

Social Learning Profile

©1996 Respectful Behavioral Options

Library Of Congress Registration Number txu 745-149

Jeff Jacobs, Greg Cardelli, Doug Boeckmann

Navigating the DCD Maze - 155

(Reprinted with permission from Respectful Behavioral Options.)

Index

I. Functional Assessment: Social Learning Profile

Introduction	4
Functional Assessment	5
Behavior/Difficulty	7
Early Signals	9
Situation, Most Likely	11
Message or Purpose	13
Medical and Physical	15
Situation, Least Likely	17
Strengths and Interests	19

II. Preventive and Educative Strategies

Space and Environment	23
Task, Text and Materials	24
Time and Schedule	25
Limits and Boundaries	26
Choice and Options	27
Respectful Refusals and Dignified Escapes	28
Communication, Self Expression and Social Skills	29
Tasks based on Strengths and Interests	30
Reward and Incentive	31
Attention and Ignoring	32
Verbal Directions and Redirections	33
Visual and Nonverbal cues	33
Incompatible, Alternative or Replacement Behavior	35
Natural and Educative Consequences	36

III. Calming and Coping Strategies

Introduction	38
Assessment	39
Distraction or Change	40
Exercise	40
Calming tasks	41
Listening and Acknowledgement	41
Relaxation	42

Sensory	43
Brief Interruption	44
Personal Space	45
Recovery Time	46
Protective Interventions	47

IV. Short Form **48**

(a condensed version of the process for purposes of facilitating team discussion)

V. Respectful Behavior Options **57**

VI. References **59**

VII. Program Summary (a data sheet) **60**

Introduction

To produce a dignified result, use a dignified process.

John McGee

A behavior problem is like a clue in a mystery story. It reveals and it conceals. It leads and it misleads. It speaks a variety of messages and serves a variety of purposes. It is affected by the situation in which it occurs, by the response that it receives, and by the depth of the need that it conveys. It is as complex as the person who uses it, and who is, too often, defined by it.

Although there are no easy answers to complex behavioral problems, there *are* wide arrays of practical and effective options, which can be considered and explored by the person's team; options which are respectful of the person's individual dignity, and yet also respectful of the rights of others.

Our purpose here is to provide the team (those who work with, live with, and support the person on a daily basis) with a clear and concise framework for exploring those options.

As with anything, success lies in the details, and the most important decisions are often the smallest ones.

Start wherever you are, and use these tools to find a place where both the person and their team feel safe and successful. Then gradually, help the person take increasing responsibility for their own success.

Section One:

Functional Assessment

For every complex problem, there is a solution that is quick, easy, and wrong.

-H.L. Menken

Before we can resolve a behavioral problem, we must first attempt to understand it. What does it mean? What purpose does it serve? What message does it attempt to convey?

A good functional assessment is like a newspaper article. It asks the questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and provides the team with an organized framework for gathering its answers. It allows us to gain a shared vision of the problem, and in the process, may unearth some valuable clues as how to resolve it.

This assessment is designed as a one-page series of team discussion questions, with each question corresponding to its own behavioral checklist (i.e.: question #1 corresponds to checklist #1).

There are eight questions in all, each examining a separate aspect of the person's behavior:

- 1 The **Behaviors** of Concern
- 2 Any early **Signals** that the behaviors may be about to occur
- 3 The **Situations** in which the behaviors are **most likely** to occur
- 4 The **Message or Purpose** being expressed or achieved through the behavior
- 5 Any **Medical or Physical** conditions which may underlie or complicate the behavior
- 6 The **Situations** in which the behaviors are **least likely** to occur
- 7 The person's areas of **Strength and Interest**
- 8 Those **strategies**, which have been used to **prevent or address** the behaviors in the past

Question #8 serves not only as the last question of the assessment, but as a spring board for the discussion of respectful behavioral options, which follows.

Social Learning Profile

1. Behavior or Difficulty: Describe the person's behavior, or area of difficulty: _____

2. Early Signals: Describe any early indications that the person may be experiencing anxiety, difficulty, or distress (and/or that the behaviors may be about to occur): _____

3. Situations, most likely: Describe those situations in which the person is *most likely* to experience difficulty (and/or those situations in which the behaviors are most likely to occur): _____

4. Message or Purpose: What message or purpose is being expressed or achieved through the behavior? (What is the person trying to say to us?): _____

5. Medical and Physical: Describe any medical or physical conditions, which may underlie or complicate the person's difficulty or behavior: _____

6. Situations, least likely: Describe those situations in which the person is *least likely* to experience difficulty (and/or in which the behaviors are least likely to occur): _____

7. Strengths and Interests: Describe the person's areas of ability and enjoyment (favorite people, places, and things to do): _____

8. Strategies: Describe any strategies, which have been used to prevent or address the behavior or difficulty: _____

Behavior or Difficulty

Question # 1: Describe any specific behaviors of concern and/or the areas of need or difficulty that they represent.

In the midst of crisis, we tend to overlook the obvious

-T. Bowman

Behavior of Concern

A person's behavior can be a form of self-advocacy, a means of self-expression, and a language unto itself; but at its core, it is simply an action.

As such, it can be described clearly and simply, without judgment or interpretation, in terms that are both observable and measurable: actions toward self, actions toward others, actions toward objects.

Once we have clearly defined a "target" behavior, we must also attempt to quantify it in terms of its relative frequency, duration, intensity, and history. This "baseline" information will then provide us with a yardstick by which we can later measure our progress toward success:

Frequency: The average or approximate number of times that the behavior occurs within a defined amount of time (i.e. five times per hour, twice a day, three times per week, etc.).

Duration: The average or approximate amount of time between the onset of the behavior and its eventual conclusion (i.e. less than a minute, less than ten minutes, etc.).

Intensity: The severity of the behavior (i.e. mild, moderate, intense).

History: The term and tenure of the behavior since first observed (a week, a month, three months, a year, etc.).

Area of Difficulty

Another approach to this question is to address the person's behavior in terms of the area of need or difficulty that it represents. For example, rather than saying that "Joey is hitting others", we might ask if he is having difficulty in the area of anger management. The specific behaviors may then be listed as merely examples of how this difficulty is expressed. By focusing on the need, rather than just the behavior, we put the focus on the person, and set a constructive problem-solving tone for the discussion that will follow. In the process, we may also help to define potential goal areas that can be used to measure progress toward success (i.e. Joey will develop skills in the area of anger management).

Behavior or Difficulty

I. Behavior of Concern

	Frequency	Duration	Intensity	History

II. Area of Difficulty

- _____ **1. Touch or Distance:** Difficulty recognizing or honoring others' personal space, touching to hard, too often, or in inappropriate ways.
- _____ **2. Language or Volume:** Swearing, yelling, threatening, or using inappropriate words, at inappropriate times, or in inappropriate situations.
- _____ **3. Respect for property:** Taking, breaking, or misusing own or other's belongings.
- _____ **4. Cooperation:** Difficulty following directions or accepting correction or limits.
- _____ **5. Communication and Social Skills:** Difficulty expressing needs and feelings (and/or responding to subtle social cues) in respectful and effective ways.
- _____ **6. Self-Organization:** Difficulty staying seated, focused, organized, on topic, on time, on task, or with the group.
- _____ **7. Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution:** Difficulty identifying and resolving problems and disagreements in peaceful and orderly ways.
- _____ **8. Anger Management:** Difficulty controlling anger, frustration, or disappointment.
- _____ **9. Self-Regulation:** Difficulty modulating excitement or stimulation levels.
- _____ **10. Impulse control:** Difficulty delaying gratification; acting quickly or without thinking (based upon impulse, desire, obsession, or compulsion).

Early Signals

Question # 2: Describe any early signals that the behaviors may be about to occur.

We live our lives forward, and understand them backwards

-Anonymous

Signals

As a person becomes increasingly upset, their behavior sometimes changes in subtle but observable ways. Their breathing may become more shallow, their voice louder, their posture more rigid, or their thoughts less rational. Such “signals” let us know that “something is wrong” or that more serious behaviors may be about to occur. Noticing the early signals of anxiety, difficulty, or distress can sometimes allow us to prevent their occurrence, avert their escalation, or temper their impact.

Predictable Patterns

In some situations, a person’s behavior may present itself as part of an escalating chain of actions and interactions, rather than as a discrete event. In such cases, the team may wish to view both the behavior and its signals as part of a continuum that leads from “early and mild” to “more advanced and more serious”. When using this approach, we divide the person’s conduct into three or four distinct levels, each with its own observable descriptors. Then, rather than recording the frequency of specific target behaviors, we simply note the affect level which best describes the person during a given period. For example:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Level 1. Early or subtle signals: | fidgeting, giggling, etc. |
| Level 2. Later or more advanced signals: | threatening, swearing, etc. |
| Level 3. Distress signals: | physical actions toward others or objects. |

Early Signals

Describe any early signals that the person is experiencing; anxiety, difficulty or distress (and/or that the behaviors may be about to occur).

A. Early signals: Describe any early indications that the person is having difficulty, and/or that the behaviors may be about to occur.

- __1 Changes in **posture** (rigid, slouched)_____
- __2 Changes in **facial expression** or **complexion**_____
- __3 Changes in **breathing** patterns (faster, slower, holding breath)_____
- __4 Increased or decreased **volume**_____
- __5 Increased or decreased **speed** or **reaction time**_____
- __6 Unusual **statements or sounds**_____
- __7 Unusual displays of **emotion** (giddiness, laughter, tears, etc.)_____
- __8 Unusual **quietness**, or inactivity_____
- __9 Unusual **noncompliance**_____
- __10 Mild versions of the **behavior itself** (i.e. breaking a pencil)_____
- __11 Actions toward **self** or **others**_____
- __12 Actions toward **objects**_____
- __13 Specific **Tics**_____
- __14 **Other**_____

B. Predictable Patterns: Do these signals occur in any predictable pattern of escalation? If so, the team may wish to divide them into three or four distinct and identifiable “affect” levels:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early or subtle signals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Later or more advanced signals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intense or Distress Signals

Situations in which the behaviors are **most likely to occur**

Question # 3: Describe the situations in which the person is most likely to experience difficulty, and/or in which the behaviors are most likely to occur.

