Responding to Problematic Behavior

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Differential Reinforcement

- A procedure in which a specific, desirable behavior is followed by a reinforcer while other behaviors are not. The result is an increase in the desirable behaviors and extinction of the other behaviors.

Reducing Problem Behavior Through Differential Reinforcement

Differential Reinforcement of Other Behaviors (DRO):
 Reinforcing a child for emitting any behavior other than the inappropriate behavior for a specified time period.

Example: A child is reinforced for any behavior other than talking out of turn during dinner.

Reducing Problem Behavior Through Differential Reinforcement con't.

<u>Differential Reinforcement of Incompatible Behaviors (DRI):</u>
Reinforcing a child for exhibiting a behavior that cannot be exhibited at the same time as the inappropriate behavior.

Example: Reinforcing a child for in-seat behavior when reducing out-of-seat behavior. The two are incompatible; they cannot occur at the same time.

Reducing Problem Behavior Through Differential Reinforcement con't.

<u>Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behaviors (DRA):</u>
Reinforcing a more appropriate behavior that the parents wish a child to learn, instead of exhibiting the inappropriate behavior.

Example: Reinforcing a child's use of an alternative communication system rather than his/her engaging in a tantrum when making requests.

Procedures for Reducing Behavior

- **<u>Extinction</u>**.
  Withholding reinforcement from a previously reinforced response.
- <u>Issues in using extinction</u>
  - Behavior **<u>must</u>** be maintained by attention.
  - Reduction in behavior is gradual; usually not an immediate effect
  - Extinction bursts
  - Differential reinforcement of appropriate behaviors
  - Ignoring student v. ignoring behavior

FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Conducting A Functional Behavioral Assessment

- Functional Behavioral Assessment is:

  – Built on the assumption that, if a child keeps repeating a problem behavior, that behavior must be serving some purpose or **function** for the child – otherwise, he or she would not keep repeating it

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Conducting A Functional Behavioral Assessment*

- Functional Behavioral Assessment is:

  – A process of looking for patterns in what happens around and/or to the student just before and just after the problem behavior

Conducting A Functional Behavioral Assessment*

- Functional Behavioral Assessment is:

  – Examination of these patterns to identify their purpose or their "function". Some possible functions are: *avoiding something, getting something, and making something happen*

Problem Behavior Usually Serves A Purpose

- Functional assessment is used to identify the purpose of behavior

- Problem behavior may serve many purposes and may require many interventions. Thus, a behavior shown by a child to his/her mother may be maintained by attention while the exact same behavior is exhibited with the child's father in order to avoid something unpleasant.

- The goal of intervention is education, not just behavior reduction

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Behavior Does Not Happen in a Vacuum

- Antecedents – events that set the occasion for a behavior to occur
  - Instructions
  - Introduction or removal of items
  - Teacher/peer attention (or lack thereof)
- Behavior – response that occurs
- Consequence – events that occur after a behavior
  - May make the behavior more/less likely to occur again
- Functions – what maintains a behavior

Theories of How Functions Work

- Common Functions of Behavior
  - Parent/sibling Attention (socially mediated positive reinforcement)
  - Escape or Avoidance of Unpleasant Events (Socially mediated negative reinforcement.)
  - Sensory Consequences (automatic reinforcement)
- Communication Hypothesis – all behavior serves a communicative function
- Behavior, even behavior that looks very similar, can serve very different functions. That means that the <u>same behavior</u> exhibited by <u>the same child but in different situations</u> may have <u>different functions</u>.

Functions Served By Behaviors

Positive reinforcement

Negative reinforcement

Sensory

Positive Reinforcement

- Socially mediated positive reinforcement occurs when a stimulus is presented by another individual following the occurrence of a behavior and the behavior is strengthened.
- In socially mediated positive reinforcement the reinforcers maintaining behaviors may include attention, tangibles, and/ or access to preferred activities.

What are examples of socially mediated positive reinforcement that occur in homes?

Positive Reinforcement

Situation - A child sees a candy bar in the grocery store and wants it.

1) Child screams "I want candy" and throws a tantrum. Mom/Dad hands him the candy bar in order to keep the peace. *(Reinforcement of inappropriate behavior)*

2) Child turns to the adult with him and signs 'candy'. Mom/Dad hands
   the candy bar to him and thanks him for asking nicely.
   (Reinforcement of appropriate behavior)

Discussion: *In both examples, the child has learned that his behavior gets him what he wants, so he is likely to repeat this behavior next time.*

Negative Reinforcement

- Socially mediated negative reinforcement occurs when an unpleasant stimulus or situation is terminated by another individual contingent on a behavior and the behavior is strengthened.
- In socially mediated negative reinforcement the reinforcing consequences for the behavior may involve escape from unpleasant tasks, social interactions and/or physical stimulation.

What are examples of socially mediated negative reinforcement that occur in homes?

Situation: The radio is playing loudly in the room.

1) The child comes into the room and begins screaming. Somebody rushes over to turn down the radio.
   (Reinforcement of inappropriate behavior)

2) The child comes in and covers his ears saying "Too loud". Somebody asks the child if he would like to have the volume on the radio turned down. When the child answers "yes", the volume is turned down.
   (Reinforcement of appropriate behavior)

Access to tangible reinforcement

- Access to tangible reinforcement, a form of positive reinforcement, maintains problem behavior when the child's behavior results in their gaining access to a tangible item (e.g., toys). Thus, a child who receives access to a toy following a tantrum is more likely to tantrum again the next time they want a tangible reinforcer.
- What are examples of problem behaviors in the home that are maintained by access to tangible reinforcement?

