Developing Positive Behavioral Support Programming for Students on the Autism Spectrum

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Realities

• Increasing Incidence
• Increasing Complexity
• Increasingly Complicated Lives
“What do we do when...?”
If behavior is an issue:

- Know the difference between crisis management and long-term behavior change.
Whatever you choose to do will be driven by your values?

Within the first few statements, a person’s beliefs about behavior are often evident.
Functional Behavioral Assessment:

- A process for determining the relationship between a person’s internal/external environment and the occurrence of problematic behavior.
Antecedents

• Antecedents are events that happen before the behavior.

• There are two types of antecedents:
  – Slow Triggers (Setting Events)
  – Fast Triggers (Immediate Antecedents)
Slow Triggers/Setting Events

- May happen in or out of school/classroom context.
- Conditions that increase the likelihood that behavior will occur.
  - Anxiety/Biological Issues
  - Trauma/Neurology
  - Schedule changes
  - Staff changes
  - Medications changed/missed
  - Irregular sleep patterns
  - Illness/Impending Illness
  - Missed meals
  - Excessive hot/cold temperatures
  - Argument/fight with classmates/parents/teachers
  - Difficulties on the Bus
  - Skills Deficits
  - Home/Living Conditions
  - Past/Current Experiences with School
Antecedents: “Fast Triggers”

• Events that are directly related to the challenging behavior.

• Events that immediately precede the behavior.

• Circumstances or conditions that might trigger the behavior.
Antecedents/Fast Triggers

- Teasing/Bullied
- Assignment/Curriculum Too Difficult/Boring/Easy
- Specific Type of Task/Activity
- Specific Request or Wording of A Request
- Certain Noise/People
- Unstructured Time
- Behavior of Others
- Transitions
Consequence

- Follows a Behavior or Response
- Reinforcement
- Punishment
- What is the payoff?
- What maintains behavior?
Indirect Assessment Methods

- Rating Scales/Behavior Checklists
- Learning Styles Inventory
- Comprehensive Evaluation
- ACE: Adverse Childhood Experience
- Lagging Skills Inventory
- Ziggurat Strength and Skills Inventory
- Record Reviews
Develop Hypothesis Statement

• An informed guess about the relationship between events or conditions and the individual’s problematic behavior(s). Informed means that objective information has been gathered.

• Stay away from blame.
Hypothesis Statement
(Problem Behavior Pathway)

Setting Events

- Autism/Anxiety
- Medications
- Allergies
- Communication Limitations
- Sensory Challenges
- Lack Self-Regulation and Self-Management
- Poor Social Skills
- Frequent School Changes
- Previous Experiences in School
- Home Instability

Triggering Antecedents

- Certain Demands
- Too Much Talking
- Transitions: Leaving School Bus
- Changes in Routines
- Certain academic work...too much paperwork and being read to or lectured to.

Problem Behavior

- Pinching
- Yelling
- Screaming
- Elopement
- Refusal
- Kicking
- Hitting

Maintaining Consequence

- Ends an Activity
- Gains Access to Desired Event/Activity
- Attention
- Sensory

Strengths/Skills: Rote Memorization, Learns Routines, Shows Interest in Classmates, Strong Relationship with Certain Staff Member, When Interested Can Focus on Activity for Extended Period, Likes to Help
Teaching Alternative Behaviors

- Specific alternative or replacement behaviors that must be made as (of not more) efficient and effective as the problem behavior(s).
Alternative Skills

• Problem-Solving Skills
• Choice-Making Ability
• Anger Management
• Relaxation
• Self-Management/Control
• Communication
• Social Skills
• Emotional Regulation
Now What:

• Support, but do not overly support. Enhance Resilience.
• Balance Accommodation and Assimilation
• Meaningful Work
• Know How Student Learns
• Build in Choice: Avoid Power Struggles
• Movement
• Be Present
• Addressing Sensory Needs: Fidgets
• Brain Breaks
• Purposeful Teaching
• Rapport and Relationship Building Will Be Key
• Ultimately, what are we preparing the student for in the future?
Case Study

• Lessons Learned
  – Understand a child’s entire life. Children are 24-7. Understand and work with the whole child.
  – There are many things you can not “control”. Know what you have influence over.
  – Everyone needs a champion.
  – Every child needs to experience success during each day.
Ultimately, our job is to create positive stories about children’s lives.