The real journey of discovery is not in seeing new lands,
but in seeing with new eyes.

-Marcel Proust

The situation in which a behavior occurs provides important clues as to its message and purpose.

Does the behavior generally occur in group activities? In unstructured situations? In transit from one activity to another? With certain people? In certain places? At certain times?

Is the behavior intended to gain attention or recognition? To refuse or postpone an activity? To alert others to a physical or emotional need? To express anxiety, difficulty, or distress?

This question is designed to help the team to pinpoint and describe the context in which the behavior is occurring, and to help discern the message or purpose that the person may be trying to express or achieve through its use.

At times, such an assessment will unexpectedly reveal a simple and elegant solution to a problem:

The behavior occurs before 8:00 a.m.? Schedule the activity later in the day.

The behavior occurs in groups? Allow the person to work more independently.

The behavior occurs as a way to escape an activity? Teach the person to 'just say no'.

Even when the solution to a problem remains complex and elusive, gaining an understanding of its situation and context helps us to narrow our search, prioritize our time, and focus our efforts.

Situations, most likely to occur

Describe the situations in which the person is most likely to experience difficulty.

- _1 During specific **times** of day, **days** of week, **weeks** of month_____
- _2 Within specific **places** or locations_____
- _3 Within specific **activities**_____
 - a. Vocational activities_____
 - b. Domestic activities (grooming, dressing, household chores)_____
 - c. Community activities (shopping, dining, etc.)_____
 - d. Leisure or social situations (games, recreation)_____
 - e. Academic activities_____
- _4 Within particular **parts of an activity**_____
 - a. Getting started_____
 - b. Staying on task_____
 - c. Finishing or leaving_____
- _5 Within **Structured** or **Unstructured** situations_____
- _6 Within **Group** or **Crowd** situations_____
- _7 Within **Loud/Noisy, or Distracting** situations_____
- _8 **While waiting**_____
- _9 **During transitions** between activities or places_____
- _10 As a result of **changes** in expectations or routine_____
- _11 Within **time related** situations or when feeling rushed_____
- _12 During **transportation** (on van, bus, car, etc.)_____
- _13 Within **food** related situations_____
- _14 In response to **demands** (being asked to *do* something)_____
- _15 In response to **limits** (being asked *not* to do something)_____
- _16 When a task has gone on for **too long** (attention span)_____
- _17 When asked to **stop** an enjoyable activity before completion_____
- _18 When **corrected**_____

Message or Purpose

Question # 4: What message or purpose does the person appear to be trying to express or achieve through the behavior of concern?

The primary motivation in life is to belong and contribute.
Alfred Adler

A person's behavior can be a form of self-advocacy, a means of communication, a cry for help, and a language unto itself.

It says (sometimes it shouts) "I want", "I don't want", "I don't understand", "I'm worried", "I'm confused", "I'm hungry", "I'm angry", "I'm excited" and/or, "I'm scared".

But it is an inefficient and inarticulate language, and one, which eventually pushes away the very things that it hopes to attract.

To the extent that we can figure out what a person is trying to *say* to us through their behavior, we can often help them to find more respectful and effective ways to express the same message or achieve the same purpose.

Even if we can't always honor the person's request or agree with their message, we can at least grant them the dignity of being heard, of being acknowledged, and of being understood.

Message or Purpose

What message or purpose does the person appear to be trying to express or achieve through the behaviors of concern?

- __1. To **refuse**, postpone, end, or interrupt unwanted activities or interactions _____

- __2. To **gain access** to desired items or activities (a **request**) _____

- __3. To express **disappointment** or **impatience** (when a request is denied or delayed) _____

- __4. To gain attention, reaction, or recognition _____

- __5. To **alert** others to a specific or general need _____

- __6. To initiate or maintain a **social interaction** _____

- __7. To express **confusion** with directions or expectations _____

- __8. To express **frustration, anxiety, or worry** _____

- __9. To express **illness, discomfort, or fatigue** _____

- __10. To express **over-stimulation** (difficulty handling or recovering from stimulating situations) _____

- __11. To express **under-stimulation**, boredom, or low arousal levels (difficulty staying alert) _____

- __12. As a function of a **compulsion, preoccupation, fixation, or obsession** _____

- __13. To **gain sensory** input (touch, smell, movement, sound) _____

- __14. As a function of **sensitivity to sensory input**
 - __a. Sensitivity to touch, clothing, etc _____
 - __b. Sensitivity to noise or sounds _____
 - __c. Sensitivity to movement or motion _____
 - __d. Sensitivity to certain scents or tastes _____

Medical and Physical

Question # 4: Describe any medical or physical conditions, which may underlie or complicate the person's behavior or difficulty.

We do not see things as they are. We see things as we are.

-Anias Nin

Medical and physical conditions often masquerade as behavioral problems. Neurological disorders, seizure disorders, toothaches, allergies, and stomachaches can all leave a person vulnerable and unable to adequately cope with the challenges of their day.

Most medical syndromes carry with them their own set of behavioral characteristics, and many medications produce a litany of side effects, which can mirror or exacerbate a behavioral problem. An understanding of a person's medical and physical challenges often brings with it a degree of empathy for their struggle and a more sympathetic and respectful approach to their behavior.

This question explores the common medical and physical conditions, which may underlie or complicate a person's behavior. If the team suspects that the person's behavior is an expression of an underlying or undiagnosed medical problem, they should refer the person to the appropriate medical personnel (School Nurse, Doctor, etc.) in order to obtain the appropriate referral, diagnosis, and treatment.

Medical and Physical

Describe any medical, physical, or sensory conditions that may underlie or complicate the person's behavior.

A. Medical/Physical conditions

- __ 1. Headaches _____
- __ 2. Allergies (seasonal, food, substance, or medication) _____
- __ 3. Chronic infections (ear, etc.) _____
- __ 4. Chronic digestive problems (constipation, etc.) _____
- __ 5. Chronic pain _____
- __ 6. Obsessive thoughts or compulsive actions _____
- __ 7. Seizure or neurological disorders _____
- __ 8. Specific health disorders _____
- __ 9. Specific mental health diagnosis _____
- __ 10. Physical disabilities or limitations _____
- __ 11. Vision impairments _____
- __ 12. Hearing impairments _____

B. Medications: List or attach the name of any relevant medications that the person is taking, and the purpose for which they are prescribed (or simply reference the appropriate medical form.)

Situations in which the behaviors are least likely to occur

Question # 6: Describe the situations in which the person is least likely to experience difficulty, and/or in which the behaviors are least likely to occur.

For me there are only two kinds of learning, the easy and the impossible.

-Temple Grandin

The situations in which a behavior does *not* occur are at least as important as those in which it does.

We might, for example, find that the behavior rarely if ever occurs in the morning or that it has never occurred while the person was at their job.

What is it about these situations that make them so successful?

How do they differ from the situations in which the behavior *is* occurring?

How can we position them most effectively throughout the day?

How can we use them to design effective reinforcers?

How might we incorporate them into instructional and vocational activities that will then become more naturally reinforcing and self-motivating?

By examining these situations, by comparing them with each other, and by contrasting them with the difficult or problematic situation, we can begin to see the broad outlines of success.

These are the activities, places, and interactions in which the person is already thriving, happy, and engaged; in which the behaviors are rarely if ever occurring; and incidentally, in which we, as parents or professionals, are already doing “something right”.

Situations, least likely

A. Describe those situations in which the person is least likely to have difficulty (and/or in which the behaviors are least likely to occur)?

- __1. During certain times of day, days of week_____
- __2. In certain places, locations_____
- __3. With certain people (family members, staff, peers)_____
- __4. Within certain activities, subjects or classes_____
 - __a. Vocational activities_____
 - __b. Domestic activities(grooming, dressing, household chores)_____
 - __c. Community activities (shopping, dining, etc.)_____
 - __d. Leisure or social situations (games, recreation)_____
 - __e. Academic activities_____

B. What is it about these situations that seem to make them so successful?

- __1. The **environment** itself_____
- __2. The **tasks** involved_____
- __3. The **schedule**, timing, or pace of the situation_____
- __4. The degree of **choice** available (including the right to refuse or opt out)_____
- __5. The opportunity to **communicate** wants, needs, and feelings_____
- __6. The person's level of **interest**_____
- __7. The level of external **reinforcement**_____
- __8. The clarity of the **rules or limits**_____
- __9. The type of **attention** or reaction given to behaviors_____
- __10. The level of **difficulty** or success_____
- __11. The type of **redirections or consequences** being used_____
- __12. The availability of **calming and coping** options_____
- __13. The **interaction style** of the person's involved_____

Strengths and Interests

Question # 7: Describe the person's areas of Interest (favorite items, activities, and interactions).

Notice the things that bring you joy, the things that make time pass quickly and effortlessly. These are the keys to your path.

Wayne Dyer

A person's interests are perhaps our greatest tool for creating positive behavioral change. They show us what the person truly cares about, what they want, and in a sense, who they are. When we develop an interest inventory for a person, we are creating a bank of naturally successful activities and potentially compelling rewards that can serve them well for years to come.

Naturally Successful Activities

We all know of people who can immerse themselves for hours on end in their garden, on their computer, or under the hood of their car with no thought of payment or reward. They can do this because they love what they are doing, and because they seem to have a "knack" for the skills involved.

Similarly, we can all think of things that we have done for a friend or family member that no one else could have paid us enough to do. We do these things not for the reward we receive or the consequences we avoid, but because of the relationships we have formed.

To the extent that our work, play, and learning are based upon our own strengths and interests, we tend to be happier, more successful, and less dependent on external or artificial rewards and supports.

Compelling Rewards

Which is not to say that we don't all need a little reinforcement now and then. The word itself means to "bolster, brace, or support" as with the girders, beams, and rafters that reinforce the structure of a building.

A reinforcer is a tangible symbol of our respect and appreciation. Not a bribe, but a fair exchange for an honest effort. It provides the person with a "light at the end of the tunnel", gives the person something to look forward to, and creates a genuine bond between the person giving the reward and the one receiving it.

