Thinking Functionally About Problem Behavior: Tier 1 Instruction for all Staff

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Overview
- Explain the ABC's of behavior using non-behavior analytic jargon
- Train school or clinic staff how to think functionally about problem behavior
- Detail the top 4 behavior management traps and be able to train staff on how to avoid them.

Why Proactively Teaching Behavior is Important

Focus on Behavior Instruction vs. Behavior Management
Teaching Social Behavior

“If a child doesn’t know how to read, we teach.”
“If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we teach.”
“If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we teach.”
“If a child doesn’t know how to drive, we teach.”
“If a child doesn’t know how to behave, we ………. teach? ………. punish?”

“Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?”

John Herner (NASDE President) Counterpoint (1998, p.2)

Positive Behavior Support
Assumptions

- Behavior is “learned” and thus can be unlearned
- Punishment does not teach new behavior
  - e.g., time out, in or out of school suspension MAY teach students what not to do, but does not teach them an alternative behavior (what to do instead of problem behavior)
- Being “fair” does not mean doing the same thing with each student, it means giving each student what he/she needs.
- Student behavior won’t change until adult behavior changes

Teaching Social Behavior

The Far Side by Gary Larson

High above the hushed crowd, Rex tried to remain focused.

Still, he couldn’t shake one nagging thought: He was an old dog and this was a new trick.

Assessing Tier 1: Classroom Behavior Management

Components of a Successful Classroom – Self Assessment
Thinking Functionally About Problem Behavior

Explanations of Human Behavior

Biophysical Explanations
- Genetic and hereditary effects
- Biochemical explanations
- Brain damage

Developmental Explanations
- Psychoanalytic Theory
- Stage Theory of Cognitive Development

Behavioral Explanations
- Obtain pleasant/desirable consequences & avoid/escape unpleasant consequences

Focus on what we can change

- We cannot:
  - prescribe medication
  - change the students previous experiences
- We often cannot change the parenting practices in the home
- Some venting is good, but too often it takes over leading to less productive meetings, instruction & supports for students

There is a LOT we can do in the classroom to Change student problem behavior

This starts with student learning……

How to Use Behavioral Explanation to Determine Why Students Are Acting Out

Functional Behavioral Assessment Defined
- Examining the environment to determine the function problem behavior serves or-
- What does the student get out of continuing to engage in the problem behavior?
- Two main reasons students act out
  - Obtain something desirable
  - Avoid something unpleasant

ABC’s of Understanding Behavior

- Understanding the function of behavior is the first step in changing the behavior.
- Understanding comes from repeated observation of:
  - What happens before (A or antecedent) the behavior occurs?
  - What is the behavior (B)?
  - What happens after (C or consequence) the behavior occurs?
Behavioral Function
Obtain Desirable Events

- Obtain Internal/Private Stimulation
  - Smiles/hugs
  - Preferred activity
  - Toys/food/games
  - Money?
- Obtain External/Socially Mediated Stimuli
  - Talking/interaction
  - Preferred activity
  - Toys/food/games
  - Money?

Obtain Attention from Objects/Activities
- Daydreaming
- Visual stimulation
- Body movements
- Endorphins?

Behavioral Function
Avoid/Escape Undesirable Events

- Avoid/Escape Internal/Private Events
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Anger
  - Hunger
  - Fatigue
  - Illness
  - Medication effects
- Avoid/Escape External/Socially Mediated Things/Events
  - Smiles/hugs
  - Frowns/reprimands
  - Talking/interaction
  - Preferred activity

Obtain Attention from Tasks/Events
- Task demands
- Difficult tasks
- Changes in routine
- Interruptions of desired activities

Nonexamples of Problem Behavior Functions
- Power
- Repressed Anger
- Paybacks
- Because they have ADHD (or some other label)

Case Study: Juan
- Fifth-grade general education classroom plus reading tutor
- Over 5 discipline referrals resulting in in-school suspension in recent months
- In-school suspension is held in the principal’s office with principal. He will complete his work when sitting next to principal at her desk.
- Referrals were usually the result of extremely disruptive behavior in the classroom (e.g., hiding under desks, crying loudly, throwing papers and school supplies).
- Disruptive behaviors occur at times when student is expected to work on his own
- Difficult staying on task, unless he receives frequent redirection or praise from the teacher.
- Recent assessments indicate work is not too difficult for him.
- Consistently seeks and enjoys praise from any adult figure.

