Making Teachable Moments Out of Meltdowns for Toys, Treats, and Attention

Kyle Dawson & Christie Stiehl, BCaBA

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UHCL Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities

Overview

- Introduction to problem behavior

- Common functions (causes) of problem behavior
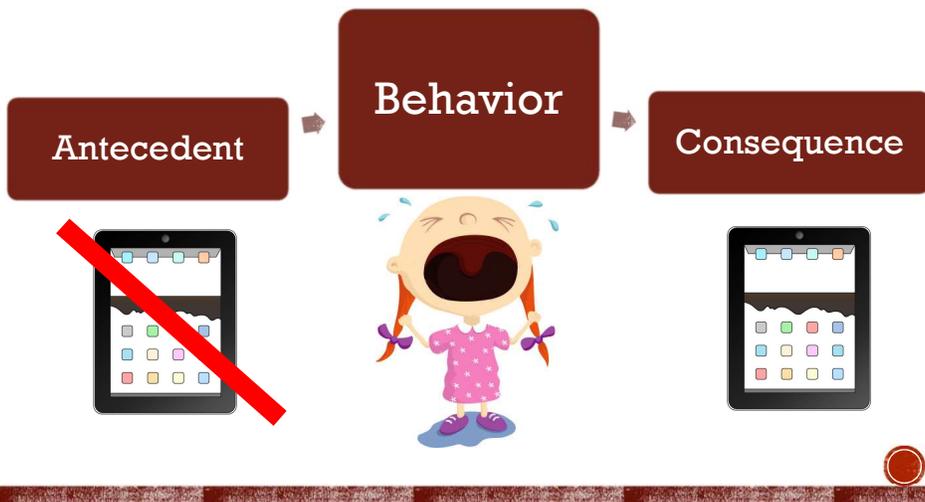
- Determining the function

Break (15 min)

- How to reduce problem behavior to get toys, treats, and attention

Introduction to Problem Behavior

A B C s of Behavior

Antecedent ➡ Behavior ➡ Consequence

Form: What it looks like

Function: Why it happens

Common Forms of Problem Behavior

- **Aggression**
  - Hitting
  - Kicking
  - Biting
- **Tantrums**
  - Crying
  - Yelling
  - Spitting
- **Noncompliance**

- **Property Destruction**
  - Throwing
  - Breaking
- **Running away**
- **Self-Injurious Behavior**
- **Stereotypy** (repetitive behaviors)
- **Pica** (eating inedible items)

What Do We Know?

- Problem behavior usually occurs for a reason

- May be the easiest way to get what they want

Functions of Problem Behavior

Common Functions of Problem Behavior

- Gain attention
- Gain toys and treats
- Escape from task or activity
- Experience pleasurable stimulation or alleviate pain

Attention Examples

- Reprimands
  - e.g., "No, don't do that"
- Nonverbal signs
  - e.g., Glaring, angry expression
- Physical attention
  - e.g., Hugging/squeezing the learner to calm them down, restraint
- Acknowledging the behavior
  - e.g., Talking about the learner's behavior to someone else, saying they hurt you

Toys And Treats Examples

- Preferred toy
  - Tantrum for new toy in store
  - Hitting sibling to get favorite toy
- Leisure activity
  - Damaging property to get tablet back
  - Running from parents to go to a playground
- Favorite food
  - Refusing to eat to get favorite food
  - Biting hand to get candy

Common Functions of Problem Behavior

- Attention
- Toys and treats
- Escape from task or activity
- Feels good or alleviates pain

Escape Examples

- Falling to the ground to avoid leaving the park
- Hitting head to get out of academic tasks
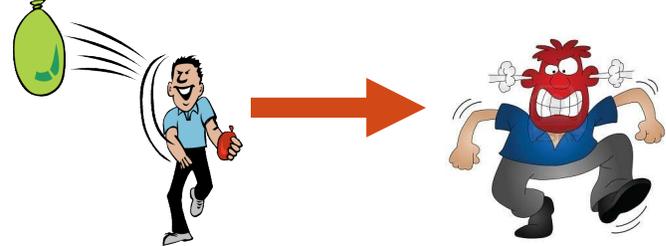- Biting a parent to avoid brushing teeth

- **February 11, 2017**:

