Supporting Young Students with Challenging Behavior

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Today we will...

- Principles of behavior/ functions of behavior
- Preventive strategies
- Consequences strategies
What behaviors do you see?
Behaviors and why we define them:

- Aggression
  - Pinching
  - Biting
  - Hitting
- Self-injury
- Non-compliance
- Elopement
- Property destruction
According to the DSM-V, Autism Spectrum Disorder is classified as a neurodevelopmental disorder.

Neurodevelopmental disorders have an onset that occurs during an individual’s developmental period.

This means that the disorder typically occurs early in development, usually before the child begins grade school.

The three main diagnostic criteria for autism spectrum disorder are marked developmental impairments in the following areas:

1. Social communication (verbal and non-verbal)
2. Social interaction
3. Restricted repertoire of activities and interests
Learning Barriers

- Impaired Social Communication
- Non-verbal or limited verbal communication
- Unusual speech patterns (echolalia, volume/pitch impairments)
- Difficulty with conversations and expressing needs and desires
- Receptive language / auditory processing difficulties
Learning Barriers Continued:

- Impaired Social Interaction
- Lack of joint attention
- May seem unaware of others’ existence
- Theory of mind deficits
- Lack of peer relationships
- Lack of play skills (i.e., cooperative play, imitation, pretending)
- Difficulty reading overt and subtle social cues
- Lack of eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures
Learning Barriers: Behavioral Excesses and Deficits

- Sensory and motor challenges that affect behavior (hand-flapping, rocking, slouching in seat, inattentiveness, etc.)
- Restricted interests and repetition (preoccupation with objects, themes, TV shows, etc.)
- Adherence to specific non-functional routines
- Tantrums (kicking, screaming, crying)
- Physical aggression (hitting, biting, self-injury)
Real Quick....

- I slept at least 8 hours last night
- I had a well-rounded breakfast this morning that included fruit and whole grains
- I did not rush to get here
- I had no conflicts with other people this morning
- I have no other obligations that I need to attend to right now
Behavior does not occur in a vacuum...

Student

Health

Immediate demands

Physical environment

History
Behavior Assumptions: Can we agree...

- People do not engage in self-injury, aggression, property destruction or seriously disruptive behaviors solely because they have a disability.
- Challenging behavior has a message - I am bored, I am sad, I am frustrated, I need some attention. It communicates a want or need.
- Behavior serves a specific function.
- Behavior is related to events preceding or following it.
- One behavior can serve multiple functions**
CHILDREN USE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR WHEN THEY DON’T HAVE THE SOCIAL/COMMUNICATION SKILLS THEY NEED TO ENGAGE IN MORE APPROPRIATE INTERACTIONS.

WE NEED TO FOCUS ON TEACHING CHILDREN WHAT TO DO IN PLACE OF THE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR.

BEHAVIOR THAT PERSISTS OVER TIME IS WORKING FOR THE CHILD
Then we find this to be true...

- Important to place CB in a context rather then people “having” behaviors

- If we consider challenging behavior occurring in people, it is logical to try to change the people- when CB occurs in a context, let’s change the context

- Behavior change occurs by changing environments
A-B-C model: The Three-Term Contingency

Antecedent  Behavior  Consequence
A-B-C

- **Antecedent**: Situation or event that cues the behavior

- **Behavior**: The response

- **Consequence**: What happens after the behavior (The consequence will determine the likelihood of the behavior occurring again)
Looking at behaviors this way:

- It allows us to analyze behavior occurring in any environment
- By understanding the events that occurred immediately before and immediately after a behavior, we are able to evaluate the cause (antecedent) and the effect (consequence) of a behavior

Examples of Antecedents:

- Demand (come to circle, write your name, line up...)
- No engagement
- No attention

Examples of Consequences:

- Escape
- Attention
- Obtain an object

Cooper, et al, 2007
Antecedent: Dee is sitting at table with peers during craft making.

Behavior: Dee bites self.

Consequence: Teacher says “no, don’t do that”, pulls hand away from mouth, redirects to activity.
Teacher prompts Dee to work on craft?
Teacher verbally prompts class to come to circle

CP remains at computer

Teacher continues to transition class and CP remains at computer, *teacher prompts CP again with visual*
Teacher walks to CP, turns off computer and visually prompts him to come to circle.
Looking at the function

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Function?

Obtain something/get something

Escape/Get away from something
Functions of Behavior

Obtain
- attention
- tangibles
- activities

Escape
- attention
- tangibles
- activities

Sensory
- visual
- vestibular
- auditory
Behavior Change

- Eliminate
- Reduce
- Increase
- Change Or Shape

Target Behavior
Universal Supports: will address the needs for most students...