Antecedent | Behavior | Consequence
--- | --- | ---
Individual work | Tantrum | Referral to office

Function
When Juan is expected to do individual seatwork, he attempts to gain attention by having a tantrum in class. This strategy works for him because he is sent to the principal’s office where he is required to have a one-to-one discussion with the principal.

Function = Adult attention
Motivating Operations

- Environmental events that have an indirect impact on problem behavior
- MOMENTARILY changes the value of the reward or punishment
- Either increase or decrease the likelihood that a behavior will occur
- Can be removed in time or occur at the same time as the antecedent

Examples of Motivating Operations

- Missing breakfast
- Crowding in the cafeteria
- Having a fight on the way to school
- Bad grade on a test
- Substitute teacher
- Forgetting to take allergy medication

Motivating Operations

- Antecedents
- Behavior
- Consequence

Nonexamples of Motivating Operations

- Disability Labels
  - ADHD
  - ED
  - Autism
- Events that do not alter value or rewards/punishers
  - Hair color

Motivations vs. Antecedents

- Motivating Operation
  - Set UP the problem behavior
- Antecedents (aka triggers, hot buttons)
  - Set OFF the problem behavior

A-B-C Recording Form

Child's Name_______________________Observer____________________________  Date__________
Setting_____________________________________Obs. Start Time___________Stop Time_________

Antecedent Events | Behaviors | Consequent Events
--- | --- | ---
1. Children running around in circle
2. Children standing in circle and talking
3. Bell rang and kids ran toward building

A-B-C Recording Form

Child's Name_______________________Observer____________________________  Date__________
Setting_____________________________________Obs. Start Time___________Stop Time_________

Antecedent Events | Behaviors | Consequent Events
--- | --- | ---
1. Michael pushed Tim from behind
2. Michael told Tim *"you're a nerd!*" and hit him on the head
3. Bell rang and kids ran toward building

1. Tim yelled at Michael to "Stop!"
2. Tim did nothing; Michael laughed
3. Tim yelled "Stop it, stupid!"
Angela, an 8th grade student, came to school very angry. Her parents had been having a heated argument, and they both turned their anger on Angela right before she left the house. Shortly after arriving in to school, Angela’s teacher told her that her shirt, which contained a sexually explicit slogan on the back, was in very poor taste and that she must go and change it immediately (this is a pattern - she has come to school on several occasions dressed inappropriately). Angela responded by yelling at the teacher and refusing to change the shirt. Her friends laughed and cheered Angela’s defiance. The teacher told Angela to go to the office.

**Case Study: Angela**

**Motivation Operations**

- Arguing at home between parents and between Angela and her parents

**Motivating Operations?**

- How to make behavior less likely to occur
Case Study: Angela

**Antecedent**
- Verbal reprimand by the teacher concerning the shirt

**Antecedent Strategies?**

Case Study: Angela

**Teaching/promoting positive skills and/or behaviors**
- What replacement behaviors to teach?
  - Replacement Behs = Behaviors to be taught to the student that serve the same function as the inappropriate behavior(s). Replacement behaviors provide the student with a socially appropriate means to meet their needs without having to resort to problem behaviors

**Positive and reductive consequences**
- What positive consequence will she get if she engages in appropriate behavior?
- What negative consequence will be applied if she engages in *inappropriate* behavior?

Preventing Adult Behavioral Errors

**BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT TRAPS**

Behavior Management Traps

- 1
- 2
- 4
- 5

**Big Ideas**
- All staff should receive training on the ABCs of problem behavior & thinking functionally
- Always determine “why” a student is engaging in problem before intervening.
- Intervene early - before the problem behavior occurs
  - Focus on antecedent interventions
- Prior to referring students for Tier 2 support ensure Tier 1 is in place.