Managing Tantrum Behavior

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Challenging Behavior

Behavior emitted by a child that results in self-injury, or injury to others, causes damage to the physical environment, interferes with the acquisition of a new skill and/or socially isolates the child. (Doss & Reichle, 1991)

Behavior is Communication

- For children who have limited communication skills, challenging behavior serves to communicate needs and wants
- For example:
  - Hit my head: receive medical attention
  - Bite my friend: receive adult attention or escape non-preferred activity

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Behavior is Communication

- Even for children who have good communication skills, often their challenging behavior is a form of communication.
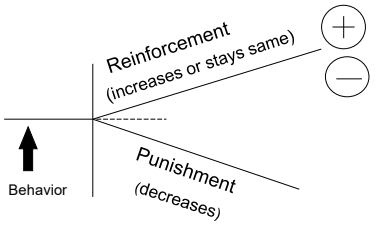
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Behavior

DEFICIT   EXCESS

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Reinforcement Paradigms

Reinforcement
(increases or stays same) $+$
                                $-$

Behavior

Punishment
(decreases)

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So why do tantrums occur?

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Form Vs. Function

FORM		FUNCTION
hit		obtain attention
hit	→	escape activity
hit		clear earache
cry		obtain attention
grab toys	→	obtain attention
call names		obtain attention

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Obtain
(+) → Objects
Activities
Attention
Sensory

Avoid/
Escape
(−) → Objects
Activities
Attention
Sensory

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Setting Events

- Heat
- Noise
- Hunger
- Sleep
- Fear for their safety
- Arguments at home

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Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

Indirect Assessment

Direct Assessment

Functional Analysis (FA)

ID Function

Intervention Matching

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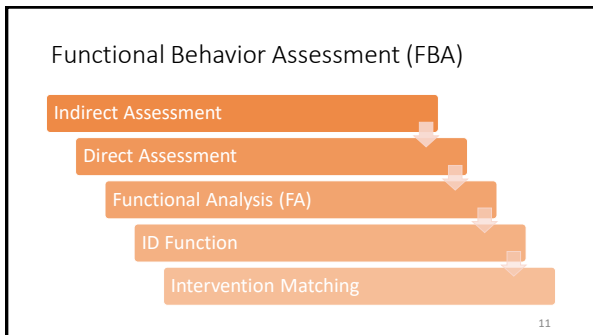
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Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS)

- Behavioral Science of Human Behaviors
- Interventions
  - Practical
  - Based on FBA
  - Teach independence, adaptive, or improve communication
  - Monitored with systematic data collection and analysis
- Social values during assessment and intervention
- Behavior change observed across all environments and over time

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Belief System

- When a student doesn't know how to drive........
     we teach him.
- When a child doesn't know how to wash her hands...........
     we teach her.
- When a person doesn't know how to read.......
     we teach her.
- But when a child doesn't know how to behave...........
     we punish him. ☹

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"So what do I do?"

01	02	03	04	05
Prevent behavior before it starts	Recognize triggers to target behaviors	Recognize behavior chains (what happens before escalation)	Ask for an FBA if behavior doesn't improve	Ask for a BIP to assist you and your family or program

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Strategies

Improve	Improve the Learner's Communication
Improve	Improve the Adults' Communication
Increase	Increase Reinforcement
Trick	Trick Them
Provide	Provide Consequences Consistently

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Improve Learner Communication

Communication Intervention	• Enhanced Milieu Teaching • Mand Training • Speech Therapy
Functional Communication Training (FCT)	• Not facilitated • Prompts faded • AAC may be needed

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Improve Adult Communication

Schedules		
Activity Schedules	Prespecified Reinforcers	
Task Analysis	If then	
Daily Schedules	First then	
Weekly Schedules		
Monthly Calendars		

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Reinforcement

Increase Reinforcement
- Praise
- Tokens
- High 5s

Fade Reinforcement
- Once behaviors are learned
- Fade systematically

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Trickster Interventions

Choice	Distractor	HPR	Embedding
• Power!	• Preferred Item • Fidget Item	• 3-5 High P commands • Followed by non-preferred	• Music • Fidget toys • Other preferred activities

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What NOT To Do During/After Child Tantrum

- Tantrum
- Over-react
- Shouting or raising voice
- Arguing
- Tugging or grabbing the student
- Get in the student's face
- Nagging or preaching
- Engaging in power struggles
- Cornering the student
- Make threats you can't carry out

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Planned Consequences

Extinction
- Attention
- Escape
- Tangibles

Punishment
- Time Out
- Response Cost

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Extinction during/after Tantrums

Keep children safe without providing reinforcement

Respond without emotional reaction

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What Does "Extinction" (Attention)

- No use of target child's name
- No eye contact
- No emotions
- No lectures
- Limited "chasing"

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What Does Extinction (Tangible) Look Like?