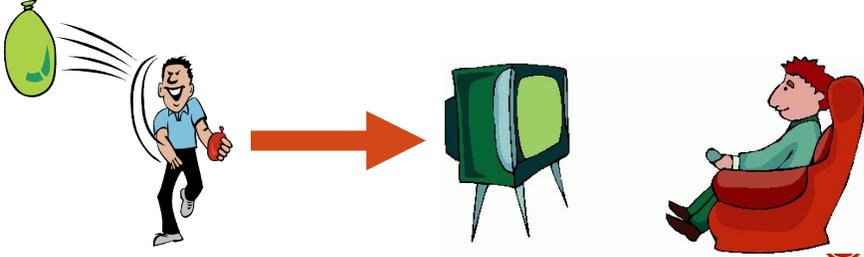 "Don't Sweat the Hard Stuff: Managing Problem Behavior During Work Time"

 By Channing Langlinais
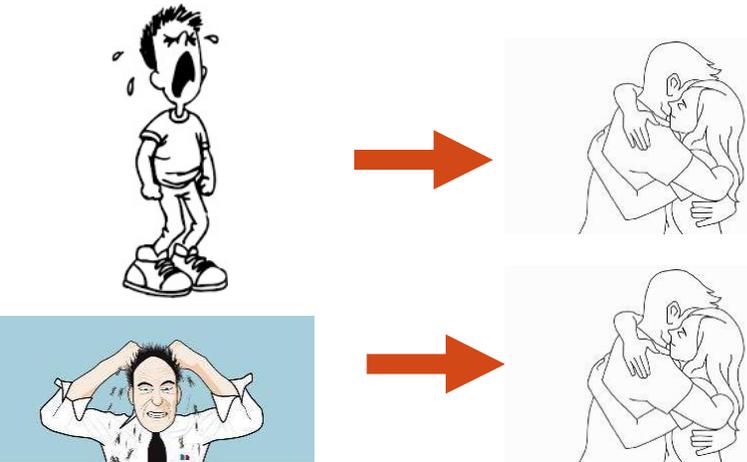
Self-Reinforcing Examples

A learner may engage in similar behaviors for multiple reasons

A learner may engage in different behaviors for the same reason

Management strategies
work best if
based on the function
of the behavior

Determining the Function

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

Used to identify antecedents and consequences of a behavior

Collecting ABC Data

- Directly observe the person

- Document the ABCs (antecedents, behaviors, consequences)

- There are more precise assessments used for more severe behaviors (see a BCBA®)

Planning to Collect ABC Data

1. Collect ABC data multiple times across several days
2. Observe in all settings where the behavior occurs
3. Collect data on all occurrences of behavior

How to Collect ABC Data

- Antecedents/consequences are on data sheet
- Select a problem behavior
- When behavior occurs, select the appropriate antecedents and consequences
- Have somebody else collect the ABC data

Common Antecedents:

- Low levels of attention
- Removal/restriction of toys or treats
- Instructions given to the learner
- Interruption of routine

Common Consequences:

- Attention is given
- Favorite toy or activity is given
- An instruction or task is removed or work is delayed

Date: _____   **Behavior:** _____

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
What happened immediately before the behavior? (Antecedent)												
Ignored by someone; Stopped giving attention												
Item/food removed or denied												
Other request denied												
Given instruction/prompt to work												
Provoked by someone												
Child was alone												
What happened immediately after the behavior? (Consequence)												
Attention, block behavior, told to "stop"												
Given food/leisure materials/ activities												
Work requirement or instruction delayed or removed												
Other activity delayed or removed												
Someone walked away												
None												

TOTALS: Attention   Tangible   Escape   Self-reinforcing

Modified from Iwata (1998)

Date: 11/19/2016   **Behavior:** Screaming

|	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
What happened immediately before the behavior? (Antecedent)													
Ignored by someone; Stopped giving attention	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓		✓		6
Item/food removed or denied		✓			✓		✓					✓	5
Other request denied						✓							1
Given instruction/prompt to work										✓			1
Provoked by someone										✓			1
Child was alone													0 / 0
What happened immediately after the behavior? (Consequence)													
Attention, block behavior, told to "stop"	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓		✓		6
Given food/leisure materials/ activities		✓	✓	✓		✓						✓	6
Work requirement or instruction delayed or removed						✓							1
Other activity delayed or removed										✓			1
Someone walked away										✓			1 / 1
None													0

TOTALS: 12 Attention   12 Tangible   5 Escape   1 Self-reinforcing

Modified from Iwata (1998)

