Approaches for Students Who Present Complex Challenges

Dr. Cathy Pratt, BCBA-D
Director
Indiana Resource Center for Autism
Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
Indiana University
Phone: (812) 855-6508
Fax: (812) 855-9630
prattc@indiana.edu
www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca
Realities

- More students
- More complex issues
- More complicated lives
Categories of Behavior

- Refusal
- Withdrawal
- Self-Injury/Abuse
- Aggression
- Property Destruction
“What do we do when...?”
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.
When we get calls about behavior, part of the process is figuring out what the true issues are. Is this an issue about lack of resources, limited training/knowledge, classroom management, school culture, home conditions, or what is really happening.
Functional Behavioral Assessment:

• A process for determining the relationship between a person’s internal/external environment and the occurrence of problematic behavior.
Gather Information

• Once behavior is determined, need to begin process of identifying antecedents and consequences.
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
  - Argument/fight with classmates/parents/teachers
  - Skills Deficits
  - Home Conditions
  - Past/Current Experiences with School
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

- Informal or structured interviews with multiple informants, including the individual.
- Rating Scales/Behavior Checklists
- Learning Styles Inventory
- Comprehensive Evaluation
- ACE: Adverse Childhood Experience
- Lagging Skills Inventory
- Ziggurat Strength and Skills Inventory
- Record Reviews
Information Obtained from a Functional Assessment

• Under what conditions does the individual do well?
• During what times or activities is the individual most successful?
• What are areas of strength and interest for the individual?
• Are identified strengths and interests utilized for programming purposes and are they reinforced?
• Does the person have an opportunity to be successful each day?
Direct Methods for Gathering Information

- Frequency Recording
- Duration
- Scatterplot
- Setting Events
## Scatter Plot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.E.</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis Statement
(Problem Behavior Pathway)

Setting
Events
- Autism/Anxiety
- Seizures
- Medications
- Allergies
- Communication Limitations
- Sensory Challenges
- Lack Self-Regulation and Self-Management
- Poor Social Skills

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
- Aggression

Maintaining Consequence
- Ends an Activity
- Gains Access to Desired Event/Activity
- Attention
- Sensory
Hypothesis Statement (Problem Behavior Pathway)

Setting Events  Triggering Antecedents  Problem Behavior  Maintaining Consequence

Strengths/Skills:
Teaching Alternative Behaviors

• Specific alternative or replacement behaviors that must be made as 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
- Resilience
- Perspective Taking
Case Study

- Movement
- Rapport
- Champion
Indiana School Mental Health Initiative

- Seeing a Need
- Behavior Consultants Statewide: Community of Practice
- Social Emotional Learning
- Mental Health Leads
- Five Foundational Documents
- Website: Lookup Indiana
- Bring Change to Mind
- Summit
- Training/Coaching