Strengths and Interests

Describe the person's areas of strength and interest (favorite people, places, & activities)

A. Leisure

- ___ 1 T.V. shows, movies, video tapes _____
- ___ 2 Books, magazines, photo album _____
- ___ 3 Games, toys _____
- ___ 4 Computer or video games _____
- ___ 5 Socialization, time with favorite people _____
- ___ 6 Clothing fashions, jewelry, hair care, etc. _____
- ___ 7 Art/Craft (drawing, painting, coloring, latch hook, etc.) _____

B. Music

- ___ 1 Types of music (Country, rock, classical, etc.) _____
- ___ 2 Specific songs, artists, or radio stations _____
- ___ 3 Musical instruments, singing _____

C. Motor

- ___ 1 Aerobic (walk, run, jog, bike, dance) _____
- ___ 2 Sport related (shoot baskets, play catch, bowling) _____
- ___ 3 Exercise (or playground) equipment _____

D. Community

- ___ 1 Specific stores (book, music, clothing, video, grocery, department) _____
- ___ 2 Specific restaurants _____
- ___ 3 Recreational (parks, walking paths, YMCA) _____
- ___ 4 Informational (library, museum) _____

E. Food and Beverage

- ___ 1 Beverages (pop, milk, water, juice, coffee) _____
- ___ 2 Snacks (chips, sweets, popcorn) _____
- ___ 3 Main course: fruits, vegetables, meats, etc. _____
- ___ 4 Cooking and food prep _____
- ___ 5 Tastes and textures (sweet, spicy, sour, chewy, crunchy) _____

F. Academic

- ___ 1 Favorite subjects or classes _____
- ___ 2 Favorite skill areas (reading, writing, math, computer) _____

G. Vocational/Domestic

- ___ 1 Household tasks (cleaning, clothes care, car care) _____
- ___ 2 Active/physical work (delivery, errands, yard work) _____
- ___ 3 Organizational tasks (sorting, filing) _____
- ___ 4 Fine motor work (assembly, packaging, using tools) _____
- ___ 5 Tasks comprised of one repeating step (i.e. shredding documents) _____
- ___ 6 Service related tasks (helping others, serving the public) _____
- ___ 7 Other _____

H. Sensory Items or Activities (if applicable)

- ___ 1 Tactile (items to touch, hold, squeeze, or manipulate) _____
- ___ 2 Olfactory or Oral (scents, tastes, textures, etc.) _____
- ___ 3 Visual or Auditory (sights and sounds) _____
- ___ 4 Movement and Muscle Sense _____

Section Two: Preventive and Educative Strategies

Question #8. Describe any strategies that have been successfully used to prevent or address the behavior.

Creativity is the freedom to make mistakes...

Art is knowing which mistakes to keep...

-Anonymous

This section serves two purposes. It answers the last question of our functional assessment and it serves as the *starting point* of our exploration of respectful and successful behavioral options.

In this section, we begin to translate the information gathered from our assessment into a set of practical instructional strategies.

As with the previous section, this one employs a single-page set of team discussion questions, each supported by its own full-page behavioral checklist.

Each strategy is discussed in terms of the *type* of support that the person might need in order to be successful, and each can be used either proactively (to prevent the behavior from occurring) and/or reactively, to respond once the behaviors have already begun to occur.

The team does not necessarily need to consider these options in the exact order in which they appear. Brainstorming and problem solving are often less linear processes than that (with an idea from one category sparking a different, but equally valid idea from another). However; it is important for the team to consider it's full range of options before making any final decisions.

Because these strategies are stated concisely, and because the list is not intended to be all-inclusive, the team will want to consult with the appropriate professionals in order to tailor a plan to the individual needs of the person, and to insure correct implementation, documentation, and approval.

Preventive and Educative Strategies

- ___1. **Space and Environment:** Arrange the environment in ways that make the behavior less likely to occur. _____
- ___2. **Task, Text, and Materials:** Adapt task, text, and materials toward clarity, simplicity, and success. _____
- ___3. **Time and Schedule:** Help the person understand and organize the pace, flow, and structure of their day. _____
- ___4. **Limits and Boundaries:** Provide clear and fair rules, based upon safety and respect. _____
- ___5. **Choices and Options:** Involve the person in the plans and decisions of their day. _____
- ___6. **Respectful Refusals and Dignified Escapes:** Teach the person to respectfully refuse, postpone, end, or interrupt unwanted activities or interactions. _____
- ___7. **Communication and Social Skills:** Help the person to express their needs in more respectful ways. _____
- ___8. **Tasks based on Strengths and Interests:** Provide activities and jobs, which match the person's own interests and learning style. _____
- ___9. **Reward and Incentive:** Reinforce the person for participation and self-control. _____
- ___10. **Attention and Ignoring:** Provide or withdraw attention to (or from) the behavior. _____
- ___11. **Verbal Directions and Redirections:** Employ clear and concise instructions, corrections, and cues (Don't overwhelm or confuse with too many words). _____
- ___12. **Visual and Nonverbal Cues:** Supplement verbal information with nonverbal cues. (Show, rather than tell). _____
- ___13. **Incompatible, Alternative, or Replacement Behaviors:** Provide the person with a skill or action which addresses the same need or serves the same purpose as the problem behavior. _____
- ___14. **Natural and Educative Consequences:** Provide feedback that helps the person to learn from the results of their actions. _____

Preventive and Educative Strategies

- ___1. **Space and Environment:** Arrange the physical environment in ways that make the behaviors less likely to occur.

The physical space in which an activity occurs can have a profound effect on the behavior that occurs within it. Consider, for example, a gymnasium, a library, a waiting room, a factory, or a church. Each setting wordlessly suggests the noise level, activity level, and type of interactions that will occur within it.

If we can set up the environment in ways that promote clarity of purpose, simplicity of organization, and respect for personal space, we can often “set the stage” for success.

- ___A. **Setting:** Move the activity to a less distracting, quieter, better equipped, or more motivating environment.
- ___B. **Room arrangement:** Examine the placement and amount of space between chairs and table spaces. Use the natural elements of the room (furniture, tables, partitions) to create subtle boundaries and barriers that separate the person from the object of their frustration or temptation, without drawing attention to their behavior.
- ___C. **Seating arrangement:** Consider the position of the person in relation to others in the room, on the bus, in a line, or across the table. Consider the position of the person in relation to dangerous or tempting areas or items within the room.
- ___D. **Personal space:** Examine the person’s primary seating area in terms of spatial boundaries, and natural barriers. Provide the person with their own consistent spot within each primary environment (a desk, table space, study carrel, easy chair, etc.) where they can feel safe, start their day, return to in between tasks, or retreat to in times of stress.
- ___E. **Workspace:** Create distinct and separate areas and stations within the room. Designated to facilitate different kinds of activities (active areas, quiet spaces, messy art tables, academic areas, organized work stations, etc.).
- ___F. **Storage space:** Provide a place (shelf, drawer, locker, pocket, etc.) for the person to store personal or distracting items when not in use.
- ___G. **Temptation level:** Put distracting items out of sight, out of reach, or anchored down.
- ___H. **Stimulation level:** Reduce the noise, distraction, and activity level within the room.
- ___I. **Group Dynamics:** Reduce the number of person’s in each group, change it’s configuration, and/or create more compatible person pairings.

___ **2. Task, Text, and Materials:** Adapt the task, text, or materials toward clarity, simplicity, and success.

The way in which an activity is “set up” can often determine its outcome. Is the purpose of the activity self-evident? Does it have an obvious ending point? Are the tools that are needed accessible and easy to use? Are the materials laid out in a logical manner?

If, through careful preparation, we are able to set up activities in ways that facilitate success (and minimize failure), we can often free the learner or worker from having to rely on complex verbal instructions, corrections, and cues.

___ **A. Visual clarity:** Increase the degree to which the task, concept, or expectation is visually obvious and self-explanatory (models, templates, a finished product for the person to replicate, a set of pictures which clearly displays the correct sequence of an activity, a sign which pictures or states a rule, etc.)

___ **B. Durability and Stability:** Bolster, brace, strengthen, or select materials that withstand misuse. Hold, secure, anchor down, or make equipment more stable.

___ **C. Simplicity, Ease of use, degree of Success:** Make the activity easier to access, hold, handle, manipulate, see, read, or complete.

___ **D. Duration/Length of task:** Shorten the task or lessen the amount of work required to match the person’s learning style.

___ **E. Number of steps:** Reduce the number of steps within the task. Reduce the number of pieces that the person is required to manipulate at any given time.

___ **F. Obvious ending points:** Set out the exact amount of work to be completed (“These five math problems”, “These ten envelopes”) so that the end of the task is always in sight.

___ **G. Level of participation:** Encourage activities, which allow for partial or shared participation (i.e. having the person do just the first step, last step, easiest step, every other step, or one repeating step of an activity).

___ **H. Adaptations and accommodations:** Employ adaptive or adapted equipment (spoon, chair, key board, etc.) to increase clarity of purpose and ease of use.

- ___3. **Time and Schedule:** Help the person to better understand and organize the pace, flow, and structure of their day.

Time is an abstract concept, yet one on which we rely in very concrete and practical ways. We need to know how long it will be until payday, until lunch, until an assignment is due, until vacation. And, if we are deprived of such information, (as when stuck in a traffic jam on our way to an important meeting) we can easily become frustrated or anxious.

This effect is magnified for persons who do not have sophisticated time telling skills, and who must therefore always look for clues as to what might be happening next, how long it will be until desired activities become available, or how long until difficult experiences will be over (As one Mother recently reported her child asking, “How many songs until church is over?”).

This section offers some suggestions for clarifying these important time concepts.

- ___A. **Processing time and wait time:** Allow extra time to settle in, respond to instructions, answer questions, make decisions, make transitions, complete tasks, and regroup in between activities.
- ___B. **Routines and rituals:** Provide a predictable sequence of events or daily rituals, which helps the person to anticipate “what’s next”.
- ___C. **Written or picture schedule:** Employ a visual schedule that clearly displays the sequence and progression of the day.
- ___D. **Obvious ending points:** Set out the exact amount of work to be completed (“These 5 math problems”, “These 10 envelopes”) so that the “end is always in sight”.
- ___E. **Time keeping tools:** Employ devices that make time a more concrete and observable process (watches, clocks, sand dials, visual/auditory timers, etc.).
- ___F. **Waiting and transition items:** Provide something to do, or something to hold, that helps the person to get through the difficult time period between activities (a magazine to thumb through in the doctor’s office, a ball to carry to the gym, a menu to hold while waiting to go to a restaurant, etc.).
- ___G. **Organizational tools:** Provide a shopping list, calendar, To-Do list, daily planner, or checklist that keeps track of daily activities, task steps, or chores.
- ___H. **Events of a predictable length:** Use naturally occurring events to help clarify the time frame of a situation. For example, have the person work, rest, or wait until the end of a song, a C.D., a videotape, a TV show, a class period, etc.
- ___I. **Check out/sign up:** Employ check out and sign up sheets for library books, computer time, popular toys, etc.