Tier 2 supports: small group of similar students that are not responding to universal supports

Tier 3: individual, intensive supports/interventions for students who do not respond to Tier 1+ Tier 2 supports
Universal Supports:

- Preventing challenging behaviors from occurring (we want to teach, yes?)
- They are proactive and address the antecedent part of the chain
- Gives control back to the teacher
Antecedent

Dee is sitting at table with peers during craft making

Behavior

Dee bites self

Consequence

Teacher says “no, don’t do that”, pulls hand away from mouth, redirects to activity
Universal Supports: Primary Prevention
Effective for 80% to 90% of students

- Establish school/class wide expectations
- Teach expectations
- Address antecedent contributors to problem behaviors
- Use acknowledgement systems
- Ensure effective instruction
- Ensure consistent consequences for misbehavior
- Use data to guide decision-making
Classroom Arrangement and Environmental Supports

- Physical Design
- Environmental Cues
- Schedules and Routines
- Transitions
- Promoting Engagement During Large and Small Group Activities
- Simple Rules/Expectations
- Ongoing Monitoring and Positive Attention
Setting up the environment

- Physical classroom set up (how can it be set up to prevent CB?)
  - Thoughtful?
  - Convenient for who?
  - Organization
- Visual Schedules
  - Form of representation (object, picture, word)
  - Helps with independence
- Visual Supports
  - Video modeling*
  - Helps with prompting
- Visual Boundaries
  - Leave location (escape)
  - Expectations for work clear?
  - Minimize large open spaces
Schedules and Routines

- Class Schedules
  - Where are they posted?
  - What do they look like?
  - How do you get your students to use them?
- Individual schedules
  - When is this needed?
  - What does it look like?
  - Transitioning to a typical schedule
- Changes to the schedule
  - Special events
  - Fire drills
  - Absences
Transitions

- How many?
- Most of the time: Preferred to non-preferred
- Warnings
- Too many during the day...
- Let’s all go together?
- It takes too long...
- Where are we going?
- Preferred item as distractor
Preferred item as distractor

- Evidence based
- Make it as natural as possible
- Keeps hands busy
- Helps with children who prefer “objects”
- All ages!
Pre-correction

- Designed to prevent or interrupt predictable problem behavior from occurring
- Increase the likelihood of expected behavior taking place.
- Teacher *anticipates* problem behavior based on the student(s) previous behavior patterns or knowledge of student behavior in general.
- Given this information, the teacher takes measures to disrupt this behavior pattern or chain
Intervention for escape maintained behaviors
- Must be used prior to challenging behavior
- Teacher control/ only 2 items
  - Not open ended
- Start with 2 highly preferred items
- Gradually move to items that are more preferred
Collaboration

- Can be combined with other interventions
- Allows for escape, student must be ok with attention as well
- Working together...

- Task: clean up  “I’ll pick up the trucks you pick up the blocks”
- Task: assignment  “I’ll do #1 you do #2”
Antecedent

• Universal Supports
• Schedules
• Preferred Item
• Pre-Correction
• Choice
• Collaboration

Behavior

Consequence
Behaviors

**DECREASE**
- Aggression
- Spitting
- Vocalizations
- Noncompliance
- Elopement
- Pica

**INCREASE**
- Requesting
- Responding
- Compliance
When considering new/ replacement behaviors

- Is the new skill:
  - Developmentally appropriate
  - In their repertoire?
  - Functional Equivalent?
- Can we use chaining to teach this new skill?
  - Forward Chaining
  - Backward Chaining
- Approximations?
  - Sometimes close is better then nothing...
Functional Communication

- Intervention that addresses all functions of behavior
- Replaces behavior with functional alternative to obtain *same* outcome
Functional Communication Training

- Does the student have the skill already?
  - Look at motivation
  - Why are they not using that skill?
  - Schedules of reinforcement

- Does the student need to learn the skill?
  - First, we teach the new skill
  - Interventions that increase behaviors
  - High reinforcement
  - Shaping the behavior
Social Stories

According to Gray (2010) 'a Social Story describes a situation, skill, or concept in terms of relevant social cues, perspectives, and common responses in a specifically defined style and format.'
A-B-C model: The Three-Term Contingency

Antecedent  Behavior  Consequence
Reinforcement

- Definition of Reinforcement
- Frequency/Intensity
- Quality
- Immediacy
- Negative vs. Positive Reinforcement
- A bit about Punishment
Differential Reinforcement

- Differential Reinforcement of Other Behavior (DRO)
  - Absence of the behavior for period of time

- Differential Reinforcement of Incompatible Behavior (DRI)
  - Behavior that is incompatible with CB

- Differential Reinforcement of Low Rates of Behavior (DRL)
  - Lower rate during a period of time

- Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behavior (DRA)
  - A new behavior that was taught
“Time-Out” from Reinforcement

- What was reinforcing?

- Typically toys, activity...

- Be mindful of reinforcing “escape” maintained behaviors

- Set time (age appropriate 1 minute per year of life)

- Why this often fails...
Planned Ignoring

- Only if the function of the challenging behavior is **attention** maintained
- It’s called PLANNED for a reason... do you have a plan?
- Can you actually implement it? (peer/ other adults)
- Behaviors are often strengthened with interval reinforcement, so this is a very real consideration
How do we know if what we are doing is working?
Data Collection

- Why do we collect data?
- I don’t have the time...
- How can I make it easy, but still work for me?
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Remember!

Children engage in challenging behavior because it works for them!
You did it! Any questions?

Thank you!
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