Challenging behaviours and effective interventions

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STEPS TO TAKE WHEN FACING A CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

1) Definition
2) Measurement
3) Preference assessment
4) Functional assessment
5) Appropriate intervention
6) Monitoring
7) Change/Maintainance
8) Fading
Definition

- Challenging behaviour: behaviour that interferes with everyday routines, learning, social interactions, inclusion.

- Examples: Aggression, self-injurious behaviour, property distraction, tantrums, stereotypies.

- Examples of purposes they serve: gain access to food, gain break from tasks, gain adult attention, avoid aversive situations, attenuate pain, self-stimulate, etc.
Measurement

- Measurement is important to give us a picture of the behaviour’s current level.
- Measurement is necessary in order to judge if the intervention that will be put in place is effective.
- Common behaviour dimensions to measure: frequency, duration.
- Practical Examples
Preference assessments

- **Single-stimulus presentation** (Green, Reid, White, Halford, Brittain, & Gardner, 1988; DeLeon & Iwata, 1996; Windsor, Piché, & Locke, 1994)

- **Paired-stimulus presentation** (Dattilo, 1986; Fisher, Piazza, Bowman, Hagopian, Owens, & Slevin, 1992)

- **Multiple-stimulus presentation** (DeLeon & Iwata, 1996; Roane, Vollmet, Ringdahl, & Marcus, 1998; Windsor, Piché, & Locke, 1994)

- **Example**: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opD476Uetwg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opD476Uetwg)
Functional assessment

- Importance of function vs topography
- Function = cause-effect relation
- Topography = how the behaviour looks like/its form.

- Questionnaires (e.g., FAST)
- ABC
- Functional analysis
**Example: FAST**

**Functional Analysis Screening Tool**

(FAST© 2005 The Florida Center on Self-Injury)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the problem behavior occur when the person is not receiving attention or when caregivers are paying attention to someone else?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does the problem behavior occur when the person's requests for preferred items or activities are denied or when these are taken away?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When the problem behavior occurs, do caregivers usually try to calm the person down or involve the person in preferred activities?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is the person usually well behaved when (s)he is getting lots of attention or when preferred activities are freely available?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scoring Summary**

Circle the number of each question that was answered “Yes” and enter the number of items that were circled in the “Total” column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items Circled “Yes”</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Potential Source of Reinforcement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social (attention/preferred items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 6 7 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social (escape from tasks/activities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 10 11 12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Automatic (sensory stimulation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 14 15 16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Automatic (pain attenuation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Example: ABC assessment datasheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill is doing Math tasks with his teacher.</td>
<td>He throws the materials off the table.</td>
<td>His teacher gives him a break until he is calm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom, 4 years old goes to bed without his pacifier for the 1\text{st} time (=time to take it off).</td>
<td>He has an intensive and long tantrum and seems unable to fall asleep after 1 hour.</td>
<td>His parents decide he is not mature enough yet to sleep without the pacifier and give it back to him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim sits is alone in the living room and TV is on.</td>
<td>Jim flaps his hands and sings.</td>
<td>Mum and dad are still not in the living room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The food is just served and includes lentils.</td>
<td>Kate cries and throws the plate off the table.</td>
<td>Dad substitutes lentils for pizza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary and Ann are playing in their room.</td>
<td>Mary and Ann start fighting and calling their mother.</td>
<td>Mum stops cooking and joins them to make sure they do not fight again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their mum is cooking in the kitchen.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Functional Analysis

- More precise, flexible and efficient method to identify the function of behaviour
  (Iwata, Dorsey, Slifer, Bauman, & Richman, 1994a; Iwata, Pace, Dorsey, Zarcone, Vollmer, Smith, et al., 1994b)

- Systematic exposure of participant to certain conditions.
  - Conditions: attention, alone, play, demand

- Must be conducted under the supervision of a BCBA.
Intervention

☐ Antecedents:

- **Manipulate demands:** reduce session length, reduce difficulty, provide prompts, give choices, teach appropriate ways of asking for a break. (Attention! The alternative appropriate behaviours should be naturally maintained in the environment, so make sure it is easy to emit and everybody reinforces it).

- **Give attention for desirable behaviours:** give praise for appropriate attention seeking behaviours (e.g., “Mummy, look!”, tap shoulder)

- **Enrich environment:** teach appropriate play skills, provide toys and activities that stimulate all senses
Intervention

- **Consequences:**
  - **Escape extinction:** do not provide breaks when the problem behaviour arises, always continue with the task, give prompts if needed.
  - **Planned ignoring:** do not pay attention to inappropriate behaviour (Attention! Even eye contact can be reinforcing)
  - **Behaviour contract:** establishes what wactly the student has to do in order to gain a specified reinforcer (*e.g.*, **arrive on time in class 4 out of 5 school days in order to gain a ticket for the cinema**).
  - **Differential Reinforcement procedures:** Control the emission of repetitive and out of context behaviours that offer auto-stimulation with the use of DRO, DRA, and DRI.
  - **Response Interruption and Redirection (RIRD) procedure.**
Intervention

- **Consequences:**
  - **DRO:** reinforcement is delivered after a specified period of time if the student has not engaged in the target behaviour.
    
    *Example*: The teacher delivers social praise every 10 minutes for students who have not engaged in speaking with peers in class).
  
  - **DRA:** reinforcement is delivered when the student shows an alternative behaviour.
    
    *Example*: The teacher gives a break from tasks to the student, when he verbally asks for it instead of throwing the materials away.

  **Tip!** Choose alternative behaviours that can easily compete with problem behaviours for being easy to perform, provide prompts for their emission and reinforce them.
Intervention

- **Consequences:**
  - **DRI:** reinforcement is delivered when the student shows an incompatible behaviour, same as DRA but the student could not perform both the problem and incompatible behaviours simultaneously
    
    *Example: The incompatible behaviour is placing the hands on the table and the problem behaviour is hitting.*

  - Response Interruption and Redirection (RIRD) procedure: The teacher interrupts the emission of the stereotypical behaviour and redirects the student to an appropriate activity.
    
    *Example: The student emits out of context vocalizations and the teacher contingently presents motor imitation tasks.*
Intervention

- Combination of As and Cs and data:
  - Manipulate **antecedents**
  - Also manipulate **consequences**
  - Monitor progress by **data** taking and graphing
  - Make **changes** or **maintain** the procedure and gradually **adapt** it to the individual’s progress (e.g., thin the reinforcement schedule)
  - Conduct **generalization** probes
  - **Terminate** once criterion met
  - Take **follow-up** data to make sure change is maintained
Monitoring

Change

Maintenance

Example of graph and decision

Example from Vollmer, Roane, Ringdahl, & Marcus, 1999, page 18.
Fading

- Remember to fade out **prompts** (e.g., fade out the echoic prompt provided for the emission of a mand for a break).
- Remember to fade out your **presence**, it can also be a prompt (e.g., for appropriate play with a specific toy).
- Remember to gradually increase the length and difficulty of **demands** back to the desired levels.
References