___ **4. Limits and Boundaries:** Provide clear and fair rules and expectations based upon safety and respect (not just compliance).

Limits and boundaries provide us with a sense of safety, security, and stability. They help to explain what is acceptable and unacceptable in a given situation, and thereby prevent us from making unintentional mistakes, which might harm our safety, our reputation, or our access to important living or learning environments. Most people want to know where their limits are, even as they test and protest them, and most people tend to rebel at a level just above where the limit is set.

To be effective in the long run, rules, limits, and boundaries must spring from a sense of respect for the individual, their peers, and their community.

___ **A. Safety based rules:** Identify those areas or actions that cannot be safely or respectfully accessed or allowed (stove, street, teacher’s desk, parent’s purse, etc.)

___ **B. Situation specific rules:** Identify those items, areas, or actions that may be safely permitted within certain limits or with certain restrictions, for example: ___ restricted by Time (“Snack at 2:00”, “Music for 15 minutes”)

___ restricted by Place (“Paint in the art area”, “Play ball outside”)

___ restricted by Number (“Just one hug”, “Two cookies per person”)

___ restricted by supervision (“Only when accompanied by an adult”, “only with your parent”)

___ **C. Written rules:** “Put it in writing” in order to make expectations more clear, more explicit, less open to interpretation, and more universally accepted.

___ **D. Personal boundaries:** Teach respect for others’ personal space and privacy issues (i.e. respect for the wishes of those who ask not to be touched, or hugged, not going through a person’s desk or purse, etc.).

___ **E. Social etiquette:** Teach subtle interpersonal concepts such as respectful touch, respectful volume, respectful language, appropriate social distance, and respect for property.

___ **F. Standards and Expectations:** Set achievable standards for behavior within a group, class or family. For example, “We treat all people with respect”.

___ **G. Laws and policies:** Adhere to legal or facility-based rules which all citizens, employees, or students must follow (not crossing on a green light, not running at the swimming pool, not taking things that don’t belong to you.)

___ **H. Code of ethics:** Help the group to draw up and agree upon its own set of guiding principles, (“we agree to resolve disputes peacefully, to listen without interrupting, to not talk behind each other’s back” etc.)

___ **I. Rights, Privileges, and Responsibilities:** Differentiate between those acts that are inalienable (rights), those, which are contingent on conduct (privileges), and those,

which are merely expected (responsibilities). For example, in a family, a person might have the right to respectfully decline certain activities, the privilege of watching T.V. after dinner, and the responsibility to keep their room clean.

___ **5. Choice and Options:** Involve the person more fully in the plans and decisions of their daily life.

We all like to have some “say” in the events and decisions that make up our day and affect our lives.

We don’t like to be told answers; we like to discover them for ourselves. We want to generate our own personal goals, and are often more successful when allowed to do so. We hate it when others try to force or manipulate us into doing something against our will, even if we secretly suspect that it is in our own best interest or “for our own good”.

Many people, especially those with behavioral challenges, find themselves in situations in which most, if not all, of the decisions of their lives are controlled by others, from when they get up in the morning, to what they eat, where they work, who they associate with, and when they go to bed at night. For them, there are no small decisions or insignificant choices.

___ **A. Input into schedule:** Solicit input in planning the activities and sequence of the day.

___ **B. Choice between and within activities:** Provide small choices between and within required activities in order to give the person a “measure of control” i.e. choosing the order in which it will occur, the manner in which it will be done, the place in which it will be held, the time at which it will begin, etc.

___ **C. Negotiation and compromise:** Allow reasonable alternatives to a scheduled activity. For example, reading quietly at your desk rather than attending a group discussion.

___ **D. Input into goals and objectives:** Encourage involvement in the creation of meaningful long term goals and short term objectives which the person will then be more invested in achieving.

- ___ **6. Respectful Refusals and Dignified Escapes:** Help the person to respectfully refuse, postpone, end, or interrupt unwanted activities and interactions.

The right to say “No” is one of the most basic of human rights. When we say “No” to someone or to something, we are, in a small way, defining ourselves, declaring our independence, claiming our autonomy, and setting our own personal boundaries.

Many, if not most, inappropriate behaviors occur as an inefficient, although not altogether ineffective, way of saying “No” to unwanted or feared activities or interactions.

If a person can learn to respectfully avoid, reject, postpone, or escape unwanted situations, in ways that don’t frighten or anger others, they stand a better chance of getting their needs met, their requests honored, and their hopes fulfilled.

___ **A. Polite refusal:** Teach the person how to respectfully refuse, decline, postpone, or delay a suggested activity before it begins.

___ **B. Interruption:** Teach the person how to respectfully suspend or request a break from an activity that is already in progress.

___ **C. Graceful Exits:** Provide the person with an errand, delivery, a “Get out of activity free card” or any task that gets them out of the disrupted or potentially difficult situation, without drawing undue attention to their behavior.

___ **D. Acceptable alternatives:** Provide the person with a dignified alternative to a refused activity. For example, reading quietly, rather than participating in a group discussion.

___ **E. Negotiation and Compromise:** Allow the person to suggest reasonable alternatives to a scheduled activity.

- ___ 7. **Communication, Self Expression, and Social Skills:** Help the person to express their message in more respectful and effective ways.

A behavior problem is often a form of self-advocacy and a means of communication. If we can understand what a person is trying to say to us through their behavior, we can often help them to find more effective and successful ways of saying it.

___A. **Communication skills:**

- ___1. Respectful **requests**, and/or ways to add emphasis to a request
- ___2. Respectful **rejection**
- ___3. Respectful **expression** of feelings, opinions, and concerns
- ___4. Respectfully gaining **assistance**
- ___5. Respectfully accepting a **change** in activity, setting, or expectation
- ___6. Respectfully communicating **discomfort, illness, or fatigue**
- ___7. Other:

___B. **Social skills:**

- ___1. **Expressing feelings and viewpoints**
- ___2. **Interaction**, conversation, turn taking skills
- ___3. **Group skills**, contributing, sharing, politeness, respect, empathy
- ___4. **Problem solving skills**
- ___5. **Other:**

- ___ **8. Tasks based on Strengths and Interests:** Find or design activities that match the person’s interests and learning style.

We all know of people who can immerse themselves for hours on end in their garden, on their computer, or under the hood of their car with no thought of payment or reward. They can do this because they love what they’re doing, and because they seem to have a “knack” for the skills involved.

We all have certain kinds of tasks that just seem to come more easily for us, tasks that we accomplish with little or no effort, and within which, time seems to “fly”.

To the extent that our work, play, and learning is based upon our own strengths and interests, we tend to be happier, more successful, and less dependent on external or artificial rewards and supports.

A. Best category of task:

___ 1. **Vocational** (jobs):

___ 2. **Leisure:**

___ 3. **Community:**

___ 4. **Domestic** (chores):

___ 5. **Academic:**

B. Best types of tasks:

___ 1. **Functional** tasks that involve practical, “real life” experience, meaning/purpose.

___ 2. **Active or physical tasks** which involve movement or muscle sense.

___ 3. **Organizational tasks** that require matching, sorting, or categorizing.

___ 4. **Interpersonal tasks** that require “people skills”.

___ 5. Tasks that have essentially **one repeating step** (operating a paper shredder, etc.)

___ 6. **Tactile/Kinesthetic:** Fine motor tasks that involve handling, or manipulating.

___ 7. **Routine:** Tasks that allow repeated exposure to the same task, situation or material.

___ 8. **Visual:** Written, picture, or symbol related tasks and/or tasks which provide visual directions, demonstration, observation, or self evident task set-up.

___ 9. **Auditory/Verbal:** Tasks involving verbal directions, discussion, and explanation.

___ **9. Reward and Incentive:** Reinforce the person’s efforts at participation and self-control.

A reward is tangible symbol of appreciation and respect. Not a bribe, but a fair exchange for an honest effort. It provides the learner or worker with something to look forward to, and serves as a point of genuine contact between the person giving the reward and the one receiving it.

A. Decide which behaviors to reinforce:

- ___ 1. Participation, task completion, or skill acquisition
- ___ 2. Appropriate behavior (and/or the absence of specific inappropriate behaviors)

B. Select the type of reward (See Interest analysis)

- ___ 1. **Social:** such as friendship, trust, or praise.
- ___ 2. **Tangible:** such as pop, treats, or toys.
- ___ 3. **Activity:** such as games or music.
- ___ 4. **Time:** such as extra free time, or less time on a low-interest task.
- ___ 5. **Privileges and responsibilities:** such as special errands, or increased independence.
- ___ 6. **Tokens:** such as points, stickers, signatures, or stars.
- ___ 7. **Financial:** such as money or paychecks.
- ___ 8. **Sensory:** such as favorite sights, sounds, tastes, touch, or motions.
- ___ 9. **Fascinations and fixations:** such as a person’s own unique areas of intense focus.

C. Select the Schedule of Reinforcement

- ___ 1. **Natural:** Schedule high interest activities to coincide with natural breaks within the day (Grandma’s Law).
- ___ 2. **Contingent:** Schedule rewards to follow actions, tasks, or time intervals.
 - ___ a. **During** the task: While working or while displaying the desired behaviors.
 - ___ b. **Task completion:** Upon completing an activity or a designated number of activities (i.e. following every three tasks).
 - ___ c. **Time interval:** Upon completion of a time period or a designated number of time periods (i.e. after three successful minutes, hours, days, or weeks).
 - ___ d. **Predetermined times or pay periods:** At the end of the morning, the day, the week, or on regularly scheduled paydays.
 - ___ e. **Intermittent rewards:** At randomly selected intervals, when the person is doing well (“Catch them being good”).
- ___ 3. **Secondary rewards:** Upon accumulation of a set number of tokens, points, etc.
 - ___ a. **Tokens:** Select a symbol of progress toward success (v, initial, point, chip)
 - ___ b. **Charts:** Visually display the required number of tasks, intervals, or tokens
 - ___ c. **Menu:** Provide a list (or price list) of available reward options.
- ___ 4. **Contracts:** Negotiate a mutually agreeable, written document that states the specific activities or behaviors being addressed, the criteria for success, and the reward to be earned.

