Behavior & Sensory Strategies for Individuals with ASD
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Training Objectives

- Have an improved understanding of the functions of behavior in persons with ASD.
- Have an understanding of the sensory issues for people with ASD.
- Have an understanding of the ABC’s of behavior.
- Have an understanding of evidence based strategies used to support people with ASD.
Behaviors we have seen

Examples:

• Running off
• Biting
• Pushing things away
• Screaming
• Rocking
• Biting

Have you seen these?
Behaviors

They all have a reason
What types of behaviors do you see from individuals with ASD?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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Functions of Behavior

- Escape – from a person, task, environment, etc.
- Tangible – desire for a specific item or activity.
- Attention – the desire for attention from peers, adults, etc.
- Sensory – the behavior feels good or meets a sensory need.
- Power and Control.

V. Mark Durand, 1990

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Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS)

 Approaches to helping people improve their difficult behavior based on four principles.
The Principles of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS)

- *Understanding* that people (including caregivers) do not control others.
- *Belief* that there is a reason behind difficult behavior.
- *Application*, we will try what we know and change what we do.
- *Conviction* to move away from punishment and unpleasant events to manage behavior.
Behavioral strategies:

- Sensory strategies
- Understanding ABC’s of behavior
- Reinforcement
- Being aware of the aggression cycle
- Knowing the steps of changing behavior
Sensory Integration

• Ability to take in, sort out, and connect information from the world around us. It’s controlled by our central nervous system and information comes in through our senses.

• Sensory integration is the ability to make sense out of the environment in which we live.
Sensory Registration

(Information Coming in Through Channels…)

- Touch
- Movement
- Position
- Taste
- Smell
- Sound
- Sight
Sensory Processing
Making sense out of the information

Information Comes In
- Sight
- Auditory
- Movement
- Position
- Taste
- Smell
- Touch

Respond

Brain

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Response

Behavioral Response:

• Reacting & responding to the information

• It’s what we can see
Understanding the “Cycle”

1. Sensory Registration
   Information coming in

2. Sensory Processing
   Making Sense of the Information

3. Behavioral Response
   - Reacting & responding to the information
   - It’s what we can see

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We as educators:

• We can’t change the brain and how it is processing sensory information.

BUT…

• We can change the sensory input going in

• And watch the behavioral response coming out.
Sensory Channels:

Which ones work best for people with ASD?

See
Smell
Taste
Hear
Position in space
Touch
Move

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Sensory Channels

- **See** (Great Open road…)
- **Smell**
- **Taste** (hypersensitive)
- **Hear** (difficult)
- **Position in space**
- **Move** (can seek too much)
- **Touch** (needs to have control)

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No Filter = Sensory Overload
Sensory overload =

Too much sensory information coming into the brain at one time. The brain is not able to process all the information so the body “reacts”

- Fight
- Fright
- Freeze
Fight =

These are the children who hit, kick, pinch, bite, and pull hair.
Fright =

These are the children who run away, hide, and yell “get away.”
Freeze =

These are the children that shut down and don’t look like they are in our world. It is important for us to remember to help these children out by changing the sensory input coming in. These children often get left in their own little world too long.
Sensory input that can help regulate an individual...

- Rhythmical movement
- Deep touch pressure
- Organized visual directions
- Decreased auditory input (noise)
- Heavy work activities (proprioception)
- Oral motor options
Sensory input that can escalate an individual…

- Arrhythmic movement
- Light and unpredictable touch
- Disorganized visual input
- Environments with a lot of noise
- Too much movement
- Too much touch
- Too much talking
Sensory options at your establishment?
Having an understanding of sensory input can help change behavior…

This is a Positive Behavioral Support…
What are the ABC’s of Behavior?

ABC

• Antecedents – What happens before a particular behavior occurs
• Behavior – What the person actually does in response to the antecedent
• Consequences – What happens after a person performs a particular behavior
Antecedents

What happens before the behavior occurs:

- **Setting events:** could occur hours/days/weeks prior to the behavior (sleep pattern, illness, family issues, medication change, etc.)

- **Immediate antecedents:** act as “triggers” for the behavior (teacher says… , peer takes a toy, schedule says cafe, etc.)
Behavior

Positive or negative behaviors fall into this category

- Child can request a “drink” with a picture or verbally (positive behavior)
- Child can throw a cup onto the floor (negative behavior)
- Both are considered “behaviors”
Consequence

What happens immediately following the target behavior

- Not always bad
- Reinforcement (causes an increase in behavior)
- Punishment
## Example of ABC’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Antecedent</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Consequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At school playing a game &amp; not sharing</td>
<td>Told “No don’t do that or you’ll lose your turn”</td>
<td>Says, “No Mine!” and runs off with the toy.</td>
<td>Gets to keep toy, but teacher talks to him about empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child watching TV before dinner</td>
<td>Mom turns off the TV for dinner, “Let’s eat”</td>
<td>Child screams, cries and turns on the TV</td>
<td>Child gets to eat dinner on the couch while watching TV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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ABC’s of Changing Behavior

Proactive Intervention

Reactive Intervention

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Proactive Interventions:

• Visual schedule
• Routines
• Setting up the environment
• Sensory breaks
• Visual directions
• Time to process
• Partial participation
• Reinforcement plan
ABC’s of Changing Behavior

A

Proactive Intervention

B

Reactive Intervention

C

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Reactive Interventions:

- Stay calm
- Keep the person with ASD and yourself safe
- Stop talking
- Give appropriate physical space
- Use visual supports and gestures
- Back your language down
- Adjust agenda accordingly
Keeping track of the ABC’s

Can help educators to be more proactive, therefore having less problem behaviors to deal with.
Reinforcement: Why do it?

• Helps people to do what needs to be done.
• Encourages people to try new things.
• Gives an end to an unfamiliar sequence.
• Help people deal better with stress and anxiety.
• May not be naturally reinforced by the activity itself.
What do you use for reinforcement at your establishment?

We need to reinforce the small steps.
Reinforcing with strengths and interests…

…is a key to supporting positive behavior with people with ASD because they are often not reinforced by the social interactions or the activity itself.
Behaviors

They all have a reason

And they have a level…
Levels of Behavior

Most severe

- Hurting themselves
- Aggressive toward others
- Damaging Property
- Irritating

Less severe
The steps to changing behavior:

1. Determine the level
2. Determine the reason
3. Decide what you can replace the behavior with that is as fast and as easy
4. Determine how and who will teach the new behavior
5. Determine how you will reinforce the child for using the new behavior
Taking the time…

To follow the steps in changing behavior:

• Level of behavior
• Problem solve the reason
• Determining how to replace the behavior
• Decide how to teach the new behavior
• Teach it and reinforce the new behavior

Will help in the Long Run…
Aggression Cycle

- Escalation
- Explosion
- Post explosion

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Being Aware of this cycle:

• Allows us to know when we may need to “ride a tantrum out.”
• Makes us aware that children need time to recover.
• Sometimes our interventions in the middle of a cycle make things worse.
Positive Behavioral Supports:

- Sensory strategies
- Understanding ABC’s of behavior
- Reinforcement
- Being aware of the aggression cycle
- Knowing the steps of changing behavior
Understanding a child’s behavior....

Can help us understand their world!