Intervention for Problem Behavior
to Get Toys, Treats, and Attention

Shifting the Consequence

Problem Behavior

Antecedent

Consequence

Replacement behavior

Shifting the Consequence

Yelling

Mom busy

Give "Talk" card
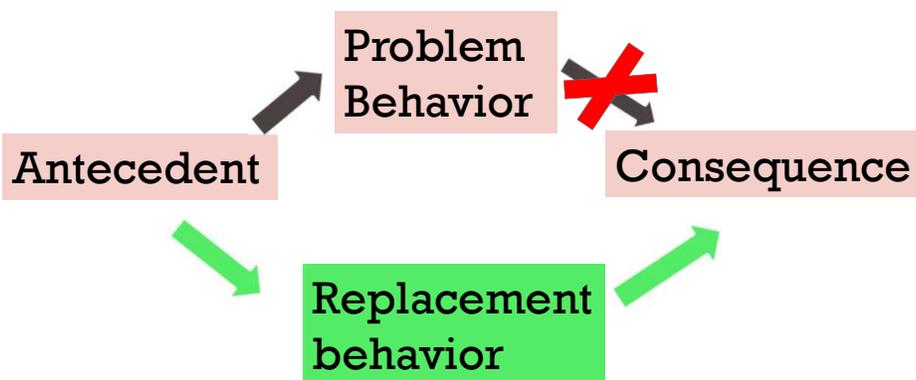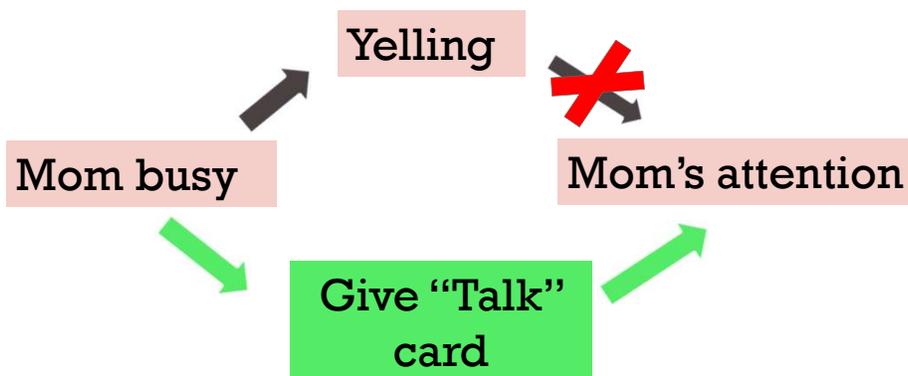
Mom's attention

Select a Replacement Behavior that is:

- Easy for the learner
- Easily understood by others
- Usually produces the consequence (toys, treats, or attention)

Examples

- **Attention**
  - Exchanging a card with word "attention"
  - Raising hand
  - Saying "play with me please"

- **Toys and treats**
  - Signing "ice cream"
  - Asking "Can I please have the tablet?"
  - Using a communication device to request "book"

Teaching a physical (non-vocal) request:

1. Create antecedent
   - Withdraw attention
   - Do not provide treats of favorite toys

2. Wait 5-10 seconds

3. Prompt learner to ask
   - Show
   - Help

4. Provide consequence

Prompting a physical request:

- If the learner doesn't ask after 5-10 s…

  - Show

- If the learner doesn't ask after you show them…

  - Help

Teaching a vocal request:

1. Create antecedent
   - Withdraw attention
   - Do not provide treats of favorite toys

2. Wait 5-10 seconds

3. Prompt learner to ask
   - Partial vocal
   - Full vocal

4. Provide consequence

Prompting a vocal request:

- If the learner doesn't ask after 5-10 s…
  - ## Partial vocal

- If the learner doesn't ask after your partial prompt…
  - ## Full vocal

Learning to wait or accept "no"

Previous Lecture available on YouTube

Preventing Meltdowns - How to Teach Your Learner How to Ask, Wait, and Accept No – By Lauren Phillips

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zARNbHHge1c

Rewarding

vs. Bribing

Rewarding

- Rule stated BEFORE any problem behavior
- Good behavior = reward

vs. Bribing

- Rule stated AFTER problem behavior
- Problem behavior = reward

Stop the Consequence

- Withhold toys, treats, and attention
  - Prompt the replacement behavior
- Remove yourself if possible
- Block or prevent dangerous behavior

Examples of Stopping Consequences

- **Attention**
  - Leaving the room when your learner curses
  - Turning away and reading a book when your learner begins screaming

- **Toys and treats**
  - Not turning the movie back on when your learner hits you
  - Not buying the desired snack at the grocery store when your child falls to the ground and refuses to leave

Blocking dangerous behavior without providing attention

Side Effects

- Crying, negative statements, etc.
- Burst of more extreme behaviors before decrease
  - Increased amount
  - New behaviors

When Stopping the Consequence Isn't Possible...

Reduce Motivation to Engage In the Behavior

Antecedent – PB – Consequence

Reducing Motivation to Engage in Behavior

- Identify situations/settings when learner had limited access
- Provide more opportunities to get toys, treats, and/or attention
- Catch the learner "being good"