NOT GIVING TOY   NOT GIVING FOOD   NOT GIVING CLOTHING

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What Does Escape Extinction Look Like

- Not allowing running from circle
- Not allowing escape from bathroom
- Not allowing break from table work
- Not allowing interaction with adult or peer to stop

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Characteristics of Extinction

Gradual reduction of behavior

May cause an "extinction burst"
- increase in rate/intensity of responding
- induce aggression
- spontaneous recovery

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Tips for Extinction

Maintaining extinction for a sufficient time

Everyone must do it

Be aware of extinction bursts

If stopped, behavior will re-occur at greater rates and intensities.

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Punishment Procedures

- Decreasing behavior by:
  - Removing consequences
  - Adding consequences

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Disadvantages of Punishment

Tends to elicit aggressive behavior

Can produce other emotional side effects (crying, etc.)

Can cause people and settings to become conditioned punishers

Does not teach any new behavior

May cause students to model our behavior

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Disadvantages of Punishment

- Immediate, short-term effects
  - Behavior usually returns but only strengthened
  - Professionals may opt to use this method and disregard using reinforcement procedures

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Negative Punishment

- Decreasing a behavior by removing a consequence
  - Time Out
  - Response Cost

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Time-Out ___ _____

- Time out is not a chair
- Time out is not a place
- Time out is not restraint
- Time out is not a threat

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Time Out From Reinforcement

- Opportunities to obtain reinforcers are eliminated for a short time.
- Ways of implementing a LEGAL time-out:
  - take away a toy
  - time out ribbon
  - remove other children to a safe place

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Recommendations for Time-Out

- Should not exceed one minute per year of age
- Use of bathroom and drink must not be withheld
- Do not time out from an aversive event
- Child should be monitored (no attention)
- Release is contingent on targeted challenging behavior or pre-selected criteria
- Document all use and length of time out

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Response Cost

DECREASING A BEHAVIOR BY REMOVING A REINFORCER

LATE FEES (LOSE MONEY)

TRAFFIC TICKETS

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Other Planned Consequences

Physical Guidance

Blocking

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Physical Guidance

- Physically guiding the child through the task without providing attention
- Usually done from behind
- Try not to "carry" the child
- Praise when child complies
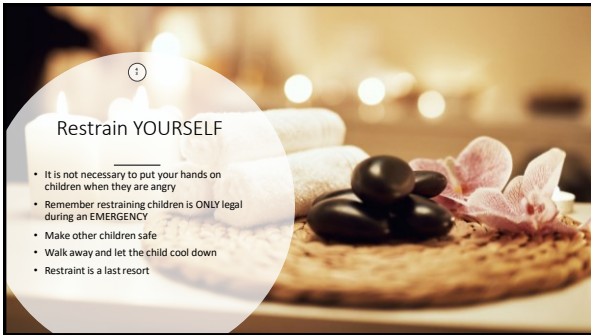 - less enthusiastic than when task completed independently

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Blocking

- Anything to prevent injury to student, peers, or environment
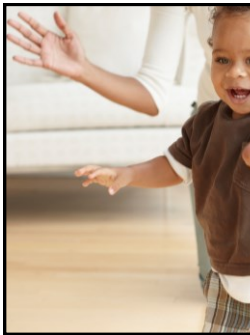 - Block with body
  - Block with object (be careful)

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Restrain YOURSELF

- It is not necessary to put your hands on children when they are angry
- Remember restraining children is ONLY legal during an EMERGENCY
- Make other children safe
- Walk away and let the child cool down
- Restraint is a last resort

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"So what do I do?"

- Prevent behavior before it starts
- Recognize triggers to target behaviors
- Recognize behavior chains (what happens before escalation)
- Complete an FBA
- Develop a BIP

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