
Behavior reduction using differential reinforcement and alternative skill acquisition procedures

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Behavior reduction

Plans for reducing any behavior should always emphasize the following 2 considerations:

- What should this person do *instead* of the target beh?
- Why would he/she engage in that alternative beh?



FUNCTION

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Behavior reduction

Emphasis on *functions* of behavior in applied settings

- appropriate: *language, social, excesses*
- inappropriate: *tantrums, aggression*



IT'S ALL BEHAVIOR

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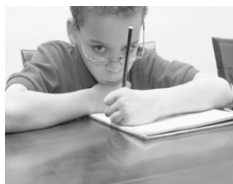
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Measurement

What behaviors to measure?

- Behavior reduction (e.g., self-injury, aggression, etc.)
- Skill acquisition (e.g., language, attention, cognitive abilities, etc.)



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Behavior reduction

Why are various and detailed measurements important?

- **Diagnostics (e.g., antecedents, consequences, times of day, etc.) – useful for developing & adjusting programs**
- **Evaluation (e.g., frequency, intensity, duration) – useful for determining effectiveness of current strategies**

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Measurement / Diagnostics

Behavior Checklist	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Aggression							
Physical aggression							
Verbal aggression							
Self-harm							
Property destruction							
Non-compliance / refusals							
Spitting							
Attempt to leave: area=A / room=R							
Inappropriate vocalizations							
Other: <i>streping</i>							

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Measurement / Diagnostics

Behavior Checklist

Date:	3-3	3-4	3-6	3-8	3-9							
Time:	8:00	9:45	8:15	1:00	12:00	1:45	6:30	7:50	9:55	11:15	3:30	4:45

Behavior:	AM	AM	AM	PM	PM	PM	PM	AM	AM	AM	PM	PM
SIB	✓											✓
physical aggression		✓	✓								✓	
spitting							✓					
attempt to leave: area=A / room=R				A	R				A			R
inappropriate vocalizations						✓		✓			✓	
non-compliance / refusals	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
property destruction											✓	
other: <i>streping</i>									✓			

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Measurement / Diagnostics

Antecedent:

adult made request	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
can't get what she wants (told 'no')		✓									✓
loud, stressful, chaotic environment				✓		✓					✓
inappropriate behavior interrupted						✓					
preferred activity interrupted											
unknown											
waiting for reinforcement		✓									✓
unexpected event											
family visit											
transition: high to low preference											
transition: low to high preference											
transition: no contrast in preference											
other:											


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Measurement / Diagnostics

Consequence/Response:

planned ignoring											
verbal redirection	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
physical redirection	✓	✓	✓		✓						✓
removal											
therapeutic hold											
PRN medication											
other:											

Student response

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Measurement / Diagnostics

Location/Activity – write in activity if relevant (i.e., "writing"):

day room	✓		✓									
hallways												
bedroom												
bathroom												
classroom		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
outside												
gym							✓	✓				
cafeteria												
community												
foyer												
other:												
Group size												
Duration (Min.)	1	3	2	1	15	5	1	1	10	5	12	10
Intensity – Mild (1) to Severe (5)	1	2	1	1	3	3	2	2	1	3	5	2

Student response: 1=behavior improved 2=behavior continued w/out change 3=behavior escalated

Group size: 1=1-1 2=small group activity (2-5 students) 3=large group activity (6 or more students)

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Behavior Management

Identifying functions can help you in 3 ways:

1. Identify antecedents (eliminate or increase?)

- Increase antecedents that evoke positive behavior
- Decrease antecedents that evoke negative behavior



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Behavior Management

Identifying functions can help you in 3 ways:

2. Identify consequences that maintain behavior (eliminate or increase?)

- Positive reinforcement: Increase consequences that maintain positive behavior (particularly incompatible behavior).
- Extinction: Decrease consequences that maintain negative behavior.

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Behavior Management

Identifying functions can help you in 3 ways:

3. Identify and target functionally-equivalent behavior

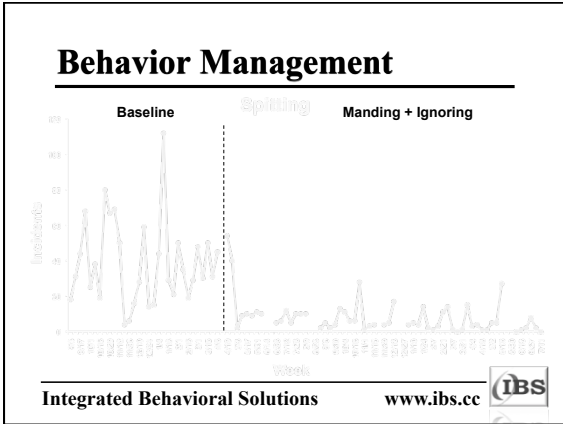
- Teach/reinforce replacement behavior (i.e., social skills)
- Reinforcement related to function



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Behavior Management


Increasing behavior

- **Reinforcement: A consequence that increases the probability of the behavior it follows**



Optimum conditions:

- Contingent
- Immediate
- Appropriate to the person

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Behavior Management


Decreasing behavior

- **Extinction: Decreasing the probability of a behavior by removing reinforcement for the target behavior**

Optimum conditions:

- Prepare for extinction “burst”
- Use in combination w/ R+ procedure



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Behavior Management

Decreasing behavior

- **Differential reinforcement: Provide reinforcement for some behaviors and not for others**
 - **DRO: R⁺ for zero rates of behavior**
 - **DRA: R⁺ for alternative behaviors**
 - **DRI: R⁺ for incompatible behaviors**
 - **DRL: R⁺ for low rates of behavior**

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Behavior Management

- **What about punishment?**

Should not be primary tx strategy

Effects diminish when threat decreases

Does not teach what you SHOULD do

Makes interaction less functional



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Reinforcement vs. Bribery

Reinforcement:

Instruction → Behavior → R⁺

Bribery:

R⁺ offer → Instruction → Behavior
(i.e., "I'll give you [this] if you do [this].")

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Reinforcement vs. Bribery

Avoid using rewards as bribes.



- Avoid telling student in advance about the R⁺ he/she will receive (dangling a carrot).

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Reinforcement vs. Bribery

Avoid patterns of using rewards as bribes

- Do not remind the student of R⁺ he/she would be getting if disruptive behaviors were not occurring (or *will* get if disruptive behaviors cease).
- Do not offer additional R⁺ if behaviors escalate in an attempt to calm him/her down.



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