___ **10. Attention and Ignoring:** Give or withhold attention, in order to increase or decrease a specific behavior.

Our attention (what we notice and where we focus) is our simplest and most powerful behavioral tool.

Consider, for example, how our own behavior changes in subtle and sometimes dramatic ways when we sense that we are being observed. Without even knowing it, we tend to put on “our best face”, and make slight adjustments in our posture, our attitude, and our actions.

The effect is all the more powerful if we know why we are being observed, and what the person is looking for. More powerful still if we have been consulted in the process, agree with the purpose, and are invested in the outcome.

Certain negative behaviors are said to be “attention getting” because they seem intended to solicit a response or to “get a rise” out of others. Receiving a strong reaction, these behaviors continue, receiving none, they may initially intensify, but then eventually subside, looking elsewhere for their response or seeking another avenue of expression.

Seeking attention, in and of itself, is not necessarily a bad thing. The author Richard Carlson has written that the greatest desire of the human heart is to be listened to and to be heard. We all need attention, recognition, and respect. We may not all know how to achieve it.

By consciously placing our attention where it will do the most good (and by withholding it from the situations where it might do harm), we can often help the persons learn which behaviors are valued within their family or community, and teach them better ways to get the recognition that they crave.

___ **A. Ignore** attention-seeking behaviors.

___ **B. Praise** and/or attend to those behaviors that we wish to increase.

___ **C. Self-Monitor:** Enlist the person’s participation in the selection of the behaviors to be increased or decreased. Provide them with the appropriate tools, checklists, or means of monitoring their own success.

___ **11. Verbal Cues:** Employ clear and concise instructions, corrections, and cues (Don't overwhelm or bombard the person with too many words).

As a person becomes increasingly anxious or upset, their ability to process complex verbal information decreases (often dramatically). The distressed person craves clarity (over choice), and simplicity (over detail). They need to know just enough information to get them through the present situation successfully (and/or to get out of it gracefully).

Verbal redirection is as much an art as a science, as much a gift as a skill. Even so, there are a few guidelines that can help us to hone and develop our talent in this important area. In general, short is better than long, visual is better than verbal, familiar better than novel.

- ___ a. **Positively stated:** Let the person know what to do rather than what not to do. For example by saying: 1) "Hands in pockets", rather than "Don't touch"; 2) "Quiet voice", rather than "Don't yell"; or 3) "Stay by my side", rather than "Don't run".
- ___ b. **Simplified:** Reduce the length and complexity of verbal cues. Use concise wording, fewer words, key words, and familiar phrases.
- ___ c. **Use counting:** Use counting to clarify the time frame of an instruction, for example, Let's do four more, Let's stand up on the count of three.
- ___ d. **Familiar:** List any unique or person specific phrases used successfully by those who know the person best.
- ___ e. **Fill in the blank:** Supplying the person with the first few words of their response (Hands stay to self, In the library we use a quiet voice).
- ___ f. **Warnings reminders:** Develop a specific cue hierarchy that alerts the person to the increasing seriousness or immediacy of action. For example, Please use a quiet voice, this is your second (of 3) reminders.

___ **12. Visual and Nonverbal cues:** Supplement verbal information with visual or nonverbal cues.

Think of how many times we hear phrases such as "A picture is worth a thousand words", "Show. Don't tell", "I don't know the name, but I never forget a face" or "I can't remember the address, but I'll know it when I see it".

And think of how differently we respond to a question on a test if it is open ended (Who is the fifth President of the United States?) versus if we are given multiple-choice answers to choose from (a. Abraham Lincoln b. James Monroe c. Grover Cleveland).

A picture is worth a thousand words because it crosses language barriers, cuts through complicated syntax, and remains available for future reference (unlike verbal language which literally disappears into thin air as it is spoken).

The American flag, the Golden Arches, and the Stop Sign are all examples of how a simple visual image can evoke a clear and powerful message.

- ___a. **Gesture:** Point to, tap on, look at, or gesture toward the expected response.
- ___b. **Demonstration/observation:** Show the person how to do the expected action, and/or allow the person to watch others engaged in the action.
- ___c. **Self-explanatory task set up:** Set up the activity in the clearest, most logical and self-evident manner possible.
- ___d. **Visually obvious ending points:** i.e. “Shred this pile of papers, “Complete these seven math problems”, “Fill these 10 boxes”.
- ___e. **Picture, Photo, Word, or Symbol:** Assess which visual representation is most clear and communicative for the individual.
- ___f. **Visual directions:** Written, Picture, or Symbol instructions (a “Stop Sign”, “Red Light”, a Picture schedule, written directions, etc.)
- ___g. **Easy answer formats:** Use simple response formats (such as circling, crossing out, filling in the blank, marking an X, multiple choice, etc.).
- ___h. **Representative objects:** Use items that represent or suggest the next activity, for example, a basketball for Gym, a key for locker, a cup for meals.
- ___i. **Visual time concepts** (clock, visual timer, obvious ending points, calendar, schedule, etc.
- ___j. **Visual problem solving tools:** Use written or pictorial tools that help the person to identify their problem, their feelings, and their options.
- ___k. **Visual rules;** such as a STOP sign on the door, a taped line separating restricted areas, etc.
- ___l. **Auditory cues:** Timer, school bell, familiar music signaling a transition, etc.

___ **13. Incompatible, Alternative, and Replacement Behaviors:** Teach or provide the person with a skill or action which addresses the same need or serves the same purpose as the problem behavior.

If a behavior fills some need or serves some purpose for the person who uses it, then it stands to reason that we can't just take it away, without giving them something to replace it with, some other way to achieve the same purpose or to meet the same need.

If, through our functional assessment, we have identified the need that is being served by the behavior, we can then give or teach the person a skill or an action to "replace" it.

- ___ a. **Communicative:** Something else to say (for inappropriate verbalizations), or some other way to make the same request, or express the same point of view (see section on Communicative and Social Skills).
- ___ b. **Oral:** Something else to eat, chew, or mouth (for inappropriate oral behavior).
- ___ c. **Tactile:** Something else to do with their hands (hands in pocket, something to hold, handle, carry, or manipulate).
- ___ d. **Auditory:** Something appropriate to listen to (headphones on the bus).
- ___ e. **Visual:** Something else to look at (magazine, photo's etc.).
- ___ f. **Independence:** Teaching the person to achieve their purpose or meet their need on their own (teaching them how to make their own snack, how to operate their own tape player, etc.).
- ___ g. **Cognitive:** Something to occupy thoughts (puzzles, questions, plans, etc.).
- ___ h. **Self esteem:** Some other way of gaining recognition or attention (special responsibilities, working toward an award, focusing on strengths and interests, etc.)

___ **14. Natural and Educative Consequences:** Help the person to learn from the results of their actions.

Most of us learn more from our successes than from our failures; however, there are some situations in which experience is still the best and truest teacher. A person violates a traffic law, and is required to attend driver's safety class; a child breaks a window with an errant baseball and is required to save his allowance to replace it; an employee fails to call in sick and loses his pay for the day.

A logical consequence, if thoughtfully chosen and carefully applied, can be an important part of a positive intervention plan, and can impart important lessons in the areas of respect, responsibility, and self-control.

- ___ a. **Temporary removal/loss of access to items or privilege:** Briefly remove or withhold an item that is being misused (put away a toy for ten minutes, suspend television privileges, impose a one-day restriction on access to the computer, etc.)
- ___ b. **Loss of reward, point, or pay** (response cost): Subtract points, pay, or tokens for each inappropriate behavior.
- ___ c. **Restitution and restoration:** Allow or help the person to restore or correct the situation (clean up, apologize, pay for damages).
- ___ d. **Related assignment:** Assign a task that helps the person to remember or learn the relevant rule or concept. For example, a worksheet or reading assignment.
- ___ e. **Community service:** Assign a task that is of benefit to the classroom, school, home, or local community (cleaning the school grounds, helping other's with their homework, etc.)
- ___ f. **Increased supervision:** Supervise the person's work and free time, until they can demonstrate an ability to handle independence responsibly.
- ___ g. **Meeting or private discussion:** Hold a formal discussion to discuss the problem, emphasize the gravity of a situation, decide on consequences, and/or prevent future occurrences.
- ___ h. **Contingent instruction:** Require participation in a class or meeting that educates the person about the violated rule, procedure, or code (for example, driver's re-education class, rules class, social skills class, sensitivity training, etc.).
- ___ i. **School discipline policy:** Utilize (or adapt) consequences that apply to all students within a school (in-school suspension, detention, one day dismissal).
- ___ j. **Job discipline policy:** Utilize (or adapt) consequences that apply to all workers within the same job site (firing, pay docking).

- ___k. **Authority figure:** Enlist the services of a person of power or prestige (a parent, principal, job supervisor, etc.) to help explain, enforce, or add emphasis to a rule.

- ___l. **Second chance:** Have the person try (or redo) the action in a more respectful way.

Section Three

Calming and Coping Strategies

I wish my son had come with instructions

- A parent

This section centers on helping a person learn to relax, regroup, and recover from a stressful experience.

We each have our own unique ways to relax and unwind. Some of us need to rest, others to run, still others to meditate. Some of us like to read, some to talk, and some to tinker on our computer, in our garden, or under the roof of our car.

Although some of the strategies covered in this section may conventionally be viewed as interventions (or even as consequences), what separates them is the purpose for which they are presented and the way in which they are carried out. Their purpose is not to consequence but to calm their delivery, not one of judgment, but of support.

Calming and Coping Strategies

Strategies that help the person to relax, regroup, and regain their composure.

