
Staff Member: __________________ Position: __________________

Whenever someone acts inappropriately it is important to figure out what went wrong so that they can learn to do better next time. This form will help you understand and describe what happened so that next time you can make a better choice.

When did my problem behavior happen? Where did it occur and who was present at the time?

What bad choice did I make? (undesired behavior)

What negative outcomes might occur (or did occur) if or when I use this unacceptable behavior?

What could I have done instead? (Put a ☑ by the one(s) you might do next time if a similar situation occurs)

What might happen that is positive if I choose an appropriate behavior to handle my problem?
Behavior Support and Correction that Minimally Disrupts the “Flow of Instruction”

Phase E: Consequences (if needed)
Behavior Support and Correction

Support and correct skillfully
Reactive and Deescalation Strategies

Teach What You Want
Cue alternate
Handling the problem

Debriefing, using the teachable moment

Consequences if needed

taken from: Diana Browning Wright
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Punishment? To Achieve What?

- Do I consider alternatives?
- Do I consider logical consequences and response cost when needed?
- Have I considered tighter structure?
Need To Punish?

- Why? Who will benefit?
- Can I problem solve with this student and reach a solution?
- Can I develop a communication system with the parents/guardians?
- Can a mentor serve as parent if appropriate?
- Do I understand the behavior’s purpose?
- Is there high contrast present? 5 to 1?
- Is the punishment clearly a response cost?
- Do I add undesired or take away desired?
If you must...

- Consider “Logical Consequences”
- Consider “Response Cost”

- How will I address the side effects of punishment (fight and flight)?
- Have I considered alternatives to suspension?
Response Cost....explained

• It occurs when a stimulus is taken away as a consequence of behavior and the effect is to reduce the frequency of the behavior.

• In general, any time you use the word penalty you are talking about response cost. A speeding ticket is a negative reinforcer.
Debrief and try again 😊

- Perhaps increase structure
- Increase intervention levels
- If significant, Consider Behavior Intervention Plan
Questions?

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