

ADDRESSING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS IN AUTISM THROUGH FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING

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Goals of this workshop

- ☐ To understand
- ☐ To Acquire
- ☐ To develop

A good Intervention will...

- ☐ Make the problem behaviour irrelevant
- ☐ Make the problem behaviour inefficient
- ☐ Make the problem behaviour ineffective
- ☐ Make the new response relevant
- ☐ Make the new response efficient
- ☐ Make the new response effective

What do we know about children with ASD?

- ❑ We know that the majority of their inappropriate behaviours are motivated by escape (from demand, instruction, social stimulation, etc)
- ❑ We know that a large percentage of their behaviour is motivated by automatic reinforcement (sensory stimulation)

Challenging in addressing problematic behaviours

- ❑ Behaviours may be chronic or episodic (seemingly unpredictable)
- ❑ Confusing history of previously attempted interventions (creating a slot machine effect)
- ❑ Parents and/or teachers may be "burnt out"
- ❑ Parents need to consider siblings while teachers need to consider other students
- ❑ Mediators may disagree about the need for intervention or what the intervention should be

What does the research show

- ❑ All behaviour serves a function, including inappropriate behaviour
- ❑ Focusing on the topography of the behaviour does not lead to success
- ❑ Understanding the function of the behaviours leads to more effective intervention

Steps to Success

- ❑ 1. Decide who will be involved in the intervention
- ❑ 2. Conduct a functional assessment of the behaviour
- ❑ 3. Develop a plan based on the assessment of the function
- ❑ 4. Implement and evaluate the plan

Identify who will aid or hinder the intervention

- ❑ For example, a well intentioned grandma may be excluded from the intervention until such time as the behaviour is under the control of numerous others

ABC vs Functional Evaluation

- ❑ Collecting ABC data may provide clues as to where to look for the function but does not necessarily lead to that discovery

Behaviour serves only 3 Functions

- ❑ Behaviour continues because it is:
- ❑ A. Positively reinforced through with tangible or social reinforcement
- ❑ B. Is negatively reinforced by avoidance or escape from an aversive
- ❑ C. Is automatically reinforced as the behaviour provides its own reinforcement through sensory stimulation

Form and Function

- ❑ Different forms of behaviour can serve the same function
- ❑ Same or similar forms of the behaviour may serve different functions

The importance of Function

- ❑ Interventions based on an understanding of functions are more effective (Carr et al, 1999)

Functional Assessment Methods

- ❑ Indirect: An interview
- ❑ Direct:
 - ❑ ABC data
 - ❑ Scatter plot
 - ❑ Functional Assessment Checklist
 - ❑ Functional Assessment Cards

Functional Assessment Methods

- ❑ Interview:
 - ❑ Good starting place
 - ❑ May provide clues as to when to collect data on the behaviour
 - ❑ May help determine the method by which to collect data
 - ❑ Can be subjective

ABC Data

- ❑ Antecedents
- ❑ Behaviour
- ❑ Consequence
- ❑ Child's reaction to the consequence

Scatter Plot

- ▣ Takes very little time
- ▣ Useful for high frequency behaviours

Functional Assessment Cards

- ▣ May take a few minutes per card
- ▣ Need many cards for comparison
- ▣ Need at least two or more recorders

Functional Assessment

- ▣ Less subjective than ABC data
- ▣ May identify patterns
- ▣ May reveal correlations between settings and behaviour

How to Develop and Intervention based on function

- ❑ Determine the child's current communication repertoire
- ❑ Replace the inappropriate behaviour with verbal operants that are:
 1. more efficient than the inappropriate behaviour
 2. are less effortful than the inappropriate behaviour
 3. Are understood by many listeners

We want to make the problem behaviour

- ❑ 1. Irrelevant (reinforcement is available through the emission of other behaviours)
- ❑ Inefficient (the new response brings reinforcement faster and with less effort than the problem behavior)
- ❑ Ineffective (the problem behaviour no longer results in reinforcement.

Making the behaviour ineffective

- ❑ Research has shown that for a child to acquire a new, more appropriate response the previous inappropriate response must be effectively placed on extinction. This means that it no longer serves a function.

Caution!

- ❑ When reinforcement no longer follows a behaviour which was previously effective it gets worse before it gets better
- ❑ Sometimes effective interventions are prematurely abandoned because of this

Ways to lessen the extinction burst

- ❑ Non-contingent reinforcement
- ❑ Development of a functional alternative
- ❑ Make the alternative more efficient and effective

Making the problem Behaviour Irrelevant

- ❑ Anticipate and Prevent
 - Insert a neutralizing activity
 - Make instructions or tasks easier
 - Add aids to learning (visual cues)
 - Increase reinforcement (build it into the task)
 - Provide non-contingent reinforcement (decrease the motivation)
 - Break activities down into smaller steps and reinforcement smaller steps

High Probability Requests

- Having the child complete 4 to 5 high probability requests before issuing a low probability request will create behavioural momentum (increase the likelihood that the low probability request will be followed)

Behaviour and Communication

- There is a direct relationship between problem behaviour and communication deficits in Autism

Manding

- In lay terms a mand is essentially a request either for something tangible or for information.
- When thirsty (EO) I see water (SD) I ask for water (mand) and receive water (reinforcement)
- When lost (EO) I see a person (SD) I ask for directions (mand) and I'm no longer lost (reinforcement)

How to teach manding

- ❑ Need to identify what is reinforcing for the child
- ❑ Need to stop reinforcing inappropriate methods of acquiring the reinforcer
- ❑ Need to determine the form of the new response to acquire the reinforcer (verbal, picture, sign, etc)
- ❑ Need to contrive an establishing operation (motivation)
- ❑ Need to identify the discriminative stimulus (cue) that signals the availability of reinforcement.

Functional Communication Training

- ❑ Select a response modality that would be successful for the child (sign, gestures, PECS, voice output)
- ❑ Select a response form that the child can learn rapidly (e.g. break card)
- ❑ Contrive numerous learning opportunities for the child to use and have the new response reinforced

Functional Communication Training, con'ted

- ❑ Provide cues/instructions for the child to use the communication response
- ❑ Provide physical prompts for the child to use the communicative response
- ❑ Verbally label the child's request as s/he makes it.

Functional Communication Training, con'ted

- ❑ Fade prompts and Instructions to promote independence
- ❑ Specifically teach generalization across settings in which the data indicates the behaviour may occur

Matching the Strategy to the Function of the Behaviour

- ❑ For attention Maintained behaviours
 - Give effective instructions
 - Provide non-contingent reinforcement
 - Use differential reinforcement
 - Use consistent planned ignoring

For Object / Activity Maintained Behaviours

- ❑ Response cost procedures
- ❑ Extinction
- ❑ Teach an appropriate alternative communicative response to request objects/activities

For Automatically Reinforced Maintained Behaviours

- ❑ Get a medical examination
- ❑ Interrupt and redirect
- ❑ Provide non-contingent opportunities to engage in activities that provide the same or similar sensory input

Contact us for Future Training Events

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