1. Distraction & Change: Shift the person's attention away from the source of their anxiety, difficulty, or distress. _____

2. Exercise: Provide a constructive outlet to release and re-channel excess or nervous energy.

3. Calming (or Focusing) Tasks: Introduce a familiar, high success, low-pressure task that helps the person to refocus their attention. _____

4. Listening and Acknowledgement: Use active listening techniques to help the person to express and think through their feelings and concerns _____

5. Relaxation: Teach and explore strategies for reducing and managing stress. _____

6. Sensory: Investigate calming sights, sounds, scents, touch, tastes, and movements. _____

7. Brief Interruption: Stop or prevent the behavior from occurring, just long enough to allow the person to relax and regain control. _____

8. Respectful Space: Find a respectful spot where the person can feel safe and calm. _____

9. Sufficient Time: Provide the person with a clear and sufficient amount of time in which to relax, group, regroup, recover, and rebound. _____

10. Protective Interventions: Maintain safety, and protect the person from harming themselves or others until they can regain their composure and self-control. _____

- ___1. **Distraction or Change:** Shift the person’s attention away from the source of their anxiety, difficulty, or distress.

Distraction refers to that set of simple strategies which help a person to “take their mind off their problems”, and to shift their focus to some non-threatening event or interaction.

- ___a. **Change tasks:** Shift the person’s focus to a different or easier activity.
- ___b. **Switch staff:** Introduce a new person, one not involved in the original, problematic situation.
- ___c. **Change settings:** Move the activity to a different, calmer, or quieter area or room.
- ___d. Introduce a safe, clearly non-threatening or compelling **topic**, task, or idea.
- ___e. **Change peer groupings:** Pair the person with a good role model. Create compatible person pairings.

- ___2. **Exercise:** Provide a constructive outlet for releasing and re-channeling excess energy.

Exercise allows a person to expend nervous energy in harmless yet beneficial ways. It helps regulate mood, restore energy, and provides a sense of accomplishment.

- ___a. Take a **walk**, introduce an errand, or engage in an aerobic activity such as biking or swimming.
- ___b. **Physical work:** Provide jobs (i.e. yard work,) or exercise (i.e. isometrics, gym equipment, etc.) that involves constructive physical exertion.
- ___c. **Sport related:** Provide opportunities for sport-like activities such as shooting baskets, playing catch, hitting tennis balls, jogging, or bowling

- ___3. **Calming Tasks:** Introduce a high success/low pressure task that helps the person to refocus their attention in a more constructive direction.

We all have certain tasks that we rely upon, perhaps without even realizing it, to calm ourselves in times of stress. We may, for example, clean house, wash the car, tinker with the computer, or reorganize our files. Such activities have the advantage of being almost automatic, and of thereby freeing our minds to quietly regroup from a frustrating or

worrisome experience.

The calming tasks listed here are merely examples. “Use our assessment of Strengths and Interests” to select activities tailored to the person’s own individual needs.

- ___a. **Vocational:** Jobs, chores, errands, sorting, assembly, disassembly, etc.
- ___b. **Academic:** Worksheets, computer programs, reading familiar texts, completing an “easy” math sheet, etc.
- ___c. **Art/Craft:** Drawing, tracing, coloring, models, latch hook, etc.
- ___d. **Domestic:** Washing dishes, sweeping, organizing shelves, car care, yard care, copying shopping lists, etc.

- ___4. **Listening and Acknowledgement:** Listen supportively, without judgment or interpretation, to the person’s worries or concerns.

We have all had the experience of marching into someone’s office, intending to angrily confront them over some real or perceived offense, but then having our anger melt away when that person simply “listened” to us.

The author Richard Carlson once said that the greatest desire of the human heart was to be listened to and to be heard, and the psychologist, Carl Rogers, made listening, the keystone of his therapeutic approach.

The following are a few guidelines for listening effectively and supportively:

- ___a. **Active listening:** Listen to the person’s worries or concerns without interruption, contradiction, judgment, or unsolicited advice.
- ___b. **Paraphrase and summarize:** Rephrase or repeat the core of the person’s message back to them, so that they can recognize, reflect upon, and express their thoughts more accurately.
- ___c. **Acknowledge** the person’s feelings and perspectives, even if we can’t share their assessment of the situation, condone their actions, or agree to their requests.
- ___d. Help the person to **explore solutions**, and to develop their own menu of coping strategies that they can then use to address future occurrences of the problem.

___ **5. Relaxation:** Teach and explore strategies for reducing and managing stress.

Just as each person is unique in the ways in which they express their anxiety, so too, each person is unique in the ways that they find to “unwind”. Some are active, some are passive, some seek out friends, and some seek out privacy. The following techniques may be helpful when trying to discover a person’s own best relaxation style.

- ___ a. **Breathing techniques:** Have the person learn to take deep breaths and/or help them to develop calm breathing patterns.
- ___ b. **Visualization and guided imagery techniques:** Help the person to picture a pleasant memory or to “walk through” a sequence of increasingly calming images.
- ___ c. **Relaxation training:** Teach specific relaxation techniques such as systematic muscle tension/release exercises.
- ___ d. **Massage techniques:** Provide a respectful and professional hand rub, shoulder rub, finger rub, hair brushing, etc. (only on the person’s own terms).
- ___ e. **Relaxation tapes or video:** Provide visual or audio tapes which contain relaxing images or music and/or which take the person through a specific series of relaxation techniques.
- ___ f. **Relaxing items:** Provide the person with items that have been observed to help them to maintain or regain their composure (blanket, teddy bear, favorite book, etc.)

___ **6. Sensory:** Explore calming sights, sounds, scents, touch, tastes, and movements

Thousands of years of exploration and discovery have gone into the development of elaborate forms of sensory stimulation: Art, music, poetry, perfume, cuisine, and sports are all merely sophisticated extensions of our senses, providing perceptual reinforcement to our eyes, ears, nose, mouth, brains, and body.

Sensory input calms us down, keeps us alert, and helps us to focus our thoughts.

The following is a list of potential sensory activities that might be used as calming and coping tools. However, the area of sensory integration is complex, and should not be embarked upon without the input of a knowledgeable professional.

- ___ a. **Ear/Auditory:** Story tapes, sound tapes, singing, different types of music (classical, age relevant songs, folk songs, etc.)

___b. **Eye/Visual:** Magazines, photos, videos, computer, window seats, aquariums.

___c. **Hand/Tactile:** Provide something to hold, rub, touch, twist, squeeze, pick at, press, or manipulate.

___d. **Nose/Olfactory:** Explore calming scents such as vanilla or lavender.

___e. **Muscle sense/Proprioceptive:** Provide a shoulder rub, hand rub, back rub, deep pressure, joint compression, etc.

___f. **Motion/Vestibular:** Set up activities that allow the person to experience calming movement (swing, spin, ride, bounce, rock, etc.).

___g. **Oral:** Provide tastes and textures (chewing gum, jerky, etc.)

___7. **Brief Interruption:** Briefly stop or prevent the behavior from occurring, just long enough to allow the person to regain their self-control.

Brief interruption simply means stopping the behavior for a moment, in order to give the person (and ourselves) a chance to relax, regroup, and regain control. In practice, it is more of a decision than a strategy. Should we work through the behavior or interrupt it? If the decision is to interrupt the behavior, there are many ways to accomplish this purpose:

- Verbally interrupt the behavior (with a prearranged cue phrase, for example)
- Visually interrupt the behavior (with a silent gesture or sign)
- Physically interrupt the behavior (with a touch or prompt)
- Remove the object that is causing the person concern
- Remove any other persons who might be contributing to the problem
- Remove the person; to a different setting
- Remove yourself from the situation.

Let the person's own reaction be your guide as to which approach will be beneficial. Some persons may become distressed at having their behavior stopped, but others will seem greatly relieved.

The following example illustrates how we might attempt to interrupt a behavior while keeping the person within the learning situation.

If the person is in great distress, the team may wish to move on to the next three sections (space, time, and protective interventions) before making any final decisions.

- ___a. Use a concise **verbal cue** (saying the person’s name, for example, or using single consistent phrases such as “Look”, “Stop” or “Quiet-hands”).
- ___b. Teach an **incompatible action** (such as hands in lap, hands in pockets, hands clasped together, hands on table, etc.) and/or adopting a proper learning posture (such as sitting in a chair, feet on floor, facing forward).
- ___d. If needed, provide a supportive **physical prompt** (such as taking or lowering the person’s hands).
- ___e. If needed, provide a brief **count** or other means of setting the time frame of the interruption (i.e. “Let’s clasp our hands and count to ten” or “Let’s take three breaths”).

___8. **Personal Space:** Find a respectful spot where the person can feel safe and calm.

Each person has surrounding them a circle of space within which they feel safe and secure, and without which they feel anxious or threatened. As a person becomes increasingly angry or upset, this circle grows, and their need for space increases, sometimes dramatically.

Many behavioral interventions commonly used within the classroom or the home (such as Time-Out or Contingent Observation) has, as their basis, this nearly universal need for space.

The right kind of space can provide a person with a sense of having “room to breathe”, and prevent them from feeling literally or figuratively “backed into a corner”.

When choosing the right space for a given person, the team must consider both the amount of space and the type of space that they need. The following list of potential space options are meant to provide clear and safe borders and boundaries without drawing unnecessary attention to the behavior.

- ___a. **Chair:** The simple act of sitting down can have a calming effect on a person. Although any chair will often do, one with a well defined set of natural boundaries can provide the person with a greater sense of safety and security (an easy chair, cushioned chair, recliner, or library style arm chair).
- ___b. **Table space:** A table has the advantage of providing a work surface on which a calming activity can be done, as well as providing a natural boundary between the person and the object of their frustration or temptation.
- ___c. **Desk:** A desk provides a working surface, a natural boundary, and a storage

space in which calming items or activities may be kept. Some school desks have their writing surface attached to the arm of the chair, which can have the effect of extending its natural protective boundaries on three sides.

