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

Examples

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** http://www.livesinthebalance.org/sites/default/files/ALSUP216.pdf
- ✓ **Ziggurat Strength and Skills Inventory** http://texasautism.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/ISSI.pdf
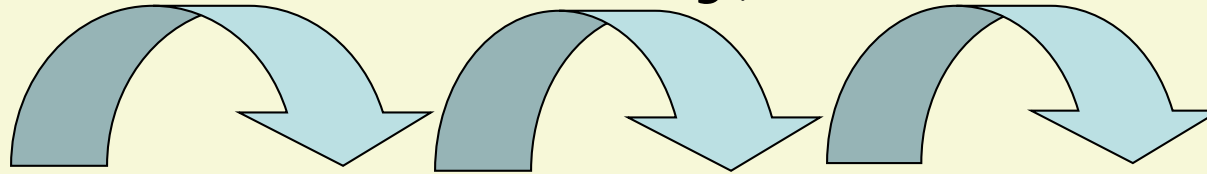- ✓ **Record Reviews**

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.