Case Study #1

- Dylan's mother gives him his homework which he is supposed to complete independently. Dylan begins to whine and refuses to work. He argues with his mother and throws his work on the floor. His mother says "It's okay Dylan, I know this hard for you. Let's take a break." As a result, Dylan whines, argues, refuses to work and throws his work on the floor the next time he is asked to complete his homework.
- What is the function of Dylan's behavior?

Case Study #2

- Jill whines and cries often when her father is making dinner. Her father rubs her back, verbally comforts her, and offers her a snack. Jill whines and cries more often when her father is not interacting with her.
- What is the function of Jill's behavior?

Factors To Consider In Assessing Causes Of Problem Behavior

GENERAL SETTING   INSTRUCTIONAL ISSUES

Low level of
reinforcement

    too difficult

    pacing is too fast/slow

    lack of variety

    lack of choice

Factors To Consider In Assessing Causes Of Problem Behavior

Specific Factors That Occur Before Behavior (Antecedents)

introduction of new activities

unclear instructions

removal of reinforcers

too many demands

asking child to wait

transitions

Specific Factors That Occur After Behavior (Consequences)

escape from difficult instructions

attention from parents or siblings

tangible reinforcers

Selection of Tools
Types of Assessments

- Indirect Assessment
  - Ratings Scales

- Direct Observation
  - ABC Analysis

Indirect Assessment
Checklists and Rating Scales

- Forms that ask questions that point to the functions of behavior
- Also assesses events that may have occurred but nonetheless affects the response in question
- Advantages:
  – Easy to administer
  – Requires very few resources
  – Attempt to analyze environment for setting events

Motivation Assessment Scale

Name_____ Rater _____ Date _____
Behavior Description _____
Setting Description _____

Instructions: The Motivation Assessment Scale is a questionnaire designed to identify those situations in which an individual is likely to behave certain ways. From this information, more informed decisions can be made concerning the selection of appropriate reinforcers and treatments. To complete the Motivation Assessment Scale, select one behavior that is of particular interest. It is important that you identify the behavior very specifically. *Aggressive*, for example, is not as good a description as *hits his sister*. Once you have specified the behavior to be rated, read each question carefully and circle the *one* number that best describes your observations of this behavior.

QUESTIONS   ANSWERS

QUESTIONS	Never	Almost Never	Seldom	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
1. Would the behavior occur continuously, over and over, if this person was left alone for long periods of time (For example, several hours.)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Does the behavior occur following a request to perform a difficult task?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Does the behavior seem to occur in response to your talking to other persons in the room?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Does the behavior ever occur to get a toy, food, or activity that this person has been told that he or she can't have?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Never	Almost Never	Seldom	Half the Time	Usually	Almost Always	Always
5. Would the behavior occur repeatedly, in the same way, for very long periods of time, if no one was around? (For example, rocking back and forth for over an hour.)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Does the behavior occur when any request is made of this person?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Does the behavior occur whenever you stop attending to this person?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Does the behavior occur when you take away a favorite toy, food, or activity.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Does it appear to you that this person enjoys performing the behavior? (It feels, tastes, looks, smells, and/or sounds pleasing.)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Does the behavior stop occurring shortly after (one to five minutes) you stop working or making demands of this person?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Does this person seem to do the behavior to get you to spend some time with him or her?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Does the behavior stop occurring shortly after you give this person the toy, food or activity he or she has requested?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

ABC Analysis

- Allows the parent to record behaviors as they happen
- Easy to complete
- Easy to analyze for patterns

ABC Behavior Chart

Time	Date	Antecedent/Trigger: What happens RIGHT BEFORE the behavior of concern	Behavior Describe what happened-detail the behavior of concern	Consequence/Response What happens as a result of the behavior	Adult w/child

Interpreting the ABC analysis

- Look for common themes
  - Antecedents – events that set the occasion for a behavior to occur
  - Consequences – events that occur after a behavior
    - May make the behavior more/less likely to occur again
- Do not make any causal inferences

ABC Behavior Chart

Date	Time	Antecedent/Trigger: What happens RIGHT BEFORE the behavior of concern	Behavior Describe what happened-detail the behavior of concern	Consequence/Response What happens after the behavior has occurred	Adult w/child
2/22	8am	Parent says "time to get dressed"	Child yells, "I am too tired"	Parent says "You can wait 10 more min and then you have to get dressed"	TJ
2/22	10am	Parent says "come and eat your breakfast"	Child says "I am watching TV and I do not want to eat now"	Parent says "Ok, you can come eat after the program is over"	TJ
2/22	11:30	Parent says "We are going to visit Grandma now. Go Go out to the car"	Child says "I am am playing with my toys. I don't want to leave now"	Parent tells child they are leaving when the timer goes off	TJ
2/22	2pm	Parent says "time to go home. Say goodbye to Grandma"	Child says "I do not want to leave until after lunch"	Parent says "OK, but we are leaving right after lunch"	TJ

Developing a Behavior Intervention Plan

- Have hypothesis
  - Escape, attention, etc.
- Develop plan based on functions
  - Integral part of BIP is to identify and reinforce an alternative acceptable behavior that serves the same function

- To assess effectiveness
  - Develop a system for collecting data
  - Data collection should now focus on the specific problematic behavior(s).
  - Continue to analyze the data
  - Make modifications as necessary

Things to Keep in Mind

Every moment is a "teachable" moment!

Data collection is valuable to track progress and troubleshoot, but it should never interfere with teaching!

If the child is not learning, it's the fault of the <u>teaching procedures</u>, NOT the child!

If it's not meaningful to the child, don't teach it until it is!

Behaviors always occur for a reason. It's up to US to figure out WHY.

Learning can (and should) be FUN!

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