- ___d. **Study Carrel:** A study carrel has the advantage of having a work surface, a partial boundary extending on three sides, and a sense of privacy without totally isolating the person from their environment.
- ___e. **Area of the room:** Some individuals (especially those who prefer to stand, walk, or pace) may need to have a larger space available to them. For example; a carpet, an area rug, or a designated corner of the room (such as a reading nook).
- ___f. **Room:** A bedroom, office, classroom, or designated quiet or counseling room can afford the person a measure of privacy and dignity as they struggle to regain their composure. A distressed person should not be left unsupervised in a room due to the possibility of intentional or accidental injury
- ___g. **Outdoors:** A yard, courtyard, porch, walking path, basketball court (and sometimes even just a seat facing a window) can provide the person with a sense of not being “fenced in”, while the natural elements of just “being outside”(trees, breeze, sun, clouds, etc.) can lend their own calming grace to the situation. The person should always be supervised when outdoors for safety reasons.

- ___9. **Recovery Time:** Provide the person with a clear and sufficient amount of time in which to relax, regroup, and regain their composure.

Time can be a powerful healer because it allows a person to put some emotional distance between themselves and the object of their frustration or distress. As with personal space, each person has an amount of time that they need in order to truly relax and recover from a traumatic or emotional experience.

Each team will need to use their own powers of observation and past experience with the person to determine the amount of time that he or she needs.

In general, short intervals are as effective, or more effective, than longer ones, especially when paired with specific behavioral criteria for determining “calmness”.

The following guidelines should help the team to determine the person’s best calming interval.

- ___a. Choose a **calming interval** tailored to the person’s personal recovery time (the average amount of time that they have needed the past several occasions to truly regain their composure).

- ___ b. **Wait for specific signals of calmness, rationality, and readiness** before ending the interval (for example, a quiet voice, relaxed breathing, relaxed muscles, the ability to answer a question, or do a simple task without resistance or re-escalation.)
- ___ c. Employ **time keeping tools** such as a timer, clock, or sand dial to clarify the duration of the calming interval (i.e. Let's relax until the bell rings or; Let's rest until 10:45).
- ___ d. **Count aloud** to clarify the duration of the calming interval, and/or to provide immediate feedback as to the person's state of readiness (for example, When you're calm, I'll count to twenty, or When you're ready, we'll count together to ten. When using this approach, if the person re-escalates before the count is finished, simply pause, wait for another moment of calm, and begin again.
- ___ e. **Events of a predictable length.** Familiar events can serve as efficient time markers because the person has already internalized their approximate duration. For example, we might say, Let's relax until this song ends, until this show ends, until this class period ends, until this commercial ends, etc. Very familiar videos or musical tapes can be especially effective, because the person can often anticipate the sequence of songs or scenes leading from start to finish.

___ **10. Protective Interventions:** Protect the person from harming themselves or others until they can regain their composure and self-control.

A protective intervention is not a consequence, nor is it a teaching strategy. It is merely a safety net.

When we employ a protective intervention, we are lending our external control to a person just until they can regain their own. Although the exact intervention used may differ from person to person, the message we deliver through our words and our actions must always be the same: You are safe.

Whether to use a protective intervention is an individualized decision, which must be based on the collective insights and experiences of those who know the person best.

Although not to be used lightly or without consent, protective interventions can be an important part of a positive intervention plan.

Protective interventions must include informed consent, be in accordance with State and Federal law, and be taught by a qualified professional, and, for that reason, they are not specifically described in this text.

- ___ a. **Escorts:** Helping the person to get out of the disrupted situation and/or into a safer or more respectful place.

- __b. **Protective holds:** Protecting the person from harming themselves or others until they regain their self-control.

- __c. **Supported self-restraint:** Teaching the person self control strategies such as putting their hands in their pockets, clasping their hands together, sitting on their hands, or holding/carrying an item within tempting situations (so that their hands are not free to react to an impulsive inclination).

- __d. **Protective seating arrangements:** Having the person sit in a safer area, out of reach of any vulnerable person's or items which prevent the behavior from occurring while the person has a chance to calm or heal.

- __e. **Protective clothing adaptations:** Clothing adaptations such as helmets or arm splints (for prevention of self injury) require a Doctor's approval, and should only be used with strict guidelines and full supervision.

Short Form

The short form is a condensed version of the full process without the discussion, explanation, or detail. It can be used by facilitators who are leading the team discussion process, but only by those who are very familiar with the full process.

When using this process, the facilitator should give each team member a copy of the single page Social Learning Profile and Respectful Behavioral Options guide sheets (pages 55 and 56) reserving the detailed checklists (whether the long or short version) for their own use.

The facilitator asks the question, allows the team to fully share and explore their own insights, observations, and experiences, and then uses the checklists to further expand and define their answers.

Social Learning Profile

Assessment

1. Behavior or Difficulty

2. Early Signals

3. Situations/Most Likely

4. Message or Purpose

5. Medical/Physical

6. Situations/Least Likely

7. Strengths and Interests

Respectful Behavioral Options

Preventive and Educative Strategies

Calming and Coping Strategies

I. Social Learning Profile

1. Behavior or Difficulty:

Behaviors of Concern:

- Physical actions toward others:
- Physical actions toward objects:
- Physical actions toward self:
- Verbal actions toward others:

Area of Difficulty:

- Touch or social distance
- Language or volume
- Respect for property
- Cooperation
- Communication or Social Skills
- Self organization
- Problem/conflict solving
- Anger management
- Self Regulation
- Impulse Control

2. Early Signals of Anxiety, Difficulty, or Distress:

- Posture
- Facial expression
- Mannerisms or Tics
- Movements
- Volume
- Words, phrases, topics, sounds
- Emotions (sadness, giggling)

- Activity level
- Noncompliance
- Mild versions of behavior itself
- Actions to self, others, objects
- Motivation level
- Obsession or Compulsion
- Impulsiveness

3. Situations in which the Behaviors are Most Likely to Occur:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Times of day, week, month | <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in expectations/routine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Places or locations | <input type="checkbox"/> Time related/feeling rushed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activities (work, leisure, chores) | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation related |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parts of activities (starting, focusing, finishing) | <input type="checkbox"/> Food related |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structured (or unstructured) situations | <input type="checkbox"/> In response to demand |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group or Crowd situations | <input type="checkbox"/> In response to limits/boundaries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loud/Noisy/Distracting situations | <input type="checkbox"/> As a function of attention span |
| <input type="checkbox"/> When asked to stop an enjoyable activity | <input type="checkbox"/> While waiting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> When corrected | <input type="checkbox"/> Transition (prior to, during, after) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outside stressors (changes at home, on bus) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

4. The Message or Purpose that is being Expressed or Achieved through the Behavior:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rejection (to refuse, postpone, end, or interrupt) | <input type="checkbox"/> Frustration, anxiety, or worry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Requests (to gain access to items or activities) | <input type="checkbox"/> Illness, discomfort, or fatigue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disappointment (if requests are delayed/denied) | <input type="checkbox"/> Over-stimulation or excitement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attention (to gain reaction or recognition) | <input type="checkbox"/> Under-stimulation or boredom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance (to alert others to a need) | <input type="checkbox"/> Compulsion or obsession |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social (to initiate or maintain social interactions) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory seeking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confusion (with directions or expectations) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory defensiveness |

5. Situations in which the Behaviors are Least Likely to Occur:

- Specific times of day, days of week.
- Within certain places or locations
- With certain people
- Within certain activities, subjects

6. Areas of Strength and Interest:

Leisure

- T.V. shows, movies, videotapes.
- Books, magazines, photo album
- Games, toys
- Computer or video games
- Socialization, time with favorite people
- Clothing fashions, jewelry, hair care, etc.
- Art/Craft (drawing, painting)

Music

- Types of music (Country, rock, classical, etc.)
- Specific songs, artists, or radio stations
- Musical instruments, singing

Motor

- Aerobic (walk, run, jog, bike)
- Sport Related (shoot baskets, catch, bowl)
- Exercise (or playground) equipment

Community

- Specific stores
- Specific restaurants
- Recreational (parks, walking paths, YMCA)
- Informational (Library, Museum)

Food and Beverage

- Beverages (pop, water, juice)
- Snacks (chips, sweets, popcorn)
- Main course: fruits, veg. meats
- Cooking and food prep
- Tastes/textures (sweet, spicy, etc)

Academic

- Favorite subject areas (science)
- Favorite skill areas (reading)

Vocational/Domestic

- Household tasks (cleaning)
- Active/physical work
- Organizational (sorting, filing)
- Fine Motor (assembly, etc)
- Single action tasks (shredder)
- Service related (helping)

Sensory

- Tactile (items to touch, hold, squeeze, or manipulate)
- Olfactory or Oral
- Visual or Auditory
- Movement and Muscle Sense

7. Medical or Physical conditions which may Underlie or Complicate the Behavior:

- Headaches
- Allergies
- Chronic infections (ear, etc.)
- Chronic digestive problems
- Chronic pain
- Obsessive thoughts or compulsive actions
- Seizure or neurological disorders
- Specific health disorders
- Specific mental health diagnosis
- Physical limitations
- Vision impairments
- Hearing impairments
- Medications/side effects

II. Respectful Behavioral Options

- 1. Space and Environment:** Arrange the physical environment in ways that make the behavior less likely to occur.

<input type="checkbox"/> Setting	<input type="checkbox"/> Work space
<input type="checkbox"/> Room arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/> Storage space
<input type="checkbox"/> Seating arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/> Temptation level
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal space	<input type="checkbox"/> Stimulation level
	<input type="checkbox"/> Group dynamics/person pairings

- 2. Task, Text, and Materials:** Adapt tasks, text, materials, or curriculum toward clarity, simplicity, and success.

<input type="checkbox"/> Clarity (self evident task set up)	<input type="checkbox"/> Number of steps
<input type="checkbox"/> Durability and Stability	<input type="checkbox"/> Obvious ending points
<input type="checkbox"/> Simplicity (level of difficulty)	<input type="checkbox"/> Level of participation
<input type="checkbox"/> Duration (length of task)	<input type="checkbox"/> Adaptations and accommodations

- 3. Time and Schedule:** Help the person to better understand and organize the pace, flow, and structure of their day.

<input type="checkbox"/> Processing and “wait” time	<input type="checkbox"/> Time keeping tools (clock, timer)
<input type="checkbox"/> Routine and rituals	<input type="checkbox"/> Waiting or transition items (something to do or hold while while waiting or in transit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational tools (calendar, checklist)	<input type="checkbox"/> Events of predictable length (tape, video)
<input type="checkbox"/> Written or picture schedules	<input type="checkbox"/> Check out/sign up (for computer, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Obvious ending points/Closure	

- 4. Limits and Boundaries:** Provide clear and fair rules and expectations based upon safety and respect (not just compliance).

