




Behavior and Down Syndrome

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1

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2



At DSG, we believe:



All people have the right to live, love, work, play, and pursue their life aspirations in their community.

3


Our ultimate goal is that the people with Down syndrome we support end up living a meaningful, productive, and authentic adult life where they are exercising choice, doing things for themselves, feeling safe and secure, living a healthy life, having friends, and belonging in community.

4

Objective of this Presentation



Following this presentation, participants will be able to define reinforcement and punishment. Participants will also be able to label the four functions of behavior. Lastly, participants will be able to identify basic proactive strategies for promoting appropriate behavior.



5

Applied Behavior Analysis


- ABA is the science of behavior
- Change in environment to impact **socially significant** behavior
- Data
- Function of the behavior
- Skinner (the founder)
 - Started in a lab with animals, but found that principles apply to all living organisms.

6

What is behavior?


- According to Johnston & Pennypacker (1993a), behavior is *“that portion of an organism’s interaction with its environment that is characterized by detectable displacement in space through time of some part of the organism and that results in a measurable change in at least one aspect of the environment.”*



7

Excuse me?

- Simply stated, behavior is ANYTHING that a person does that can be observed and is measurable.




8

Where it all goes wrong

- Too much of the behavior
- Not enough of the behavior
- Wrong place, wrong time, wrong people



All of these may indicate a skill deficit

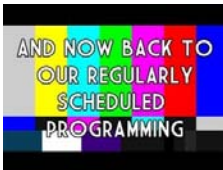



9

An important message

There are **NO BAD KIDS.**

Just kids behaving in ways that have worked to get their needs met.

10




What behaviors do you see?



11

Definitions matter


- Define the inappropriate behavior
 - Measurable
 - Observable
 - Describe exactly what you see
 - Do not infer feelings of the individual
- An objective and measurable definition will help get accurate data, help determine the cause of the behavior, and ultimately help determine if behavior is improving.



12

Wait, why did it all go wrong to begin with?

- Behavior is maintained by the consequence, i.e., what happens right after the behavior occurs.
- Consequences have the power to increase a behavior or decrease a behavior.
- Consequences fall into 2 categories:
 - Reinforcement
 - Punishment




13

Consequences

- Reinforcement
 - Anything that occurs after a behavior that **INCREASES** the likelihood of the behavior occurring again in the future
- Punishment
 - Anything that occurs after a behavior that **DECREASES** the likelihood of the behavior occurring again in the future

Consequences are defined by the effect they have on behavior.

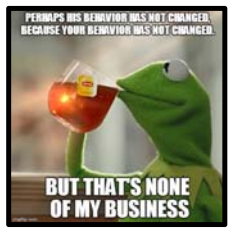

Consequences are **NOT** defined by the effect **YOU** intended them to have on behavior.



14

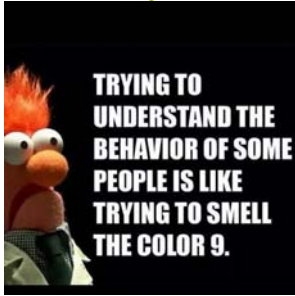

But why is the behavior occurring in the first place?

- Humans behave to get their wants and needs met.
- Humans only behave in ways that work.
 - If behavior increases, it means it is working to get a need met.
 - The behavior is getting reinforced.
- You have to change your behavior to make sure that inappropriate behavior does not work.

15



Ok, but what need is my child trying to meet?

16

4 Main Functions of Behavior

- Access to Attention
- Access to Toys/Activities/Food
- Escape/Avoid
- Sensory/Automatic

17

But what about control?


- Everyone wants to control their environment.
- But everyone is just looking to control
 - Access to Attention
 - Access to Toys/Activities/Food
 - Escape/Avoid
 - Sensory/Automatic




18

But what can I do about it?


- Punishment is a bad teacher
 - By definition punishment only decreases behavior. If you want to increase appropriate behavior, you will need to use reinforcement.



19

But what can I do about it?



- Shift focus to the good stuff
 - Teach appropriate behavior.
 - Catch your child being good.
 - Reinforce appropriate behavior.



20

Ignore the Junk



- Junk behavior is behavior that is not harmful or destructive.
- Junk behavior is just annoying.
- You have the power to ignore junk behavior
 - Don't say anything about it
 - Don't react in any way
 - Do an activity independent of the child
 - Pivot praise
 - Catch the child being good or calmly re-direct

21

Proactive Strategies

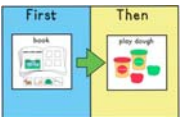

- Respond, but don't react.
 - Keep your voice and your face neutral
 - Don't take it personally
 - Use fewer words, if any at all
 - Take away eye contact
 - Ignore the junk

22

Proactive Strategies



- Set the stage for success
 - Proactively set up the environment
 - Have contingency plans
 - Provide sufficient processing time
 - Count to 10
 - Use visuals

23


Proactive Strategies

- Tell them what **TO DO** not what not to do
- Use specific verbal praise
- Use tokens
- Be consistent







24

Next Steps



- If problem behaviors persist or are dangerous to self, others, or property, it may be necessary to conduct a formal functional behavior assessment (FBA) to systematically determine the function(s) of the behavior(s).
- Contact a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) for guidance in how to complete an FBA and implement a formal behavior plan if necessary.



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