<input type="checkbox"/> Safety rules	<input type="checkbox"/> High standards and expectations
<input type="checkbox"/> Situation specific rules (by time, place)	<input type="checkbox"/> Laws and policies
<input type="checkbox"/> Written rules	<input type="checkbox"/> Code of ethics, Personal values
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal space and boundaries	<input type="checkbox"/> Rights, privileges & responsibilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Social etiquette	

- 5. Choices and Options:** Involve the person more fully in the plans, decisions, goals, and activities of their daily life.

<input type="checkbox"/> Input into schedule and planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation and compromise
<input type="checkbox"/> Choice between & within activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Input into goals and objectives

6. **Respectful Refusals and Dignified Escapes:** Help the person to respectfully refuse, postpone, end, or interrupt unwanted activities and interactions.

<input type="checkbox"/> Polite refusals (No thanks)	<input type="checkbox"/> Offering Acceptable Alternatives to the disliked activity
<input type="checkbox"/> Interruption (I need a break)	<input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation and compromise
<input type="checkbox"/> Graceful exits (errands, setting changes)	

7. **Communication and Social Skills:** Help the person to express their message in more respectful and effective ways.

Communication

Making requests, self-advocacy
 Gaining assistance, attention
 Identifying illness, discomforts
 Seeking information, clarification

Social Skills

Expressing feelings and viewpoints
 Interaction, conversation, turn taking
 Group skills, contributing, sharing
 Problem solving techniques

8. **Tasks based on Strength and Interest:** Find or design activities that match the person's interests and learning style.

<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic (chores)	<input type="checkbox"/> Community
<input type="checkbox"/> Vocational (jobs)	<input type="checkbox"/> Leisure (Recreation)

9. **Reward and Incentive:** Reinforce the person's efforts at participation and self-control.

Types of rewards

Social (friendship, praise, trust)
 Tangible (items, treats, pop)
 Activity (games, computer, music)
 Time (free-time, more time, less time)
 Privileges and Responsibilities
 Token (points, stickers, signatures)
 Financial (money, paycheck)
 Sensory/perceptual
 Fascinations and Fixations

Schedule of Reinforcement

Natural: Rewards occur at natural or logical breaks within the day.
 Contingent: Rewards occur following completion of tasks or time intervals
 Secondary: Rewards occur upon accumulation of points, signatures, or tokens
 Contract: Rewards occur according to the terms of a written agreement.

10. **Attention and Ignoring:** Provide (or withhold) attention in order to increase (or decrease) behaviors.

<input type="checkbox"/> Ignore undesired behaviors	<input type="checkbox"/> Self Monitoring/Self Evaluation
<input type="checkbox"/> Praise/attend to desired behaviors	

11. Verbal Directions and Redirections: Provide clear and concise directions, corrections, and cues (Don't overwhelm the person with too many words).

- Positively phrased ("What to do", rather than what not to do)
- Counting-related (on the count of three, Let's do four more, etc.)
- Simplified (concise, fewer words)
- Fill in the blank phrases (Hands stay)
- Familiar: person-specific or unique cues
- Early warnings and reminders

12. Visual (and Nonverbal cues): Supplement verbal information with clear visual or nonverbal clues (Show, rather than tell).

- Gestures (point, touch, look toward)
- Visual answer formats (v, cross out, etc.)
- Demonstration/ Observation
- Actual or representative items
- Self explanatory task set-up
- Visual problem solving tools
- Obvious ending points
- Visual (written or pictorial) rules
- Word, picture, photo, or symbol
- Auditory cues (bell, timer, sound, song)
- Visual time concepts
- Physical prompts

13. Incompatible, Alternative, and Replacement Behaviors: Provide a skill or action that addresses the same need or serves the same purpose as the problem behavior.

- Communicative (another way to say it)
- Visual (something else to look at)
- Oral (something else to eat, chew, etc.)
- Independent (teach the person how to do it for themselves)
- Tactile (something else to hold, carry, handle, or manipulate)
- Cognitive (something to occupy thoughts or to redirect ideas)
- Auditory (something else to listen to)
- Self esteem (some other way to gain recognition and acceptance)

14. Natural and Educative Consequences: Provide feedback that helps the person to learn from the results of their actions.

- Temporary removal/loss of access to item, privilege or area.
- Increased supervision (reduced freedom)
- Loss of rewards, points, or pay
- Private or formal discussion/meeting
- Restoration (correct, reimburse, apologize for, or make amends)
- Contingent instruction (class, in-service)
- Extra assignment
- School policies (dismissal, detention)
- Community service
- Job policies (suspension, pay docking)
- Authority figures (principal, boss, parent)
- Second chance (try again, redo, retest)

III. Calming and Coping Strategies

1. Distraction or Change: Shift the person's focus away from the source of their concern.

- Change tasks
- Switch staff
- Change settings
- Change peer groupings
- Introduce a safe compelling topic

2. Exercise: Provide a constructive outlet for releasing and re-channeling excess energy.

- A walk or an errand
- Aerobic activity
- Physical work or exercise
- Sport related (baskets, play catch)

3. Calming Tasks: Introduce a simple, compelling task that helps the person to refocus their attention.

- Vocational (jobs, chores, errands)
- Academic (worksheet, book, etc.)
- Art, craft, drawing. Etc.
- Domestic chore

4. Listening and Acknowledgement: Listen supportively and without judgment as to the person's worries or concerns.

- Active listening
- Restate, paraphrase and summarize
- Acknowledge feelings
- Develop problem solving tools

5. Relaxation: Explore strategies for reducing and managing anxiety and stress.

- Breathing techniques
- Visualization and guided imagery
- Progressive Relaxation training
- Massage techniques
- Tapes or videos
- Comfort items (teddy bear, blanket)

6. Sensory: Explore an array of calming sights, sounds, scents, touch, tastes, and movements.

- Ear/auditory: sound, music, voice tone
- Eye/visual: video, magazine, photos
- Hand/tactile: something to hold, touch handle, squeeze, twist, or manipulate
- Nose/olfactory: calming/alerting scents
- Muscle sense/proprioceptive
- Motion/vestibular movement
- Oral/gustatory: taste, texture, mouthing

7. Brief Interruption: Briefly stop or prevent the behavior from occurring, just long enough to give the person time to relax, regroup, and regain their composure.

- Give a concise verbal cue (“Quiet hands”)
- A physical prompt (if needed)
- Teach an incompatible action (i.e. hands clasped at side, in pockets, in lap, etc.)
- A brief count (i.e. to 10) if need

8. Respectful Space: Find a respectful spot where the person can relax and regain their composure (with supervision).

- Chair (easy chair, rocker, desk)
- Room (bedroom, quiet room)
- Table (desk, study carrel, cubicle)
- Outdoor (yard, path, porch)

9. Sufficient Time: Provide a clear and sufficient time frame in which to relax and regroup.

- Choose a calming interval tailored to the person’s recovery time.
- Time keeping tools (timer, etc.)
- Wait for signals of calmness, readiness
- Counting (“Let’s count to ten”)
- Natural transition times
- Events of predictable length (class period, TV show, etc.)

10. Protective Interventions: Protect the person from harming themselves or others, until they can regain their self-control.

- Protective escort
- Protective hold
- Supported self restraint (hands clasped, in lap, in pockets, etc)
- Protective seating arrangements
- Protective clothing adaptations

Respectful Behavioral Options

- 1
Space and Environment Adaptations
- 2
Task, Text, and Material Adaptations
- 3
Time and Schedule
- 4
Limits and Boundaries
- 5
Choices and Options
- 6
Respectful Refusals and Dignified Escapes
- 7
Communication and Social Skills
- 8
Tasks based on Strengths and Interests
- 9
Reward and Incentive
- 10
Attention and Ignoring
- 11
Verbal Cues
- 12
Visual and Non-verbal Cues
- 13
Incompatible, Alternative, and Replacement Behaviors
- 14
Natural and Educative Consequences
- 15
Calming and Coping Strategies

a. Distraction

b. Exercise

c. Calming Task

d. Listening

e. Relaxation

f. Sensory

g. Brief Interruption

h. Respectful space

i. Sufficient time

j. Protective Interventions

A note about respectful, non-technical language.

The words that we use when addressing a distressed person, when talking to each other about the person, or when explaining the situation later to others, all have a dramatic impact on the persons themselves, on those watching from the sidelines, and ultimately on our own actions.

A person can feel supported while being restrained, or demeaned while being praised, all depending on how the situation is presented, intended, and perceived.

For that reason, the words used throughout this text are designed to spring from a sense of respect for the individual dignity of the person, empathy for their struggle, and an understanding of underlying need, which is being manifested through the behavior.

References

Pages 4, 12, and 18 adapted from Alternatives for Persons who are Behaviorally Challenged 1987, District # 287, Jacobs, Cardelli, Boeckmann.

The remainder of this manual is reprinted from Respectful Behavioral Options, Jacobs, Cardelli, Boeckmann, 1996, with permission of Security Academy, Saint Paul, Minnesota, Library Of Congress, Registration Number txu 745-149.

We would like to acknowledge the following articles and authors for their pioneering influence in the field of positive behavioral practice:

Carr, Edward G. and Duran V. Mark, 1985, Reducing Behavior Problems through Functional Communication, Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, Vol. 18, pp 111-126

Donnellan, Anne M. 1984, Analyzing the Communicative function of Aberrant Behavior, Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, Volume 10, pp 123-131.

Lavigna, G.W. and Donnellan, A.M. , 1987, Alternatives to Punishment: Solving Behavior Problems with Nonaversive Strategies, Irvington press, New York, New York.

Meyer, Luanna H. and Evans, Ian, 1986, Modification of Excess Behavior, Education of Learners with Severe Handicaps, Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

McGee, John J. 1987, Gentle Teaching, and Alternative to Punishment for People with Challenging Behaviors, Teachers College press.

Program Summary

Name:

Date:

Behavior/Signals

Strategies
